Title: The Crew of the Water Wagtail

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Release date: June 6, 2007 [eBook #21710]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Nick Hodson of London, England

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"The Crew of the Water Wagtail"

Chapter One.

A Rough Beginning.

It is well that mankind cannot pry into the secrets of futurity.

At all events, it is certain that if the crew of the *Water Wagtail* had known what was in store for them when they set sail from Bristol, one fine spring morning at the beginning of the sixteenth century, most of them would have remained at home—though it is not improbable that, even with full knowledge of coming events, some of the romantic among them, and a few of the reckless, might have decided to go on.

Undoubtedly Paul Burns would have scorned to draw back, for he was a "hero of romance;" an enthusiast of the deepest dye, with an inquiring mind, a sanguine disposition, and a fervent belief in all things great and good and grand. He was also a six-footer in his socks, a horse in constitution, a Hercules in frame, with a hook nose and a hawk eye and a strong jaw—and all the rest of it. Paul had a good brain, too, and was well educated—as education went in those days. Yes, there can be little doubt that even though Paul Burns had been able to see into the future, he would have deliberately chosen to go on that voyage.

So would Oliver Trench, for Oliver worshipped Paul! He loved him as if he had been an elder brother. He admired him, afar off, as a rare specimen of human perfection. He looked up to him, physically as well as mentally, for Oliver was at that time little more than a boy of medium size, but bold as a bull-dog and active as a weasel. Yes, we are safe to say that a revelation of the disasters, dangers, sufferings, etcetera, in store, would not have deterred Oliver Trench. He would have gone on that voyage simply because Paul Burns went. That was reason enough for him. The devotion of Ruth to Naomi was mild compared with that of Oliver to Paul—if words are a test of feelings—for Ruth's beautiful language could not compare with the forcible expressions with which Oliver assured his friend that he would stick to him, neck or nothing, through thick and thin, to the latest hour of life!

As for the rest of the crew—Big Swinton, Little Stubbs, George Blazer, Squill, and the like—it was well, as we have said, that they could not see into the future.

There were forty of them, all told, including the cook and the cabin-boy. We do not include Paul Burns or Oliver Trench, because the former was naturalist to the expedition—a sort of semi-scientific freelance; and the latter, besides being the master's, or skipper's, son, was a free-and-easy lance, so to speak, whose duties were too numerous to mention, and too indefinite to understand. Most of the men were what is expressed by the phrase "no better than they should be." Some of them, indeed, were even worse than that. The wars of the period had rendered it difficult to obtain good seamen at that particular time, so that merchant skippers had to content themselves with whatever they could get. The crew of the *Water Wagtail* was unusually bad, including, as it did, several burglars and a few pickpockets, besides loafers and idlers; so that, before leaving Bristol, a friend of the skipper, whose imagination was lively, styled it a crew of forty thieves.

The coast of Norway was the destination of the *Water Wagtail*. She never reached the coast of—but we must not anticipate. What her object was in reference to Norway we cannot tell. Ancient records are silent on the point.

The object of Paul Burns was to gather general information. At that period the world was not rich in general information. To discover, to dare, to do—if need were, to die—was the intention of our big hero. To be similarly circumstanced in a small way was our little hero's ambition.

"Goin' to blow," remarked Skipper Trench, on the evening of the day on which he sailed, as he paced the deck with his hands in his pockets, and, as his son Oliver said, his "weather-eye" open.

It seemed as though the weather, having overheard the prophecy, was eager to fulfil it, for a squall could be seen bearing down on the ship even while the words were being uttered.

“Close reef to-o-o-p-s’ls!” roared Master Trench, with the energy of a man who means what he says.

We are not sure of the precise nautical terms used, but the result was a sudden and extensive reduction of canvas; and not a moment too soon, for the operation had scarcely been completed when the squall struck the ship, almost capsized her, and sent her careering over the billows “like a thing of life.”

This was the first of a succession of squalls, or gales, which blew the *Water Wagtail* far out upon the Atlantic Ocean, stove in her bulwarks, carried away her bowsprit and foretopmast, damaged her skylights, strained her rudder, and cleared her decks of loose hamper.

After many days the weather moderated a little and cleared up, enabling Master Trench to repair damages and shape his course for Norway. But the easterly gales returned with increased violence, undid all the repairs, carried away the compass, and compelled these ancient mariners to run westward under bare poles—little better than a wreck for winds and waves to play with.

In these adverse circumstances the skipper did what too many men are apt to do in their day of sorrow—he sought comfort in the bottle.

Love of strong drink was Master Trench’s weakest point. It was one of the few points on which he and his friend Burns disagreed.

“Now, my dear man,” said Paul, seating himself one evening at the cabin table and laying his hand impressively on his friend’s arm, “do let me lock up this bottle. You can’t navigate the ship, you know, when you’ve got so much of that stuff under your belt.”

“O yes, I can,” said the skipper, with an imbecile smile, for his friend had a winning way with him that conciliated even while he rebuked. “Don’t you fear, Paul, I—I’m all right!”

The half-offended idiotic expression of the man’s face was intensely ludicrous, but Paul could not see the ludicrous at that time. He only saw his usually sedate, manly, generous friend reduced to a state of imbecility.

“Come, now, Master Trench,” he said persuasively, taking hold of the case-bottle, “let me put it away.”

“N–no, I won’t” said the captain sharply, for he was short of temper.

The persuasive look on Paul’s face suddenly vanished. He rose, grasped the bottle firmly, went to the open hatch, and sent it whizzing up into the air with such force that it went far over the stern of the ship and dropped into the sea, to the unutterable amazement of the man at the helm, who observed the bottle’s unaccountable flight with an expression of visage all his own.

There is no accounting for the rapid transitions of thought and feeling in drunken men. The skipper sprang up, clenched his right hand, and gazed in fierce astonishment at his friend, who advanced towards him with a benignant smile, quite regardless of consequences. Even in the act of striking, the captain restrained his arm and opened his hand. Paul met it with a friendly grasp, while the faces of both men expanded in smiling goodwill.

“Y–you’re a trump, P–Paul,” said the captain. “I—I—won’t drink a–another d’op!”

And Master Trench kept his word. From that day forth, till circumstances rendered drinking impossible, he drank nothing stronger than water.

Soon after this event the weather improved, damages were again repaired, and the skipper—in whom there was much of the spirit of the old vikings—once more laid his course for Norway, resolving to steer, as the said vikings were wont to do, by the stars. But a spirit of mutiny was abroad in the forecastle by that time. If hard work, hard fare, and hard fortune are trying even to good men and true, what must they be to bad men and false?

“Here’s how it lays, men,” said Big Swinton, in a subdued voice, to a knot of friends around him. “Blowin’ hard as it has bin ever since we left England, it stands to reason that we must have pretty nigh got across the western sea to that noo land discovered by that man wi’ the queer name—I can’t remember rightly—”

“Columbus, you mean,” cried George Blazer. “Why, my father sailed with Columbus on his first voyage.”

“No, it wasn’t Columbus,” returned Swinton, in a sharp tone, “an’ you needn’t speak as if we was all deaf, Blazer. It was John Cabot I was thinkin’ of, who, with his son Sebastian, discovered land a long way to the nor’ard o’ Columbus’s track. They called it Newfoundland. Well, as I was sayin’, we must be a long way nearer to that land than to Norway, an’ it will be far easier to reach it. Moreover, the Cabots said that the natives there are friendly and peaceable, so it’s my opinion that we should carry on as we go till we reach Newfoundland, an’ see whether we can’t lead a jollier life there than we did in Old England.”

“But it’s *my* opinion,” suggested Little Stubbs, “that the skipper’s opinion on that point will have to be found out first, Swinton, for it’s of more importance than yours. You ain’t skipper *yet*, you know.”

“That’s so, Stubbs,” said Squill, with a nod.

“Let your tongues lie still,” retorted Swinton, in an undertoned growl. “Of course I know I’m not skipper yet, but if you men have the courage of rabbits I’ll be skipper before another sun rises—or whoever you choose to appoint.”

A sudden silence ensued for a few moments, for, although there had been mutinous whisperings before, no one had, up to that time, ventured to make a distinct proposal that action should be taken.

“What! steal the ship?” exclaimed a huge black-bearded fellow named Grummidge. “Nay—I’ll have no hand in that.”

“Of course not; we have no intention to *steal* the ship,” retorted Swinton, before any one else had time to express an opinion; “we are all upright honourable men here. We only mean to take the *loan* of her. After all we have suffered we are entitled surely to a pleasure-trip, and when that’s over we can return the ship to the owners—if so disposed. You’ll join us in that, Grummidge, won’t you? And we’ll make you skipper—or first mate, if you’re too modest to take command.” This sally was received with a subdued laugh, and with marks of such decided approval, that Grummidge was carried with the current—at all events, he held his tongue after that.

An earnest undertoned discussion followed, and it was finally arranged that Big Swinton should sound Master Trench about the propriety of running to Newfoundland instead of returning on their track to Norway. The seaman was not slow to act. That afternoon, while at the helm, he made the suggestion to the skipper, but met with a sharp rebuke and an order to attend to his duty.

No word did Big Swinton reply, but that very night he entered the cabin with a dozen men and seized the skipper, his son, and Paul Burns, while they slept. Of course, being greatly outnumbered, they were overcome and bound. The two officers of the vessel were also seized by another party on deck, and all the five were imprisoned in the hold.

Next morning they were brought on deck, and made to stand in a row before Big Swinton, who had, in the meantime, been appointed by the mutineers to the command of the ship.

“Now, Master Trench,” said Swinton, “we are no pirates. We have no desire to kill you, so that whether you are killed or not will depend on yourself. If you agree to navigate this ship to Newfoundland—good; if not we will heave you overboard.”

“Heave away then,” growled the skipper, his nature being such that the more he was defied the more defiant he became.

“Well, Master Trench, you shall have your way. Get the plank ready, boys,” said Swinton, turning to the men. “Now stand aside and let the first mate choose.”

The same question being put to the two mates, they returned similar answers, and were ordered to prepare to walk the plank.

“You don’t understand navigation, I fancy, Master Burns,” said Swinton to Paul, “but as you can set broken bones, and things of that sort, we will spare you if you agree to serve us.”

“Thank you,” replied Paul, with quiet urbanity. “I prefer to accompany Master Trench, if you have no objection.”

There was a slight laugh at the coolness of this reply, which enraged the new skipper.

“Say you so?” he exclaimed, jumping up. “Come, then, shove out the plank, lads, and bring them on one at a time.”

“Stop!” cried little Oliver, at this point. “You’ve forgot *me*.”

“No, my little man, I haven’t,” returned Swinton, with a cynical smile. “You shall accompany your amiable father; but first I’ll give you a fair chance,” he added, in a bantering tone: “will *you* navigate the ship?”

“Yes, I will,” answered Oliver promptly.

“Indeed!” exclaimed the new skipper, taken aback by the boy’s boldness, and at a loss for a reply.

“Yes, indeed,” retorted Oliver, “only put me in command, with an auger, and I’ll navigate the ship to the bottom of the sea, with you and all your cowardly crew on board of her!”

“Well said, little master,” cried Grummidge, while a general laugh of approval went round.

Seeing that there was a symptom of better feeling among some of the men, Master Trench was about to make an appeal to them, when—

“Land ho!” was shouted by the look-out in stentorian tones.

Chapter Two.

The Adventurers Land on the Island.

The excitement caused by the sight of land was tremendous. Nearly every one ran to the bow or leaped on the bulwarks, and the prisoners were left unguarded.

Seeing this, Grummidge quietly cut their bonds unobserved, and then hurried forward to gaze with the rest. Even the man at the tiller left his post for a moment to get a better view of the land. On returning, he found Master Trench occupying his place, and Paul Burns standing beside him with a handspike in his grasp. Oliver had also armed himself with a marlinespike in default of a better weapon.

“Go for’ard, my man,” said the skipper, in a quiet voice, “an’ tell your mates to get ready the anchor and stand by the cable. Haste ye, if you value life.”

The man slunk away without a word.

“We seem far from land yet, Master Trench; why such haste?” asked Paul.

“Look over the stern,” was the skipper’s curt reply.

Paul and Oliver both did so, and saw that another squall was bearing down on them.

“Is it Newfoundland?” asked Paul.

“Ay, and an ugly coast to make in a squall. Hallo! there—if ye would not be food for fishes lay aloft and take in all sail!”

The skipper, as his wont was, gave the order in a stern tone of command, and resigned the tiller to Grummidge, who came aft at the moment. The men saw with surprise that a heavy squall was bearing down on them from the eastward. Mutiny flew, as it were, out at the hawseholes, while discipline re-entered by the cabin windows. Even Big Swinton was cowed for the moment. It may be that the peculiar way in which Paul Burns eyed him and toyed with the handspike had some effect on him. Possibly he was keenly alive to the danger which threatened them. At all events, he went to work like the rest!

And there was occasion for haste. Before the sails were properly secured, the squall struck them; the foremast was snapped off close to the deck; for a time the ship became unmanageable and drifted rapidly towards the land.

“Is that a small island that I see on the weather bow, Olly?” said the skipper to his son. “Look, your eyes are better than mine.”

“Yes, father. It looks like a small one.”

“Steer for that, Grummidge. We’ll take shelter in its lee.”

The sails were braced, and the direction of the vessel was changed, while the wreck of the foremast was being cleared away; but, just as they were drawing near to the island, the wind chopped round, and the hoped-for shelter they were approaching became suddenly a lee shore.

“Nothing can save us now,” muttered Grummidge, “the *Water Wagtail* is going to her doom.”

“You’re right, my man. Before another hour goes by, she will have wagged her tail for the last time,” said Master Trench, somewhat bitterly.

They were both right. In less than an hour after that the ship was hurled upon the outlying rocks of a low island. Shaken and strained as she had been during her disastrous voyage, it took but a short time to break her up, but the bow had been thrust high between two rocks and remained fast.

Circumstances do not change character, but they often bring it to the front. Heroes and poltroons may remain unknown until a sudden incident or change of condition reveals them. As the crew of the wrecked ship clustered on the fragment of the bow, and gazed on the tumultuous flood of foaming water that seethed between them and the shore, their hearts failed them for fear. Some sternly compressed their lips, and looked like men who had made up their minds to “die game.” A few even looked defiant, as if daring Fate to do her worst, though the pallor of their countenances gave the lie to the expression of their features; but many of them, in the terror of the moment, cried aloud for mercy, and wildly promised amendment if their lives should be spared. A few were composed and grave. Brave men, though bad. Possibly some of these prayed. If so, they had the sense to do it silently to Him who knows the secrets of all hearts.

“No man can cross that and live,” said the skipper, in a low, sad tone.

“It is my intention to try, Master Trench,” said Paul Burns, grasping the end of a light line and tying it round his waist.

Little Oliver looked quickly and anxiously at his friend. His heart sank, for he saw at a glance that it was not possible to follow him. The deed, if done at all, must be done by his friend alone. Great, therefore, was the rebound of joy in the boy’s heart when Paul said—

“Now, Olly, attend to me. My life, under God, may depend on close attention to my signals and the management of the line. I can trust your father and the men to haul me back to the ship if need be, but I will trust only you to pay out and read my signals. Observe, now, let there be no *slack* to the line; keep it just taut but without any pull on it, so that you may *feel* the signals at once. One pull means *pay out faster*, two pulls mean *haul me aboard*, three pulls is *all right and fix the big hawser to the line so that I may haul it ashore*. Now, Olly, I trust to you to read my signals and act promptly.”

Oliver’s heart was too full to speak. He looked at his friend with swimming eyes and nodded his head.

“Men,” said Paul to the crew, “let me beg you to obey the boy’s orders smartly. If God wills it so, we shall all be saved.”

He leaped over the side as he concluded. Another moment and he was seen to rise and buffet the plunging waters manfully. Great as was the muscular strength of the young man, it seemed absolute feebleness to those who looked

on; nevertheless he made headway towards the shore, which was strewn with great boulders with a low cliff behind them. It was among these boulders that his chief danger and difficulty lay, for his strong frame would have been as nothing if dashed against them.

Quickly he was lost to view in the hurly-burly of foam and spray.

With the utmost care did Oliver Trench perform his duty. It required both vigour of hand and delicacy of touch to keep the line right, but it was manipulated by hands whose vigour and touch were intensified by love.

“Ease off!” he cried, looking back impatiently at the strong fellows who held the slack of the line.

The men obeyed so readily that the line ran out too fast and the boy had much ado to check it. Just as he got it sufficiently taut, he felt what seemed to him like *two* pulls—“haul me in!” Could it be? He was not certain. In an agony of anxiety he held on, and was about to give the signal to haul in, when his father, who watched his every movement, instantly said, “Give him another second or two, Olly.”

Just then there was a strong single pull at the line.

“Pay out!—faster!” shouted Oliver, and, at the same moment he eased off his own feelings in a tremendous sigh of relief.

After that the line ran steadily for a few seconds, and no signals came. Then it ceased to run, and poor Oliver’s fears began to rush in upon him again, but he was speedily relieved by feeling three distinct and vigorous pulls.

“Thank God, he’s safe,” cried the boy. “Now then, pass along the hawser—quick!”

This was done, the light line was attached to a three-inch rope, and the party on the wreck waited anxiously.

“Give it a pull, Olly, by way of signal,” suggested Master Trench.

“He did not tell me to do that, father,” returned the boy, hesitating.

“No doubt he forgot it in the hurry—try it, anyhow.”

A hearty pull on the line was accordingly given, and they soon had the satisfaction of seeing the hawser move over the side and run towards the shore. When it ceased to run out they knew that Paul must have got hold of the end of it, so, making their end fast to the heel of the bowsprit, they waited, for as yet the rope lay deep in the heaving waters, and quite useless as a means of escape.

Presently the rope began to jerk, then it tightened, soon the bight of it rose out of the sea and remained there—rigid.

“Well done, Paul,” exclaimed the skipper, when this was accomplished. “Now, Olly, you go first, you’re light.”

But the boy hesitated. “No, father, you first,” he said.

“Obey orders, Olly,” returned the skipper sternly.

Without another word Oliver got upon the rope and proceeded to clamber along it. The operation was by no means easy, but the boy was strong and active, and the water not very cold. It leaped up and drenched him, however, as he passed the lowest point of the bight, and thereafter the weight of his wet garments delayed him, so that on nearing the shore he was pretty well exhausted. There, however, he found Paul up to the waist in the sea waiting for him, and the last few yards of the journey were traversed in his friend’s arms.

By means of this rope was every man of the *Water Wagtail’s* crew saved from a watery grave.

They found that the island on which they had been cast was sufficiently large to afford them shelter, and a brief survey of it proved that there was both wood and water enough to serve them, but nothing of animal or vegetable life was to be found. This was serious, because all their provisions were lost with the wrecked portion of the ship, so that starvation stared them in the face.

“If only the rum-kegs had been saved,” said one of the men, when they assembled, after searching the island, to discuss their prospects, “we might, at least, have led a merry life while it lasted.”

“Humph! Much good that would do you when you came to think over it in the next world,” said Grummidge contemptuously.

“I don’t believe in the next world,” returned the first speaker gruffly.

“A blind man says he doesn’t see the sun, and don’t believe in it,” rejoined Grummidge: “does that prove that there’s no sun?”

Here Master Trench interposed.

“My lads,” he said, “don’t you think that instead of talking rubbish it would be wise to scatter yourselves along the coast and see what you can pick up from the wreck? Depend on’t some of the provisions have been stranded among the rocks, and, as they will be smashed to pieces before long, the sooner we go about it the better. The truth is, that while you have been wastin’ your time running about the island, Master Burns and I have been doin’ this, an’ we’ve saved some things already—among them a barrel of pork. Come, rouse up and go to work—some to the shore, others to make a camp in the bush.”

This advice seemed so good that the men acted on it at once, with the result that before dark they had rescued two more barrels of pork and a barrel of flour from the grasp of the sea, besides some cases of goods which they had not taken time to examine.

Returning from the shore together, laden with various rescued articles, Paul and Oliver halted and sat down on a rock to rest for a few minutes.

“Olly,” said the former, “what was that I saw you wrapping up in a bit of tarred canvas, and stuffing so carefully under the breast of your coat, soon after the ship struck?”

“Mother’s last letter to me,” said the boy, with a flush of pleasure as he tapped his breast. “I have it safe here, and scarcely damaged at all.”

“Strange,” remarked Paul, as he pulled a well-covered packet from his own breast-pocket; “strange that your mind and mine should have been running on the same subject. See here, this is *my* mother’s last gift to me before she died—a letter, too, but it is God’s letter to fallen man.”

With great care the young man unrolled the packet and displayed a well-worn manuscript copy of a portion of the Gospel of John.

“This is copied,” he said, “from the translation of God’s Word by the great Wycliffe. It was given to my mother by an old friend, and was, as I have said, her parting gift to me.”

The friends were interrupted in their examination of this interesting M.S. by the arrival of one of the sailors, with whom they returned to the encampment in the bush.

Chapter Three.

First Experiences on the Island.

A wonderfully picturesque appearance did these shipwrecked mariners present that night when, under the shelter of the shrubbery that crowned their small island, they kindled several camp-fires, and busied themselves in preparing supper.

As there was no law in the island—and our skipper, having lost his ship, forbore to assert any right to command—every one naturally did what seemed right in his own eyes.

As yet there had arisen no bone of contention among them. Of food they had secured enough for at least a few days. Fire they had procured by means of flint, steel, and tinder. A clear spring furnished them with water, and ships’ buckets washed ashore enabled them to convey the same to their encampment. Fortunately, no rum-kegs had been found, so that evil passions were not stirred up, and, on the whole, the first night on the island was spent in a fair degree of harmony—considering the character of the men.

Those who had been kindred souls on board ship naturally drew together on shore, and kindled their several fires apart. Thus it came to pass that the skipper and his son, the two mates, and Paul Burns found themselves assembled round the same fire.

But the two mates, it is right to add, were only sympathetic in a small degree, because of their former position as officers, and their recent imprisonment together. In reality they were men of no principle and of weak character, whose tendency was always to throw in their lot with the winning side. Being a little uncertain as to which was the winning side that night, they had the wisdom to keep their own counsel.

Oliver presided over the culinary department.

“You see, I’m rather fond of cookin’,” he said, apologetically, “that’s why I take it in hand.”

“Ah, that comes of his bein’ a good boy to his mother,” said Master Trench in explanation, and with a nod of approval. “Olly was always ready to lend her a helpin’ hand in the house at anything that had to be done, which has made him a Jack-of-all-trades—cookin’ among the rest, as you see.”

“A pity that the means of displaying his powers are so limited,” said Paul, who busied himself in levelling the ground beside the fire for their beds.

“Limited!” exclaimed Trench, “you are hard to please, Master Paul; I have lived on worse food than salt pork and pancakes.”

“If so, father,” said Oliver, as he deftly tossed one of the cakes into the air and neatly caught it on its other side in the pan, “you must either have had the pork without the pancakes or the pancakes without the pork.”

“Nay, Master Shallowpate, I had neither.”

“What! did you live on nothing?”

“On nothing better than boiled sheepskin—and it was uncommon tough as well as tasteless; but it is wonderful what men will eat when they’re starving.”

“I think, father,” returned the boy, as he tossed and deftly caught the cake again, “that it is more wonderful what

men will eat when they're *not* starving! Of all the abominations that mortal man ever put between his grinders, I think the worst is that vile stuff—"

He was interrupted by a sudden outbreak of wrath at the fire next to theirs, where Big Swinton, Grummidge, and several others were engaged, like themselves, in preparing supper.

"There will be trouble in the camp before long, I see plainly enough," remarked Paul, looking in the direction of the disputants. "These two men, Swinton and Grummidge, are too well-matched in body and mind and self-will to live at peace, and I foresee that they will dispute your right to command."

"They won't do that, Paul," returned Trench quietly, "for I have already given up a right which I no longer possess. When the *Water Wagtail* went on the rocks, my reign came to an end. For the future we have no need to concern ourselves. The man with the most powerful will and the strongest mind will naturally come to the top—and that's how it *should* be. I think that all the troubles of mankind arise from our interfering with the laws of Nature."

"Agreed, heartily," replied Paul, "only I would prefer to call them the laws of God. By the way, Master Trench, I have not yet told you that I have in my possession some of these same laws in a book."

"Have you, indeed?—in a book! That's a rare and not altogether a safe possession now-a-days."

"You speak the sober truth, Master Trench," returned Paul, putting his hand into a breast-pocket and drawing forth the packet which contained the fragment of the Gospel of John. "Persecution because of our beliefs is waxing hotter and hotter just now in unfortunate England. However, we run no risk of being roasted alive in Newfoundland for reading God's blessed Word—see, there it is. A portion of the Gospel of John in manuscript, copied from the English translation of good Master Wycliffe."

"A good and true man, I've heard say," responded the skipper, as he turned over the leaves of the precious document with a species of solemn wonder, for it was the first time he had either seen or handled a portion of the Bible. "Pity that such a friend of the people should not have lived to the age o' that ancient fellow—what's his name—Thoosle, something or other?"

"Methuselah," said Paul; "you're right there, Master Trench. What might not a good man like Wycliffe have accomplished if he had been permitted to live and teach and fight for the truth for nine hundred and sixty-nine years?"

"You don't mean to say he lived as long as that?" exclaimed the boy, looking up from his pots and pans.

"Indeed I do."

"Well, well! he must have been little better than a live mummy by the end of that time!" replied Oliver, resuming his interest in his pots and pans.

"But how came you to know about all that Master Paul, if this is all the Scripture you've had?" asked Trench.

"My mother was deeply learned in the Scriptures," answered Paul, "and she taught me diligently from my boyhood. The way she came to be so learned is curious. I will tell you how it came about, while we are doing justice to Oliver's cookery."

"You must know, Master Trench," continued Paul, after the first demands of appetite had been appeased, "that my dear mother was a true Christian from her youth. Her father was converted to Christ by one of that noble band of missionaries who were trained by the great Wycliffe, and whom he sent throughout England to preach the Gospel to the poor, carrying in their hands manuscript portions of that Gospel, translated by Wycliffe into plain English. You see, that curious invention of the German, John Gutenberg—I mean printing by movable types—was not known at that time, and even now, although half a century has passed since the Bible was printed abroad in Latin, no one with means and the power to do it has yet arisen to print an English Bible, but the day is not far distant when that work shall be done, I venture to prophesy, though I make no pretence to be among the prophets!

"Well, as I was going to say, the missionary was a hoary old man when he preached the sermon that turned my grandfather from darkness to light. My grandfather was just fifteen years old at that time. Ten years later the same missionary came to grandfather's house, worn out with years and labours, and died there, leaving all his treasure to his host. That treasure was a small portion of the New Testament in English, copied from Wycliffe's own translation. You may be sure that my grandfather valued the legacy very highly. When he died he left it to my mother. About that time my mother married and went to live on the banks of the Severn. Not far from our farm there dwelt a family of the name of Hutchins. The father had changed his name and taken refuge there during the recent civil wars. This family possessed a Latin Bible, and the head of it was well acquainted with its contents. It was through him that my mother became well acquainted with the Old as well as the New Testament, and thus it was that I also came in course of time to know about Methuselah, and a good many more characters about whom I may perhaps tell you one of these days."

"So, then, this is the manuscript the old missionary carried about, is it?" said Trench, fingering the fragment tenderly.

"Ay, and a good translation it is, I have been told by one whom most people would think too young to be a judge. You must know that this Mr Hutchins has a son named William, who is considerably younger than I am, but he is such a clever, precocious fellow, that before he left home for college I used to find him a most interesting companion. Indeed, I owe to him much of what little I have learned, for he is a wonderful linguist, being able to read Hebrew and Greek about as easily as Latin or English. He is at Oxford now—at least he was there when I last heard of him. Moreover, it was through the Hutchins' family, in a roundabout way, that *your* mother, Olly, came to learn to write

such letters as you have got so carefully stowed away there in your breast-pocket."

"Good luck to the Hutchins' family then, say I," returned Olly, "for I'm glad to be able to read, though, on account of the scarcity and dearness of manuscripts, I don't have the chance of makin' much use of my knowledge. But you puzzle me, Paul. It was poor Lucy Wentworth who used to live with us, and who died only last year, that taught me to read, and I never heard her mention the name of Hutchins. Did you, father?"

"No, I never did, Olly. She said she had lived with a family named Tyndale before she came to us, poor thing! She was an amazin' clever girl to teach, and made your mother good at it in a wonderful short time. She tried me too, but it was of no use, I was too tough an' old!"

"Just so, Master Trench," rejoined Paul. "Hutchins' real name was Tyndale, and he had resumed the name before Lucy Wentworth went to live with the family. So, you see, Olly, you are indebted, in a roundabout way, as I said, to the Tyndales for your mother's letter. William will make his mark pretty deeply on the generation, I think, if God spares him."

Little did Paul Burns think, when he made this prophetic speech by the camp-fire on that distant isle of the sea, that, even while he spoke William Tyndale was laying the foundation of that minute knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages, which afterwards enabled him to give the Bible to England in her own tongue, and that so ably translated, that, after numerous revisions by the most capable of scholars, large portions of his work remain unaltered at the present day.

The night was far spent, and the other members of the camp had been long buried in slumber before Paul and Trench and Oliver could tear themselves away from the manuscript Gospel of John. The latter two, who knew comparatively little of its contents, were at first impressed chiefly with the fact that they were examining that rare and costly article—a book, and a forbidden book, too, for the reading of which many a man and woman had been burned to death in times past—but they became still more deeply impressed as Paul went on reading and commenting and pointing out the value of the Book as God's own "Word" to fallen man.

"Here is a promise to rest upon," said Paul, as he finally closed the book and repeated the verse from memory, "Jesus said, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

"Ay, that's it, Paul—*free*! We're all slaves, more or less, to something or other. What we all want is to be *free*," said Master Trench, as he drew his blanket round him, pillowed his head on his cloak, and went to sleep.

Silently Paul and Oliver followed his example, the fires died out, and in a few minutes the slumbering camp was shrouded in the mantle of night.

Energetic action was the order of the next day, for those shipwrecked mariners knew well enough that nothing but hard and steady labour could enable them to live on an apparently desolate island.

By daybreak most of the crew had scattered themselves along the shores, or over the interior, to spy out the land. About two hours later they began to drop into camp as hungry as hawks, each carrying the result of his researches in his arms or on his shoulders.

"Well done, Squill!" said Paul, who chanced to be first back in camp, with a huge sail bundled up on his shoulder, and who, just then, was busy blowing up his fire; "got another barrel of pork, eh?"

"It's myself as doesn't know, sur," answered Squill, "and it wasn't me as found it, but Jim Heron there. I only helped to sling it on the pole, and shoulder an end. It's aither pork or gunpowther, so if it ain't good for a blow out it'll be good for a blow up, anyhow."

"Did you see little Oliver anywhere?" asked Paul.

"Ay, sur, I saw him on the shore, bringing up what seemed to me the ship's bowsprit—anyhow, a spar o' some sort, about as big as he could haul along."

"Just so," returned Paul, with a laugh, "a ridge-pole for our tent. He's a smart boy, little Olly."

"Sure he's all that, sur, and more. Here he comes, blowin' like a porpoise."

Sure enough, Oliver appeared at the moment, dragging a heavy spar behind him. Several of the men appeared at the same time, staggering through the bushes, with various loads of wreckage, which they flung down, and noisily began discussing their experiences as they lighted the fires and prepared breakfast.

"Here comes Little Stubbs," cried Jim Heron. "What fortune, comrade?"

"Good fortune, though my load is the lightest yet brought in."

He flung down a small piece of wood with an air of satisfaction.

"Why, it's only a boat's rudder!" said Oliver.

"Ay, so it is, and the boat lies where I picked it up, but it was too heavy to bring into camp without your assistance, boy. And the best of it is that it's not much damaged. Very little repair will make her fit for sea again."

This was indeed a find of immense importance, and the assembled party discussed the event in all its bearings till

their mouths were partially stopped by pork and pancakes.

In the midst of this they were interrupted by the arrival of Big Swinton, George Blazer, and Grummidge with another find, which afterwards cost them much trouble and regret—namely, a couple of young lads, natives, whom they led into camp with their wrists tightly bound behind their backs.

Chapter Four.

Strange Visitors—Dark Plots—And Evil Purposes.

The youths who had been captured were simple savages, with very little clothing, and with an expression of considerable alarm on their faces. As was afterwards learned, they had been coasting along the shore of the large neighbouring island in a canoe; had observed the strange fires in the night-time, and had crossed over the channel to see what could be the cause thereof. On reaching the highest part of the island they discovered some of the sailors, and turned to fly to their canoe, but Blazer had observed them, their retreat was cut off, and they were captured—not without a severe struggle, however, in which they were very roughly handled.

Big Swinton, still smarting under the bruises and bites he had received in the scuffle, dragged them forward, and demanded angrily what was to be done to them.

“What have they done?” asked Trench.

“Done!—why, they have kicked and bitten like wildcats, and I doubt not have come over here to see what they can steal. In my opinion a thief deserves keel-hauling at the very least.”

Master Trench’s mouth expanded into a very broad smile as he looked round the group of men. “D’ye hear that, lads, what *Master* Swinton thinks ought to be done to *thieves*?”

The men broke into a loud laugh, for even the most obtuse among them could not fail to perceive the humour of the skipper’s look and question.

“You have nothing more to do wi’ the matter, Trench, than any one else has,” returned Swinton. “I claim these lads as my prisoners, and I’ll do with them what I please. No man is master now. Might is right on this island!”

The words had scarcely been uttered when Big Swinton felt his right shoulder grasped as if in a vice, and next moment he was flung violently to the ground, while Paul Burns stood over him with a huge piece of wood in his hand, and a half-stern, half-smiling look on his countenance.

The men were taken completely by surprise, for Paul had, up to this time, shown such a gentle unwarlike spirit that the crew had come to regard him as “a soft lump of a fellow.”

“Big Swinton,” he said, in the mildest of voices, “as you have laid down the law that ‘might is right,’ you cannot, of course, object to my acting on it. In virtue of that law, I claim these prisoners as mine, so you may get up and go about your business. You see, lads,” he added, turning to the men, while Swinton rose and retired, “though I have no wish to domineer over you or to usurp authority. I have a right to claim that my voice shall be heard and my reasons weighed. As Swinton truly remarked, no man is master now, but as he followed this remark by making *himself* master, and laying down a law for us, I thought it might be complimentary to him just to act, for once, under his law, and show him how well it works! Now, let me have a word with you.

“It is evident that the land over there is peopled with savages who, probably, never saw white men before. If we treat these young fellows kindly, and send them away with gifts in their hands, we shall, no doubt, make friends of the savages. If we treat them ill, or kill them, their relations will come over, mayhap in swarms, and drive us into the sea. I drop the Swinton law of might being right, and ask you who are now the law-makers—which is it to be—kindness or cruelty?”

“Kindness!” shouted by far the greater number of the audience, for even bad men are ready enough to see and admit the beauty of truth and justice when they are not themselves unpleasantly affected by these principles.

The decision being thus made, Paul took the arm of one of the young Indians and led him gently towards his fire, while the men scattered to their several camps. Master Trench led the other youth in the same kindly way, and little Oliver, motioning to them to sit down, set before them two platters of pork and pancakes. This he did with such a benignant smile that the poor youths were obviously relieved from the dread of immediate and personal violence. After some glances of timid uncertainty they began to eat.

“That’s right,” said Oliver, patting the bigger of the two on the shoulder, “you’ll find the victuals pretty good, though you’re not much used to ’em, mayhap.”

Of course the youths did not understand the words, but they understood and fully appreciated the feeling with which they were expressed. They also appreciated most powerfully the viands. At first they were greatly perplexed by the offer of knives and forks; but, after looking at these implements gravely for a few moments, they laid them gently down, and went to work in the natural way with fingers and teeth.

After they had finished the food, and licked the platters clean, they were presented with several bright brass buttons, an old clasp-knife, a comb, and a kerchief or two, with which inestimable gifts they embarked in their canoe, and returned to the opposite shore.

That day a most important discovery was made among the wreckage, namely, a case containing fish-hooks of various sizes and a number of lines. With these, and the boat repaired, Master Trench saw his way to prolonged existence on the island.

“To tell ye the plain truth,” he remarked to Little Stubbs, with whom he fell in while searching on the shore, “before this case of tackle was found, I had no hope at all of surviving here, for a few barrels of pork and flour could not last long among so many, and our end would have bin something awful; but now, with God’s blessing, we may do well enough until we have time to think and plan for our escape.”

“But d’ye think, master,” said Stubbs, “that we shall find fish in them waters?”

“Find ’em! Ay, I make no doubt o’ that, but we shall soon put it to the test, for the boat will be ready by to-morrow or next day at furthest, and then we shall see what the fish hereabouts think o’ salt pork. If they take to it as kindly as the Indians did, we shall soon have grub enough and to spare.”

The natural tendency of man to bow to the best leader was shown immediately after the incident of the capture of the Indians, for Paul Burns was thence-forward quietly appealed to by most of the crew in all circumstances which required much consideration. Paul, being a law-respecting man, naturally turned to the skipper, whose decision was usually final, and thus Master Trench dropped, by general consent, into his old position of commander.

But it must not be supposed that all the party acquiesced in this arrangement. There were men among that crew—such as Swinton, Blazer, Garnet, and others—who, either from false training, bad example, or warped spirits, had come to the condition of believing that the world was made for their special behoof; that they possessed that “divine right” to rule which is sometimes claimed by kings, and that whoever chanced to differ from them was guilty of arrogance, and required to be put down! These men were not only bad, like most of the others, but revengeful and resolute. They submitted, in the meantime, to the “might” of Paul Burns, backed as he was by numbers, but they nursed their wrath to keep it warm, and, under the leadership of Big Swinton, plotted the downfall of their rivals.

Meanwhile, being unquestionably “in power,” Master Trench, Paul, Oliver, Grummidge, Stubbs, and several of the well-affected, took possession of the boat when ready, and, inviting Swinton to join them—as a stroke of policy—pushed off, with hooks and lines, to make the first essay in the way of fishing on the now famous Banks of Newfoundland.

Anchoring the boat in what they deemed a suitable spot, they went to work.

“I wonder if they’ll take to pork,” remarked Stubbs, as he baited a large hook.

“If they take to it as you do, we shall soon run short o’ that article,” said Swinton, dropping his hook into the water.

“I have brought off some shellfish,” remarked Master Trench. “They may prefer that.”

“So have I, father,” said Oliver, whose bait was already at the bottom, “and if—hallo! hold on! hi! Oh! I say!”

While the boy was thus ejaculating, in a state of blazing excitement, his arms, and indeed his body, to say nothing of his spirit, were being jerked violently by his line in a way that suggested something awful at the other end!

“Have a care, Olly!” “Gently, lad!” “Hold on, boy!” “Let ’im run!” were among the contradictory pieces of advice given in various tones of warning, remonstrance, or simple recommendation; but Oliver heeded them not. Acting on his own judgment he drew his fish, or whatever it might be, gradually and carefully from the deep.

“A mermaid it must be, to tug so hard,” muttered Stubbs, as he and the others looked on with eager interest.

“A mer*man* if it’s anything,” said Squill; “sure there was never a maid in the say, or out of it, as would tug like that.”

“That depends,” said Grummidge. “I’ve had ’em tuggin’ at my heart-strings worse than that many a time.”

“Look out! Here it comes,” cried Oliver, as something huge and white was seen to flash wildly in the green depths. “Have the cleek ready.”

“All ready, my boy,” said his father, in a low voice, leaning over the side with a stick, at the end of which was a large iron hook.

“Now then, father! Quick! Missed it? No! Hurrah!”

For a moment it seemed as if Master Trench had got Neptune himself on his cleek, so severely did his stout frame quiver. Then he gave a tremendous heave—“ya-hoy!” and up came a magnificent cod—the first of a grand hecatomb of cod-fish which have since that day enriched the world, nauseated the sick with “liver oil,” and placed Newfoundland among the most important islands of the British Empire.

“Well done, Olly!” exclaimed the delighted father; but he had barely time to open his mouth for the next remark, when Squill uttered an Irish yell, and was seen holding on to his line with desperate resolve stamped on every feature.

“That’s the merman this time,” cried Stubbs.

“His gran’mother, no less,” muttered Squill, in a strongly suppressed voice, while he anxiously hauled in the line.

A shout from the other side of the boat here diverted attention.

“Attacked front and rear!” cried Paul, with a hilarious laugh, “I shouldn’t wonder if—hallo! N–no, it was only a nib—ha! there he is!”

And, truly, there he was in a few minutes, another splendid cod in the bottom of the boat.

To make a long story short, the boat was nearly filled with cod before the sun set, and that night was spent in general rejoicing and feasting on fish—with a second course of pork and pancakes for those who were insatiable.

But the state of contentment did not last long. The very next day there was quarrelling as to who should go in the boat. To allay the contention, Trench and Paul volunteered to stay in camp and help the party that should be left to split and clean the fish, and erect tents and booths. Again the fishing was successful, but dissensions about the use of the boat soon became more violent than ever.

Of course, in all this Master Trench and his friend Paul took a prominent part in trying to smooth matters, to the intense jealousy of Big Swinton and his sympathisers. In short, the camp ere long was divided into two hostile bands—the moderately bad and the immoderately wicked, if we may so put it. The first, who were few in number, sided with Trench and his friends; the second declared for Swinton. But the resolute bearing of Paul and the skipper, and the fact that the whole party was destitute of weapons (except clubs cut out of the bush, and a few clasp-knives), kept the larger and more vicious party in check.

Swinton and his friends, therefore, had recourse to secret plotting; but, plot as they would, they had not sufficient brain-power among them to devise a method by which to free themselves of the men they envied.

At last circumstances favoured them. It was found necessary to send men to the other side of the island to cut and fetch over some small trees that grew there, in order to make stages on which to dry their fish. As the operation would require part of two days, it was proposed to spend the night there. Swinton was to command the party, and Master Trench said, jestingly, that he and Master Burns, with Olly, would stay to guard the camp! The wood-cutting party was to start early the next day.

Then a plan of revenge flashed into Big Swinton’s mind. That night he revealed it to those of his friends whom he could trust, and who were necessary to his purpose. The night following—while the men around them should be sleeping at the other side of the island, and their enemies were alone in the camp—was fixed on for the execution of their purpose.

Chapter Five.

Turned Adrift in a Foreign Land.

It was a calm but very dark night when Swinton, Blazer, Garnet, Heron, Taylor, and several other men of kindred spirit, rose from their couches at the further end of the island, and, stealthily quitting the place, hastened back to their original camp.

They reached it about midnight, and, as they had expected, found all quiet, for the so-called “guard” of the camp had been hard at work all day and were at that moment fast asleep. Paul and the captain, with Oliver, lay side by side under a tent which they had constructed out of broken spars and a piece of sailcloth.

Their foes drew together not far from the spot.

“Now, men,” said Swinton, “this is a tough job we have in hand, for they are strong men, and the boy, albeit not big, is a very tiger-cat to fight. You see, if our plan was murder we could easily settle their business while they slept but that’s not our plan. We are *not* murderers—by no means!”

“Certainly not,” growled Blazer, with virtuous solemnity.

“Well, that bein’ so, we must take them alive. I will creep into the tent with you, Jim Heron, for you’re big and strong enough. You will fall on Trench and hold ’im down. I’ll do the same to Burns. Garnet will manage the boy. The moment the rest of you hear the row begin, you will jump in and lend a hand wi’ the ropes. After we’ve got ’em all safe into the boat, we will pull to the big island—land them there, an’ bid them a tender farewell!”

“But surely you won’t land them without a morsel to eat?” said Taylor.

“Why not? They’re sure to fall in wi’ their *dear* friends the savages, who will, doubtless, be very grateful to ’em, an’ supply grub gratis! Now, lads, you understand what you’ve got to do?”

“Ay, ay,” was the response, in a low tone, as they moved cautiously away, like evil spirits, to carry out their wicked plans.

“Fortune,” it is said, “favours the brave,” but in this case she did not thus bestow her favours, for the cowardly plan was successfully carried out. Before the sleepers were well awake, they were overwhelmed by numbers, secured and bound. They were not gagged, however, as no one was near to hear even if they shouted their loudest, which they knew it was useless to do. In a few minutes the three prisoners were hurried into the boat and rowed across the wide channel that separated the islet from the opposite shore.

At that time it was not supposed, either by the original discoverers or those who immediately followed them, that Newfoundland was one large island—considerably larger than Ireland. Not till many a year afterwards did explorers ascertain that it was an island of about three hundred and seventeen miles in length, by about the same in breadth;

but so cut up by deep bays, inlets, and fords as to have much the appearance of a group of islands.

During their passage across the channel both Trench and Paul attempted to reason with Swinton, but that hardened villain refused to utter a word till their prisoners were marched up the shingly beach, and told to sit down on a ledge of rock under the steep cliffs, where innumerable sea-birds were screaming a clamorous welcome, or, perchance, a noisy remonstrance.

“Now, my friends,” said their foe, “as you are fond of commanding, you may take command o’ them there sea-birds —they won’t object!—and if ye fall in wi’ your friends the savages, you may give them my love an’ good wishes.”

“But surely you don’t mean to leave us here without food, and with our hands tied behind us?” fiercely exclaimed Master Trench, whose wrath at any thing like injustice was always prone to get the better of his wisdom.

“As to grub,” answered Swinton, “there’s plenty of that around, if you only exert yourself to find it. I won’t cut your lashin’s, however, till we are fairly in the boat, for we can’t trust you. Come along, lads; and, Garnet, you bring the boy with ye.”

Under the impression that he was to be separated from his father and friend, and taken back again to the islet, poor Oliver, whom they had not thought it worth while to bind, struggled with a ferocity that would have done credit to the wildcats with which he had been compared; but Garnet was a strong man, and held him fast.

“Take it easy, my boy,” said Paul, who, being helpless, could only look on with intense pity. “Submit to God’s will—we will pray for you.”

But Olly’s spirit could by no means reach the submitting point until he was fairly exhausted. While they dragged him towards the boat, Taylor turned back and flung a small canvas bag at the captain’s feet.

“There, Master Trench,” he said, “you’ll find a lump o’ pork in that bag to keep you goin’ till ye get hold o’ somethin’ else. An’ don’t take on about the boy. *We* don’t want ’im, bless you. Why, we only want to prevent him settin’ you free before we gets fairly away.”

This was true. When the boat was reached and the men were on board, ready to shove off, Garnet, still holding Olly fast by the arm, said, “Keep still, will you, and hear what Master Swinton has got to say?”

“Now, you fiery polecat,” said Swinton, “you may go and cut their lashin’s, and take *that* as a parting gift.”

The gift was a sounding box on the ear; but Olly minded it not, for while Garnet was speaking, as he stood knee-deep in the water close to the boat, he had observed an axe lying on one of the thwarts near to him. The instant he was set free, therefore, he seized the axe, and, flourishing it close past Garnet’s nose, with a cheer of defiance he sprang towards the beach. Garnet leaped after him, but he was no match for the agile boy, who in another minute had severed Paul’s bonds and placed the weapon in his hands.

“Hallo! hi, you’ve forgot *me*. Cut my—ho!”

But there was no occasion for Master Trench to cry out and struggle with the cords that bound him. A furious rush of Paul with the axe caused Garnet to double with the neatness of a hunted hare. He bounded into the boat which was immediately shoved off, and the sailors rowed away, leaving Paul to return and liberate the captain at leisure.

Silently the trio stood and watched the receding boat, until it was lost in the darkness of the night. Then they looked at each other solemnly. Their case was certainly a grave one.

“Cast away on an unknown shore,” murmured the captain, in a low tone; as if he communed with his own spirit rather than with his companions, “without food, without a ship or boat—without hope!”

“Nay, Master Trench,” said Paul, “not without hope; for ‘God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble,’ so says His own Word, as my mother has often read to me.”

“It is well for you, Paul,” returned the captain, “that you can find comfort in such words—I can find none. Stern realities and facts are too strong for me. How can I take comfort in unfulfilled promises? Here we are in trouble enough, surely. In what sense is God a ‘refuge’ to us—or ‘strength,’ or a ‘present help’? Why, we are left absolutely destitute here, without so much as a bite of food to keep our bodies and souls together.”

He spoke with some bitterness, for he was still chafing under the sense of the wrong which he had suffered at the hands of men to whom he had been invariably kind and forbearing. As he turned from Paul with a gesture of impatience his foot struck against the canvas bag of pork which the man Taylor had flung to him on leaving, and which had been forgotten. He stopped suddenly and gazed at it; so did Paul.

“Looks like as if God had already helped us—at least to food—does it not?” said the latter.

“It was Taylor helped us to that,” objected Trench.

“And who put it into Taylor’s heart to help us?” asked Paul. “He is one of the worst men of our crew, so we can hardly say it was his own tenderness, and certainly it was not the devil who moved him to it. Am I wrong in holding that it was ‘Our Father’?”

“I believe you are right, Paul. Anyhow, I have neither the capacity nor the inclination to dispute the point now. Pick up the bag, Olly, and come along. We must try to find some sort of shelter in which to spend the rest o’ the night and consider our future plans.”

With a lighter heart and firmer faith, Paul Burns followed his leader, silently thanking God as he went along for thus far, and so opportunely, demonstrating His own faithfulness.

They had to wander some time before a suitable camping spot was found, for that part of the Newfoundland coast on which they had been landed was almost inaccessible. The cliffs in many places rose sheer out of the water to a height of full three hundred feet. Only in a few places little strips of shingly beach lay between the base of the cliffs and the sea, so that the finding of an opening in those stupendous ramparts of rock was no easy matter in a dark night.

At last they came to a place where the cliffs appeared to rise less precipitously. After careful clambering for some minutes they discovered a sort of gap in the rampart, up which they climbed, amid rugged and broken masses, until they reached a somewhat level plateau, or shelf, covered with small bushes. Here they resolved to encamp.

“Whether it’s the top o’ the cliffs or not, there’s no findin’ out,” remarked Trench, as he tried to survey the ground; “but whether or not don’t matter, for it looks level enough to lie on, an’ we’re as like as not to break our necks if we try to go further.”

“Agreed,” said Paul; “but now it occurs to me that our pork may be raw, and that we shall want fire to cook it. Have you got flint and steel in your pocket, Master Trench?”

“Ay—never travel without it; but by ill-luck I’ve got no tinder. Flint and steel are useless, you know, without that.”

“If ill-luck troubles *you*,” returned Paul, “good luck favours *me*, for I have got a bit of tinder, and—”

“The pork’s raw,” exclaimed Oliver, who had been hastily investigating the contents of the canvas bag; “but, I say, there’s more than pork here. There’s a lot o’ the little flour-cakes our cook was so fond of makin’.”

“Good. Now then let us have a search for wood,” said Paul. “If we find that, we shall get along well enough till morning. But have a care, Olly, keep from the edge of the cliff. The ledge is not broad. Have an eye too, or rather an ear, for water as you go along.”

Success attended their search, for in a few minutes Paul and the captain returned with loads of dry branches, and Olly came back reporting water close at hand, trickling from a crevice in the cliffs.

“Your shirt-front tells the tale, Olly. You’ve been drinking,” said Paul, who was busy striking a light at the time.

“Indeed I have; and we shall all be obliged to drink under difficulties, for we have neither cup nor mug with us.”

“Neither is wanted, boy, as I’ll soon show you,” said Paul. “Why, a bit of birch-bark, even a piece of paper, forms a good drinking vessel if you only know how to use it. Ha! caught at last,” he added, referring to some dry grasses and twigs which burst into flame as he spoke.

Another moment and a ruddy glare lit up the spot, giving to things near at hand a cosy, red-hot appearance, and to more distant objects a spectral aspect, while, strangely enough, it seemed to deepen to profounder darkness all else around. Heaping on fresh fuel and pressing it down, for it consisted chiefly of small branches, they soon had a glowing furnace, in front of which the pork ere long sputtered pleasantly, sending up a smell that might have charmed a gourmand.

“Now, then, while this is getting ready let us examine our possessions,” said the captain, “for we shall greatly need all that we have. It is quite clear that we could not return to our shipmates even if we would—”

“No, and I would not even if I could,” interrupted Oliver, while busy with the pork chops.

“And,” continued his father, regardless of the interruption, “it is equally clear that we shall have to earn our own livelihood somehow.”

Upon careful examination it was found that their entire possessions consisted of two large clasp-knives; a sheath hunting-knife; flint, steel, and tinder; the captain’s watch; a small axe; a large note-book, belonging to Paul; three pencils; bit of indiarubber; several fish-hooks; a long piece of twine, and three brass buttons, the property of Oliver, besides the manuscript Gospel of John, and Olly’s treasured letter from his mother. These articles, with the garments in which they stood, constituted the small fortune of our wanderers, and it became a matter of profound speculation, during the progress of the supper, as to whether it was possible to exist in an unknown wilderness on such very slender means.

Olly thought it was—as a matter of course.

Master Trench doubted, and shook his head with an air of much sagacity, a method of expressing an opinion which is eminently unassailable. Paul Burns condescended on reasons for his belief—which, like Olly’s, was favourable.

“You see,” he said, wiping his uncommonly greasy fingers on the grass, “we have enough of pork and cakes here for several days—on short allowance. Then it is likely that we shall find some wild fruits, and manage to kill something or other with stones, and it cannot be long till we fall in with natives, who will be sure to be friendly—if not, we will make them so—and where *they* can live, *we* can live. So I am going to turn in and dream about it. Luckily the weather is warm. Good-night.”

Thus did our three adventurers, turning in on that giddy ledge, spend their first night in Newfoundland.

Chapter Six.

Difficulties met and Overcome.

The position in which the trio found themselves next morning, when daylight revealed it, was, we might almost say, tremendously romantic.

The ledge on which they had passed the night was much narrower than they had supposed it to be, and their beds, if we may so call them, had been dangerously near to the edge of a frightful precipice which descended sheer down to a strip of sand that looked like a yellow thread two hundred feet below. The cliff behind them rose almost perpendicularly another hundred feet or more, and the narrow path or gully by which they had gained their eyrie was so steep and rugged that their reaching the spot at all in safety seemed little short of a miracle. The sun was brightening with its first beams an absolutely tranquil sea when the sleepers opened their eyes, and beheld what seemed to them a great universe of liquid light. Their ears at the same time drank in the soft sound of murmuring ripples far below, and the occasional cry of sportive sea-birds.

“Grand! glorious!” exclaimed Trench, as he sat up and gazed with enthusiasm on the scene.

Paul did not speak. His thoughts were too deep for utterance, but his mind reverted irresistibly to some of the verses in that manuscript Gospel which he carried so carefully in his bosom.

As for Oliver, his flushed young face and glittering eyes told their own tale. At first he felt inclined to shout for joy, but his feelings choked him; so he, too, remained speechless. The silence was broken at last by a commonplace remark from Paul, as he pointed to the horizon—“The home of our shipmates is further off than I thought it was.”

“The rascals!” exclaimed the captain, thinking of the shipmates, not of the home; “the place is too good for ’em.”

“But all of them are not equally bad,” suggested Paul gently.

“Humph!” replied Trench, for kind and good-natured though he was he always found it difficult to restrain his indignation at anything that savoured of injustice. In occasionally giving way to this temper, he failed to perceive at first that he was himself sometimes guilty of injustice. It is only fair to add, however, that in his cooler moments our captain freely condemned himself.

“‘Humph!’ is a very expressive word,” observed Paul, “and in some sense satisfactory to those who utter it, but it is ambiguous. Do you mean to deny, Master Trench, that some of your late crew were very good fellows? and don’t you admit that Little Stubbs and Squill and Grummidge were first-rate specimens of—”

“I don’t admit or deny anything!” said the captain, rising, with a light laugh, “and I have no intention of engaging in a controversy with you before breakfast. Come, Olly, blow up the fire, and go to work with your pork and cakes. I’ll fetch some more wood, and Paul will help me, no doubt.”

With a good grace Paul dropped the discussion and went to work. In a few minutes breakfast was not only ready, but consumed; for a certain measure of anxiety as to the probability of there being an available path to the top of the cliffs tended to hasten their proceedings.

The question was soon settled, for after ascending a few yards above their encampment they found an indentation or crevice in the cliff which led into an open spot—a sort of broader shelf—which sloped upwards, and finally conducted them to the summit.

Here, to their surprise, they discovered that their new home, instead of being, as they had supposed it, one of a series of large islands, was in truth a territory of vast, apparently boundless, extent, covered with dense forests. Far as the eye could reach, interminable woods presented themselves, merging, in the far distance, into what appeared to be a range of low hills.

“Newfoundland is bigger than we have been led to believe,” said Paul Burns, surveying the prospect with great satisfaction.

“Ay is it,” responded Trench. “The fact is that discoverers of new lands, bein’ naturally in ships, have not much chance to go far inland. In a country like this, with such a wild seaboard, it’s no wonder they have made mistakes. We will find out the truth about it now, however, for we’ll undertake a land voyage of discovery.”

“What! without arms or provisions, father?” asked Oliver.

“What d’ye call the two things dangling from your shoulders, boy?” returned the captain, with some severity; “are these not ‘arms’? and have not woods—generally got lakes in ’em and rivers which usually swarm with provisions?”

“That’s so, father,” returned the lad, somewhat abashed; “but I did not raise the question as a difficulty, only I’ve heard you sometimes say that a ship is not fit for sea till she is well-armed and provisioned, so I thought that it might be the same with land expeditions.”

Before the skipper could reply, Paul drew attention to an opening in the woods not far from them, where an animal of some kind was seen to emerge into an open space, gaze for a moment around it, and then trot quietly away.

“Some of our provisions—uncooked as yet,” remarked Oliver.

“More of them,” returned his father, pointing to a covey of birds resembling grouse, which flashed past them at the moment on whirring wings. “How we are to get hold of ’em, however, remains, of course, to be seen.”

“There are many ways of getting hold of them, and with some of these I am familiar,” said Paul. “For instance, I can

use the long-bow with some skill—at least I could do so when at school. And I have no doubt, captain, that you know how to use the cross-bow?"

"That I do," returned Trench, with a broad grin.

"I was noted at school as bein' out o' sight the worst shot in the neighbourhood where I lived. Indeed, I've bin known to miss a barn-door at twenty yards!"

"Well, well, you must learn to shoot, that's all," said Paul, "and you may, perchance, turn out better with the sling. That weapon did great execution, as no doubt you know, in the hands of King David."

"But where are we to get long-bows and cross-bows and slings?" asked Oliver eagerly.

"Why, Olly, my boy, excitement seems to have confused your brain, or the air of Newfoundland disagrees with you," said Paul. "We shall make them, of course. But come," he added, in a more serious tone, "we have reached a point—I may say a crisis—in our lives, for we must now decide definitely what we shall do, and I pray God to direct us so that we may do only that which is right and wise. Are you prepared, captain, to give up all hope of returning to our shipmates?"

"Of course I am," returned Trench firmly, while a slight frown gathered on his brow. "The few who are on our side could not make the rest friendly. They may now fight it out amongst themselves as best they can, for all that I care. We did not forsake *them*. They sent *us* away. Besides, we could not return, if we wished it ever so much. No; a grand new country has been opened up to us, and I mean to have a cruise of exploration. What say *you*, Olly?"

"I'm with 'ee, father!" answered the boy, with a nod of the head that was even more emphatic than the tone of his voice.

With a laugh at Oliver's enthusiasm, Paul declared himself to be of much the same mind, and added that, as they had no boxes to pack or friends to bid farewell to, they should commence the journey there and then.

"I don't agree with that," said the captain.

"Why not, Master Trench?"

"Because we have not yet made our weapons, and it may be that we shall have some good chances of getting supplies at the very beginning of our travels. My opinion is that we should arm ourselves before starting, for the pork and cakes cannot last long."

This being at once recognised as sound advice, they entered the forest, which was not so thick at that place as it at first appeared to be. They went just far enough to enable them to obtain a species of hardwood, which the experienced eye of Paul Burns told them was suitable for bow-making. Here they pitched their camp. Paul took the axe and cut down several small trees; the captain gathered firewood, and Oliver set about the fabrication of a hut or booth, with poles, bark, turf, and leaves, which was to shelter them from rain if it should *fall*, though there was little chance of that, the weather being fine and settled at the time.

The work which they had undertaken was by no means as easy as they had anticipated. Paul had indeed made bows and arrows in former years, but then all the materials had been furnished "in the rough" to his hands, whereas he had now not only to select the tree best adapted to his purpose, but had to choose the best part of it, and to reduce that portion from a massive trunk to suitably slender proportions. It was much the same with the arrows and cross-bow bolts. However, there was resolution and perseverance in each member of the party far more than sufficient to overcome such little difficulties; only, as we have said, they were slower about it than had been expected, and the work was far from completed when the descent of night obliged them to seek repose.

"Not a bad little bower," remarked Paul, as they sat down to supper in the primitive edifice which Oliver had erected.

The said bower was about four feet high, eight wide, and five deep, of irregular form, with three sides and a roof; walls and roof being of the same material—branchy, leafy, and turfy. The fourth side was an open space in which the inhabitants sat, facing the fire. The latter, being large enough to roast a sheep whole, was built outside.

"Why, Olly, you're a selfish fellow," said the captain, during a pause in the meal; "you've thought only of yourself in building this bower. Just look at Paul's feet. They are sticking out ten or twelve inches beyond our shelter!"

"That comes of his being so tall, daddy. But it does not matter much. If it should come on to rain he can draw his feet inside; there's room enough to double up. Don't you think so, Paul?"

But Paul replied not, save by a gentle snore, for he was a healthy man, and child-like in many respects, especially in the matter of going off to the land of Nod the moment his head touched his pillow. Possibly the fresh air, the excitement, the energy with which he had wrought, and the relish with which he had supped, intensified this tendency on the present occasion. Oliver very soon followed his friend's example, and so Captain Trench was left to meditate beside the fire. He gazed into its glowing embers, or sometimes glanced beyond it towards an open space where a tiny rivulet glittered in the moonlight, and a little cascade sent its purling music into the still air.

Ere long he passed from the meditative to the blinking stage. Then he turned his eyes on the sleepers, smiled meekly once or twice and nodded to them—quite inadvertently! After that he stretched his bulky frame beside them, and resigned himself to repose.

Now, it is probable that we should have had nothing more to record in reference to that first night in Newfoundland if Captain Trench had been in the habit of taking his rest like ordinary mortals, but such was not his habit. He bounced

in his sleep! Why he did so no one could ever find out. He himself denied the “soft impeachment,” and, in his waking moments, was wont to express disbelief as well as profound ignorance in regard to the subject. Several broken beds, however, had, in the course of his career, testified against him; but, like the man who blamed “the salmon,” not “the whisky,” for his headaches, Trench blamed “the beds,” not “the bouncing,” for his misfortunes.

One might have counted him safe with the solid earth of Newfoundland for his bed, but danger often lurks where least expected. Oliver Trench was not an architect either by nature or training. His bower had been erected on several false principles. The bouncing of a big man inside was too much for its infirm constitution. Its weak points were discovered by the captain. A bounce into one of its salient supports proved fatal, and the structure finally collapsed, burying its family in a compost of earth and herbage.

With a roar that would have done credit to a native walrus, the captain struggled to free himself, under the impression that a band of savages had attacked them. All three quickly threw off the comparatively light material that covered them, and stood in warlike attitudes for a few seconds, glancing around for foes who did not exist! Then the roar of alarm was transformed into shouts of laughter, but these were quickly checked by a real foe who crept up insidiously and leaped on them unexpectedly. The half-extinguished fire, having been replenished by the falling structure—much of which was dry and inflammable—caught on the roof and flashed down into the interior.

“Save the pork, lad!” shouted the captain, as he sprang out of the kindling mass.

“Ay, ay, father,” replied the son.

Paul meanwhile grasped the half-finished bows and arrows in his arms, and thus their little all was rescued from the flames. Of course, the bower was utterly consumed, but that caused them little grief. Having extinguished the flames, they all lay down to finish off the night under a neighbouring tree, and even its architect became so oblivious of what had occurred that he employed the remainder of his slumbering hours in dreaming of the home in old England, and of that dear mother whose last letter was still carefully guarded in the pocket of the coat that covered his ardent little bosom.

Chapter Seven.

They Begin their Travels in Earnest.

When their weapons were complete our three travellers started on their journey of exploration in the new-found land.

Captain Trench armed himself with a strong, heavily-made cross-bow, and a birch-bark quiver full of bolts. Paul Burns carried a bow as long as himself, with a quiver full of the orthodox “cloth-yard shafts.” Oliver provided himself with a bow and arrows more suited to his size, and, being naturally sanguine, he had also made for himself a sling with the cord he chanced to possess and the leathern tongue of one of his shoes. He likewise carried a heavy bludgeon, somewhat like a policeman’s baton, which was slung at his side. Not content with this, he sought and obtained permission to carry the axe in his belt. Of course, none of the bolts or arrows had metal points; but that mattered little, as the wood of which they were made was very hard, and could be sharpened to a fine point; and, being feathered, the missiles flew straight to the mark when pointed in the right direction.

“Now, captain,” said Paul, on the morning they set out, “let’s see what you can do with your cross-bow at the first bird you meet. I mean the first eatable bird; for I have no heart to kill the little twitterers around us for the mere sake of practice.”

“That will I right gladly,” said Trench, fixing his bow and string, and inserting a bolt with a confident air.

“And there’s a chance, daddy! See! a bird that seems to wish to be shot, it sits so quietly on the tree.”

The seaman raised his weapon slowly to his shoulder, shut the wrong eye, glared at the bird with the other, took a long unsteady aim, and sent his bolt high over the creature’s head, as well as very much to one side.

“Might have been worse!” said the captain.

“Might have been better,” returned Paul, with equal truth. “Now it’s my turn.”

The bird, all ignorant of the fate intended for it, sat still, apparently in surprise.

Paul drew his cloth-yard shaft to his ear and let fly. It went apparently in search of the captain’s bolt.

“Now me!” cried the impatient Olly, in a hoarse whisper, as he placed a stone in the sling and whirled it round his head. His companions drew off! There was a “burring” noise as the stone sped on its mission and struck the tree-stem with a sounding crack, three yards from the bird, which, learning wisdom from experience, at last took wing.

In anticipation of their chance coming round again, both Paul and the captain had got ready their artillery, and Oliver hastily put another stone in his sling. A look and exclamation of disappointment were given by each as the bird vanished, but just at that moment a large rabbit darted across their path. Whiz! twang! burr! went bolt and bow and stone, and that rabbit, pierced in head and heart, and smitten on flank, fell to rise no more.

“Strange!” said Trench, in open-mouthed surprise, “I’ve often heard of coincidences, but I never did see or hear of the like of that.”

“All three to hit it at once!” exclaimed Paul.

“Ay, and all three of us doin’ our best to hit it, too,” exclaimed Oliver.

“Just so—that’s the puzzle, lad,” rejoined the captain. “If we had been tryin’ to hit something else now, there would have been nothing strange about it! But to hit what we all aimed at—”

Apparently the captain failed to find words adequately to express his ideas, for he did not finish the sentence; meanwhile Paul picked up the rabbit and attached it to his belt. After this, advancing through the woods in a north-westerly direction, they made for a somewhat elevated ridge, hoping to obtain from that point a more extended view of the land.

Towards noon, feeling hungry, they began to look out for a suitable spot whereon to lunch, or rather to dine; for while travelling on foot in wild countries men usually find it convenient to take a very substantial meal about, or soon after, noon.

“To have water handy,” remarked Paul, as they stopped to look round, “is essential to comfort as well as cookery.”

“Look there, away to the nor’-west o’ that bunch o’ trees,” said the captain, pointing to a distant spot, “there’s a depression in the ground there; and from the lie o’ the land all round I should say we shall find a stream o’ some sort near it.”

“I hope so,” said Oliver; “for I shall want water to wash the rabbit with, and I have a strong hope that we may find fish in the rivers of this land, and although my hooks are big, I think the fish may not be particular, seein’ that they have never before been tempted in that way.”

“That’s true, Olly; I hope you won’t be disappointed. But what makes you want to wash the rabbit, my boy?” asked the captain; “it is not dirty?”

“Perhaps not; but I don’t quite relish the dirty work of cleaning out a rabbit before cooking it, so I want to try the plan of cutting it open, holding it under water, and scraping out the inside while in that position.”

“My son, you won’t be so particular when you’ve been a few weeks huntin’ in the wild woods. But what about the hair?”

“Oh, we can singe that off, daddy.”

“What! singe off wet hair? And the skin—I doubt we might find that tough?”

The young cook—for such he became to the exploring expedition—looked puzzled.

“I never skinned a rabbit,” he said, “but no doubt it is easy enough. I’ll just cut it open at the head—or tail—and pull it off like a glove.”

“Not quite so easily done as that” remarked Paul, with a laugh; “but I happen to know something about skinning birds and beasts, Olly, so make your mind easy. I will show you how to do it.”

“You happen to know something about almost everything, I think,” said the captain. “Tell me now, d’ye happen to know what sort o’ beast it is that I see starin’ at us over the bushes yonder?”

“No, Master Trench, I do not; but it looks marvellously like a deer of some sort,” said Paul, as he hastily fitted an arrow to his bow. But before he could discharge it the animal wisely retired into the shelter of its native wilds.

By this time, having walked smartly, they had gained the crest of one of the lower ridges, or plateaus, that rose in gentle slopes from the rocky shore, and there, as had been anticipated, they found a small rivulet, such as Americans would call a creek, and Scotsmen a burn. It flowed in a north-easterly direction, and was broken by several small rapids and cascades.

With a little shout of satisfaction, Oliver ran down to its banks, getting his hooks out as he went. Arriving at the margin of a deep pool, he bent over it and gazed earnestly down. The water was as clear as crystal, showing every stone at the bottom as if it had been covered merely with a sheet of glass, and there, apparently undisturbed by the intruder, lay several large fish.

What they were he knew not—cared not. Sufficient for him that they seemed large and fat. His first impulse was to turn and shout the discovery to his companions; but seeing that they had already set to work to cut firewood a little higher up the stream, he checked himself.

“I’ll catch a fish first maybe,” he muttered, as he quickly adjusted to his piece of cord one of the smallest cod-hooks he possessed. A few minutes sufficed for this; but when he was ready, it occurred to him that he had no bait. He looked around him, but nothing suitable was to be seen, and he was about to attempt the all but hopeless task of tearing up the soil with his fingers in search of a worm, when his eyes fell on a small bright feather that had been dropped by some passing bird. “Happy thoughts” occurred to people in the days of which we write, even as now, though they were not recognised or classified as such.

Fly-fishing was instantly suggested to the eager boy. He had often tried it in Old England; why not try it in Newfoundland? A very brief period sufficed to unwind a thread from the cord, and therewith to attach the feather to the hook. He had no rod, and neither time nor patience to make one. Gathering the cord into a coil, such as wharfmen form when casting ropes to steamers; he swung it round his head, and hove his hook half-way across the glassy pool.

The fish looked up at him, apparently in calm surprise—certainly without alarm. Then Olly began to haul in the hook. It was a fearful fly to look at, such as had never desecrated those waters since the days of Adam, yet those covetous fish rushed at it in a body. The biggest caught it, and found himself caught! The boy held on tenderly, while the fish in wild amazement darted from side to side, or sprang high into the air. Oliver was far too experienced a fisher not to know that the captive might be but slightly hooked, so he played it skilfully, casting a sidelong glance now and then at his busy comrades in the hope that they had not observed him.

At last the fish became tired, and the fisher drew it slowly to the bank—a four- or five-pound trout at the very least! Unfortunately the bank was steep, and the boy found, to his distress, that the hook had only caught hold slightly of the fish's lip. To lift out the heavy creature with the line was therefore impossible, to catch hold of it with the hand was almost equally so; for when he lay down and stretched out his arm as far as possible, he could scarcely touch it with the end of his finger.

"If it makes another dash it'll escape," muttered the anxious boy, as he slid further and further down the bank—a hairbreadth at a time.

Just then the fish showed symptoms of revival. Olly could stand this no longer. He made a desperate grasp and caught it by the gills just as the hook came away. The act destroyed what little balance he had retained, and he went with a sharp short yell into the pool.

Paul looked up in time to see his friend's legs disappear. He ran to the spot in considerable alarm, supposing that the boy might have taken a fit, and not knowing whether he could swim. He was relieved, however, to find that Olly on reappearing struck out manfully with one hand for a shallow place at the lower end of the pool, while with the other he pressed some object tightly to his bosom.

"You don't mean to say," exclaimed Paul, as he assisted his friend out of the water, "that you went in for that splendid trout and caught it with your hands!"

"You saw me dive," replied the boy, throwing the fish down with affected indifference, and stooping to wring the water from his garments as well as to hide his face; "and you don't suppose, surely, that I caught it with my feet. Come, look at the depth I had to go down to catch him!"

Seizing his prize, Olly led his friend to the spot where he had fallen in, and pointed with a look of triumph to the clear, deep pool. At the moment a smile of intelligence lit up Paul's features, and he pointed to the extemporised fly-hook which still dangled from the bank.

Bursting into a hearty fit of laughter, the successful fisher ran up to the encampment, swinging the trout round his head, to the surprise and great satisfaction of his father, who had already got the fire alight and the rabbit skinned.

Need it be said that the meal which followed was a hearty one, though there was no variety save roast rabbit, roast trout, and roast pork, with the last of the cakes as pudding?

"A first-rate dinner!" exclaimed Paul, after swallowing a draft of sparkling water from the stream.

"Not bad," admitted Captain Trench, "if we only had something stronger than water to wash it down."

Paul made no reply to this remark, but he secretly rejoiced in the necessity which delivered his friend from the only foe that had power to overcome him.

"Now," remarked Paul, when he had finished dinner, "I will strengthen my bow before starting, for it does not send the arrows with sufficient force, and the only way to do that, that I can think of, is to shorten it."

"And I will feather the last arrow I made," said Oliver, drawing the shaft in question out of his quiver.

"Well, as my bow and bolts are all ship-shape and in perfect order, I will ramble to the top of the ridge before us and take a look out ahead."

So saying the captain departed, and the other two were soon so deeply absorbed in their work and in conversation about future plans that they had almost forgotten him when a loud shout caused them to start up. On looking towards the ridge they beheld Captain Trench tossing his arms wildly in the air, and shouting and gesticulating violently.

"Sees savages, I think," said Paul.

"Or gone mad!" cried Olly.

Catching up their arms, the two ran hastily to the top of the ridge, where they arrived perspiring and panting, to find that their excitable comrade had only gone into ecstasies about the magnificent scenery that had burst upon his sight.

Chapter Eight.

Beautiful Scenes and Strange Experiences.

And, truly, the scene which met their gaze was of a nature calculated to arouse enthusiasm in a much less ardent bosom than that of Captain Trench. A wide undulating country, studded with lakelets and rich with verdure, stretched

away from their feet to the horizon, where a range of purple hills seemed to melt and mingle with cloudland, so that the eye was carried, as it were, by imperceptible gradations from the rugged earth up into the soft blue sky; indeed, it was difficult to distinguish where the former ended and the latter began. The lakes and ponds were gay with yellow water-lilies, and the air was musical with the sweet cries of wildfowl; while the noon-tide sun bathed the whole in a golden glory.

The effect of such a sight on our wanderers was at first too powerful for words, and when words did burst forth they served to show how wonderfully diverse are the spirits of men. Captain Trench, as we have seen, was moved by this vision of beauty to shout, almost to dance, with delight, while in thought he bounded over the length and breadth of the new land, taking bearings, and making notes and charts with the view of extending the geographical knowledge of mankind! His son Oliver, on the other hand, allowed his imagination to revel freely through the forests and over the hills and across lakes and savannahs in powerful sympathy with the aspirations which must have animated Nimrod; while to Paul Burns, whose temperament was sedate and earnest, as well as cheerful and hearty, the glorious vision at once suggested thoughts of that tranquil home in which man's lot was originally cast by the loving heart of God.

"Now it is quite plain," said Trench, as they slowly descended into this beautiful scene, "that this land is no collection of small islands, as we have been led to suppose, but a great land full of all that is needful to make it the happy abode of man."

"Just so, daddy!" exclaimed the enthusiastic Oliver, "and *we* have been sent to explore it and carry home the news—perhaps to bring out the first settlers and show them the way!"

"Why, Olly, you carry too much sail for so small a craft; you look out rather too far ahead. And what mean ye by saying we are sent? Nobody sent us on this journey that I know of, unless you mean that Swinton—the big scoundrel!—sent us."

"Whatever Olly meant by the expression," interposed Paul, "I think he is right; for all men are sent by the Almighty, no matter where they go."

"What! d'ye mean that men are sent by the Almighty whether they go to do good or evil?"

"Ay, Master Trench, that is what I mean; they *are* sent by Him, though not sent to *do evil*. Look here, don't you admit that God created all men and *sent* them into this world?"

"Of course I do."

"And that He made you an Englishman, and so *sent* you to England; and that He made you a sea-captain, and among other places *sent* you to Newfoundland."

"Well—I—I suppose He did," returned the captain, with that puzzled expression of countenance which was wont to indicate that his mind was grappling difficulties.

"Well, then," continued Paul, "*being* good, of course the Almighty sent us to *do* good; but He also gave us free wills, which just means permission to do as we please; so it remains to be seen whether we will use our free wills in working with Him, or in *trying* to work against Him, for, strange to say, we cannot really work against God, we can only *try* to do it, and in so trying we establish the fact of our own wickedness; but His grand and good purposes shall be carried out in spite of us notwithstanding, for he can bring good out of evil."

"Now, Paul, I've lost soundings altogether, and it's my opinion that you are foolishly talking about things that you, don't understand."

"I never heard, Master Trench, that it was foolish to talk about what one does not understand! On the contrary, it is by talking of things that we don't understand that we manage at last to understand them. You had a deal of talking about navigation, had you not, before you understood it?"

"Look 'ee here, lad," said Trench, stopping suddenly, with his legs planted firmly apart as though on the quarter-deck of his ship in a cross sea, while he drove his right fist into the palm of his left hand argumentatively. "Look 'ee here. How can it be possible that—that—pooh! Come along, we'll never get on with our survey of the land if we dispute at this rate."

The stout mariner turned away with an air of exasperation, and resumed his walk at a rapid pace, closely followed by his amused friend and son.

This irreverent mode of dismissing a grave and difficult subject was not peculiar to Captain Trench. It has probably been adopted by those who shrink from mental effort ever since the days of Adam and Eve. Minds great and small have exercised themselves since the beginning of time on this perplexing subject—God's sovereignty and man's free will—with benefit, probably, to themselves. We recommend it in passing, good reader, to your attention, and we will claim to be guiltless of presumption in thus advising, so long as the writing stands, "Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."

Before the sun went down that night our explorers had plunged into the very heart of the beautiful country which we have described—now pushing through tangled underwood, or following the innumerable deer-tracks with which the country was seamed, or breasting the hill-sides, or making détours to get round small lakes, being guided, in a westerly direction, by a small pocket-compass which Captain Trench was fortunately in the habit of carrying with him wherever he went. No large lakes or broad rivers had yet been met with, so that up to this point the divergencies from the direct line had not been great.

Thus they advanced for several days, subsisting on game and fish, chiefly the last, however; for their shooting powers were very defective, and Oliver was an ardent—too ardent—fisher. Their inability to shoot became at last a serious matter, for many arrows and bolts were lost, as well as much game.

“Look, now, there’s *another* chance,” whispered Paul, pointing to a plump willow-grouse that sat in a bush in front of them. “You try first, Master Trench.”

“An’ *don’t* miss, daddy,” said Oliver entreatingly; “there’s only the bones of a rabbit left from this morning’s breakfast.”

The captain took a fervently careful aim, but went far wide of the mark, to his intense chagrin. Paul then bent his bow, but without success, though his arrows stuck in a branch close under the bird, which, being very tame, only glanced down inquiringly. Oliver’s arrow went over it, and the stone which he afterwards slang made such a rattling in the bush that the puzzled creature finally retired.

“This is becoming serious,” remarked the captain, with a face so solemn that Paul burst into a fit of laughter.

“Ha! you may laugh, lad,” continued Trench, “but if you were as hungry as I am you’d be more inclined to cry. D’ye think a stout man like me can sup heartily on rabbit bones?”

“You’ve forgot, daddy, the four big trout I caught to-day.”

“So I have, Olly; well, come and let’s have ’em cooked at once.”

The fish, which were really more than sufficient without the rabbit bones, were soon grilling over a huge fire under the canopy of a spreading birch-tree.

When the skipper had disposed of enough to allay the pangs of hunger, he turned and said to his comrades, in a tone of marked decision—

“Now, mess-mates, I’ve been rummagin’ my brains a bit, and the outcome of it is as follows:— ‘Whatever is worth doin’ is worth doin’ well,’ as the old proverb puts it. If we are to explore this country, we must set about learning to shoot, for if we don’t, we are likely to starve in the midst of plenty, and leave our bones to bleach in this beautiful wilderness.”

“True, Master Trench,” remarked Paul, for the seaman had paused at this point; “thus far you and I think alike. What more have you to say?”

“This I have to say, that I am resolved not to explore another fathom o’ this land until I can make sure of hittin’ the crown o’ my cap with a cross-bow bolt at a reasonable distance; and I would advise you both to make the same resolution, for if you don’t you will have to do your exploring without me.”

“Just so, captain,” said Paul, putting the last morsel of fish into his mouth, with a sigh of contentment; “you are commander of this expedition. I will obey orders.”

“But what do you call a ‘reasonable’ distance, daddy?” asked Oliver, with that pert cock of the head peculiar to insolent youths; “a yard, or a fathom?”

“Well, now,” continued Trench, ignoring the question, “we will set about it to-morrow morning, first thing after breakfast; stick up a target, retire to a *reasonable* distance, and work away from morning till night, and every day till we become perfect.”

“Agreed, captain,” said Paul; “but what about food?”

“We will give Olly leave of absence for an hour or two daily to go and fish,” said the captain; “that will keep us alive, coupled with what birds or beasts may come accidentally in front of our arrows.”

This plan, although proposed at first half in jest, was carried into operation next day, during the whole of which they practised shooting at a mark most diligently. At supper-time, over a couple of fine trout, it was admitted sadly by each that the progress made was very slight—indeed, scarcely perceptible. Next night, however, the report was more favourable, and the third night it was felt that the prospect ahead was becoming hopeful; for, besides the improvement in shooting, two rabbits graced their supper, one having been arrested by an almost miraculous bolt when bolting; the other having been caught, unintentionally, by a stone similar to that which brought down the giant of Gath. The fact that skill had nothing to do with the procuring of either did not in the least detract from the enjoyment with which they consumed both.

“Nothing is denied,” they say, “to well-directed labour, and nothing can be done without it.” Like most of the world’s maxims, this is a partially erroneous statement; for many things are denied to well-directed labour, and sometimes amazing success is accorded to ill-directed and blundering efforts. Still, what truth does exist in the saying was verified by our three friends; for, after two weeks of unremitting, unwearied, persistent labour, each labourer succeeded in raising enormous blisters on two fingers of his right hand, and in hitting objects the size of a swan six times out of ten at a “reasonable distance!”

Having arrived at this state of proficiency with their weapons, they resumed their journey, fortified with a hearty breakfast, the foundation of which was fish, the superstructure willow-grouse interspersed with rabbit, and the apex plover.

Not long after that the first deer was shot. It occurred thus:—

They were walking one beautiful morning slowly along one of the numerous deer-tracks of which we have already made mention, and were approaching the summit of a ridge at the very time that a herd of deer, headed by a noble stag, were ascending the same ridge from the opposite side. The little air that moved was blowing in the right direction—from the deer towards the travellers. As they topped the ridge about the same instant, the two parties stood suddenly face to face, and it would be difficult to determine which party looked most amazed.

Facility in fitting arrows, etcetera, had been acquired by that time. The hunters were ready in a couple of seconds. The deer, recovering, wheeled about; but before they could take the first bound, “burr, twang, and whizz,” sounded in their ears. The stone struck an antler of the stag, the arrow pierced his flank, the bolt quivered in his heart, and the monarch of the woods, leaping wildly into the air, fell dead upon the ground.

“Well done, Master Trench!” shouted Paul, with a hearty cheer. As for Oliver, he uttered a squeal of delight, threw an uncontrollable somersault, and landed, sittingwise, on a bed of soft moss.

This was a tremendous triumph and source of jubilation, and it soon became obvious to each that the other two had a hard struggle to keep their expressions of satisfaction within the limits of moderation; for not only had they now obtained the crowning evidence of their skill, but they were provided with a supply of meat which, if properly dried, would furnish them with food for many days to come.

It was a striking and picturesque, though perhaps not an agreeable, sight to witness the party that night, in the ruddy light of the camp-fire, with sleeves rolled to the shoulders, and bloody knives in hands, operating on the carcase of the deer, and it was several hours past their usual supper-time before they felt themselves at liberty to sit down on a bed of spruce-fir branches and enjoy the luxury of rest and food.

Next day, while proceeding slowly through the woods, chatting merrily over the incidents of the previous day, a sudden silence fell upon them; for out of the thick shrubbery there stalked a tall, noble-looking man of middle age. He was dressed in the garb of a hunter. Long yellow curls hung on his shoulders, and a heavy beard and moustache of the same colour concealed the lower part of a bronzed and handsome countenance. His bright blue eyes seemed to sparkle with good humour as he gazed inquiringly, yet sadly, at the astonished faces of the three travellers.

Chapter Nine.

Their New Acquaintance Becomes Interested and Practical.

The tall stranger who had thus suddenly presented himself bore so strong a resemblance to the vikings of old that Paul Burns, who was familiar with tales and legends about the ancient sea-rovers, felt stealing over him at the first glance a sensation somewhat akin to awe, for it seemed as if one of the sea-kings had actually risen from his grave to visit them.

This feeling was succeeded, however, by one of intense surprise when the stranger addressed them in the English tongue.

“I thought, years ago,” he said, “that I had seen the last of white faces!”

It immediately occurred to Oliver Trench that, as their faces were by that time deeply embrowned by the sun, the stranger must be in a bantering mood, but neither he nor his companions replied. They were too much astonished to speak or even move, and waited for more.

“This is not a land where the men whose ruling ideas seem to be war and gold are likely to find what they want,” continued the stranger, somewhat sternly. “Whence come ye? Are you alone, or only the advance-guard of the bloodthirsty race?”

There was something so commanding as well as courtly in the tone and bearing of this extraordinary man, that Paul half involuntarily removed his cap as he replied:

“Forgive me, sir, if astonishment at your sudden appearance has made me appear rude. Will you sit down beside us and share our meal, while I answer your questions?”

With a quiet air and slight smile the stranger accepted the invitation, and listened with profound interest to Paul as he gave a brief outline of the wreck of the *Water Wagtail*, the landing of the crew, the mutinous conduct of Big Swinton and his comrades, and the subsequent adventures and wanderings of himself, Master Trench, and Oliver.

“Your voices are like the echoes of an old, old song,” said the stranger, in a low sad voice, when the narrative was concluded. “It is many years since I heard my native tongue from English lips. I had forgotten it ere now if I had not taken special means to keep it in mind.”

“And pray, good sir,” said Paul, “may I ask how it happens that we should find an Englishman in this almost unheard-of wilderness? To tell you the truth, my first impression on seeing you was that you were the ghost of an ancient sea-king.”

“I am the ghost of my former self,” returned the stranger, “and you are not far wrong about the sea-kings, for I am in very truth a descendant of those rovers who carried death and destruction round the world in ancient times. War and gold—or what gold represents—were their gods in those days.”

“It seems to me,” said Captain Trench, at last joining in the conversation, “that if you were in Old England just now, or any other part of Europe, you’d say that war and gold are as much worshipped now-a-days as they ever were in

the days of old."

"If you add love and wine to the catalogue," said Paul, "you have pretty much the motive powers that have swayed the world since the fall of man. But tell us, friend, how you came to be here all alone."

"Not now—not now," replied the stranger hurriedly, and with a sudden gleam in his blue eyes that told of latent power and passion under his calm exterior. "When we are better acquainted, perhaps you shall know. At present, it is enough to say that I have been a wanderer on the face of the earth for many years. For the last ten years my home has been in this wilderness. My native land is one of those rugged isles which form the advance-guard of Scotland in the Northern Ocean."

"But are you quite alone here?" asked Captain Trench, with increasing interest.

"Not quite alone. One woman has had pity on me, and shares my solitude. We dwell, with our children, on an island in a great lake, to which I will conduct you if you will accept my hospitality. Red men have often visited me there, but I had thought that the face of a white man would never more grieve my sight."

"Is, then, the face of the white man so distasteful to you?" asked Paul.

"It *was*; but some change must have come over me, for while I hold converse with you the old hatred seems melting away. If I had met you eight or ten years ago, I verily believe that I would have killed you all in cold blood, but now—"

He stopped abruptly, and gazed into the flames of the camp-fire, with a grave, almost tender air that seemed greatly at variance with his last murderous remark.

"However, the feeling is past and gone—it is dead," he presently resumed, with a toss of his head which sent the yellow curls back, and appeared at the same time to cast unpleasant memories behind him, "and I am now glad to see and welcome you, though I cannot help grieving that the white race has discovered my lonely island. They might have discovered it long ago if they had only kept their ears open."

"Is it a big island, then—not a cluster of islands?" asked Trench eagerly.

"Yes, it is a large island, and there is a great continent of unknown extent to the westward of it."

"But what do you mean, stranger, by saying that it might have been discovered long ago if people had kept their ears open?" asked Paul. "It is well known that only a few years ago a sea-captain named Columbus discovered the great continent of which you speak, and that so recently as the year 1497 the bold mariner, John Cabot, with his son Sebastian, discovered these islands, which they have named Newfoundland."

The stranger listened with evident interest, not unmingled with surprise, to this.

"Of Columbus and Cabot I have never heard," he replied, "having had no intercourse with the civilised world for twenty years. I knew of this island and dwelt on it long before the time you say that Cabot came. But that reminds me that once, on returning from a hunting expedition into the interior, it was reported to me by Indians that a giant canoe had been seen off the coast. That may have been Cabot's ship. As to Columbus, my forefathers discovered the great continent lying to the west of this about five hundred years before he could have been born. When I was a boy, my father, whose memory was stored with innumerable scraps of the old viking sagas, or stories, used to tell me about the discovery of Vinland by the Norsemen, which is just the land that seems to have been re-discovered by Columbus and Cabot. My father used to say that many of the written sagas were believed to exist among the colonists of Iceland. I know not. It is long since my thoughts ceased to be troubled by such matters, but what you tell me has opened up the flood-gates of old memories that I had thought were dead and buried for ever."

All that day the strange hunter accompanied them, and encamped with them at night. Next morning he resumed with ever-increasing interest the conversation which had been interrupted by the necessity of taking rest. It was evident that his heart was powerfully stirred; not so much by the news which he received, as by the old thoughts and feelings that had been revived. He was very sociable, and, among other things, showed his new friends how to slice and dry their venison, so as to keep it fresh and make it convenient for carriage.

"But you won't require to carry much with you," he explained, "for the country swarms with living creatures at all times—especially just now."

On this head he gave them so much information, particularly as to the habits and characteristics of birds, beasts, and fishes, that Paul's natural-historic enthusiasm was aroused; and Oliver, who had hitherto concerned himself exclusively with the uses to which wild animals might be applied—in the way of bone-points for arrows, twisted sinews for bowstrings, flesh for the pot, and furs for garments—began to feel considerable curiosity as to what the creatures did when at home, and why they did it.

"If we could only find out what they think about," he remarked to the hunter, "we might become quite sociable together."

What it was in this not very remarkable speech that interested their new friend we cannot tell, but certain it is that from the time it was uttered he took greater interest in the boy, and addressed many of his remarks and explanations to him.

There was a species of dignity about this strange being which prevented undue familiarity either with or by him; hence, he always addressed the boy by his full name, and never condescended to "Olly!" The name by which he himself chose to be called was Hendrick, but whether that was a real or assumed name of course they had no means of knowing.

Continuing to advance through a most beautiful country, the party came at last to a river of considerable size and depth, up the banks of which they travelled for several days. Hendrick had by tacit agreement assumed the leadership of the party, because, being intimately acquainted with the land, both as to its character, form, and resources, he was naturally fitted to be their guide.

“It seems to me,” said Captain Trench, as they sat down to rest one afternoon on a sunny bank by the river side—out of which Olly had just pulled a magnificent trout—“that the climate of this island has been grossly misrepresented. The report was brought to us that it was a wild barren land, always enveloped in thick fogs; whereas, although I am bound to say we found fogs enough on the coast we have found nothing but beauty, sunshine, and fertility in the interior.”

“Does not this arise from the tendency of mankind to found and form opinions on insufficient knowledge?” said Hendrick. “Even the Indians among whom I dwell are prone to this error. If your discoverer Cabot had dwelt as many years as I have in this great island, he would have told you that it has a splendid climate, and is admirably adapted for the abode of man. Just look around you—the region which extends from your feet to the horizon in all directions is watered as you see by lakes and rivers, which swarm with fish and are alive with wildfowl; the woods, which are largely composed of magnificent and useful trees, give shelter to myriads of animals suitable for food to man; the soil is excellent, and the grazing lands would maintain thousands of cattle—what more could man desire?”

“Nothing more,” answered Paul, “save the opportunity to utilise it all, and the blessing of God upon his efforts.”

“The opportunity to utilise it won’t be long of coming, now that the facts about it are known, or soon to be made known, by us,” remarked Trench.

“I’m not so sure about that” said Paul. “It is wonderful how slow men are to believe, and still more wonderful how slow they are to act.”

That the captain’s hopes were not well founded, and that Paul’s doubts were justified, is amply proved by the history of Newfoundland. At first its character was misunderstood; then, when its unparalleled cod-fishing banks were discovered, attention was entirely confined to its rugged shores. After that the trade fell into the hands of selfish and unprincipled monopolists, who wilfully misrepresented the nature of this island, and prevailed on the British Government to enact repressive laws, which effectually prevented colonisation. Then prejudice, privileges, and error perpetuated the evil state of things, so that the true character of the land was not known until the present century; its grand interior was not systematically explored till only a few years ago, and thus it comes to pass that even at the present day one of the finest islands belonging to the British Crown—as regards vast portions of its interior—still remains a beautiful wilderness unused by man.

But with this we have nothing at present to do. Our business is, in spirit, to follow Hendrick and his friends through that wilderness, as it was at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Deer-tracks, as we have said, were innumerable, and along one of those tracks a herd of deer were seen trotting one day about two bow-shots from the party. With characteristic eagerness Oliver Trench hastily let fly an arrow at them. He might as well have let it fly at the pole-star. The only effect it had was to startle the deer and send them galloping into the shelter of the woods.

“*What* a pity!” exclaimed Oliver.

“Not so, my boy,” remarked his father. “Experience, they say, teaches fools; and if experience has now taught you that it is foolish to shoot at game out of range, you are no fool, which is not a pity, but matter for congratulation.”

“But what about practice, daddy? Did you not say only last night that there is nothing like practice to make perfect?”

“True, lad, but I did not recommend practising at deer beyond range. Besides, you can practise at stumps and stones.”

“But stumps and stones don’t afford *running* shots,” objected Olly.

“Yes they do, boy. You can run past the stumps while you shoot, and as to stones, you can roll them down hill and let fly at them as they roll. Now clap the hatches on your mouth; you’re too fond of argument.”

“I’m only a chip of the ancient tree, father,” retorted the boy, with a quiet laugh.

How much further this little skirmish might have proceeded we cannot tell, for it was brought to an abrupt close by the sudden appearance of a black bear. It was on turning a cliff which bordered the edge of a stream that they came upon the monster—so close to it that they had barely time to get ready their weapons when it rose on its hind legs to attack them.

“Look out!” yelled Oliver, who, being in advance, was the first to see the bear.

A stone from his sling was well though hastily aimed, for it hit the animal fairly on the nose, thereby rendering it particularly angry. Almost at the same moment a bolt and an arrow flew from the weapons of Paul and Trench; but they flew wide of the mark, and there is no saying what the result might have been had not Hendrick bent his short but powerful bow, and sent an arrow to the feather into the creature’s breast.

The modern bullet is no doubt more deadly than the ancient arrow, nevertheless the latter had some advantages over the former. One of these was that, as it transfixed several muscles, it tended to hamper the movements of the victim shot. It also drew attention in some degree from the assailant. Thus, on the present occasion the bear, with a savage growl, seized the head of the arrow which projected from the wound and wrenched it off. This, although little

more than a momentary act, gave the hunter time to fit and discharge a second arrow, which entered the animal's throat, causing it to fall writhing on the ground, while Oliver, who had gone almost mad with excitement, grasped his axe, bounded forward, and brought it down on bruin's skull.

Well was it for the reckless boy that Hendrick's arrows had done their work, for, although his young arm was stout and the axe sharp, little impression was made on the hard-headed creature by the blow. Hendrick's knife, however, completed the work and despatched the bear. Then they all sat down to rest while the hunter set to work to skin the animal.

Chapter Ten.

Olly's First Salmon and Hendrick's Home.

From this time forward the opportunities for hunting and fishing became so numerous that poor Oliver was kept in a constantly bubbling-over condition of excitement, and his father had to restrain him a good deal in order to prevent the larder from being greatly overstocked.

One afternoon they came to a river which their guide told them was one of the largest in the country.

"It flows out of the lake, on one of the islands of which I have built my home."

"May I ask," said Paul, with some hesitation, "if your wife came with you from the Shetland Isles?"

A profoundly sad expression flitted across the hunter's countenance.

"No," he replied. "Trueheart, as she is named in the Micmac tongue, is a native of this island—at least her mother was; but her father, I have been told, was a white man—a wanderer like myself—who came in an open boat from no one knows where, and cast his lot among the Indians, one of whom he married. Both parents are dead. I never saw them; but my wife, I think, must resemble her white father in many respects. My children are like her. Look now, Oliver," he said, as if desirous of changing the subject, "yonder is a pool in which it will be worth while to cast your hook. You will find something larger there than you have yet caught in the smaller streams. Get ready. I will find bait for you."

Olly needed no urging. His cod-hook and line, being always handy, were arranged in a few minutes, and his friend, turning up the sod with a piece of wood, soon procured several large worms, which were duly impaled, until they formed a bunch on the hook. With this the lad hurried eagerly to the edge of a magnificent pool, where the oily ripples and curling eddies, as well as the great depth, effectually concealed the bottom from view. He was about to whirl the bunch of worms round his head, preparatory to a grand heave, when he was arrested by the guide.

"Stay, Oliver; you will need a rod for this river. Without one you will be apt to lose your fish. I will cut one."

So saying, he went into the woods that bordered the pool, and soon returned with what seemed to the boy to be a small tree about fourteen feet long.

"Why, Hendrick, do you take me for Goliath, who as Paul Burns tells us, was brought down by a stone from the sling of David? I'll never be able to fish with that."

"Oliver," returned the hunter gravely, as he continued the peeling of the bark from the rod, "a lad with strong limbs and a stout heart should never use the words 'not able' till he has tried. I have seen many promising and goodly young men come to wreck because 'I can't' was too often on their lips. You never know what you can do till you try."

The boy listened to this reproof with a slight feeling of displeasure, for he felt in his heart that he was not one of those lazy fellows to whom his friend referred. However, he wisely said nothing, but Hendrick observed, with some amusement, that his brow flushed and his lips were firmly compressed.

"There now," he said in a cheery tone, being anxious to remove the impression he had made, "you will find the rod is lighter than it looks, and supple, as you see. We will tie your line half-way down and run it through a loop at the end—so!—to prevent its being lost if the point should break. Now, try to cast your hook into the spot yonder where a curl in the water meets and battles with an eddy. Do you see it?"

"Yes, I see it," replied Olly, advancing to the pool, with the rod grasped in both hands.

"It would be better," continued Hendrick, "if you could cast out into the stream beyond, but the line is too short for that, unless you could jump on to that big rock in the rapid, which is impossible with the river so high."

Oliver looked at the rock referred to. It stood up in the midst of foaming water, full twenty feet from the bank. He knew that he might as well try to jump over the moon as attempt to leap upon that rock; nevertheless, without a moment's hesitation, he rushed down the bank, sprang furiously off, cleared considerably more than half the distance, and disappeared in the foaming flood!

Hendrick was suddenly changed from a slow and sedate elephant into an agile panther. He sprang along the bank to a point lower down the stream, and was up to the waist in the water before Olly reached the point—struggling to keep his head above the surface, and at the same time to hold on to his rod. Hendrick caught him by the collar, and dragged him, panting, to land.

Paul and his father had each, with a shout of surprise or alarm, rushed for the same point, but they would have been

too late.

“Olly, my son,” said Trench, in a remonstrative tone, “have you gone mad?”

“No, father; I knew that I could not jump it, but I’ve been advised never to say so till I have tried!”

“Nay, Oliver, be just,” said the guide, with a laugh. “I did truly advise you never to say ‘I can’t’ till you had tried, but I never told you to try the impossible. However, I am not sorry you did this, for I’d rather see a boy try and fail, than see him fail because of unwillingness to try. Come, now, I will show you something else to try.”

He took Oliver up the stream a few yards, and pointed to a ledge of rock, more than knee-deep under water, which communicated with the rock he had failed to reach.

“The ledge is narrow,” he said, “and the current crossing it is strong, but from what I’ve seen of you I think you will manage to wade out if you go cautiously, and don’t lose heart. I will go down stream again, so that if you should slip I’ll be ready to rescue.”

Boldly did Oliver step out upon the ledge; cautiously did he advance each foot, until he was more than leg-deep, and wildly, like an insane semaphore, did he wave his arms, as well as the heavy rod, in his frantic efforts not to lose his balance! At last he planted his feet, with a cheer of triumph, on the rock.

“Hush, Olly, you’ll frighten the fish,” cried Paul, with feigned anxiety.

“You’ll tumble in again, if you don’t mind,” said his cautious father.

But Olly heard not. The whole of his little soul was centred on the oily pool into which he had just cast the bunch of worms. Another moment, and the stout rod was almost wrenched from his grasp.

“Have a care! Hold on! Stand fast!” saluted him in various keys, from the bank.

“A cod! or a whale!” was the response from the rock.

“More likely a salmon,” remarked Hendrick, in an undertone, while a sober smile lit up his features.

At the moment a magnificent salmon, not less than twenty pounds weight, leapt like a bar of silver from the flood, and fell back, with a mighty splash.

The leap caused a momentary and sudden removal of the strain on the rod. Oliver staggered, slipped, and fell with a yell that told of anxiety more than alarm; but he got up smartly, still holding on by both hands.

In fishing with the tapering rods and rattling reels of modern days, fishers never become fully aware of the strength of salmon, unless, indeed, a hitch in their line occurs, and everything snaps! It was otherwise about the beginning of the sixteenth century. It is otherwise still with primitive fishers everywhere. Oliver’s line could not run; his rod was rigid, save at the point. The result was that it was all he could do to stand and hold on to his captive. The rod, bent down into the water, sprang up to the perpendicular, flew hither and thither, jerked and quivered, causing the poor boy to jerk and quiver in irresistible sympathy. At last a mighty rush of the fish drew the fisher headlong into the flood.

“He’ll be drowned or killed on the boulders below,” gasped his father, running wildly down the bank of the river.

“Don’t fear,” said Hendrick, as he ran beside him. “There is a shallow just above the boulders. We will stop him there.”

Paul Burns was already abreast of the shallow in question, and Oliver was stranded on it, but a deep rapid stream ran between it and the bank, so that Paul hesitated and looked eagerly about for the best spot to cross.

“Follow me,” cried Hendrick, “I know the ford.”

He led his comrade swiftly to a point where the river widened and became shallow, enabling them to wade to the tail of the bank at the top of which Oliver stood engaged in a double struggle—with the water that hissed and leaped around him, and the fish that still surged wildly about in its vain efforts to escape.

As the three men waded nearer to him they got into shallower water, and then perceived that the boy had not lost his self-possession, but was still tightly grasping the butt of his rod. Just as they came up the salmon, in its blind terror, ran straight against the boy’s legs. Olly fell upon it, let go the rod, and embraced it! Happily, his friends reached him at the moment, else the water that rushed over his head would have compelled him to let go—or die!

Paul lifted him up. The great fish struggled in its captor’s arms. It was slippery as an eel, and its strength tremendous. No digging of his ten nails into it was of any use. Slowly but surely it was wriggling out of his tight embrace when Hendrick inserted his great thumbs into its gills, and grasped it round the throat.

“Let go, Oliver,” he said, “I’ve got him safe.”

But Olly would not let go. Indeed, in the state of his mind and body at the moment it is probable that he could *not* let go.

His father, having made some ineffectual attempts to clear the line, with which, and the rod, they had got completely entangled, was obliged to “stand by” and see that the entanglement became no worse. Thus, holding on each to the other and all together, they staggered slowly and safely to land with their beautiful prize.

“Are there many fish like that in these rivers?” asked Paul, as they all stood contemplating the salmon, and recovering breath.

“Ay, thousands of them in all the rivers, and the rivers are numerous—some of them large,” replied Hendrick.

“This will be a great country some day, you take my word for it,” said the captain, in a dogmatic manner, which was peculiar to him when he attempted amateur prophecy.

That prophecy, however, like many other prophecies, has been only partly fulfilled. It has come true, indeed, that Newfoundland now possesses the most valuable cod-fishery in the world, and that her exports of salmon are considerable, but as to her being a great country—well, that still remains unfulfilled prophecy; for, owing to no fault of her people, but to the evils of monopoly and selfishness, as we have already said, her career has been severely checked.

Not many days after the catching of the salmon—which remained a memorable point in the career of Oliver Trench—the explorers were led by Hendrick to the shores of a magnificent lake. It was so large that the captain at first doubted whether it was not the great ocean itself.

“It is not the sea,” said their guide, as he surveyed the watery expanse with evident enthusiasm. “It is a lake full fifty miles long, yet it is not the largest lake in this island. Taste its waters and you will find them sweet. Here,” he added, with a look of gratification, “is my home.”

“God has given you a wide domain,” said Paul, gazing with pleasure on the verdant islets with which the bay before him was studded. “Yet I cannot help thinking that it is a waste of one’s life to spend it in a solitude, however beautiful, when the sorrowing and the suffering world around us calls for the active energies of all good men.”

The hunter seemed to ponder Paul’s words.

“It appears to me,” he said at last, “that our Creator meant us to serve Him by making ourselves and those around us happy. I have to do so here, and in some degree have succeeded.”

As he spoke he raised both hands to his mouth and gave vent to a prolonged halloo that swept out over the calm waters of the bay.

It was quickly replied to by a shrill cry, and in a few minutes a canoe, emerging from one of the islets, was seen paddling swiftly towards them.

Chapter Eleven.

The Hunter’s Home.

The canoe, which approached the shores of the lake where our explorers stood, was a large one, built after the fashion of the coracle of the ancient Britons, namely, with a frame of wicker-work covered with deerskin. It was propelled with paddles by a woman seated in the stern and a little girl in the bow.

“My wife is a woman of forethought,” remarked Hendrick, with a pleased expression. “Seeing that we are a large party, she has not only brought our largest canoe, but has made Oscar get out the small one.”

He pointed to the island, from a creek in which a little canoe of a reddish colour was seen to issue. It was made of birch-bark, and was propelled by a small boy, who seemed from his exertions to be in urgent haste to overtake the other craft.

“Your son, I suppose?” said Paul.

“Yes, my eldest. His younger brother is but a babe yet. These, with my daughter Goodred, and my wife Trueheart, who are now approaching, constitute the family which God has given to me.”

A feeling of satisfaction filled the heart of Paul Burns as he listened to the last words, for they proved that their new friend was not among those who deem it weakness or hypocrisy in men to openly acknowledge their Maker as the Giver of all that they possess. This feeling was merged in one of surprise when the canoe touched the shore, and an exceedingly pretty child, with fair complexion, blue eyes, and curling hair, stepped lightly out, and ran to her father, who stooped to kiss her on the cheek. Hendrick was not demonstrative, that was evident; neither was his wife, nor his child. Whatever depth of feeling they possessed, the surface ran smooth. Yet there was an air of quiet gladness about the meeting which enabled Paul to understand what the hunter meant when, in a former conversation, he had said that he “made those around him happy.”

“Is baby well?” he asked quickly.

“Yes, father, quite well, and I very sure wishing much that you come home soon. You been long time away.”

“Longer than I expected, Goodred. And I have brought friends with me,” he added, turning to his wife. “Friends whom I have found in the forest, Trueheart.”

“You friends be welcome,” said Trueheart, with a modest yet self-possessed air.

The woman, who advanced and held out a small hand to be shaken in European fashion, was obviously of Indian

extraction, yet her brown hair, refined cast of features, and easy manner, showed as obviously the characteristics of her white father. Though not nearly so fair as her child, she was still far removed from the deep colour of her mother's race.

Before more could be said on either side the enthusiastic youngster in the bark canoe leaped ashore, burst into the midst of the group with a cheer, and began wildly to embrace one of his father's huge legs, which was about as much of his person as he could conveniently grasp. He was a miniature Hendrick, clad in leather from top to toe.

The whole party now entered the canoes, skimmed over the lake, and past the wooded islets, towards the particular island which the hunter called "home."

It was as romantic a spot as one could desire for a residence. Though only a quarter of a mile or so in diameter, the island, which was composed of granite, was wonderfully diversified in form and character. There was a little cove which formed a harbour for the hunter's canoes; bordering it was a patch of open ground backed by shrubs, above which rose a miniature precipice. The ground in the centre of the isle was rugged—as the captain remarked, quite mountainous in a small way! Hendrick had taught his children to call it the mountain, and in the midst of its miniature fastnesses he had arranged a sort of citadel, to which he and his family could retire in case of attack from savages. One peak of this mountainette rose in naked grandeur to a height of about fifty feet above the lake. Elsewhere the islet was wooded to the water's edge with spruce and birch-trees, in some places fringed with willows. On a few open patches were multitudes of ripe berries, which here and there seemed literally to cover the ground with a carpet of bright red.

On the open ground, or lawn, beside the cove, stood the hunter's hut, a small structure of rounded logs, with a door, on either side of which was a window. From those glassless windows there was a view of lake and isles and distant woods, with purple mountains beyond, which formed a scene of indescribable beauty. Close to the door, forming, as it were, a porch to it, there stood a semi-circular erection of poles covered with birch-bark and deerskins, in front of which blazed the household fire, with a tripod over it, and a bubbling earthen pot hanging therefrom. Around the inner side of the fire, under the semi-circular tent, were spread a number of deerskins to serve as couches. On one of these sat an Indian woman, with the family babe in her arms.

It was a wonderful babe! and obviously a wise one, for it knew its own father directly, stretched out its little arms, and shouted for instant recognition. Nor had it to shout long, for Hendrick, being fond of it and regardless of appearances, seized it in his arms and smothered it in his beard, out of which retreat crows and squalls of satisfaction thereafter issued.

"Excuse me, friends," said Hendrick at last, delivering the child to its mother. "I have been absent on a visit to my wife's relations, and have not seen little Ian for a long time. Sit down, and we will see what cheer the pot contains. I don't ask you to enter the hut, because while the weather is mild it is pleasanter outside. When winter comes we make more use of the house. My wife, you see, does not like it, having been accustomed to tents all her life."

"But me—I—likes it when the snow fall," said Trueheart, looking up with a bright smile from the pot, into which she had previously been making investigations.

"True—true. I think you like whatever I like; at least you try to!" returned the hunter, as he sat down and began to tie the feathers on the head of an arrow. "You even try to speak good grammar for my sake!"

Trueheart laughed and continued her culinary duties.

"You told us when we first met," said Captain Trench, who had made himself comfortable on a deerskin beside the baby, "that you had taken special means not to forget your native tongue. Do I guess rightly in supposing that the teaching of it to your wife and children was the means?"

"You are right, captain. Of course, the language of the Micmac Indians is more familiar and agreeable to Trueheart, but she is obstinate, though a good creature on the whole, and insists on speaking English, as you hear."

Another little laugh in the vicinity of the earthen pot showed that his wife appreciated the remark.

Meanwhile Goodred busied herself in preparing venison steaks over the same fire, and Oscar undertook to roast marrow bones for the whole party, as well as to instruct Oliver Trench in that delicate operation.

While they were thus engaged the shades of evening gradually descended on the scene, but that did not interfere with their enjoyment, for by heaping fresh resinous logs on the fire they produced a ruddy light, which seemed scarcely inferior to that of day; a light which glowed on the pretty and pleasant features of the wife and daughter as they moved about placing plates of birch-bark before the guests, and ladling soup and viands into trenchers of the same. Savoury smells floated on the air, and gradually expelled the scent of shrub and flower from the banqueting-hall.

Truly, it was a right royal banquet; fit for a king—if not too particular a king—to say nothing of its being spread before one who was monarch of all he surveyed, and served by his queen and princess!

There was, first of all, soup of excellent quality. Then followed boiled salmon and roast sea-trout. Next came a course of boiled venison, fat and juicy, with an alternative of steaks and grilled ribs. This was followed by what may be styled a haunch of beaver, accompanied by the animal's tail—a prime delicacy—in regard to which Captain Trench, with his mouth full of it, said—

"This is excellent eatin', Master Hendrick. What may it be—if I may presume to ask?"

“Beaver’s tail,” replied the hunter.

“Dear me!” exclaimed Olly, withdrawing a roast rib from his mouth for the purpose of speech; “beavers seem to have wonderfully broad and flat tails.”

“They have, Oliver, and if you will try a bit you will find that their tails are wonderfully good.”

Oliver tried, and admitted that it was good; then, observing that little Oscar had just finished his fourth venison steak, he politely handed him the trencher. The greasy-fingered boy gravely helped himself to number five, and assailed it as if he had only just begun to terminate a long fast.

There were no vegetables at that feast, and instead of bread they had cakes of hard deer’s-fat, with scraps of suet toasted brown intermixed—a species of plum-cake, which was greatly relished by the visitors. At the last, when repletion seemed imminent, they finished off with marrow bones. With these they trifled far on into the night. Of course as the demands of appetite abated the flow of soul began.

“I see neither nets, hooks, nor lines about the camp, Hendrick,” said Paul Burns, after the queen and princess had retired into the hut for the night. “How do you manage to catch salmon?”

The hunter replied by pointing to a spear somewhat resembling Neptune’s trident which stood against a neighbouring tree.

“We spear them by torchlight,” he said. “Oscar is a pretty good hand at it now.”

“You live well, Master Hendrick,” remarked Trench, raising a bark flagon to his lips and tossing off a pint of venison soup, with the memory of pots of ale strong upon him. “Do you ever have a scarcity of food?”

“Never; for the country, as you have seen, swarms with game. We dry the flesh of deer, otter, martens, and musk-rats, and store it for winter, and during that season we have willow-grouse and rabbits for fresh meat. Besides, in autumn we freeze both flesh and fish, and thus keep it fresh till spring, at which time the wildfowl return to us. The skins and furs of these creatures furnish us with plenty of clothing—in fact, more than we can use. The question sometimes comes into my mind, Why did the Great Father provide such abundance for the use of man without sending men to use it?—for the few Micmacs who dwell in the land are but as a drop in the ocean, and they totally neglect some things, while they waste others. I have seen them slaughter thousands of deer merely for the sake of their tongues and other tit-bits.”

“There is much of mystery connected with that, Master Hendrick, which we cannot clear up,” remarked Trench.

“Mystery there is, no doubt,” said Paul quickly. “Yet there are some things about it that are plain enough to those who choose to look. The Word of God (which, by the way, is beginning to be circulated now among us in England in our mother tongue), that Word tells man plainly to go forth and replenish the earth. Common sense, from the beginning of time, has told us the same thing, but what does man do? He sticks to several small patches of the earth, and there he trades, and works, and builds, and propagates, until these patches swarm like ant-hills, and then he wars, and fights, and kills off the surplus population; in other words, slays the *young* men of the world and sows misery, debt and desolation broadcast. In fact, man seems to me to be mad. Rather than obey God and the dictates of common sense, he will leave the fairest portions of the world untenanted, and waste his life and energies in toiling for a crust of bread or fighting for a foot of land!”

“Some such thoughts have passed through my mind,” said Hendrick thoughtfully, “when I have remembered that my ancestors, as I have told you, discovered this land, as well as that which lies to the west and south of it, long before this Columbus you speak of was born. But surely we may now expect that with all our modern appliances and knowledge, the earth will soon be overrun and peopled.”

“I don’t feel very sanguine about it,” said Paul, with a prophetic shake of the head.

That Paul was justified in his doubts must be obvious to every reader who is aware of the fact that in the present year of grace (1889) there are millions of the world’s fair and fertile acres still left untenanted and almost untrodden by the foot of man.

“It’s my opinion,” remarked Captain Trench, with a blink of the eyes, induced possibly by wisdom and partly by sleep, “that you two are talking nonsense on a subject which is quite beyond the reach of man’s intellect.”

“It may be so,” replied Paul, with a laugh which merged into a yawn, “and perhaps it would be wiser that we should go to rest. Olly and Oscar have already set us a good example. What say you, Hendrick?”

“As you please,” answered the polite hunter. “I am ready either to sleep or to converse.”

“Then I will not tax your good-nature. We will seek repose. But what of our future movements? My sleep will be sounder if I could lie down with the assurance that you will continue to be our guide into the fertile interior of which you have said so much.”

“I will go with you,” returned Hendrick, after a few moments’ thought, “but I must ask you to spend a few days in my camp to rest yourselves, while I provide a supply of fresh meat and fish for my family; for, willing and able though Oscar is to provide for them, he is yet too young to have the duty laid upon his little shoulders.”

This having been satisfactorily settled, the captain and Paul wrapped themselves in deerskin blankets, and lay down with their feet to the fire.

Hendrick, having heaped a fresh supply of fuel on the embers, followed their example, and the camp was soon buried in profound silence.

Chapter Twelve.

A Surprise, a Fight, and a War Party.

At this point in our tale we might profitably turn aside for a little to dilate upon the interesting—not to say exciting—proceedings of our explorers and the hunter's family during the few days spent in the island home and its neighbourhood, were it not that incidents of a more stirring and important nature claim our attention.

We might, if time and space permitted, tell how they all went fishing in the lake with Oliver's cod-hooks, which were, of course, greatly superior to the bone-hooks which Hendrick had been accustomed to manufacture; how they went salmon-spearing by torchlight in a neighbouring stream, in which operation Oliver soon became as expert as his entertainers, and even more enthusiastic, insomuch that he several times met what seemed to be his ordinary fate—a ducking in the water; how, in consequence, he caught a bad cold, as well as fish, and was compelled to lie up and be nursed for several days, during which time of forced inaction he learned to appreciate the excellent nursing qualities of Trueheart and her daughter Goodred. He also learned to estimate at its true value the yelling power of the family baby, whose will was iron and whose lungs were leather, besides being inflated by the fresh, wholesome air of the grand wilderness. We might tell of the short but thrilling expeditions undertaken by the men and boys in pursuit of bears, otters, beaver, and deer, in which Hendrick displayed the certainty of his deadly aim, and Master Trench the uncertainty of his dreadful shooting, despite all his former "practice." We might relate the interesting stories, anecdotes, and narratives with which the explorers and the hunter sought to beguile the pleasant periods that used to follow supper and precede repose, and describe the tremendous energy of Paul Burns in springing to the rescue of the self-willed baby when it fell into the fire, and the cool courage of Oliver Trench in succouring the same baby when it tumbled into the water. All this we might dilate on, and a great deal more—such as the great friendship struck up between Oscar and Oliver, and the intense interest expressed by Hendrick on finding that his friend Paul possessed a manuscript copy of the Gospel of John, and the frequent perusals of that Gospel over the camp-fire, and the discussions that followed on the great subjects of man's duty, the soul's destiny, and the love of God, as shown in and by Jesus Christ—but over all this we must unwillingly draw a curtain and leave it to the courteous reader's imagination, while we pass on to subjects which bear more directly on the issues of our tale.

One day, some time after leaving Hendrick's camp on the great lake, Captain Trench and his son, with Paul Burns and the hunter, halted to rest on the summit of a cliff from which they could obtain a magnificent view of the country lying beyond.

They had by that time passed over the rich grassland with its park-like plains, its lakes and streams and belts of woodland, and had entered upon that mountainous region which lies towards the southwesterly portion of the island.

"Hendrick," said Paul, as he gazed with admiration on the wild scene before him, "I have now seen enough to know that this land is most suitable for the abode of man. The soil is admirable; the woods contain magnificent timber; fish, flesh, and fowl are plentiful; coal exists in, I should think, extensive fields, while there are indications in many places of great mineral wealth, especially copper. Besides this, the land, you tell me, is pierced by innumerable bays, inlets, fords, and natural harbours; and, to crown all, the climate, except on some parts of the coast, is exceedingly good. Now it seems to me that these facts ought to be made known in England, and that our King should not only take possession, but should send out colonists to settle all over this island and develop its resources. If permitted, it will be my part to finish this exploration and carry home the news."

Hendrick did not reply for a few minutes, then a faint sigh escaped him as he replied—

"No doubt what you say is just, and I doubt not that these plains and hills will one day resound with the activities of civilised life: the plough will obliterate the deer-tracks, the axe will lay low the forests, and the lowing of cattle and the bark of dogs will replace the trumpeting of the wild-goose and the cry of plover; but when the change begins to come, I will strike my tent and go to the great unknown lands of the west, for I cannot bear the clatter and the strife of men."

Paul was about to reply, when an arrow whizzed through the air, pierced the sleeve of his coat, scratched his left arm slightly as it passed, and quivered in a tree behind them.

Leaping up, each member of the party sprang for shelter behind a neighbouring tree.

At the same moment there arose a terrible cry, as of men rushing to attack each other. The form of the ground prevented our travellers from seeing the combatants, though the sound of their strife proved them to be close at hand. Suddenly Hendrick left the tree behind which he had taken shelter, and, running towards a precipitous bank or cliff, called to his companions to follow. They obeyed at once.

"I fear," he said, as Paul ran up alongside of him, "that I know the meaning of this. Some of the voices sound familiar to me. That arrow was not, I think, discharged at us. We shall be wanted here. May I count on you?"

"You may," said Paul. "I cannot doubt that your cause must be a just one."

"I'm with you!" exclaimed Master Trench, plucking the hatchet from his son's belt—a weapon that the youngster could well spare, as the bludgeon and the bow were still left to him.

Hendrick had spoken in quick, sharp tones, for he was evidently much excited. On reaching the crest of a rising

ground he looked cautiously over it.

“As I thought!” he said; “my wife’s relations are attacked by savages from Labrador. Come, follow me!”

He ran swiftly round the base of the rising ground, not giving his comrades time even to see the combatants to whom he referred.

Suddenly they came in full sight of perhaps the most terrible sight that our fallen world can present—two bands of armed men, mad with rage, engaged in the fiendish work of butchering each other.

In the immediate foreground two powerful Indians were struggling each to plant a short spear in the other’s heart. One, who was shorter than the other but equally powerful, was making a desperate effort to wrench his right hand from his foe’s grasp, and another foe was on the point of stabbing the short man in the back, when the white men appeared on the scene. Paul, the captain, and Oliver, although ready with arrow and bolt hesitated, for they knew not which to regard as foes, and which as friends. No such difficulty, however, interfered with Hendrick, who sent an arrow into the brain of the savage who meant to strike from behind. At the same instant the short warrior succeeded in his effort; his spear flashed upwards, and the next moment his tall enemy fell to rise no more.

Hendrick, who seemed to have been transformed into a human tiger, rushed to the attack with a shout and a display of fury that for a moment arrested the fight. The short Indian, whose life he had just saved, bestowed on him and his companions one look of surprise, and joined him in the rush. Captain Trench, whose combative tendencies were easily aroused, joined them with a roar which was somewhat intensified by the fact that he was still a little uncertain as to which was “the enemy.” Oliver relieved his overcharged bosom by an involuntary shriek or howl, that rose high and shrill above the tumult, as he followed suit, whirling his bludgeon with some difficulty round his head.

The combined effect of all this was to strike terror into the enemy who, turning short round, fled precipitately, and were followed for a considerable distance by some of the victorious Indians.

On returning from the pursuit, Hendrick introduced the short Indian as his wife’s cousin, who, with a party of hunters, had been out for a supply of fresh meat when attacked by the Labrador savages.

“It is an old feud,” remarked Hendrick, as he and Paul sat a little apart that evening, while their comrades assisted the Indians to prepare supper; “an old feud. Oh! war—war! There is no place of rest from it, I fear, in this world.”

The hunter’s tone was so sad that Paul looked at him inquiringly.

“You are surprised,” said his companion, “that I should long thus for escape from the warring passions of men, but if you knew what reason I have for hating war, you would not wonder. Listen! Many years ago I went with my wife and child to visit a kinsman in the Scottish Highlands. I need scarcely tell you that it was not my present wife and child. She was young, fair, faultless in person and disposition. Our little daughter resembled her in all respects. There chanced to be a miserable feud existing between my relative and a neighbouring chief. It originated in some disputed boundary, and always smouldered, like a subdued volcano, but occasionally broke forth in open warfare. At the time of my visit my kinsman, who was a bachelor, had gone to transact some business at a town not far distant, leaving a message for me to follow him as he required my assistance in some family arrangements, and meant to return home the same night. I went, leaving my wife and child in the castle. That very night my kinsman’s foe—knowing nothing of my arrival—came to the castle, took the small body of defenders by surprise, overcame them, and set the place on fire. Fiendish and revengeful though the marauders were, I believe they would not wantonly have murdered the helpless ones, had they known of their being in the place, but they knew it not until too late.

“When we returned that night the castle was a black smoking ruin, and my wife and little one had perished! Can you wonder that I fled from the horrible spot; that I left my native land for ever; and that I shudder at the very thought of strife?”

“Nay, brother, I wonder not,” said Paul, in a sympathetic tone; “but I fear there is no region on the face of this earth where the terrible war-spirit, or, rather, war-fiend, is not alive.”

“Why, the man whose life I took this very day,” resumed Hendrick, clenching his right hand almost fiercely, “has doubtless left a woman at home who is now a widow, and it may be children, whom I have rendered fatherless! No rest—no rest anywhere from this constant slaying of our fellow-men; yet I was forced to do it to save the life of my wife’s kinsman! Oh! is there no deliverance, no hope for this poor world?”

“Hendrick,” said Paul, laying his hand impressively on his friend’s arm, “there *is* deliverance—there *is* hope. See here.”

He pulled out the manuscript Gospel as he spoke, and turning over the well-thumbed leaves, read the words—

“‘Jesus saith... A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another... Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In My Father’s house are many mansions.’ Hendrick, this same Jesus, who is Immanuel, God with us, has said, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*.’ ‘Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.’ These latter words are not here, but they are in other scriptures which I have often heard read.”

“But how shall I know,” said the hunter earnestly, “that these words are true—that they are the words of God?”

For some time Paul made no reply, then suddenly, to the surprise of his friend, he looked upwards, and, in a low voice, said—

“O Holy Spirit of God, convince my friend that these words are Thine,—in Jesus’ name!”

Then, turning to the hunter, he continued: “Come, let us examine this writing together.”

“Something of this have I heard before,” said Hendrick, “and, as I thirst for light and truth, I will gladly examine it with you.”

Need we say that those two earnest men were soon engrossed in the study of the Word, and that the interruption of the evening meal did not prevent them from afterwards poring over the manuscript far into the night by the light of the camp-fire. Hendrick was well able to do so, for, like Paul, he had received a better education than fell to the lot of most men in those days.

At first Captain Trench and his son had listened to the conversation and discussion of the students with much interest and the sturdy matter-of-fact mariner even ventured to put one or two puzzling questions to them; but by degrees their interest flagged, and at last taking example by the Indians, they rolled themselves in deerskin robes and sought repose.

Continuing their journey next day, they were about to part from their Indian friends on the mountain ridge, from which a view of the Western ocean could be obtained, when they observed a band of Indians in the far distance travelling eastward.

“On the war-path!” suggested Hendrick.

After a prolonged gaze the kinsman of Trueheart came to the same conclusion, and said he felt sure that they were not from Labrador, but were evidently men of the Island.

“Can you guess what they are going to do?” asked Hendrick.

The Indian shook his head solemnly. “No, he did not know—he could not guess, and as they were separated by some miles of valleys, precipices, and mountain gorges, there was no possibility of finding out.”

After some time spent in speculation and guessing as to the intention of the war party, our explorers, bidding farewell to their red friends, proceeded on their journey, while the latter diverged to the southward, and continued their hunt after fresh meat.

If Paul Burns and his friends had known the purpose of the warriors whom they had just seen, it is probable that they might not have slept quite as soundly as they did that night under the greenwood trees.

Chapter Thirteen.

Unlooked-for Interruptions and Difficulties.

No elaborate dissertation is needed to prove that we are ignorant of what the morrow may bring forth, and that the best-laid plans of men are at all times subject to dislocation. It is sufficient here to state that immediately after parting from the Indians, Paul Burns and Captain Trench had their plans and hopes, in regard to exploration, overturned in a sudden and effective though exceedingly simple manner.

On the evening of the day on which their travels were resumed they halted sooner than usual in order to have time to form their camp with some care, for the weather had suddenly become cold, and that night seemed particularly threatening.

Accordingly they selected a spot surrounded by dense bushes, canopied by the branches of a wide-spreading fir-tree, and backed by a precipitous cliff, which afforded complete shelter from a sharp nor’-west gale that was blowing at the time. In this calm retreat they erected a rough-and-ready wall of birch-bark and branches, which enclosed them on all sides except one, where a glorious fire was kindled—a fire that would have roasted anything from a tom-tit to an ox, and the roaring flames of which had to be occasionally subdued lest they should roast the whole encampment.

There, saturated, so to speak, with ruddy light and warmth, they revelled in the enjoyment of a hearty meal and social intercourse until the claims of tired Nature subdued Captain Trench and Oliver, leaving Paul and Hendrick to resume their eager and sometimes argumentative perusal of the Gospel according to John.

At last, they also succumbed to the irresistible influences of Nature, and lay down beside their fellows. Then it was that Nature—as if she had only waited for the opportunity—began to unfold her “little game” for overturning the sleepers’ plans. She quietly opened her storehouse of northern clouds, and silently dropped upon them a heavy shower of snow.

It was early in the season for such a shower, consequently the flakes were large. Had the cold been excessive the flakes would have been small. As it was, they covered the landscape by imperceptible but rapid degrees until everything turned from ghostly grey to ghastly white, which had the effect of lighting, somehow, the darkness of the night.

But in the midst of the effective though silent transformation the camp of our explorers remained unchanged; and the dying embers of the slowly sinking fire continued to cast their dull red glow on the recumbent forms which were thoroughly protected by the spreading fir-tree.

By degrees the morning light began to flow over the dreary scene, and at length it had the effect of rousing Oliver Trench from slumber. With the innate laziness of youth the lad turned on his other side, and was about to settle down to a further spell of sleep when he chanced to wink. That wink sufficed to reveal something that induced another

wink, then a stare, then a start into a sitting posture, a rubbing of the eyes, an opening of the mouth, and a succession of exclamations, of which “Oh! hallo! I say!” and “Hi-i-i-i!” were among the least impressive.

Of course every one started up and made a sudden grasp at weapons, for the memory of the recent fight was still fresh.

“Winter!” exclaimed Paul and the captain, in the same breath.

“Not quite so bad as that,” remarked Hendrick, as he stepped out into the snow and began to look round him with an anxious expression; “but it may, nevertheless, put an end to your explorations if the snow continues.”

“Never a bit on’t, man!” exclaimed the captain promptly. “What! d’ye think we are to be frightened by a sprinkling of snow?”

To this Hendrick replied only with a gentle smile, as he returned and set about blowing up the embers of the fire which were still smouldering.

“There is more than a sprinkling, Master Trench,” observed Paul, as he began to overhaul the remnants of last night’s supper; “but I confess it would be greatly against the grain were we to be beaten at this point in our travels. Let us hope that the storm won’t last.”

“Anyhow we can go on till we can’t, daddy,” said Oliver, with a tremendous yawn and stretch.

“Well said, my son; as you once truly remarked, you are a chip of the ancient log.”

“Just so, daddy. Don’t quite finish that marrow bone; I want some of it.”

“There, you young rascal, I leave you the lion’s share,” returned the captain, throwing the bone in question to his son. “But now, Hendrick, what d’ye really think o’ this state of things? Shall we be forced to give in an’ ’bout ship?”

“No one can tell,” answered the hunter. “If the snow stops and the weather gets warm, all will be well. If not, it will be useless to continue our journeying till winter fairly sets in, and the snow becomes deep, and the rivers and lakes are frozen. In which case you must come and stay with me in my island home.”

“You are very good, Hendrick; but don’t let us talk of givin’ up till the masts go by the board. We will carry all sail till then,” said the captain, rather gloomily, for he felt that the hunter knew best.

This first snowfall occurred about the middle of October; there was, therefore, some reasonable prospect that it might melt under an improved state of the weather, and there was also the possibility of the fall ceasing, and still permitting them to advance.

Under the impulse of hope derived from these considerations, they set forth once more to the westward.

The prospect in that direction, however, was not cheering. Mountain succeeded mountain in irregular succession, rugged and bleak—the dark precipices and sombre pine-woods looking blacker by contrast with the newly-fallen snow. Some of the hills were wooded to their summits; others, bristling and castellated in outline, afforded no hold to the roots of trees, and stood out in naked sterility. Everywhere the land seemed to have put on its winter garb, and all day, as they advanced, snow continued to fall at intervals, so that wading through it became an exhausting labour, and Oliver’s immature frame began to suffer, though his brave spirit forbade him to complain.

That night there came another heavy fall, and when they awoke next morning it was found that the country was buried under a carpet of snow full three feet deep.

“Do you admit now, Master Trench, that the masts have gone by the board,” asked Paul, “and that it is impossible to carry sail any longer?”

“I admit nothing,” returned the captain grumpily.

“That’s right, daddy, never give in!” cried Oliver; “but what has Master Hendrick got to say to it?”

“We must turn in our tracks!” said the hunter gravely, “and make for home.”

“Home, indeed!” murmured the captain, whose mind naturally flew back to old England. “If we are to get to any sort of home at all, the sooner we set about making sail for it the better.”

There was something in the captain’s remark, as well as in his tone, which caused a slight flush on Hendrick’s brow, but he let no expression of feeling escape him. He only said—

“You are right, Captain Trench. We must set off with the least possible delay. Will you and your son start off in advance to get something fresh for breakfast while Master Paul and I remain to pack up and bring on our camp equipage? Hunters, you know, should travel light—we will do the heavy work for you.”

The captain was surprised, but replied at once—

“Most gladly, Master Hendrick, will I do your bidding; but as we don’t know what course to steer, won’t we be apt to go astray?”

“There is no fear of that, captain. See you yonder bluff with the bush on the top of it?”

“Where away, Master Hendrick? D’ye mean the one lyin’ to wind’ard o’ that cliff shaped like the side of a Dutch galliot?”

“The same. It is not more than a quarter of a mile off—make straight for that. You’ll be sure to fall in with game of some sort between this and that. Wait there till we come up, for we shall breakfast there. You can keep yourself warm by cutting wood and kindling a fire.”

Rather pleased than otherwise with this little bit of pioneer work that had been given him to do, Trench stepped boldly into the snow, carrying his cross-bow in one hand, and the hatchet over his shoulder with the other. He was surprised, indeed, to find that at the first step beyond the encampment he sank considerably above the knees, but, being wonderfully strong, he dashed the snow aside and was soon hid from view by intervening bushes. Oliver, bearing his bow and bludgeon, followed smartly in his track.

When they were gone Paul turned a look of inquiry on his companion. Hendrick returned the look with profound gravity, but there was a faint twinkle in his eyes which induced Paul to laugh.

“What mean you by this?” he asked.

“I mean that Master Trench will be the better of a lesson from experience. He will soon return—sooner, perhaps, than you expect.”

“Why so—how? I don’t understand.”

“Because,” returned the hunter, “it is next to impossible to travel over such ground in deep snow without snow-shoes. We must make these, whether we advance or retreat. Meanwhile you had better blow up the fire, and I will prepare breakfast.”

“Did you not tell the captain we were to breakfast on the bluff?”

“I did; but the captain will never reach the bluff. Methinks I hear him returning even now!”

The hunter was right. A quarter of an hour had barely elapsed when our sturdy mariner re-entered the encampment, blowing like a grampus and perspiring at every pore! Oliver was close at his heels, but not nearly so much exhausted, for he had not been obliged to “beat the track.”

“Master Hendrick,” gasped the captain, when he had recovered breath, “it’s my opinion that we have only come here to lay down our bones and give up the ghost—ay, and it’s no laughing business; Master Paul, as you’ll find when you try to haul your long legs out of a hole three futt deep at every step.”

“Three futt deep!” echoed Oliver, “why, it’s *four* futt if it’s an inch—look at me. I’ve been wadin’ up to the waist all the time!”

It need scarcely be said that their minds were much relieved when they were made acquainted with the true state of matters, and that by means of shoes that could be made by Hendrick, they would be enabled to traverse with comparative ease the snow-clad wilderness—which else were impassable.

But this work involved several days’ delay in camp. Hendrick fashioned the large though light wooden framework of the shoes—five feet long by eighteen inches broad—and Oliver cut several deerskins into fine threads, with which, and deer sinews, Paul and the captain, under direction, filled in the net-work of the frames when ready.

“Can you go after deer on such things?” asked the captain one night while they were all busy over this work.

“Ay, we can walk thirty or forty miles a day over deep snow with these shoes,” answered Hendrick.

“Where do the deer all come from?” asked Oliver, pausing in his work to sharpen his knife on a stone.

“If you mean where did the reindeer come from at first, I cannot tell,” said Hendrick. “Perhaps they came from the great unknown lands lying to the westward. But those in this island have settled down here for life, apparently like myself. I have hunted them in every part of the island, and know their habits well. Their movements are as regular as the seasons. The winter months they pass in the south, where the snow is not so deep as to prevent their scraping it away and getting at the lichens on which they feed. In spring—about March—they turn their faces northward, for then the snow begins to be softened by the increased power of the sun, so that they can get at the herbage beneath. They migrate to the north-west of the island in innumerable herds of from twenty to two hundred each—the animals following one another in single file, and each herd being led by a noble stag. Thus they move in thousands towards the hills of the west and nor’-west, where they arrive in April. Here, on the plains and mountains, they browse on their favourite mossy food and mountain herbage; and here they bring forth their young in May or June. In October, when the frosty nights set in, they again turn southward and march back to winter-quarters over the same tracks, with which, as you have seen, the whole country is seamed. Thus they proceed from year to year. They move over the land in parallel lines, save where mountain passes oblige them to converge, and at these points, I regret to say, my kinsmen! the Bethuck Indians, lie in wait and slaughter them in great numbers, merely for the sake of their tongues and other tit-bits.”

“There is no call for regret, Master Hendrick,” said Captain Trench. “Surely where the deer are in such numbers, the killing of a few more or less don’t matter much.”

“I think it wrong, captain, to slay God’s creatures wantonly,” returned the hunter. “Besides, if it is continued, I fear that the descendants of the present race of men will suffer from scarcity of food.”

That Hendrick's fears were not groundless has been proved in many regions of the earth, where wanton destruction of game in former days has resulted in great scarcity or extinction at the present time.

In a few days a pair of snowshoes for each traveller was completed, and the party was prepared to set out with renewed vigour on their return to the hunter's home.

Chapter Fourteen.

Tells of a Tremendous Storm and a Strange Shelter, etcetera.

Proverbial philosophy teaches us that misfortunes seldom come singly. Newfoundland, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, does not seem to have been a place of refuge from the operation of that law.

On the morning of the day in which the explorers meant to commence the return journey, a storm of unwonted rigour burst upon them, and swept over the land with devastating violence—overturning trees, snapping off mighty limbs, uplifting the new-fallen snow in great masses, and hurling it in wild confusion into space, so that earth and sky seemed to commingle in a horrid chaos.

The first intimation the travellers had of the impending storm was the rending of a limb of the tree under which they reposed. The way in which Oliver Trench received the rude awakening might, in other circumstances, have raised a laugh, for he leaped up like a harlequin, with a glare of sudden amazement, and, plunging headlong away from the threatened danger, buried himself in the snow. From this he instantly emerged with an aspect similar to that of "Father Christmas," minus the good-natured serenity of that liberal-hearted personage.

"Daddy!" he gasped, "are you there?"

The question was not uncalled for, the captain having made a plunge like that of his son, but unlike his son, having found it difficult to extricate himself quickly.

Paul and Hendrick had also sprung up, but the latter, remaining close to the stem of the tree, kept his eye watchfully on the branches.

"Come here—quick!" he cried—"the stem is our safeguard. Look out!"

As he spoke his voice was drowned in a crash which mingled with the shrieking blast, and a great branch fell to the ground. Fortunately the wind blew it sufficiently to one side to clear the camp. The air was so charged with snow particles that the captain and his son seemed to stagger out of a white mist as they returned to their comrades who were clinging to the weather-side of the tree.

"D'ye think it will go by the board?" asked the captain, as he observed Hendrick's anxious gaze fixed on the swaying tree.

"It is a good stout stick," replied his friend, "but the blast is powerful."

The captain looked up at the thick stem with a doubtful expression, and then turned to Hendrick with a nautical shake of the head.

"I never saw a stick," he said, "that would stand the like o' that without fore an' back stays, but it may be that shoregoin' sticks are—"

He stopped abruptly, for a terrific crash almost stunned him, as the tree by which they stood went down, tearing its way through the adjacent branches in its fall, and causing the whole party to stagger.

"Keep still!" shouted Hendrick in a voice of stern command, as he glanced critically at the fallen tree.

"Yes," he added, "it will do. Come here."

He scrambled quickly among the crushed branches until he stood directly under the prostrate stem, which was supported by its roots and stouter branches. "Here," said he, "we are safe."

His comrades glanced upwards with uneasy expressions that showed they did not quite share his feelings of safety.

"Seems to me, Master Hendrick," roared the captain, for the noise of the hurly-burly around was tremendous, "that it was safer where we were. What if the stem should sink further and flatten us?"

"As long as we stood to windward of it" replied Hendrick, "we were safe from the tree itself, though in danger from surrounding trees, but now, with this great trunk above us, other trees can do us no harm. As for the stem sinking lower, it can't do that until this solid branch that supports it becomes rotten. Come now," he added, "we will encamp here. Give me the axe, Oliver, and the three of you help to carry away the branches as I chop them off."

In little more than an hour a circular space was cleared of snow and branches, and a hut was thus formed, with the great tree-stem for a ridge-pole, and innumerable branches, great and small, serving at once for walls and supports. Having rescued their newly made snow-shoes and brought them, with their other property, into this place of refuge, they sat or reclined on their deerskins to await the end of the storm. This event did not, however, seem to be near. Hour after hour they sat, scarcely able to converse because of the noise, and quite unable to kindle a fire. Towards evening, however, the wind veered round a little, and a hill close to their camp sheltered them from its direct force.

At the same time, an eddy in the gale piled up the snow on the fallen tree till it almost buried them; converting their refuge into a sort of snow-hut, with a branchy framework inside. This change also permitted them to light a small fire and cook some venison, so that they made a sudden bound from a state of great discomfort and depression to one of considerable comfort and hilarity.

“A wonderful change,” observed Trench, looking round the now ruddy walls of their curious dwelling with great satisfaction. “About the quickest built house on record, I should think—and the strongest.”

“Yes, daddy, and built under the worst of circumstances too. What puzzles me is that such a tree should have given way at all.”

“Don’t you see, Olly,” said Paul, “that some of its roots are hollow, rotten at the core?”

“Ah! boy—same with men as trees,” remarked the captain, moralising. “Rotten at the core—sure to come down, sooner or later. Lay that to heart, Olly.”

“If ever I do come down, daddy, I hope it won’t be with so much noise. Why, it went off like a cannon.”

“A cannon!” echoed the captain. “More like as if the main-mast o’ the world had gone by the board!”

“What if the gale should last a week?” asked Olly.

“Then we shall have to stay here a week,” returned Hendrick; “but there’s no fear of that. The fiercer the gale the sooner the calm. It won’t delay us long.”

The hunter was right. The day following found the party *en route*, with a clear sky, bright sun, and sharp calm air. But the art of snow-shoe walking, though easy enough, is not learned in an hour.

“They’re clumsy things to look at—more like small boats flattened than anything else,” remarked the captain, when Hendrick had fastened the strange but indispensable instruments on his feet—as he had already fastened those of the other two.

“Now look at me,” said Hendrick. “I’ll take a turn round of a few hundred yards to show you how. The chief thing you have to guard against is treading with one shoe on the edge of the other, at the same time you must not straddle. Just pass the inner edge of one shoe over the inner edge of the other, and walk very much as if you had no snow-shoes on at all—so.”

He stepped off at a round pace, the broad and long shoes keeping him so well on the surface of the snow that he sank only a few inches.

“Why, it seems quite easy,” observed the captain.

“Remarkably so,” said Paul.

“Anybody can do that,” cried Oliver.

“Now then, up anchor—here goes!” said the captain.

He stepped out valiantly; took the first five paces like a trained walker; tripped at the sixth step, and went headlong down at the seventh, with such a wild plunge that his anxious son, running hastily to his aid, summarily shared his fate. Paul burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, lost his balance, and went down—as the captain said—stern foremost!

It was a perplexing commencement, but the ice having been broken, they managed in the course of a few hours to advance with only an occasional fall, and, before the next day had closed, walked almost as easily as their guide.

This was so far satisfactory. Our three travellers were quite charmed with their proficiency in the new mode of progression, when a sudden thaw set in and damped not only their spirits but their shoes. The netting and lines became flabby. The moccasins, with which Hendrick had supplied them from the bundle he carried for his own use, were reduced to something of the nature of tripe. The damp snow, which when rendered powdery by frost had fallen through the net-work of the shoes, now fell upon it in soft heaps and remained there, increasing the weight so much as to wrench joints and strain muscles, while the higher temperature rendered exertion fatiguing and clothing unbearable.

“I wonder how long I can stand this without my legs coming off,” said poor Oliver, giving way at last to a feeling of despair.

“Seems to me to get hotter and hotter,” growled his father, as he wiped the perspiration from his face with the tail of his coat—having lost the solitary handkerchief with which he had landed.

“I’m glad the thaw is so complete,” said Hendrick, “for it may perhaps clear away the snow altogether. It is too early for winter to begin in earnest. I would suggest now that we encamp again for a few days, to see whether the weather is really going to change; hunt a little, and rest a while. What say you?”

With a sigh of contentment the captain answered, “Amen!” Paul said, “Agreed!” and Oliver cried, “Hurrah!” at the same time throwing his cap in the air.

Two days after that they were enabled to continue the journey on snowless ground, with the unwieldy shoes slung at

their backs.

The change, although decidedly an improvement was not perfect, for the ground had been made soft, the rivers and rills had been swollen, and the conditions altogether were rendered much less agreeable than they had been on the outward journey. The travellers enjoyed themselves greatly, notwithstanding, and the captain added many important jottings in what he styled the log-book of his memory as to bearings of salient points, distances, etcetera, while Paul took notes of the fauna and flora, soils, products, and geological features of the country, on the same convenient tablets.

“There can be no doubt about it,” said the latter one morning, as he surveyed the country around him.

“No doubt about what?” asked the captain.

“About the suitableness of this great island for the abode of man,” answered Paul; and then, continuing to speak with enthusiasm, “the indication of minerals is undoubted. See you that serpentine deposit mingled with a variety of other rocks, varying in colour from darkest green to yellow, and from the translucent to the almost transparent? Wherever that is seen, there we have good reason to believe that copper ore will be found.”

“If so,” observed Hendrick, “much copper ore will be found on the sea-coast, on the north side of the island, for I have seen the same rocks in many places there.”

“But there are indications of other metals,” continued Paul, “which I perceive; though my acquaintance with geological science is unfortunately not sufficient to make me certain, still, I think I can see that, besides copper, nickel, lead, and iron may be dug from the mines of Newfoundland; indeed, I should not wonder if silver and gold were also to be found. Of the existence of coal-beds there can be no doubt, though what their extent may be I cannot guess; but of this I am certain, that the day cannot be far distant when the mineral and forest wealth of this land shall be developed by a large and thriving population.”

“It may be as you say, Paul,” remarked Captain Trench, with a dubious shake of the head; “but if you had lived as long as I have, and seen as much of the world and its ways, you wouldn’t be quite so sanguine about the thriving population or the speedy development. You see, hitches are apt to occur in the affairs of men which cause wonderful delays, and tanglements come about that take years to unravel.”

If Captain Trench had been a professional prophet he could hardly have hit the nail more fairly on the head, for he indicated exactly what bad government has actually done for Newfoundland—only he might have said centuries instead of years—for its internal resources, even at the present time, remain to a very great extent undeveloped. However, not being a professional prophet, but merely an ancient mariner, the captain wound up his remark with a recommendation to hoist all sail and lay their course, as there was no saying how long the mild weather would last.

For several days after this they plodded steadily onward, sometimes over the mountains or across the grassy plains, where migrating reindeer supplied them with abundant venison; at other times among lakelets and streams, whose excellent fish and innumerable wildfowl provided them with variety for the table and music for the ear. Now and then they saw the great moose-deer, which rivals the horse in size, and once Hendrick shot one, at a time when they chanced to have consumed their last caribou steak, and happened to enter a great forest without anything for supper in their wallets. For, occasionally, circumstances may render men supperless even when surrounded by plenty.

At last they reached the great lake, with its beautiful islands, where Hendrick had set up his home.

The hunter became very silent as they drew near to its shores.

“You seem anxious,” remarked Paul, as they approached the lake. “Have you reason to fear aught?”

“None—none,” replied his friend quickly; “but I never return after a long absence without feeling anxious.”

A loud halloo soon brought the echoing answer in the shrill voice of little Oscar, whose canoe quickly shot out from the creek. It was speedily followed by the deerskin boat, and, when near enough to be heard, the reply to Hendrick’s anxious inquiry was the gratifying assurance—“All’s well!”

Chapter Fifteen.

Grummidge asserts himself—Great Discoveries are made and the Crew flits.

We must turn aside now for a time to inquire into the doings of the crew of the *Water Wagtail*, whom we left on the little island off the eastern seaboard of Newfoundland. At first, when the discovery was made that the captain, Paul, and Oliver had been put ashore and left to take care of themselves without weapons or supplies, there was a disposition on the part of the better men of the crew to apply what we now style Lynch law to Big Swinton, David Garnet, and Fred Taylor. “Let’s hang ’em,” suggested Grummidge, at a meeting of the men when the culprits were not present. “Sure an’ I’ll howld the rope wid pleasure,” said Squill. “An’ I’ll help ye,” cried Little Stubbs.

But Jim Heron shook his head, and did not quite see his way to that, while George Blazer protested against such violent proceedings altogether. As he was backed up by the majority of the crew, the proposal was negatived.

“But what are we to do, boys?” cried Grummidge vehemently. “Are we goin’ to be domineered over by Swinton? Why, every man he takes a dislike to, he’ll sneak into his tent when he’s asleep, make him fast, heave him into the boat, pull to the big island, land him there, and bid him good-bye. There won’t be one of us safe while he prowls about an’ gits help from three or four rascals as bad as himself.”

“Ay, that’s it, boys,” said Little Stubbs; “it won’t be safe to trust him. Hang him, say I.”

Stubbs was a very emphatic little man, but his emphasis only roused the idea of drollery in the minds of those whom he addressed, and rather influenced them towards leniency.

“No, no,” cried the first mate of the *Water Wagtail* who, since the wreck, had seldom ventured to raise his voice in council; “I would advise rather that we should give him a thrashing, and teach him that we refuse to obey or recognise a self-constituted commander.”

“Ah, sure now, that’s a raisonable plan,” said Squill with something of sarcasm in his tone; “an’ if I might make so bowld I’d suggist that yoursilf, sor, shud give him the thrashin’.”

“Nay, I am far from being the strongest man of the crew. The one that is best able should do the job.”

The mate looked pointedly at Grummidge as he spoke; but Grummidge, being a modest man, pretended not to see him.

“Yes, yes, you’re right, sir, Grummidge is the very man,” cried Stubbs.

“Hear, hear,” chorused several of the others. “Come, old boy, you’ll do it, won’t you? and we’ll all promise to back you up.”

“Well, look ’ee here, lads,” said Grummidge, who seemed to have suddenly made up his mind, “this man has bin quarrellin’ wi’ me, off an’ on, since the beginning of the voyage, whether I would or not, so it may be as well to settle the matter now as at another time. I’ll do the job on one consideration.”

“What’s that?” cried several men.

“That you promises, on your honour (though none o’ you’s got much o’ *that*), that when I’ve done the job you agree to make me captain of the crew. It’s a moral impossibility, d’ee see, for people to git along without a leader, so if I agree to lead you in this, you must agree to follow me in everything—is it so?”

“Agreed, agreed!” chorused his friends, only too glad that one of the physically strongest among them—also one of the best-humoured—should stand up to stem the tide of anarchy which they all clearly saw was rising among them.

“Well, then,” resumed Grummidge, “I see Swinton with his three friends a-comin’. I’ll expect you to stand by an’ see fair play, for he’s rather too ready wi’ his knife.”

While he spoke the comrade in question was seen approaching, with Fred Taylor and David Garnet, carrying a quantity of cod-fish that had just been caught.

“You’ve been holding a meeting, comrades, I think,” said Swinton, looking somewhat suspiciously at the group of men, as he came up and flung down his load.

“Yes, we have,” said Grummidge, advancing, hands in pockets, and with a peculiar nautical roll which distinguished him. “You’re right, Big Swinton, we *have* bin havin’ a meetin’, a sort of trial, so to speak, an’ as you are the man what’s bin tried, it may interest you to know what sentence has bin passed upon you.”

“Oh indeed!” returned Swinton, with a look of cool insolence which he knew well how to assume, no matter what he felt. “Well, yes, it *would* interest me greatly to hear the sentence of the learned judge—whoever he is.”

The fingers of the man fumbled as he spoke at his waist-belt, near the handle of his knife. Observing this, Grummidge kept a watchful eye on him, but did not abate his *nonchalant* free-and-easy air, as he stepped close up to him.

“The sentence is,” he said firmly but quietly, “that you no longer presume to give orders as if you was the captain o’ this here crew; that from this hour you fall to the rear and undertake second fiddle—or fourth fiddle, for the matter o’ that; and that you head a party to guide them in a sarch which is just a-goin’ to begin for the two men and the boy you have so sneakingly betrayed and put on shore—an’ all this you’ll have to do with a ready goodwill on pain o’ havin’ your brains knocked out if you don’t. Moreover, you may be thankful that the sentence is so light, for some o’ your comrades would have had you hanged right off, if others hadn’t seen fit to be marciful.”

While this sentence was being pronounced, Swinton’s expression underwent various changes, and his face became visibly paler under the steady gaze of Grummidge. At the last word he grasped his knife and drew it, but his foe was prepared. Like a flash of light he planted his hard knuckles between Swinton’s eyes, and followed up the blow with another on the chest, which felled him to the ground.

There was no need for more. The big bully was rendered insensible, besides being effectually subdued, and from that time forward he quietly consented to play any fiddle—chiefly, however, the bass one. But he harboured in his heart a bitter hatred of Grummidge, and resolved secretly to take a fearful revenge at the first favourable opportunity.

Soon after that the boat was manned by as many of the crew as it could contain, and an exploring party went to the spot where Captain Trench and his companions had been landed, guided thereto by Swinton, and led by his foe Grummidge, whose bearing indicated, without swagger or threat, that the braining part of the sentence would be carried out on the slightest symptom of insubordination on the part of the former. While this party was away; those who remained on the islet continued to fish, and to preserve the fish for winter use by drying them in the sun.

We need scarcely add that the exploring party did not discover those for whom they sought, but they discovered the true nature of the main island, which, up to that time, they had supposed to be a group of isles. When the search was

finally given up as hopeless, an examination of the coast was made, with a view to a change of abode.

“You see, lads,” observed Grummidge, when discussing this subject, “it’s quite plain that we shall have to spend the winter here, an’ as I was a short bit to the south of these seas in the late autumn one voyage, I have reason to believe that we had better house ourselves, an’ lay in a stock o’ provisions if we would escape bein’ froze an’ starved.”

“Troth, it’s well to escape that, boys,” remarked Squills, “for it’s froze I was mesilf wance—all but—on a voyage to the Baltic, an’ it’s starved to death was me owld grandmother—almost—so I can spake from experience.”

“An’ we couldn’t find a better place for winter-quarters than what we see before us,” said Garnet. “It looks like a sort o’ paradise.”

We cannot say what sort of idea Garnet meant to convey by this comparison, but there could be no question that the scene before them was exceedingly beautiful. The party had held their consultation on the crest of a bluff, and just beyond it lay a magnificent bay, the shores of which were clothed with luxuriant forests, and the waters studded with many islets. At the distant head of the bay the formation or dip of the land clearly indicated the mouth of a large river, while small streams and ponds were seen gleaming amid the foliage nearer at hand. At the time the sun was blazing in a cloudless sky, and those thick fogs which so frequently enshroud the coasts of Newfoundland had not yet descended from the icy north.

“I say, look yonder. What’s Blazer about?” whispered Jim Heron, pointing to his comrade, who had separated from the party, and was seen with a large stone in each hand creeping cautiously round a rocky point below them.

Conjecture was useless and needless, for, while they watched him, Blazer rose up, made a wild rush forward, hurled the stones in advance, and disappeared round the point. A few moments later he reappeared, carrying a large bird in his arms.

The creature which he had thus killed with man’s most primitive weapon was a specimen of the great auk—a bird which is now extinct. It was the size of a large goose, with a coal-black head and back, short wings, resembling the flippers of a seal, which assisted it wonderfully in the water, but were useless for flight, broad webbed feet, and legs set so far back that on land it sat erect like the penguins of the southern seas. At the time of which we write, the great auk was found in myriads on the low rocky islets on the eastern shores of Newfoundland. Now-a-days there is not a single bird to be found anywhere, and only a few specimens and skeletons remain in the museums of the world to tell that such creatures once existed. Their extermination was the result of man’s reckless slaughter of them when the Newfoundland banks became the resort of the world’s fishermen. Not only was the great auk slain in vast numbers, for the sake of fresh food, but it was salted by tons for future use and sale. The valuable feathers, or down, also proved a source of temptation, and as the birds could not fly to other breeding-places, they gradually diminished in numbers and finally disappeared.

“Why, Blazer,” exclaimed Heron, “that’s one o’ the sodger-like birds we frightened away from our little island when we first landed.”

“Ay, an’ there’s plenty more where this one came from,” said Blazer, throwing the bird down; “an’ they are so tame on the rocks round the point that I do believe we could knock ’em on the head with sticks, if we took ’em unawares. What d’ee say to try, lads?”

“Agreed—for I’m gettin’ tired o’ fish now,” said Grummidge. “How should we set about it, think ’ee?”

“Cut cudgels for ourselves, then take to the boat creep round to one o’ the little islands in the bay, and go at ’em!” answered Blazer.

This plan was carried out with as little delay as possible. An islet was boarded, as Squill said, and the clumsy, astonished creatures lost numbers of their companions before making their escape into the sea. A further treasure was found in a large supply of their eggs. Laden almost to the gunwale with fresh provisions, the search-party returned to their camp—some of them, indeed, distressed at having failed to find their banished friends, but most of them elated by their success with the great auks, and the prospect of soon going into pleasant winter-quarters.

So eager were they all to flit into this new region—this paradise of Garnet—that operations were commenced on the very next day at early morn. The boat was launched and manned, and as much of their property as it would hold was put on board.

“You call it paradise, Garnet,” said Grummidge, as the two carried a bundle of dried cod slung on a pole between them, “but if you, and the like of ye, don’t give up swearin’, an’ try to mend your manners, the place we pitch on will be more like hell than paradise, no matter how comfortable and pretty it may be.”

Garnet was not in a humour either to discuss this point or to accept a rebuke, so he only replied to the remark with a surly “Humph!”

Landing on the main island to the northward of the large bay, so as to secure a southern exposure, the boat-party proceeded to pitch their camp on a lovely spot, where cliff and coppice formed a luxuriant background. Ramparts of rock protected them from the nor’-west gales, and purling rivulets hummed their lullaby. Here they pitched their tents, and in a short space of time ran up several log huts, the material for which was supplied in abundance by the surrounding forest.

When the little settlement was sufficiently established, and all the goods and stores were removed from what now was known as Wreck Island, they once more launched the boat, and turned their attention to fishing—not on the

Great Bank, about which at the time they were ignorant, but on the smaller banks nearer shore, where cod-fish were found in incredible numbers. Some of the party, however, had more of the hunter's than the fisher's spirit in them, and prepared to make raids on the homes of the great auk, or to ramble in the forests.

Squill was among the latter. One day, while rambling on the sea-shore looking for shellfish, he discovered a creature which not only caused him to fire off all the exclamations of his rich Irish vocabulary, but induced him to run back to camp with heaving chest and distended eyes—almost bursting from excitement.

"What is it, boy?" chorused his comrades.

"Och! musha! I've found it at long last!—the great say—sur—no, not exactly that, but the—the great, sprawlin', long-legged—och! what shall I say? The great-grandfather of all the—the—words is wantin', boys. Come an' see for yourselves!"

Chapter Sixteen.

A Giant Discovered—New Home At Wagtail Bay—A Strange Addition to the Settlement.

The creature which had so powerfully affected the feelings of the Irishman was dead; but dead and harmless though it was, it drew forth from his comrades a shout of intense surprise when they saw it, for it was no less than a cuttlefish of proportions so gigantic that they felt themselves in the presence of one of those terrible monsters of the deep, about which fabulous tales have been told, and exaggerated descriptions given since the beginning of historical time.

"Av he's not the say-sarpint himself, boys," panted Squill, as he pointed to him with looks of unmitigated admiration, "sure he must be his first cousin."

And Squill was not far wrong, for it was found that the monstrous fish measured fifty-two feet between the extremities of its outspread arms. Its body was about eight feet long and four feet broad. Its great arms, of which it had ten radiating from its body, varied in length and thickness—the longest being about twenty-four feet, and the shortest about eight. The under sides of these arms were supplied with innumerable suckers, while from the body there projected a horny beak, like the beak of a parrot.

"It's wishin', I am, that I might see wan o' yer family alive," said Squill, as he turned over the dead arms; "but I'd rather not be embraced by ye. Och! what a hug ye could give—an' as to howldin' on—a thousand limpets would be nothin' to ye."

"A miser grippin' his gold would be more like it," suggested Grummidge.

"I don't expect ever to see one alive," said Little Stubbs, "an' yet there must surely be more where that came from."

The very next day Squill had his wish gratified, and Stubbs his unbelief rebuked, for, while they were out in the boat rowing towards one of the fishing-banks with several of their comrades, they discovered a living giant-cuttlefish.

"What's that, boys?" cried the Irishman, pointing to the object which was floating in the water not far ahead of them.

"Seaweed," growled Blazer.

Blazer always growled. His voice was naturally low and harsh—so was his spirit. Sometimes a grunt supplanted the growl, suggesting that he was porcine in nature—as not a few men are.

But it was not seaweed. The thing showed signs of life as the boat drew near.

"Starboard! starboard hard!" shouted Little Stubbs, starting up.

But the warning came too late. Next moment the boat ran with a thud into a monster cuttlefish. Grummidge seized a boat-hook, shouted, "Stern all!" and hit the creature with all his might, while Stubbs made a wild grasp at a hatchet which lay under one of the thwarts.

Instantly the horny parrot-like beak, the size of a man's fist, reared itself from among the folds of the body and struck the boat a violent blow, while a pair of saucer-like eyes, fully four inches in diameter, opened and glared ferociously. This was terrifying enough, but when, a moment later, two tremendous arms shot out from the body near the eyes, flung themselves around the boat and held on tight, a yell of fear escaped from several of the men, and with good reason, for if the innumerable suckers on those slimy arms once fairly attached themselves to the boat there seemed to be no chance of escape from the deadly embrace. In that moment of danger Little Stubbs proved himself equal to the occasion. With the hatchet he deftly severed the two limbs as they lay over the gunwale of the boat, and the monster, without cry or sign of pain, fell back into the sea, and moved off, ejecting such a quantity of inky fluid as it went that the water was darkened for two or three hundred yards around.

"Well done, Little Stubbs!" cried Grummidge, as he watched the creature disappearing. "You've often worried our lives in time past, but this time you've saved 'em. Coil away the limbs, boys. We'll measure 'em and enter 'em in the log when we go ashore."

It may interest the reader to know that the measurements were as follows:—

The longer and thinner arm was nineteen feet in length; about three and a half inches in circumference; of a pale

pinkish colour, and exceedingly strong and tough. As all the men agreed that more than ten feet of the arm were left attached to the monster's body, the total length must have been little short of thirty feet. Towards the extremity it broadened out like an oar, and then tapered to a fine tongue-like point. This part was covered with about two hundred suckers, having horny-toothed edges, the largest of the suckers being more than an inch in diameter, the smallest about the size of a pea. The short arm was eleven feet long, and ten inches in circumference. It was covered on the under side throughout its entire length with a double row of suckers. Grummidge, who was prone to observe closely, counted them that night with minute care, and came to the conclusion that the creature must have possessed about eleven hundred suckers altogether. There was also a tail to the fish—which Squill called a "divil-fish"—shaped like a fin. It was two feet in width.

Lest any reader should imagine that we are romancing here, we turn aside to refer him to a volume entitled *Newfoundland, the oldest British Colony*, written by Joseph Hatton and the Reverend M. Harvey, in which (pages 238 to 242) he will find an account of a giant-cuttlefish, devil-fish, or squid, very similar to that which we have now described, and in which it is also stated that Mr Harvey, in 1873, obtained possession of one cuttlefish arm nineteen feet long, which he measured and photographed, and described in various newspapers and periodicals, and, finally, sent to the Geological Museum in St. John's, where it now lies. The same gentleman afterwards obtained an uninjured specimen of the fish, and it is well known that complete specimens, as well as fragments, of the giant cephalopod now exist in several other museums.

Can any one wonder that marvellous tales of the sea were told that night round the fires at supper-time? that Little Stubbs became eloquently fabulous, and that Squill, drawing on his imagination, described with graphic power a monster before whose bristling horrors the great sea-serpent himself would hide his diminished head, and went into particulars so minute and complex that his comrades set him down as "one o' the biggest liars" that ever lived, until he explained that the monster in question had only appeared to him "wance in wan of his owld grandmother's dreams!"

In fishing, and hunting with bows and arrows made by themselves, as well as with ingenious traps and weirs and snares of their own invention, the crew spent their time pleasantly, and the summer passed rapidly away. During this period the rude tents of spars and sailcloth were supplanted by ruder huts of round logs, caulked with hay and plastered with mud. Holes in the walls thereof did service as windows during the day, and bits of old sails or bundles of hay stuffed into them formed shutters at night. Sheds were also put up to guard provisions and stores from the weather, and stages were erected on which to dry the cod-fish after being split and cleaned; so that our shipwrecked crew, in their new home, which they named Wagtail Bay, had thus unwittingly begun that great industry for which Newfoundland has since become celebrated all the world over.

It is not to be supposed that among such men in such circumstances everything went harmoniously. At first, indeed, what with having plenty to do in fishing, hunting, building, splitting and drying fish, etcetera, all day, and being pretty well tired out at nights, the peace was kept pretty easily; all the more that Big Swinton had been quelled and apparently quite subdued. But as the stores became full of food and the days shortened, while the nights proportionately lengthened, time began to hang heavy on their hands, and gradually the camp became resolved into the two classes which are to be found everywhere—the energetically industrious and the lazily idle. Perhaps we should say that those two extreme phases of human nature began to show themselves, for between them there existed all shades and degrees, so that it was difficult to tell, in some cases, to which class the men belonged.

The proverbial mischief, of course, was soon found, for the latter class to do, and Grummidge began to discover that the ruling of his subjects, which sat lightly enough on his shoulders during the summer, became a matter of some trouble and anxiety in autumn. He also found, somewhat to his surprise, that legislation was by no means the easy—we might say free-and-easy—business which he had supposed it to be. In short, the camp presented the interesting spectacle of a human society undergoing the process of mushroom growth from a condition of chaotic irresponsibility to that of civilised order.

The chaotic condition had been growing worse and worse for some time before Grummidge was forced to take action, for Grummidge was a man of long-suffering patience. One night, however, he lost all patience, and, like most patient people when forced out of their natural groove, he exploded with surprising violence and vigour.

It happened thus:—

The crew had built for themselves a hut of specially large dimensions, in which they nightly assembled all together round the fires, of which there were two—one at either end. Some of the men told stories, some sang songs, others played at draughts of amateur construction, and a good many played the easy but essential part of audience.

The noise, of course, was tremendous, but they were used to that, and minded it not. When, however, two of the men began to quarrel over their game, with so much anger as to interrupt all the others, and draw general attention to themselves, the thing became unbearable, and when one called the other "a liar," and the other shouted with an oath, "You're another," the matter reached a climax.

"Come, come, Dick Swan and Bob Crow," cried Grummidge, in a stern voice; "you stop that. Two liars are too much in this here ship. One is one too many. If you can't keep civil tongues in your heads, we'll pitch you overboard."

"You mind your own business," gruffly replied Dick Swan, who was an irascible man and the aggressor.

"That's just what I'll do," returned Grummidge, striding up to Swan, seizing him by the collar, and hurling him to the other end of the room, where he lay still, under the impression, apparently, that he had had enough. "My business," said Grummidge, "is to keep order, and I mean to attend to it. Isn't that so, boys?"

"No—yes—no," replied several voices.

“Who said ‘No’?” demanded Grummidge.

Every one expected to see Big Swinton step forward, but he did not. His revenge was not to be gratified by mere insubordination. The man who did at last step forward was an insignificant fellow, who had been nicknamed Spitfire, and whose chief characteristics were self-will and ill-nature. He did not lack courage, however, for he boldly faced the angry ruler and defied him. Every one expected to see Spitfire follow Dick Swan, and in similar fashion, but they were mistaken. They did not yet understand Grummidge.

“Well, Spitfire, what’s your objection to my keeping order?” he said, in a voice so gentle that the other took heart.

“My objection,” he said, “is that when you was appinted capting there was no vote taken. You was stuck up by your own friends, an’ that ain’t fair, an’ I, for one, refuse to knuckle under to ’ee. You may knock me down if you like, for I ain’t your match by a long way, but you’ll not prove wrong to be right by doin’ that.”

“Well spoken, Master Spitfire!” exclaimed a voice from the midst of the crowd that encircled the speakers.

“Well spoken, indeed,” echoed Grummidge, “and I thank *you*, Master Spitfire, for bringin’ this here matter to a head. Now, lads,” he added, turning to the crowd, “you have bin wrong an’ informal, so to speak, in your proceedin’s when you appinted me governor o’ this here colony. There’s a right and a wrong in everything, an’ I do believe, from the bottom of my soul, that it’s—that it’s—that—well, I ain’t much of a dab at preaching as *you* know, but what I would say is this—it’s right to do right, an’ it ain’t right for to do wrong, so we’ll krect this little mistake at once, for I have no wish to rule, bless you! Now then, all what’s in favour o’ my bein’ gov’nor, walk to the end o’ the room on my right hand, an’ all who wants somebody else to be—Spitfire, for instance—walk over to where Dick Swan is a-sittin’ enjo’in’ of hisself.”

Immediately three-fourths of the crew stepped with alacrity to the right. The remainder went rather slowly to the left. “The Grummidges has won!” cried Squill, amid hearty laughter.

The ruler himself made no remark whatever, but, seating himself in a corner of the hut, resumed the game which had been interrupted, quite assured that the game of insubordination was finally finished.

The day following that on which the reign of King Grummidge was established, a new member of considerable interest was added to the colony. Blaze, Stubbs, and Squill chanced to be out that day along the shore. Squill, being in a meditative mood, had fallen behind his comrades. They had travelled further than usual, when the attention of the two in front was attracted by what seemed to them the melancholy howling of a wolf. Getting their bows ready, they advanced with caution, and soon came upon a sad sight—the dead body of a native, beside which crouched a large black dog. At first they thought the dog had killed the man, and were about to shoot it, when Stubbs exclaimed, “Hold on! don’t you see he must have tumbled over the cliff?”

A brief examination satisfied them that the Indian, in passing along the top of the cliffs, had fallen over, and that the accident must have been recent, for the body was still fresh. The dog, which appeared to be starving, showed all its formidable teeth when they attempted to go near its dead master. Presently Squill came up.

“Ah, boys,” he said, “ye don’t onderstand the natur’ o’ the baste—see here.”

Taking a piece of dried fish from his pocket, he went boldly forward and presented it. The dog snapped it greedily and gulped it down. Squill gave him another and another piece; as the fourth offering was presented he patted the animal quietly on its head. The victory was gained. The dog suffered them to bury its master, but for four days it refused to leave his grave. During that time Squill fed it regularly. Then he coaxed it to follow him, and at last it became, under the name of Blackboy, a general favourite, and a loving member of the community.

Chapter Seventeen.

Has Reference to Food and a Great Fight.

There is always a certain amount of pleasure to be derived from the tracing of any subject of interest back to its origin. We have already seen how—like a noble river, which has its fountain-head in some mountain lakelet that would scarcely serve as a washing-basin for a Cyclops—the grand cod-fishing industry, which has enriched the world, and found employment for thousands of men for centuries, had its commencement in the crew of the *Water Wagtail*! we shall now show that another great industry, namely, the Newfoundland seal-fishery, had its origin in the same insignificant source.

King Grummidge was walking one morning along the shore of Wagtail Bay, with hands in pockets, hat on back of head, and that easy roll of gait so characteristic of nautical men and royalty. He was evidently troubled in mind, for a frown rested on his brow, and his lips were compressed. It might have been supposed that the cares of state were beginning to tell upon him, but such was not the case: food was the cause of his trouble.

“Fish, fish, fish,” he growled, to Little Stubbs, who was his companion in the walk. “I’m sick tired o’ fish. It’s my opinion that if we go on eatin’ fish like we’ve bin doin’ since we was cast away here, we will turn into fish, or mermaids, if not somethin’ worse. What are ye laughin’ at?”

“At the notion o’ you turnin’ into a *maid* of any sort,” replied Stubbs.

“That’s got nothin’ to do wi’ the argiment,” returned Grummidge sternly, for his anxieties were too serious to permit of his indulging in levity at the time. “What we’ve got to do is to find meat, for them auks are nigh as dry as the fish. *Meat*, lad, meat, wi’ plenty o’ fat, that’s the question o’ the hour.”

“Yes, it’s *our* question, no doubt,” rejoined Stubbs.

He might as well have bestowed his bad pun on a rabbit, for Grummidge was essentially dense and sober-minded.

“But we’ve had a few rabbits of late, an’ ducks an’ partridges,” he added.

“Rabbits! ducks! partridges!” repeated his companion, with contempt. “How many of them delicacies have we had? That’s what I wants to know.”

“Not many, I admit for there’s none of us got much to boast of as shots.”

“Shots!” echoed Grummidge. “You’re right, Stubbs. Of all the blind bats and helpless boys with the bow, there’s not I believe, in the whole world such a lot as the popilation of Wagtail Bay. Why, there’s not two of ye who could hit the big shed at sixty paces, an’ all the fresh meat as you’ve brought in yet has bin the result o’ chance. Now look ’ee here, Stubbs, a notion has entered my head, an’ when a notion does that, I usually grab that notion an’ hold ’im a fast prisoner until I’ve made somethin’ useful an’ ship-shape of ’im. If it works properly we’ll soon have somethin’ better to eat than fish, an’ more substantial than rabbits, ducks, partridges, or auks.”

We may remark in passing that the animals which those wrecked sailors called rabbits were in reality hares. Moreover, the men took an easy, perhaps unscientific, method of classifying feathered game. Nearly everything with wings that dwelt chiefly on lake, river, or sea they called ducks, and all the feathered creatures of the forest they styled partridges. From this simple classification, however, were excepted swans, geese, eagles, and hawks.

“Well, Grummidge, what may be your notion?” asked Stubbs.

“My notion is—seals! For all our hard rowin’ and wastin’ of arrows we’ve failed to catch or kill a single seal, though there’s such swarms of ’em all about. Now this is a great misfortin’, for it’s well known that seals make first-rate beef—leastwise to them as ain’t partic’lar—so we’ll set about catchin’ of ’em at once.”

“But how?” asked Stubbs, becoming interested under the influence of his comrade’s earnest enthusiasm.

“This is how. Look there, d’ye see that small island lyin’ close to the shore with several seals’ heads appearin’ in the channel between?”

“Yes—what then?”

“Well, then, what I mean to do is to have nets made with big meshes, an’ set ’em between that island an’ the shore, and see what comes of it.”

“But where’s the twine to come from?” objected Stubbs.

“Twine! Ain’t there no end o’ cordage swashin’ about the *Water Wagtail* ever since she went ashore? An’ haven’t we got fingers? Can’t we undo the strands an’ make small cord? Surely some of ye have picked oakum enough to understand what that means!”

Stubbs was convinced. Moreover, the rest of the men were so convinced that the plan promised well, when it was explained to them, that they set to work with alacrity, and, in a brief space of time, made a strong net several fathoms in length, and with meshes large enough to permit of a seal’s head squeezing through.

No sooner was it ready than the whole community went down to see it set. Then, with difficulty, they were prevented from waiting on the shore to watch the result. In the afternoon, when Grummidge gave permission, they ran down again with all the eagerness of children, and were rewarded by finding six fat seals entangled in the net and inflated almost to bursting with the water that had drowned them.

Thus they were supplied with “beef,” and, what was of almost equal importance, with oil, which enabled them to fry the leanest food, besides affording them the means of making a steadier and stronger light than that of the log fires to which they had hitherto been accustomed.

It may be here remarked by captious readers, if such there be, that this cannot appropriately be styled the beginning of that grand sealing, or, as it is now styled, “swile huntin’,” industry, which calls into action every year hundreds of steam and other vessels, and thousands of men, who slaughter hundreds of thousands of seals; which produces mints of money, and in the prosecutions of which men dare the terrible dangers of ice-drift and pack, in order that they may bludgeon the young seals upon the floes.

As well might it be objected that a tiny rivulet on the mountain-top is not the fountain-head of a mighty river, because its course is not marked by broad expanses and thundering cataracts. Grummidge’s net was undoubtedly the beginning, the tiny rill, of the Newfoundland seal-fishery, and even the bludgeoning was initiated by one of his party. It happened thus:—

Big Swinton went out one morning to try his fortune with the bow and arrow in the neighbourhood of a range of cliffs that extended far away to the northward. Swinton usually chose to hunt in solitude. Having few sympathies with the crew he shut up his feelings within his own breast and brooded in silence on the revenge he was still resolved to take when a safe opportunity offered, for the man’s nature was singularly resolute and, at the same time, unforgiving.

Now it chanced that Grummidge, in utter ignorance of where his foe had gone, took the same direction that morning, but started some time later, intending to explore the neighbourhood of the cliffs in search of sea-fowls’ eggs.

On reaching the locality, Swinton found that a large ice-floe had come down from the Arctic regions, and stranded on

the shore of the island. On the ice lay a black object which he rightly judged to be a seal. At first, he supposed it to be a dead one, but just as he was about to advance to examine it the animal raised its head and moved its tail. Love of the chase was powerful in Swinton's breast. He instantly crouched behind a boulder, and waited patiently till the seal again laid its head on the ice as if to continue its nap.

While the seaman crouched there, perfectly motionless, his brain was active. Arrows, he feared, would be of little use, even if he were capable of shooting well, which he was not. Other weapon he had none, with the exception of a clasp-knife. What was he to do? The only answer to that question was—try a club. But how was he to get at the seal with a club?

While pondering this question he observed that there was another seal on the same mass of ice, apparently sleeping, behind a hummock. He also noticed that both seals were separated from the water by a considerable breadth of ice—especially the one behind the hummock, and that there was a tongue of ice extending from the floe to the shore by which it seemed possible to reach the floe by patient stalking without disturbing the game. Instantly Swinton decided on a plan, and commenced by crawling into the bushes. There, with his clasp-knife, he carefully cut and peeled a club which even Hercules might have deigned to wield.

With this weapon he crawled on hands and knees slowly out to the floe, and soon discovered that the seals were much larger than he had at first supposed, and were probably a male and a female. Being ignorant of the nature of seals, and only acquainted with the fact that the tender nose of the animal is its most vulnerable part, he crept like a cat after a mouse towards the smaller seal, which he judged to be the female, until near enough to make a rush and cut off its retreat to the sea. He then closed with it, brought his great club down upon its snout, and laid it dead upon the ice. Turning quickly round, he observed, to his surprise, that the male seal instead of making for the water, as he had expected, was making towards himself in floundering and violent bounds!

It may be necessary here to state that there are several kinds of seals in the northern seas, and that the "hood seal"—or, as hunters call it the "dog-hood"—is among the largest and fiercest of them all. The male of this species is distinguished from the female by a singular hood, or fleshy bag, on his nose, which he has the power to inflate with air, so that it covers his eyes and face—thus forming a powerful protection to his sensitive nose, for, besides being elastic, the hood is uncommonly tough. It is said that this guard will even resist shot and that the only sure way of killing the dog-hood seal is to hit him on the neck at the base of the skull.

Besides possessing this safeguard, or natural buffer, the dog-hood is full of courage, which becomes absolute ferocity when he is defending the female. This is now so well known that hunters always try to kill the male first, if possible, when the female becomes an easy victim.

Swinton saw at a single glance that he had to deal with a gigantic and furious foe, for the creature had inflated its hood and dilated its nostrils into two huge bladders, as with glaring eyes it bounced rather than rushed at him in terrific rage. Feeling that his arrows would be useless, the man flung them and the bow down, resolving to depend entirely on his mighty club. Being possessed of a good share of brute courage, and feeling confident in his great physical strength, Swinton did not await the attack, but ran to meet his foe, swung his ponderous weapon on high, and brought it down with tremendous force on the seal's head, but the hood received it and caused it to rebound—as if from indiarubber—with such violence that it swung the man to one side. So far this was well, as it saved him from a blow of the dog-hood's flipper that would probably have stunned him. As it was, it grazed his shoulder, tore a great hole in his strong canvas jacket and wounded his arm.

Experience usually teaches caution. When the seal turned with increased fury to renew the assault Swinton stood on the defensive, and as soon as it came within reach brought his club down a second time on its head with, if possible, greater force than before; but again the blow was broken by the hood, though not again was the man struck by the flipper, for he was agile as a panther and evaded the expected blow. His foot slipped on the ice, however, and he fell so close to the seal that it tumbled over him and almost crushed him with its weight. At the same time the club flew from his hand.

Though much shaken by the fall, the seaman scrambled to his feet in time to escape another onslaught, but do what he would he could make no impression on the creature's head, because of that marvellous hood, and body blows were, of course, useless. Still Big Swinton was not the man to give in easily to a seal! Although he slipped on the ice and fell several times, he returned again and again to the encounter until he began to feel his strength going. As muscular power was his sole dependence, a sensation of fear now tended to make matters worse; at last he tripped over a piece of ice, and the seal fell upon him.

It was at this critical point that Grummidge came in sight of the combatants, and ran at full speed to the rescue. But he was still at a considerable distance, and had to cross the tongue of ice before he could reach the floe.

Meanwhile the seal opened its well-armed jaws to seize its victim by the throat. Swinton felt that death stared him in the face. Desperation sharpened his ingenuity. He thrust his left hand as far as possible down the throat of his adversary, and, seizing it with the other arm round the neck, held on in a tight though not loving embrace!

The struggle that ensued was brief. The seal shook off the man as if he had been but a child, and was on the point of renewing the attack when it caught sight of Grummidge, and reared itself to meet this new enemy.

Grummidge possessed a fair-sized clasp-knife. Armed with this, he rushed boldly in and made a powerful stab at the creature's heart.

Alas! for the poor man, even though his stabbing powers had been good instead of bad, for he would only have imbedded the short weapon in a mass of fat without touching the heart. But Grummidge was a bad stabber. He missed his aim so badly as to plunge his weapon into the hood! Nothing could have been more fortunate. The air escaped and the hood collapsed. At the same moment Grummidge received an ugly scratch on the cheek which sent

him sprawling. As he rose quickly he observed Swinton's club, which he grasped and brought vigorously down on the seal's now unprotected nose, and felled it. Another effective blow terminated its career for ever, and then the victor turned to find that Big Swinton lay on the ice, quite conscious of what was going on though utterly unable to move hand or foot.

Chapter Eighteen.

Tells of Death and Disaster.

To bind up Swinton's wounds, some of which were ugly ones, was the first business of Grummidge, after he had hastily staunched the blood which was flowing copiously from his own cheek. The stout seaman was well able to play the part of amateur surgeon, being a handy fellow, and he usually carried about with him two or three odd pieces of spun-yarn for emergencies—also a lump of cotton-waste as a handkerchief, while the tail of his shirt served at all times as a convenient rag.

Having finished the job he looked earnestly at the pale face and closed eyes of his old enemy, and said— "You've bin pretty much banged about old chap—eh?"

As the wounded man made no reply, Grummidge rose quickly, intending to run to the settlement for help, knowing that no time should be lost. He was hastening away when Swinton stopped him.

"Hallo! hold on!" he shouted. Grummidge turned back.

"You—you're not goin' to leave me, are you?" demanded his enemy, somewhat sternly, "I—I shall die if you leave me here on the cold ice."

An involuntary shudder here bore testimony to the probability of his fear being well grounded.

"Swinton," replied Grummidge, going down on one knee, the more conveniently to grasp the unwounded hand of his foe, "you mistake my c'rackter entirely. Though I'm not much to boast on as a man, I ain't quite a devil. I was only goin' to run to Wagtail Bay to start some o' the boys with a stretcher to fetch ye—an' it's my belief that there's no time to be lost."

"Right you are, Grummidge," replied the poor man in a faint voice, "so little time that if you leave me here the boys will only find some human beef to carry back, an' that won't be worth the trouble."

"Don't say that, old chap," returned the other, in a low, gruff voice which was the result of tender feeling. "Keep up heart—bless you, I'll be back in no time."

"All right," said Swinton, with a resigned look, "go an' fetch the boys. But I say, Grummidge, shake hands before you go, I don't want to carry a grudge agin you into the next world if I can help it. Goodbye."

"No, no, mate, if that's to be the way of it I'll stick to 'ee. D'ye think you could manage to git on my back?"

"I'll try."

With much heaving, and many half-suppressed groans from the one, and "heave-ho's" from the other, Big Swinton was at last mounted on his comrade's broad shoulders, and the two started for home. It was a long and weary journey, for Grummidge found the road rough and the load heavy, but before night he deposited his old enemy in a bunk in the large room of the settlement and then himself sank fainting on the floor—not, we need scarcely add, from the effect of sentimental feeling, but because of prolonged severe exertion, coupled with loss of blood.

Two days later Grummidge sat by the side of Swinton's bunk. It was early forenoon, and they were alone—all the other men being out on various avocations.

Blackboy, the large dog, lay asleep on the floor beside them.

Suddenly the dog jumped up, ran to the door, and began to whine restlessly.

"Wolves about, I suppose," said Grummidge, rising and opening the door.

Blackboy bounded away in wild haste.

"H'm! he seems in a hurry. Perhaps it's a bear this time. Well, mate, how d'ye feel now?" he added, closing the door and returning to his seat.

"Grummidge," said the sick man, in a low voice, "I'll never git over this. That seal have done for me. There's injury somewheres inside o' me, I feel sure on it. But that's not what I was going to speak about. I want to make a clean breast of it afore I goes. I've been a bad man, Grummidge, there's no question about that in my own mind, whatever may be in the mind of others. I had even gone the length of making up my mind to murder *you*, the first safe chance I got, for which, and all else I've done and thought agin ye, I ax your pardon."

"You have it" said his friend earnestly. "Thank 'ee. That's just what I expected, Grummidge. Now what I want to know is, d'ye think God will forgive *me*?"

The seaman was perplexed. Such a question had never been put to him before, and he knew not what to answer. After a few moments' consideration, he replied—

“What you say is true, Swinton. You’ve bin a bad lot ever since I’ve know’d ye. I won’t go for to deny that. As to what the Almighty will do or won’t do, how can I tell? I wish I knew more about such things myself, for I’d like to help you, but I can’t.”

Suddenly an idea flashed into his mind and he continued:—

“But it do seem to me, Swinton, that if a poor sinner like me is willin’ to forgive ye, ain’t the Almighty likely to be *much more* willin’?”

“There’s somethin’ in *that*, Grummidge—somethin’ in that,” said the sick man eagerly. Then the hopeful look disappeared as he added slowly, “but I fear, Grummidge, that what you say don’t quite fit my case, for I’ve got a notion that the Almighty must have been willin’ all my life to save me from myself, and that all my life I’ve bin refusin’ to listen to Him.”

“How d’ye make that out, boy?”

“This way. There’s bin somethin’ or other inside o’ me, as far back as I can remember, that somehow didn’t seem to be me, that has been always sayin’ ‘Don’t’ to me, whenever I was a-goin’ to do a mean thing. Now, I can’t help thinkin’ that it must have bin God that spoke, for a man would never say ‘Don’t’ to himself, an’ then go right off an’ do it, would he?”

“That’s more than I can tell,” answered Grummidge. “I remember hearin’ Master Burns a-talkin’ on that point wi’ the cappen, an’ he thought it was conscience or the voice of God.”

“Well, conscience or no conscience, I’ve resisted it all my life,” returned the sick man, “an’ it do seem a mean, sneakin’ sort o’ thing to come to the Almighty at the very last moment, when I can’t help myself, an’ say, ‘I’m sorry.’”

“It would be meaner to say ‘I’m *not* sorry,’ wouldn’t it?” returned Grummidge. “But, now I think of it, Master Burns did read one or two things out o’ that writin’ that he’s so fond of, which he says is the Word of God. If it’s true what he says, he may well be fond of it, but I wonder how he has found that out. Anyway, I remember that one o’ the things he read out of it was that the Lamb of God takes away the sins of the world; an’ he explained that Jesus is the Lamb of God, an’ that he stands in our place—takes our punishment instead of us, an’ fulfils the law instead of us.”

The sick man listened attentively, even eagerly, but shook his head.

“How can any *man* stand in my place, or take my punishments?” he said, in a tone savouring almost of contempt. “As far as I can see, every man will have enough to do to answer for himself.”

“That’s just what come into my mind too, when I heard Master Burns speak,” returned the other; “but he cleared that up by explainin’ that Jesus is God as well as man—‘God with us,’ he said.”

“That do seem strange,” rejoined the sick man, “and if true,” he added thoughtfully, “there’s somethin’ in it, Grummidge, somethin’ in it to give a man comfort.”

“Well, mate, I’m of your mind about that, for if God himself be for us, surely nobody can be agin us,” said the seaman, unconsciously paraphrasing the word of Scripture itself. “Blow high or blow low, that seems to me an anchor that you an’ me’s safe to hang on to.”

The conversation was interrupted at this point by the sudden entrance of Jim Heron with an arrow sticking in the fleshy part of his back.

“Attacked by savages!” he gasped. “Here, Grummidge, lend a hand to haul out this—I can’t well reach it. They came on us behind the big store, t’other side o’ the settlement, and, after lettin’ fly at us took to their heels. The lads are after them. I got separated from the boys, and was shot, as you see, so I came—hah! pull gently, Grummidge—came back here that you might haul it out, for it’s hard to run an’ fight with an arrow in your back.”

“Stay here, Jim,” said Grummidge, after hastily extracting the shaft. “You couldn’t do much with a wound like that. I’ll take your place and follow up the men, and you’ll take mine here, as nurse to Swinton. We mustn’t leave him alone, you know.”

Eager though Jim Heron was at first for the fray, the loss of blood had reduced his ardour and made him willing to fall in with this proposal.

“Good-bye, Grummidge,” cried Swinton, as the former, having snatched up his knife and bow, was hastening to the door.

“Good-bye—good-bye, mate,” he responded, turning back and grasping the proffered hand. “You’ll be all right soon, old chap—and Jim’s a better nurse than I am.”

“I like what you said about that anchor, mate, I’ll not forget it” said Swinton, sinking back on his pillow as Grummidge sallied forth to join in the pursuit of the savages.

The stout seaman’s movements were watched by some hundreds of glittering black eyes, the owners of which were concealed amid the brushwood of the adjoining forest.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the settlement, the greater number of the shipwrecked mariners were engaged in hot pursuit of the party of Indians who had attacked them. They were very indignant, several of their mates having been wounded, and a considerable quantity of their stores carried off.

It quickly became apparent, however, that the seamen were no match for savage, at a race through the woods, therefore Grummidge, who soon overtook his comrades, called a halt, and gathered as many of his men as possible around him.

“Now, lads,” he said, “it’s plain that some of you can’t run much further. You ain’t used to this sort o’ work. Besides, we have left our settlement undefended. Most of you must therefore return, an’ a few of the smartest among you will follow me, for we must give these rascals a fright by followin’ ’em till we catch ’em—if we can—or by drivin’ ’em back to their own place, wherever that may be.”

Many of the men were more than willing to agree to this arrangement, while others were quite ready to follow their leader. The party, therefore, that finally continued in pursuit of the Indians was composed of Grummidge, George Blazer, Fred Taylor, Little Stubbs, Garnet Squill, and several others. Armed with bows, arrows, short spears, and clubs, these set off without delay into the forest, trusting to the sun and stars for guidance. The remainder of the men returned to the settlement, where they discovered that they had been the victims of a ruse on the part of the savages. The assault at the further end of the settlement proved to be a mere feint, made by a comparatively small party, for the purpose of drawing the seamen away, and leaving the main part of the settlement undefended, and open to pillage. While the small detachment of Indians, therefore, was doing its part, the main body descended swiftly but quietly on Wagtail Bay, and possessed themselves of all that was valuable there, and carried it off.

Of course, Swinton and Jim Heron were found there. Both had been beheaded, and their bodies stripped and left on the floor. Heron seemed to have offered a stout resistance, until overpowered by numbers and slain. Poor Swinton, who could not have had much more life remaining than enabled him to understand what was occurring, had been stabbed to death where he lay.

Fortunately, it was not possible for the Indians to carry off all the dried fish and other provisions, so that the men were not reduced to absolute starvation.

All ignorant of what was going on at the settlement, the avengers were pushing their way through the woods in pursuit of the smaller body of savages. Nothing could have been more satisfactory to these latter. From every eminence and knoll unseen eyes watched the movements of the white men, who remained under the delusion that they were striking terror into the hearts of a flying foe.

“Sure, we’ll have to take a rest soon,” said Squill, as they halted on the top of a mound, about sunset to breathe and wipe their heated brows.

“True, a short sleep we *must* have, but we’ll have to take our rest without kindling a fire,” said Grummidge.

“Ay, an’ go supperless to bed, too,” remarked Little Stubbs; “for we’ve brought nothing to eat with us.”

This fact had not struck any of the party till that moment. They had been so eager in pursuit of the foe that all prudential considerations had been thrown to the winds. They now lay down, therefore, to the very brief rest that was absolutely needful, not only without supper, but with the prospect of starting again without breakfast. However, each man felt bound in honour not to damp his fellows by complaining.

“Now, boys,” said Grummidge, “you lie down, an’ I’ll mount guard. Sleep as fast as you can, for I’ll route ye out in an hour or so.”

But Grummidge did not fulfil his promise. Seating himself with his back to a tree, his bows and arrows ready to hand, and actuated by a firm resolve to watch with intense care, he fell fast asleep, and the whole party snored in concert.

About fifty Indians, who had joined the original attacking party, had waited patiently for this state of affairs. When quite certain that the seamen were all sleeping soundly, they crept silently forward, and pounced upon them. The struggle was sharp, but short. Courage and strength are futile when opposed to overwhelming numbers. A few minutes later, and the white men were led, with hands bound behind them, into the depth of the unknown wilderness.

Chapter Nineteen.

A New Friend with Startling News.

Turn we now to the island in the great lake where Hendrick, the hunter, had set up his romantic home.

The premature touch of winter, which had put so sudden a stop to the work of our explorers, gave way to a burst of warmth and sunshine almost as sudden. It was that brief period of calm repose in which nature indulges in some parts of the world as if to brace herself for the rough work of approaching winter. There was a softness in the air which induced one to court its embrace. Absolute stillness characterised the inanimate world. Clouds floated in the heavenly blue in rotund masses, which seemed, to the careless glance, as unchangeable as the hills, and the glassy water reflected them with perfect fidelity. It also reflected gulls, ducks, plover, and other wildfowl, as they sailed, whirred, or waded about, absorbed in the activities of their domestic economy, or in the hilarious enjoyment of the sweet influences around them. Colours most resplendent dyed the forest trees; gentle sounds from bird and beast told of joyous life everywhere, and the blessed sun threw a golden haze over wood and lake and hill. It was as though Paradise had been restored to man, and our loving Creator had swept away every trace of evil and misery from the beautiful earth.

But although the day is surely coming when, through Jesus Christ, “sorrow and sighing shall flee away,” Paradise had

certainly not returned to earth at the date we write of. Doubtless, however, something which seemed marvellously like it had reappeared round the hunter's home, for, while all nature was peaceful as well as beautiful, love was the grand motive power which actuated the hearts of those who dwelt there, and that love had been greatly intensified, as well as purified, since the advent of Paul Burns with the manuscript Gospel of John in his bosom, and the Spirit of God in his heart.

Besides being naturally sympathetic, Paul and Hendrick were thus drawn still more strongly together, as they communed with each other—sometimes while walking through the forest engaged in the chase; often beside the camp-fire after supper while others slept; and, not unfrequently, while paddling in their canoe over the sleeping lake.

One evening they were in the latter position—returning from a successful day's hunt in the canoe—when Hendrick became more communicative than usual about the Indian tribe to which his wife belonged, and in regard to which subject he had hitherto been reticent. The sun was setting; the island home was not far distant. The total absence of wind and consequent stillness of the lake rendered it unnecessary to do more than make an occasional dip of the paddles with which the light craft was propelled—Paul using his in the bow, while Hendrick sat in the stern and steered. No one was with them—indeed the canoe was too small to carry more than two when loaded with the proceeds of the chase.

"I have often thought" said the hunter, dipping his paddle lazily, "that you must wonder why one whose position in the world warranted his looking forward to a bright and prosperous career should inflict on himself voluntary banishment, and wed an Indian woman."

"Hendrick," returned Paul, "I wonder at few things in this life, for I know something of the working of the human mind and heart and have ceased to judge other men's feelings by my own. Besides, I criticise not the actions of my friend. The motives of his acts are known only to himself and his God. The Gospel tells me to 'judge not according to the appearance.' Moreover, the longer I live with you, the more have I learned to know that there are qualities in Trueheart which would do honour to dames of the highest station."

A gleam of satisfaction lightened the hunter's face for a moment as he exclaimed, with unwonted energy, "You do her no more than justice, my friend. I have lived to learn that love, truth, and every virtue are to be found in every station—alike with the high-born and the lowly; also that the lack of these qualities is common to both, and, to say truth, I had rather mate with a gentle savage than with a civilised female tiger!"

"But Trueheart is not a gentle savage," returned Paul, scarcely able to repress a smile at the tone in which his friend uttered his sentiments; "she is a gentle *woman*."

"Of course, I know that" rejoined Hendrick; "moreover she is a half-caste! I only used the word to designate the class of humanity to which she belongs, and to contrast her with that other class which deems itself at the top of the civilised tree."

"But it seems to me, Master Hendrick, that you are inclined to be too severe on the high-born. There are those among them whose lives conform to the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus."

"Do I not know it?" replied the hunter abruptly. "Have I not told you that my murdered wife was high-born and endowed with every grace?"

"True, but what of this civilised female tiger whom you would scorn to wed. Did not Christ die for *her*? May she not be saved by the same Power that drags the tiger of the lower ranks—both male and female—from the pit?"

"I doubt it not," answered Hendrick thoughtfully, as he relapsed into his usual quiet manner, "and I am glad you appreciate Trueheart, for she is worthy of your regard. Her name was bestowed on her by her Indian relations. My children I have named after some of my kindred in the old country. The tribe to which my wife belongs are called Bethucks. They are well-disposed and kindly in disposition, and do not quarrel among themselves more than other human beings—indeed not so much as men in our own land; probably because they have not so much to quarrel about and have more elbow-room. They are good kinsmen, as I know; good hunters also, and inclined for peace, but the natives of Labrador render peace impossible, for they make frequent raids on our island, and of course we have to drive them away. If white men now come to Newfoundland, I fear that the poor Bethucks will be exterminated." (The Bethucks are now extinct.)

"I trust not," said Paul.

"So do I," returned Hendrick, "and if the Gospel you have brought here only takes good root in our own land all will be well, for if men acted on the command 'let us love one another,' war and robbery, murder and strife, would be at an end."

"Can we expect all men to act upon that precept?" asked Paul.

"Apparently not; but we might at least expect Christians to do so; those who accept the Gospel as their book of law. I had expected to escape from war and bloodshed when I left civilised lands and settled here, but I have been disappointed. The necessity for fighting still exists!"

"And will exist until the reign of Jesus extends to every human heart," returned Paul. "It seems to me that what we have some right and ground to expect is, not the stoppage of *all* war, but the abolition of war between nations calling themselves Christian."

It is a curious circumstance that, only a few days after the above conversation, an incident occurred which induced both Paul and Hendrick to buckle on their armour, and sally forth with a clear perception that it was their bounden

duty to engage in war!

That incident was the arrival of an Indian hunter who was slightly known to Hendrick's wife.

He came in a canoe just as the family on the Island were about to sit down to supper.

It was dark when his tall figure was seen to stalk out of the surrounding gloom into the circle of firelight. Trueheart recognised him at once, and a word from her sufficed to inform her husband that the stranger was a friend. He was welcomed of course cordially, and made to sit down in the place of honour.

Every attention he accepted with the grave solemnity of an owl, and without any other recognition than a mild grunt, which was by no means meant as a surly return of thanks, but as a quiet mode of intimating that the attention was agreeable to his feelings.

It may, perhaps, be not unknown to the reader that grave reticence is one of the characteristics of the Red men of the west. They are never in a hurry to communicate their news, whether important or otherwise, but usually, on arriving at any hospitable abode, sit down with calm dignity and smoke a pipe, or make slight reference to unimportant matters before coming to the main point of their visit—if it have a main point at all. As it is with the Red men now, so was it with the Bethucks at the time we write of. True, the pernicious practice of smoking tobacco had not yet been introduced among them, so that the social pipe was neither offered, desired, nor missed! but the Indian accepted a birch-bark basket of soup with placid satisfaction, and consumed it with slow felicity. Then, being offered a formidable venison steak, he looked calmly at his host, blinked his thanks—or whatever he felt—and devoured it.

"Has he got nothing to say for himself?" asked Captain Trench, surprised at the man's silence.

"Plenty to say, I doubt not," answered Hendrick, who then explained to the Captain the Indian characteristic just referred to.

"What a power of suction he has got" said Olly, referring not to the Indian, but to the family baby which he had got on his knee, and was feeding with a dangerously large lump of bear's fat.

"What does he say?" asked Paul, referring to their visitor, who, having come to a temporary pause, with a sigh of contentment had said something in his native tongue to Hendrick.

"He asked me if the singing-birds will gladden his ears and cause his heart to thrill."

"What means he by that?"

"He only refers to a fact well known among the Indians," replied the hunter, with a quiet smile, "that Trueheart and Goodred have such sweet voices that they are known everywhere by the name of the singing-birds. Happening to have some knowledge of music, I have trained them to sing in parts one or two hymns taught to me by my mother, and composed, I believe, by a good monk of the olden time. Some things in the hymns puzzled me, I confess, until I had the good fortune to meet with you. I understand them better now. You shall hear one of them."

So saying, he turned and nodded to Trueheart who of course understood the conversation. With a slight inclination of the head denoting acquiescence she began to sing. At the same moment Goodred parted her pretty lips and joined her. The result was to fill the air with harmony so sweet that the captain and his comrade were struck dumb with delight and surprise, the Indian's jaw was arrested with an unchewed morsel in the mouth, and the family baby gazing upward in wonder, ceased the effort to choke itself on bear's fat.

It need scarcely be said that the grunt of the Indian was very emphatic when the sounds died away like fairy-music, and that the hunter's white guests entreated for more. Trueheart and her daughter were quite willing, and, for a considerable time, kept their audience enthralled.

At last, having washed down his meal with a final basketful of soup, the Indian began to unbosom himself of his news—a few words at a time. It was soon found, however, that he had no news of importance to tell. He was a hunter; he had been out with a party of his tribe, but having differed with them as to the best district to be visited, he had left them and continued the hunt alone. Being not far distant from the home of the white hunter who had mated with the Bethuck singing-bird, he had turned aside for no other purpose than to have his ears gladdened and his heart thrilled!

"We are happy," said Hendrick, "that our Bethuck brother should have his ears gladdened and his heart thrilled, and we trust that the spirit of the wolf within him is subdued, now that his stomach is also filled."

A polite grunt was the reply.

"Will our Bethuck brother tell us more news?"

"There is no more," he answered, "Strongbow is now an empty vessel."

"Considering that Strongbow has just filled himself with venison, he can hardly call himself an empty vessel," responded the hunter, with intense gravity.

Strongbow turned his head quickly and gazed at the speaker. His solemnity deepened. Could his white brother be jesting? The white brother's gravity forbade the idea. In order to convey more strongly the fact that he had no news to give the Indian touched his forehead—"Strongbow is empty *here*."

"That may well be," remarked Hendrick quietly.

Again the Indian glared. Solemnity is but a feeble word after all! He said nothing, but was evidently puzzled.

“Has our Bethuck brother seen no enemies from the setting sun? Is all quiet and peaceful among his friends?” asked the hunter.

“All is peaceful—all is quiet. But we have news of a war party that left us many days past. They had gone, about the time that the deer begin to move, to punish some white men who were cast on shore by the sea where the sun rises.”

“What say you?” cried Hendrick, starting. “Have the Red warriors been successful?”

“They have. Some of the white men have been killed, others caught and taken to our wigwams to be made slaves or to die.”

The consternation of Paul and his friends, on this being translated to them, may be imagined. Past injuries were forgotten, and instant preparations were made to set off to the rescue at the earliest dawn of the following day.

Chapter Twenty.

The Rescue Party—A Rencontre and Bad News.

Hot haste now marked the proceedings of the rescue party, for Paul and his friends felt that they had no time to lose. Fortunately the weather favoured them. That very night a sharp frost set in, hardening the moist and swampy grounds over which they had to pass. Strongbow, on being made acquainted with the state of matters, willingly agreed to lead the party to the place to which he thought it likely the captives had been taken, or where, at least, information about them might be obtained from members of his own tribe.

Little Oscar, at his own urgent request, was allowed to accompany them, and Trueheart, Goodred, and the family baby and nurse were left in charge of an old Indian whose life had once been saved by Hendrick, and who, although too old to go on the war-path, was still well able to keep the family in provisions.

Although the party was small—numbering only six, two of whom were boys—it was nevertheless formidable, each man being more than usually powerful, as well as valiant, whilst the boys, although comparatively small, possessed so much of the unconquerable spirit of their sires as to render them quite equal to average men.

The frost, which seemed to have fairly set in, kept them cool during the day while walking, and rendered their bivouac-fires agreeable at nights. Little time, however, was allowed for rest or food. They pressed on each day with unflagging energy, and felt little disposition to waste time in conversation during the brief halts for needed rest and food.

Occasionally, however, some of the party felt less disposed than usual for sleep, and sought to drive away anxiety regarding their old shipmates by talking of things and scenes around them.

“Does Strongbow think that the frost will hold?” asked Hendrick, one evening after supper, as he reclined in front of the fire on a pile of brushwood.

“Strongbow cannot tell,” returned the Indian. “It looks like thaw, but the Great Spirit sometimes changes his mind and sends what we do not expect.”

Having uttered this cautious reply with sententious gravity he continued his supper in silence.

“The Great Spirit never changes his mind,” said Paul. “Perfection cannot change, because it need not.”

“Waugh!” replied the Indian. It was evident that he did not agree with Paul, but was too polite to say so.

“I like this sort o’ thing,” remarked Captain Trench, looking up from the rib on which he was engaged, and gazing round at the magnificent sweep of hill and dale of which they had a bird’s-eye view from their camp.

“So do I, daddy; with lots to eat an’ a roarin’ fire a fellow feels as happy as a king,” said Oliver.

“Happier than most kings, I doubt not,” returned Hendrick.

“But, Olly, you have mentioned only two of the things that go to produce felicity,” said Paul. “Food and fire are certainly important elements, but these would be of little avail if we had not health, strength, and appetite.”

“To say nothin’ of the fresh air o’ the mountains, and the excitement o’ the wilderness, and the enthusiasm of youth,” added the captain.

“Are *you* not as happy as *me*, daddy?” asked the boy, with a sudden glance of intelligence.

“Happier a great deal, I should say,” replied the father, “for I’m not so much of a goose.”

“Why then, daddy, if you are happier than we, what you call the enthusiasm of youth can have nothing to do with it, you know!”

“You young rascal, the enthusiasm of middle age is much more powerful than that of youth! You let your tongue wag too freely.”

“D’ye hear that, Osky?” said Oliver to his little companion in an audible whisper. “There’s comfort for you an’ me. We’ll be more enthusiastic and far happier when we come to middle age! What d’ye think o’ that?”

Oscar—who, although much inclined to fun and humour, did not always understand the curious phases of them presented to him by his civilised friend—looked innocently in his face and said, “Me no tink about it at all!” Whereupon Olly burst into a short laugh, and expressed his belief that, on the whole, that state of mind was about the happiest he could come to.

“How long, think you, will it take us to reach the wigwams of your kindred from this point?” asked Hendrick of their guide, as he prepared to lie down for the night.

“Two days,” answered the Indian.

“God grant that we may be in time,” murmured Paul, “I fear a thaw, for it would delay us greatly.”

That which was feared came upon them the next day. They were yet asleep when those balmy influences, which alone have power to disrupt and destroy the ice-king’s reign, began to work, and when the travellers awoke, the surface of the land was moist. It was not soft, however, for time is required to draw frost out of the earth, so that progress was not much impeded. Still, the effect of the thaw depressed their spirits a good deal, for they were well aware that a continuance of it would render the low grounds, into which they had frequently to descend, almost impassable.

It was, therefore, with anxious forebodings that they lay down to rest that night, and Paul’s prayer for strength and guidance was more fervent than usual.

About this period of the year changes of temperature are sometimes very abrupt, and their consequences curious. During the night frost had again set in with great intensity. Fatigue had compelled the party to sleep longer than usual, despite their anxiety to press forward, and when they awoke the rays of the rising sun were sweeping over the whole landscape, and revealing, as well as helping to create, a scene of beauty which is seldom, if ever, witnessed elsewhere.

When rain falls with a low thermometer near the earth it becomes frozen the moment it reaches the ground, and thus a regular deposit of pure glassy ice takes place on every branch and twig of the leafless shrubs and trees. The layer of ice goes on increasing, sometimes, till it attains the thickness of half an inch or more. Thus, in a few hours, a magical transformation is brought about. The trees seem to be hung with glittering jewels; the larger limbs are edged with dazzling ice-ropes; the minutest twigs with threads of gleaming crystal, and all this, with the sun shooting on and through it, presents a scene of splendour before which even our most vivid conceptions of fairy-land must sink into comparative insignificance.

Such, then, was the vision presented to the gaze of the rescue party on awaking that morning. To some of them it was a new revelation of the wonderful works of God. To Hendrick and the Indian it was familiar enough. The Newfoundlanders of modern times know it well by the name of a “silver thaw.”

After the first gaze of surprise and admiration, our travellers made hasty preparation to resume the journey, and the frost told beneficially on them in more ways than one, for while it hardened the ground it rendered the atmosphere clear and exhilarating, thus raising their spirits and their hopes, which tended greatly to increase their power of action and endurance.

That night they encamped again on a commanding height, and prepared supper with the hopeful feelings of men who expect to gain the end of their journey on the morrow.

As if to cheer them still more, the aurora borealis played in the heavens that night with unwonted magnificence. It is said that the northern lights are grander in Newfoundland even than in the Arctic regions. At all events they were finer than anything of the kind that had ever before been seen by Paul Burns or Captain Trench and his son, insomuch that the sight filled them with feelings of awe.

The entire heavens seemed to be ablaze from horizon to zenith, not as with the lurid fires of a great conflagration, which might suggest only the idea of universal devastation, but with the tender sheen of varied half-tints, playfully shooting athwart and intermingling with brighter curtains of light of every conceivable hue.

The repose of the party was somewhat interfered with by the wonders that surrounded them that night, and more than once they were startled from slumber by the loud report of great limbs of trees, which, strong though they seemed to be, were torn off by the load of ice that had accumulated on them.

Daybreak found the party again passing swiftly over the land. It really seemed as if even the boys had received special strength for the occasion, for they neither lagged behind nor murmured, but kept well up during the whole forced march. No doubt that youthful enthusiasm to which Captain Trench had referred kept Olly up to the mark, while Osky—as his friend called him—had been inured to hard labour of every kind from infancy.

At last, about noon that day, their leader came to a sudden halt, and pointed to something on the ground before him.

“What does he see?” asked Paul, in a low voice.

“Footprints,” said Hendrick.

“What of—deer?” asked the captain, in a hoarse whisper.

“No—natives. Perhaps his friends.”

While they were whispering, the Indian was on his knees examining the footprints in question. Rising after a few minutes' survey, with a grave look he said—

"Strongbow is not sure. The prints look like those of his tribe, but—he is not sure!"

"At all events we can follow them," said Hendrick. "The land is open; we cannot easily be surprised, and we have our weapons handy."

As he spoke he drew an arrow from his quiver, and, affixing the notch to the bow-string, carried the weapon in his left hand. The others followed his example. Oliver felt his belt behind, to make sure that the axe was there, and glanced at the mighty club that hung from his shoulder.

Oscar, regarding with a slight degree of wonder the warlike arrangements of his friend, also fitted an arrow to his little bow, and then, with cautious steps and inquiring glances, the party continued to advance.

But Hendrick was wrong in supposing that a surprise was not probable, for suddenly from behind a frowning rock or cliff there appeared a band of armed men who confronted them, and instantly raised their bows to shoot. Quick as lightning the white men did the same. Evidently both parties were taken by surprise, for if the Indians had been a party in ambush they would have shot at the others without showing themselves. This or some such idea seemed to flash into the minds of both parties, for there was a slight hesitation on the part of each. Just at that moment a large black dog which accompanied the Indians, and had displayed all its formidable teeth and gums on seeing the strangers, was observed to cover its teeth and wag its tail interrogatively.

Hendrick gave a low whistle.

Instantly the dog bounded towards him, and began to fawn and leap upon and around him with every demonstration of excessive joy, at sight of which both parties lowered their weapons.

"The dog is an old friend," explained Hendrick to Paul. "Good dog," he added, addressing the animal in the Indian tongue, "you are a faithful friend—faithful in time of need."

Then, dropping his bow and advancing unarmed to the Indians, he said—

"This dog belongs to the Bethucks of Grand Lake. Did you obtain him from them?"

"No, we did not," replied one of the Indians, who seemed from his bearing to be a chief, "but we are kinsmen of the men of Grand Lake. One of their braves, Little Beaver, took one of our girls, Rising Sun, for his wife. We come from yonder (pointing northward). Some moons have passed since Little Beaver, who came to revisit us with his wife, left us to return to his wigwam on Grand Lake."

"I know Little Beaver well," said Hendrick, as the chief paused at this point; "the dog belongs to him."

Without noticing the remark the chief continued—

"When Little Beaver and Rising Sun left us they went on alone by the shores of the great salt lake. We never saw our brave in life again. Some time after, a party of our warriors came upon a grave. They examined it, and found the dead body of Little Beaver. It was bruised, and many bones were broken. A party of white men had built lodges near to the place. It was they who had murdered Little Beaver, we knew, for there was no sign of others near, and his dog was with them. So our braves went to the kinsmen of Rising Sun, and we returned and attacked the palefaces."

"Did you slay all the palefaces?" asked Hendrick anxiously.

"No, some we slew, others we took prisoners."

Hendrick thought it best to reserve in the meantime his communication of all this to Paul and his friends.

"I am your kinsman also," he said to the chief, "for Trueheart is my wife. I have much to say to you, but our business is pressing. Will you walk with me while we talk?"

The chief bowed his head, and ordered his party to fall to the rear and follow, while he walked in advance with the pale-faced hunter.

Hendrick then explained to the Indian as much about the wreck of the *Water Wagtail* and the dismissal of Captain Trench and his comrades as he thought necessary, and then said that although his three friends were indignant at the treatment they had received from their comrades, they would be grieved to hear that any of them were to be killed, and he greatly wished to prevent that. "Would the chief guide him to the place where the prisoners were?"

"I will guide you," said the chief, "but you will find it hard to save them. Palefaces have slain Little Beaver and stolen Rising Sun, and palefaces must die."

Chapter Twenty One.

Old Friends in a Sad Plight.

Anxious though Paul Burns naturally was for the fate of the crew of the *Water Wagtail*, he could not help being interested in and impressed by the fine country which he was thus unexpectedly obliged to traverse. His mind being of a practical and utilitarian cast, as well as religious, he not only admired the grand and richly diversified land as

being part of the works of God, but as being eminently suitable for the use and enjoyment of man.

“Look there,” he said to Captain Trench, as they plodded steadily along, at the same time pointing to a break in a neighbouring cliff which revealed the geological features of the land. “Do you see yonder beds of rock of almost every colour in the rainbow? These are marble-beds, and from the look of the parts that crop out I should say they are extensive.”

“But not of much use,” returned the captain, “so long as men are content to house themselves in huts of bark and skins.”

“So might some short-sighted mortal among our own savage forefathers have said long ago if the mineral wealth of Britain had been pointed out to him,” returned Paul. “Yet we have lived to see the Abbey of Westminster and many other notable edifices arise in our land.”

“Then you look forward to such-like rising in this land?” said the captain, with something of a cynical smile.

“Well, not exactly, Master Trench; but our grandchildren may see them, if men will only colonise the land and strive to develop its resources on Christian principles.”

“Such as—?” asked Trench.

“Such as the doing to others as one would have others do to one’s-self, and the enacting of equal laws for rich and poor.”

“Then will Newfoundland *never* be developed,” said the captain emphatically; “for history tells us that the bulk of men have never been guided by such principles since the days of Adam.”

“Since when were you enrolled among the prophets, Master Trench?”

“Since you uttered the previous sentence, Master Paul. I appeal to your own knowledge of history.”

“Nay, I question not your historical views, but your prophetical statements, as to the fate of this island. Have you not heard of this writing—that ‘the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea?’ Does not that signify completeness in the spread of knowledge? And when that comes to pass, will it bear no good fruit? If not, why is it recorded as a blessed state of things to which we may look forward, and towards which we may strive? I admit that the wickedness of man may delay the desired end. Unjust laws, interference with freedom of action, hatred of truth, may check progress here as it has done elsewhere; but who can tell how soon the truth, as it is in Jesus, may begin to operate, or how rapidly it may culminate?”

“You may be right, Master Paul; I know not. Anyhow I withdraw my claim to be numbered with the prophets—all the more that I see Strongbow making signals which I don’t rightly understand.”

The Indian guide, who had been walking somewhat in advance of the party, was seen standing on the summit of a knoll making signals, not to his friends behind him, but apparently to some one in front. Hastening forward they soon found that he had discovered friends,—a body of Indians, who were hurrying to meet him; while down in the valley beyond, which suddenly burst upon their view, stood an extensive Indian village. It was of that evanescent and movable kind, which consists of cone-like tents made of skins and bark spread upon poles.

“They are friends,” said Strongbow, when Hendrick and the others reached him; “kinsmen of the murdered Little Beaver.”

“Friends of Hendrick also, I see,” said the captain to Paul, as the hunter hastened forward to meet the Indians and salute them.

He was right, and a few minutes’ conversation with his friends sufficed to put the guide in possession of all he wished to know. Returning to his companions, he at once relieved their minds, to some extent at least, by telling them that it was indeed the tribe into whose hands their old shipmates had fallen, and that the sailors were still alive and well, though prisoners, and lying under sentence of death.

“Come, that at all events is good news,” said Paul. “I thank God we are not too late, and I make no doubt that we will persuade the Indians to delay execution of the sentence till we find out whether or not they have been guilty of this murder. Some of our old shipmates I know are capable of it, but others are certainly innocent.”

Hendrick did not at once reply. It was evident from his looks that he had not much hope in the merciful disposition of the Indians.

“I know some men of this tribe,” he said, “but not all of them—though they all know me by report. You may at least depend on my influence being used to the utmost in behalf of your friends. Come, we will descend.”

A few minutes’ walk brought them to the foot of the hill where the Indian tents were pitched. Here they found a multitude of men, women, and children watching them as they descended the hill, and, from the looks of many of the former, it seemed not at all improbable that a rough reception awaited them.

“You see,” said Paul, in a low voice to the captain, “they probably class us with the murderers, because of our white skins. Our only hope, under God, rests in Hendrick.”

That Paul’s hope was not ill-founded became apparent the moment the hunter made himself known. For the scowling brows cleared at once, and one or two men, who had formerly met with the white hunter, came forward and saluted

him in the European manner which he had already taught to many of the red men, namely, with a shake of the hand.

A great palaver followed in the wigwam of the chief, Bearpaw, in the course of which many things were talked about; but we confine our record to that part of the talk which bears specially on our tale.

“The men must die,” said Bearpaw sternly. “What you tell me about their harsh treatment of their chief and his son and friend only proves them to be the more deserving of death. My two young braves who visited them on the island were treated like dogs by some of them, and Little Beaver they have slain. It is just that they should die.”

“But my three friends here,” returned Hendrick, “treated your braves well, and they had no knowledge or part in the killing of Little Beaver. Perhaps the palefaces did *not* kill him. Do they admit that they did?”

“How can we tell what they admit? We know not their language, nor they ours. But there is no need to palaver. Did not Strongbow and his braves find the dead body of Little Beaver bruised and broken? Did they not see his black dog in the paleface camp, and has not Rising Sun disappeared like the early frost before the sun? Doubtless she is now in the camp with those palefaces who have escaped us, but whom we will yet hunt down and kill.”

“Bearpaw is right,” said Hendrick, “murderers deserve to die. But Bearpaw is also just; he will let the men of the sea speak in their own defence now that I am here to interpret?”

“Bearpaw is just,” returned the chief. “He will hear what the palefaces have got to say. One of the young men will take you to their prison.”

He signed as he spoke to a young Indian, who instantly left the tent, followed by Hendrick and his friends.

Passing right through the village the party reached a precipice, on the face of which was what appeared to be the entrance to a cavern. Two Indians stood in front of it on guard. A voice was heard within, which struck familiarly yet strangely on Paul and the captain’s ears. And little wonder, for it was the voice of Grummidge engaged in the unaccustomed act of prayer! The young Indian paused, and, with a solemn look, pointed upwards, as if to intimate that he understood the situation, and would not interrupt. Those whom he led also paused and listened—as did the sentinels, though they understood no word of what was said.

Poor Grummidge had evidently been brought very low, for his once manly voice was weak and his tones were desponding. Never before, perhaps, was prayer offered in a more familiar or less perfunctory manner.

“O Lord,” he said, “*do* get us out o’ this here scrape somehow! We don’t deserve it, though we *are* awful sinners, for we’ve done nothin’ as I knows on to hurt them savages. We can’t speak to them an’ they can’t speak to us, an’ there’s nobody to help us. Won’t *you* do it, Lord?”

“Sure it’s no manner o’ use goin’ on like that, Grummidge,” said another voice. “You’ve done it more than wance a’ready, an’ there’s no answer. Very likely we’ve bin too wicked intirely to deserve an answer at all.”

“Speak for yourself Squill,” growled a voice that was evidently that of Little Stubbs. “I don’t think I’ve been as wicked as you would make out, nor half as wicked as yourself! Anyhow, I’m goin’ to die game, if it comes to that. We can only die once, an’ it’ll soon be over.”

“Ochone!” groaned Squill, “av it wasn’t for the short allowance they’ve putt us on, an’ the bad walkin’ every day, an’ all day, I wouldn’t mind so much, but I’ve scarce got strength enough left to sneeze, an’ as to my legs, och! quills they are instid of Squill’s.”

“For shame, man,” remonstrated Grummidge, “to be makin’ your bad jokes at a time like this.”

The tone of the conversation now led the young Indian to infer that interruption might not be inappropriate, so he turned round the corner of rock that hid the interior from view, and led his party in front of the captives. They were seated on the ground with their backs against the wall, and their arms tied behind them.

The aspect of the unfortunate prisoners was indeed forlorn. It would have been ludicrous had it not been intensely pitiful. So woe-begone and worn were their faces that their friends might have been excused had they failed to recognise them, but even in the depths of his misery and state of semi-starvation it was impossible to mistake the expressive visage of poor Squill, whose legs were indeed reduced to something not unsuggestive of “quills,” to say nothing of the rest of his body.

But all the other prisoners, Grummidge, Stubbs, Blazer, Taylor, and Garnet, were equally reduced and miserable, for the harsh treatment and prolonged journeying through forest and swamp, over hill and dale, on insufficient food, had not only brought them to the verge of the grave, but had killed outright one or two others of the crew who had started with them.

The visitors, owing to their position with their backs to the light of the cave’s mouth, could not be recognised by the prisoners, who regarded them with listless apathy until Captain Trench spoke, swallowing with difficulty a lump of some sort that nearly choked him.

“Hallo! shipmates! how goes it? Glad to have found ye, lads.”

“Och!” exclaimed Squill, starting up, as did all his companions; but no other sound was uttered for a few seconds. Then a deep “thank God” escaped from Grummidge, and Little Stubbs tried to cheer, but with small success; while one or two, sitting down again, laid their thin faces in their hands and wept.

Reader, it were vain to attempt a description of the scene that followed, for the prisoners were not only overwhelmed

with joy at a meeting so unexpected, but were raised suddenly from the depths of despair to the heights of confident hope, for they did not doubt that the appearance of their mates as friends of the Indians was equivalent to their deliverance. Even when told that their deliverance was by no means a certainty, their joy was only moderated, and their hope but slightly reduced.

“But tell me,” said Paul, as they all sat down together in the cave, while the Indians stood by and looked silently on, “what is the truth about this Indian who was murdered, and the dog and the woman?”

“The Indian was never murdered,” said Grummidge stoutly. “He had evidently fallen over the precipice. We found him dead and we buried him. His dog came to us at last and made friends with us, though it ran away the day the settlement was attacked. As to the woman, we never saw or heard of any woman at all till this hour!”

When Bearpaw was told how the matter actually stood, he frowned and said sternly—

“The palefaces lie. If they never saw Rising Sun, why did she not come back to us and tell what had happened? She was not a little child. She was strong and active, like the young deer. She could spear fish and snare rabbits as well as our young men. Why did she not return? Where is she? Either she is dead and the palefaces have killed her, or they have her still among them. Not only shall the palefaces answer for her with their lives, but the Bethucks will go on the war-path to the coast and sweep the paleface settlement into the sea!”

It was of no avail that Hendrick pleaded the cause of the prisoners earnestly, and set forth eloquently all that could be said in their favour, especially urging that some of them had been kind to the two Indians who first visited the white men. Rising Sun had been a favourite with the chief; she was dead—and so the palefaces must die!

Chapter Twenty Two.

Tells of Terrible Suspense—Violent Intentions and Religious Discussion.

“Now I tell you what it is, Master Hendrick,” said Captain Trench, the day after their arrival at the Indian camp. “I see this is goin’ to be an ugly business, an’ I give you fair warning that I’m goin’ to git surly. I won’t stand by quietly and see Grummidge and my men slaughtered before my eyes without movin’ a finger. I’ll keep quiet as long as there’s any chance of all your palaverin’ resulting in anything, but if the worst comes to the worst I’ll show fight, even if I should have to stand alone with all the red devils in Newfoundland arrayed against me.”

“I honour your feelings, Captain Trench, but doubt your judgment. How do you propose to proceed?”

“Will you join me? Answer me that question first.”

“I will join you in any scheme that is reasonable,” returned Hendrick, after a pause, “but not in a useless attempt to fight against a whole colony of Indians.”

“Then I’ll keep my plans of procedure in my own noddle,” said the captain, turning away with an indignant fling, and taking the path that led to the cave or prison-house of his shipmates, for as yet they were allowed free intercourse with their friends.

“Grummidge,” said he, in a stern voice, as he squatted down on the floor beside the unfortunate seaman, “things look bad, there’s no doubt about that, an’ it would be unkind deception to say otherwise, for that villain Bearpaw seems to git harder and harder the more they try to soften him. Now what I want to know is, are you an’ the others prepared to join me, if I manage to cut your cords an’ give you weapons, an’—”

“Shush! clap a stopper on your mouth, cappen,” said Grummidge in an undertone, “the redskins are listening.”

“An’ what then? They know no more about English than I know about Timbuctoosh,” returned the captain irascibly. “Let ’em listen! What I was a-goin’ to say is, are you an’ the other lads ready to follow me into the woods an’ bolt if we can, or fight to the death if we can’t?”

“Sure an’ *I’m* ready to fight,” interposed Squill, “or to follow ye to the end o’ the world, an’ further; but if I do I’ll have to leave my legs behind me, for they’re fit for nothin’. True it is, I feel a little stronger since your friend Hendrick got the bastes to increase our allowance o’ grub, but I’m not up to much yet. Howsiver, I’m strong enough p’r’aps to die fightin’. Anyhow, I’ll try.”

“So will I,” said Little Stubbs. “I feel twice the man I was since you found us.”

“Putt me down on the list too, cap’n,” said Fred Taylor, who was perhaps the least reduced in strength of any of the prisoners. “I’m game for anything short o’ murder.”

Similar sentiments having been expressed by his other friends, the captain’s spirit was somewhat calmed.

Leaving them he went into the woods to ponder and work out his plans. There he met Paul and Hendrick.

“We are going to visit the prisoners,” said the former.

“You’ll find ’em in a more hopeful frame of mind,” observed the captain.

“I wish they had better ground for their hopes,” returned his friend, “but Bearpaw is inexorable. We are to have a final meeting with him to-morrow. I go now to have a talk with our poor friends. It may be that something in their

favour shall be suggested."

Nothing, however, was suggested during the interview that followed, which gave the remotest hope that anything they could say or do would influence the savage chief in favour of his prisoners. Indeed, even if he had been mercifully disposed, the anger of his people against the seamen—especially the relatives of Little Beaver and those who had been wounded during the attack on Wagtail settlement—would have constrained him to follow out what he believed to be the course of justice.

When the final meeting between the visitors and the chief took place, the latter was surrounded by his principal warriors.

"Hendrick," he said, in reply to a proposal that execution should be at least delayed, "the name of the white hunter who has mated with the Bethuck girl is respected everywhere, and his wishes alone would move Bearpaw to pardon his paleface foes, but blood has been shed, and the price of blood must be paid. Hendrick knows our laws—they cannot be changed. The relations of Little Beaver cry aloud for it. Tell your paleface friends that Bearpaw has spoken."

When this was interpreted to Paul Burns a sudden thought flashed into his mind, and standing forth with flushed countenance and raised arm, he said—

"Hendrick, tell the chief of the Bethucks that when the Great Spirit formed man He made him without sin and gave him a just and holy law to obey; but man broke the law, and the Great Spirit had said that the price of the broken law is death. So there seemed no hope for man, because he could not undo the past, and the Great Spirit would not change His law. But he found a way of deliverance. The Great Spirit himself came down to earth, and, as the man Jesus Christ, paid the price of the broken law with His own blood, so that guilty, but forgiven, man might go free. Now, if the Great Spirit could pardon the guilty and set them free, would it be wrong in Bearpaw to follow His example?"

This was such a new idea to the Indian that he did not at first reply. He stood, with folded arms and knitted brow, pondering the question. At last he spoke slowly—

"Bearpaw knows not the thing about which his paleface brother speaks. It may be true. It seems very strange. He will inquire into the matter hereafter. But the laws that guide the Great Spirit are not the laws that guide men. What may be fit in Him, may not be fit in them."

"My dark-skinned brother is wrong," said Hendrick. "The law that guides the Great Spirit, and that *should* guide all His creatures, is one and the same. It is the law of love."

"Was it love that induced the palefaces to kill Little Beaver and steal Rising Sun?" demanded the chief fiercely.

"It was not," replied Hendrick; "it was sin; and Bearpaw has now an opportunity to act like the Great Spirit by forgiving those who, he thinks, have sinned against him."

"Never!" returned the chief vehemently. "The palefaces shall die; but they shall live one day longer while this matter is considered in council, for it is only children who act in haste. Go! Bearpaw has spoken."

To have secured even the delay of a single day was almost more than the prisoners' friends had hoped for, and they resolved to make the most of it.

"Now, Hendrick," said Paul, when they were in the tent that had been set aside for their use, "we must be prepared, you and I, to give the chief a full account of our religion; for, depend on it, his mind has been awakened, and he won't rest satisfied with merely discussing the subject with his men of war."

"True, Paul; what do you propose to do?"

"The first thing I shall do is to pray for guidance. After that I will talk with you."

"For my part," said Captain Trench, as Paul rose and left the tent, "I see no chance of moving that savage by religion or anything else, so I'll go an' make arrangements for the carryin' out o' *my* plans. Come along to the woods with me, Olly, I shall want your help."

"Father," said the boy, in a serious tone, as they entered the forest, "surely you don't mean to carry out in earnest the plan you spoke of to Grummidge and the others yesterday?"

"Why not, my son?"

"Because we are sure to be all killed if you do. As well might we try to stop the rising tide as to subdue a whole tribe of savages."

"And would you, Olly," said the seaman, stopping and looking sternly at the boy, "would you advise me to be so mean as to look on at the slaughter of my shipmates without making one effort to save them?"

"I would never advise you to do anything mean, father; an' if I did so advise you, you wouldn't do it; but the effort you think of makin' would not save the men. It would only end in all of us bein' killed."

"Well, and what o' that? Would it be the first time that men have been killed in a good cause?"

"But a cause can't be a good one unless some good comes of it! If there was a chance at all, I would say go at 'em, daddy, an' bowl 'em down like skittles, but you know there's no chance in your plan. Boltin' into the woods an' gittin'

lost would be little use in the face o' savages that can track a deer by invisible footprints. An' fighting them would be like fighting moskitoes—one thousand down, another thousand come on! Besides, when you an' I are killed—which we're sure to be—what would come o' mother, sittin' there all alone, day after day, wonderin' why we never come back, though we promised to do so? Think how anxious it'll make her for years to come, an' how broken-hearted at last; an' think how careful she always was of you. Don't you remember in that blessed letter she sent me, just before we sailed, how she tells me to look well after you, an' sew the frogs on your sea-coat when they git loose, for she knows you'll never do it yourself, but will be fixin' it up with a wooden skewer or a bit o' rope-yarn. An' how I was to see an' make you keep your feet dry by changin' your hose for you when you were asleep, for you'd never change them yourself till all your toes an' heels came through 'em. Ah! daddy, it will be a bad job for mother if they kill you and me!"

"But what can I do, Olly?" said the mariner, in a somewhat husky voice, when this pathetic picture was presented to his view. "Your mother would be the last to advise me to stand by and look on without moving a finger to save 'em. What can I do, Olly? What can I do?"

This question was more easily put than answered. Poor Oliver looked as perplexed as his sire.

"Pr'aps," he said, "we might do as Paul said he'd do, an' pray about it."

"Well, we might do worse, my son. If I only could believe that the Almighty listens to us an' troubles Himself about our small affairs, I—"

"Don't you think it likely, father," interrupted the boy, "that if the Almighty took the trouble to make us, He will take the trouble to think about and look after us?"

"There's somethin' in that, Olly. Common sense points out that there's somethin' in that."

Whether or not the captain acted on his son's suggestion, there is no record to tell. All we can say is that he spent the remainder of that day in a very disturbed, almost distracted, state of mind, now paying short visits to the prisoners, anon making sudden rushes towards the chief's tent with a view to plead their cause, and checking himself on remembering that he knew no word of the Indian tongue; now and then arguing hotly with Paul and Hendrick, that all had not been done which might or ought to have been done, and sometimes hurrying into the woods alone.

Meanwhile, as had been anticipated, the chief sent for Hendrick and Paul to demand an explanation of the strange words which they had used about forgiveness and the broken law of the Great Spirit and Jesus Christ.

It would be out of place here to enter into the details of all that was said on both sides, but it may not be uninteresting to state that, during the discussion, both the palefaces and the red men became so intensely absorbed in contemplation of the vast region of comparatively new thought into which they were insensibly led, that they forgot for the time being the main object of the meeting, namely, the ultimate fate of the captives.

That the chief and his warriors were deeply impressed with the Gospel message was evident, but it was equally evident that the former was not to be moved from his decision, and in this the warriors sympathised with him. His strong convictions in regard to retributive justice were not to be shaken.

"No," he said, at the end of the palaver, "the blood of a Bethuck has been shed; the blood of the palefaces must flow."

"But tell him that that is not just even according to his own views," said Paul. "The blood of one paleface ought to suffice for the blood of one Bethuck."

This was received in silence. Evidently it had some weight with the chief.

"The paleface is right," he said, after a minute's thought. "Only one shall die. Let the prisoners decide among themselves who shall be killed. Go, Bearpaw has spoken—waugh!"

A few minutes later, and the prisoners, with their friends, were assembled in the cave discussing this new phase of their case.

"It's horrible!" said Grummidge. "D'ye think the chief is really in earnest?"

"There can be no doubt of it," said Hendrick.

"Then, my lads, I'll soon bid ye all farewell, for as I was your leader when the so-called murder was done, I'm bound in honour to take the consequences."

"Not at all," cried Squill, whose susceptible heart was touched with this readiness to self-sacrifice. "You can't be spared yet, Grummidge; if any man shud die it's the Irishman. Shure it's used we are to bein' kilt, anyhow!"

"There'll be none o' you killed at all," cried Captain Trench, starting up with looks of indignation. "I'll go and carry out *my* plans—ah! you needn't look like that, Olly, wi' your poor mother's reproachful eyes, for I'm determined to do it, right or wrong!"

Chapter Twenty Three.

Deliverance.

Fortunately for Captain Trench, and indeed for the whole party, the execution of his plan was rendered unnecessary by an incident the full significance of which requires that we should transport the reader to another, but not far distant, part of the beautiful wilderness of Newfoundland.

Under the boughs of a spreading larch, on the summit of a mound which commanded a wide prospect of plain and morass, sat an Indian woman. She might have been taken for an old woman, so worn and thin was she, and so hollow were her cheeks; but the glossy blackness of her hair, the smoothness of her brow, and the glitter of her dark eyes told that she was yet in her youthful years.

She sat perfectly listless, with a vacant yet steadfast expression on her thin features, as if she were dreaming with her eyes open. The view before her was such as might indeed arouse the admiration of the most stolid; but it was evident that she took no notice of it, for her eyes were fixed on the clouds above the horizon.

Long she sat, almost motionless, thus gazing into space. Then she began to sing in a low sweet voice a plaintive air, which rose and fell for some time more like a tuneful wail than a song. Suddenly, and in the very midst of her song, she burst into a wild laugh, which increased in vehemence until it rang through the forest in a scream so terrible that it could be accounted for by nothing but insanity. That the poor creature's reason was indeed dethroned became evident from her subsequent movements, for after falling backwards from the exhaustion produced by her effort, or, it might be, from the sheer weakness resulting from partial starvation, she got up and began quietly to cut up and devour raw a small bird which she had killed with a stone. Strengthened a little by this food, she rose and made a futile effort to draw more closely around her a little shawl, or rather kerchief of deerskin, which covered her shoulders, shuddering with cold as she did so.

Her short leathern gown and leggings were so soiled and torn that the ornamental work with which they had been originally decorated was almost invisible, and the moccasins she had worn hung in mere shreds upon her little feet.

Rising slowly, and with a weary sigh, the poor creature descended the side of the hill and entered the forest at the foot of it.

Lying concealed in a neighbouring thicket an Indian youth had watched the motions of the girl. It was evident, from his gaze of surprise, that he had just discovered her. It was equally evident, from his expression of perplexity, that he hesitated to intrude upon one who, he could not help seeing, was mad; but when she moved forward he followed her with the soft wary tread of a panther.

At first the girl's step was slow and listless. Then it became rapid. A fit of excitement seemed to come on, and she began to run. Presently the excitement seemed to have passed, for she fell again into the listless walk. After a time she sat down, and recommenced her low wailing song.

At this point, taking advantage of a neighbouring thicket, the young Indian drew as near to the girl as possible, and, in a low voice, uttered the Indian word for—"Rising Sun!"

Starting violently, the girl turned round, stretched out both arms, and, with intense hope expressed in every feature, took a step forward. In an instant the expression vanished. Another terrible scream resounded in the air, and, turning quickly away, she fled like a hunted deer.

The young man pursued, but he evidently did not try to overtake her—only to keep her in sight. The maniac did not choose her course, but ran straight before her, leaping over fallen trees and obstructions with a degree of agility and power that seemed marvellous. Sometimes she shrieked as she ran, sometimes she laughed fiercely, but she never looked back. At last she came to a small lake—about a quarter of a mile wide. She did not attempt to skirt it, but went straight in with a wild rush, and, being well able to swim, struck out for the opposite shore. The young man followed without hesitation, but could not overtake her, and when he landed she had disappeared in the woods beyond.

Skilled to follow a trail, however, the youth soon recovered sight of her, but still did not try to overtake her—only to keep her in view.

At length the fire which had sustained the poor creature seemed to have burned itself out. In attempting to leap over a low bush Rising Sun stumbled, fell, and lay as if dead.

The Indian youth came up and, raising her in his arms, looked very sadly into her face. She still breathed, but gave no other sign of life. The youth, therefore, lifted her from the ground. He was tall and strong. She was small in person, and reduced almost to skin and bone. He carried her in his arms as though she had been but a little child, and, an hour later, bore her into the Indian camp, for which for many days past she had been making—straight as the arrow flies from the bow.

He carried her at once to the chief's tent and laid his burden softly down, at the same time explaining how and where he had found her.

Bearpaw sprang up with an air of excitement which an Indian seldom displays. Evidently his feelings were deeply touched, as he knelt and raised the girl's head. Then he ordered his chief squaw to supply Rising Sun with some warm food.

It was evening when this occurred. Most of the people were supping in their tents. No one was with the chief save his own family and two of his braves.

When the poor maniac revived under the influence of the warm food, she started up with wild looks and sought again to fly, but was forcibly detained by one of the braves.

“Oh, let me go—let me go!—to his mother!” she wailed piteously, for she felt herself to be helpless in the youth’s strong grasp.

“Has Rising Sun forgotten Bearpaw?” said the chief tenderly, as he stood before her.

“Yes—yes—no. I have not forgotten,” she said, passing her hand over her brow; “but, oh! let me go to her before I die!”

“Rising Sun shall not die. She is among friends now. The pale-faced enemies who killed Little Beaver can do her no harm.”

“Killed him—enemies!” murmured the poor girl, as if perplexed; then, quickly, “Yes—yes—he is dead. Does not Rising Sun know it? Did she not see it with her own eyes? He was killed—killed!”

The poor girl’s voice rose as she spoke until it was almost a shriek.

“Rising Sun,” said the chief, in a tone which the girl could not choose but obey, “tell us who killed him?”

“Killed him? No one killed him!” she answered, with a return of the perplexed look. “He missed his footing and fell over the cliff, and the Great Spirit took him.”

“Then the palefaces had nothing to do with it?” asked the chief eagerly.

“Oh! yes; the palefaces had to do with it. They were there, and Rising Sun saw all that they did; but they did not see her, for when she saw them coming she hid herself, being in great fear. And she knew that Little Beaver was dead. No man could fall from such a cliff and live. Dead—dead! Yes, he is dead. Oh! let me go.”

“Not yet, Rising Sun. What did the palefaces do? Did they take his scalp?”

“No; oh! no. The palefaces were kind. They lifted him tenderly. They dug his grave. They seemed as if they loved him like myself. Then they went away, and then—Rising Sun forgets! She remembers running and bounding like the deer. She cannot—she forgets!”

The poor girl stopped speaking, and put her hand to her brow as if to restrain the tumult of her thoughts. Then, suddenly, she looked up with a wild yet intelligent smile.

“Yes, she remembers now. Her heart was broken, and she longed to lay it on the breast of Little Beaver’s mother—who loved him so well. She knew where the wigwams of Bearpaw stood, and she ran for them as the bee flies when laden with honey to its home. She forgets much. Her mind is confused. She slept, she fell, she swam, she was cold—cold and hungry—but—but now she has come home. Oh, let me go!”

“Let her go,” said the chief, in a low voice.

The young brave loosed his hold, and Rising Sun bounded from the tent.

It was dark by that time, but several camp-fires threw a lurid glare over the village, so that she had no difficulty in finding the hut of her dead husband’s mother, for, during the interchange of several visits between members of the two tribes, she had become very familiar with the camp. All ignorant of the poor maniac’s arrival, for the news had not yet spread, the mother of Little Beaver sat embroidering a moccasin with dyed quill-work. The traces of profound grief were on her worn face, and her meek eyes were dim as she raised them to see who lifted the curtain of the tent so violently.

Only one word was uttered by Rising Sun as she sprang in and fell on her knees before the old woman:—“Mother!”

No cry was uttered, not even an expression of surprise moved the old woman’s face; but her ready arms were extended, and the girl laid her head, with a long-drawn sigh, upon the old bosom.

Long did she lie there that night, while a tender hand smoothed her coal-black hair, and pressed the thin cheek to a warm throbbing heart, which feared to move lest the girl’s rest should be disturbed; but there was no need to fear that. Even the loving old heart could no longer warm the cheek that was slowly but surely growing cold. When the face was at last turned anxiously towards the firelight it was seen that a rest which could not be disturbed had been found at last—for Rising Sun was dead.

While this solemn scene was enacting in the old mother’s tent, a very different one was taking place in the cave prison, where the captives still sat, bound hand and foot leaning against the wall.

Captain Trench and his son sat in front of them. A small fire burned in the cave, the smoke of which found an exit among the crevices of the high roof. It cast a lurid light on the faces of the men and on projections of the wall, but left the roof in profound darkness.

The captain was still much excited, for the moment for his desperate venture was rapidly approaching.

“Now, Grummidge,” he said, in a low but earnest voice, “it’s of no use your objectin’ any more, for I’ve made up my mind to do it.”

“Which means,” returned the seaman, “that for the sake of savin’ my life, you’re a-goin’ to risk your own and the lives of all consarned. Now it’s my opinion that as the sayin’ goes, of two evils a man should choose the least. It’s better that I should die quietly than that the whole of us should die fightin’, and, maybe, killin’ savages as well, which

would be of no manner of use, d'ye see. I can only die once, you know, so I advise ye to give it up, an' leave the whole matter in the hands of Providence."

"Not at all," said Squill stoutly. "It's my opinion that when they've kilt you, Grummidge, they'll be like tigers when they've tasted blood: they'll want to kill the rest of us. No; I've made up me mind to bolt, and, if need be, fight, an' so has all the rest on us—so heave ahead, cappen, an' tell us what we've got to do."

"Well, boys, here it is," said the captain. "You see this weapon." He took up the heavy bludgeon that Oliver had made for himself on commencing his travels in Newfoundland. "Well, I've brought this here every time I've come just to get the two sentries accustomed to see me with it. This is your last night on earth, Grummidge, so I'm goin' to pay you an extra visit about midnight, by way of sayin' farewell. As I pass the sentries—who are quite used to me now—I'll fetch the first one I come to such a crack with this here that he will give no alarm. Before the other has time to wink I'll treat him to the same. It's a mean sort o' thing to do, but necessity has no law, so I've made up my mind to go through with it."

"It'll be a bad look-out if you do," said Grummidge.

"It'll be a worse look-out if I don't," replied the captain. "Then, when that's done," he continued, "I'll cut your lashin's, an' we'll crowd all sail for the woods, where I have already concealed some arms an' dried deer's-meat, an' if we can't get fair off and make for the east coast, we'll get on the top o' some mound or rock an' show these Redskins what English seamen can do when they're hard pressed."

"Not to mintion Irish wans!" said Squill.

"An' have Master Paul an' Hendrick agreed to fall in wi' this mad plan?" asked Grummidge.

"No, I can't say they have. To say truth, considerin' that Hendrick's a relation o' the Redskins an' that Master Paul is his friend, I thought it best to say nothing to them about it. So I'll—"

He was interrupted here by the sudden entrance of Hendrick and Paul themselves, accompanied by Bearpaw and the sentries. To one of the latter the chief gave an order, and the man, drawing his knife, advanced to Grummidge. The seaman instinctively shrank from him, but was agreeably surprised on having his bonds cut. The others having also been liberated, the chief said:—

"My pale-faced brothers are free."

"Yes, lads," said Paul, heartily grasping Grummidge by the hand. "God has sent deliverance at the eleventh hour—you are all free."

Chapter Twenty Four.

The Last.

The joy with which the news was received by our seamen and their friends was somewhat marred by the death of the poor girl who had unconsciously been the means of their deliverance. During several days there was profound grief in the Indian village, for Rising Sun had been a favourite with every one.

About this time one or two scattered bands of the party, which had gone to attack the paleface settlement, returned to the village, and when they found what had occurred in their absence, their enmity was turned into friendship, and general goodwill prevailed among all.

From the men just arrived Paul and his friends heard of the fate of poor Swinton and Jim Heron, but at the same time were relieved to find that none of the other seamen had been slain.

A grand council and palaver was held in front of Bearpaw's tent not long afterwards. It was a very grave and orderly council—one which would contrast favourably with many of our nineteenth century councils, for those savages had not at that time acquired the civilised capacity for open offhand misrepresentation, calumny, and personal abuse which is so conspicuous in these days, and which must be so gratifying to those who maintain that civilisation is the grand panacea for all the moral ills that flesh is heir to. Whether the Bethucks ever improved in this matter is not known, for history is silent on the point; but it is, perhaps, of little consequence, the Bethuck race having become extinct.

"It is now a matter for our consideration, my friends and warriors," said Bearpaw, in opening the palaver, "whether the palefaces are to spend the winter here and hunt with us, or to return to the Crooked Lake to stay with our kinsman, the white hunter, and his wife, the sweet singer. Of course, my warriors know well that we could keep the palefaces by force just as easily as we could take their scalps, if we were so disposed; but Bearpaw is not a tyrant. He will not inflict kindness on his friends. His heart is great. It swells within him. Something inside of him whispers, 'Let them do as they please.' That must be right, for if circumstances were reversed, it would be right to let Bearpaw do as he pleases."

The chief paused and looked sternly round, as if to say, "Contradict that if you dare!" Possibly he felt that the "something inside of him" might have stated the golden rule more simply. Returning to the point, he continued—

"Bearpaw is glad that Rising Sun came home before he killed the palefaces, for her words have saved their lives. He is also glad that the friends of the palefaces came, for they have taught him wisdom. They have shown him that he was going to act in haste; they have told him that the Great Spirit orders all events here, and the Great Spirit himself

has proved the truth of what they said; for, when Bearpaw refused to believe the palefaces, He sent Rising Sun to confirm their words, and to convince Bearpaw that he was wrong."

Again the chief paused, and looked round upon his men, some of whom appeared to dissent from what he said in condemnation of himself by slightly shaking their heads.

"Bethuck warriors," continued the chief, "have often told Bearpaw that he is wise. Bearpaw now tells his warriors that they are fools—fools for telling their chief that he is wise! If he had been wise he would not have come so near to shedding the blood of innocent men; but the Great Spirit prevented him. If the Great Spirit had not prevented him, still that would have been right, for the Great Spirit cannot do wrong, and He is not bound to give explanations to his creatures; though, doubtless, we will do it in the end. The heart of Bearpaw is grateful to his paleface brothers, and he would be glad if they will stay to hunt over his lands and palaver in his wigwam during the winter; but if they prefer to go, they may do as they please. Waugh! Bearpaw has spoken."

The chief sat down with emphasis, as if he felt that he had done his duty, and his men uttered a decided "Ho!" of approval.

Then Hendrick rose, and, looking round the circle with that grave dignity of countenance and manner which was not less natural to himself than characteristic of his Indian friends, delivered himself as follows:—

"I and my friends are glad that Bearpaw recognises the hand of the Great Spirit in all that has occurred, for we rejoice to believe that He is the great First Cause of all things, and that men are only second causes, gifted, however, with the mysterious power to do evil.

"In thanking my Bethuck brother and his warriors for their kind invitation—I speak for all my party—we are all grateful, and we would greatly like to spend the winter here, and enjoy the hospitality of our red brothers. Especially would my friend Paul Burns rejoice to read more to you from his wonderful writing, and explain it; but we cannot stay. My paleface brothers wish to return with me to Crooked Lake, where the sweet singer and her little ones await the return of the hands that feed and protect them."

Hendrick, pausing, looked round and received some nods of approval at this point.

"The winter is long, however," he continued, "and when the snow is deep over all the land we can put on our snow-shoes and revisit Bearpaw; or, better still, Bearpaw and his warriors may come to Crooked Lake, when the sweet singer and her daughter will give them hearty welcome, supply them with more food than they can consume, and cause their ears and hearts to thrill with music."

Hendrick paused again, and decided marks of approval greeted his last words.

"But, my friends and kinsmen," he resumed, "when winter draws to a close, the palefaces will go to the coast to see how it fares with their comrades, and to try whether it is not possible for them to make a big canoe in which to cross the great Salt Lake, for some of them have wives and mothers, sisters, fathers, and other relations whom they love, in the mighty land that lies far away where the sun rises—the land of my own fathers, about which I have often talked to you. If they cannot make a big enough canoe, they will wait and hope till another great canoe, like the one they lost, comes to this island—as come it surely will, bringing many palefaces to settle in the land."

"When they come they shall be welcome," said Bearpaw, as Hendrick sat down, "and we will hunt for them till they learn to hunt for themselves; we will teach them how to capture the big fish with the red flesh, and show them how to track the deer through the wilderness—waugh! But will our guests not stay with us till the hard frosts set in?"

"No; we must leave before the deep snow falls," said Hendrick. "Much of that which fell lately has melted away; so we will start for Crooked Lake without further delay."

The Indian chief bowed his head in acquiescence with this decision, and the very next day Paul and the captain and Oliver, with their rescued comrades and Strongbow, set out for Hendrick's home, which they reached not long after, to find that all was well, that the old Indian servant had kept the family fully supplied with fish, flesh, and fowl; that no one had visited the islet since they left, that the sweet singers were in good voice; and that the family baby was as bright as ever, as great an anxiety to its mother, and as terrible a torment to its idolising nurse!

Among others who took up their abode at that time on the hunter's islet was the large dog Blackboy. That faithful creature, having always had a liking for Hendrick, and finding that the old master and mistress never came back, had attached itself to the party of palefaces, and quietly accepted the English name of Blackboy.

Now, it is impossible, with the space at our command, to recount all the sayings and doings of this section of the *Water Wagtail's* crew during that winter: how they built a hut for themselves close to that of their host; how they learned to walk on snowshoes when the deep snow came; how, when the lake set fast and the thick ice formed a highway to the shore, little Oscar taught Oliver Trench how to cut holes through to the water and fish under the ice; how hunting, sledging, football, and firewood-cutting became the order of the day; supping, story-telling, singing, and reading the manuscript Gospel according to John, the order of the evening, and sleeping like tops, with occasional snoring, the order of the night, when the waters were thus arrested by the power of frost, and the land was smothered in snow. All this and a great deal more must be left untold, for, as we have said, or hinted, or implied before, matters of greater moment claim our attention.

One night, towards the close of that winter, Paul Burns suggested that it was about time to go down to the coast and visit their comrades there.

"So say I," remarked Grummidge, who at the time was feeding the baby, to the grave satisfaction of Blackboy.

“Sure, an’ I’m agreeable,” said Squills, who was too busy feeding himself to say more.

As Little Stubbs, George Blazer, Fred Taylor, and David Garnet were of the same opinion, and Hendrick had no objection, except that Trueheart, Goodred, and Oscar would be very sorry to part with them, and the family baby would be inconsolable, it was decided that a start should be made without delay.

They set out accordingly, Hendrick and Strongbow alternately leading, and, as it is styled, beating the track, while the rest followed in single file. It was a long, hard journey, but our travellers were by that time inured to roughing it in the cold. Every night they made their camp by digging a hole in the snow under the canopy of a tree, and kindling a huge fire at one end thereof. Every morning at dawn they resumed the march over the snow-clad wilderness, and continued till sun-down. Thus, day by day they advanced, living on the dried meat they carried on their backs, and the fresh meat and ptarmigan they procured with bolt and arrow. At last they reached the coast.

It was a clear, sharp, starry night when they arrived at Wagtail Bay, with an unusually splendid aurora lighting them on their way. Anxious forebodings filled the breasts of most of the party, lest they should find that their comrades had perished; but on coming in sight of the principal hut, Oliver exclaimed, “There’s a light in the window, and smoke coming from—hurr—!”

He would have cheered, but Grummidge checked him.

“Shut up your hatchway, lad! Let us see what they are about before goin’ in.”

They all advanced noiselessly, Grummidge leading, Strongbow bringing up the rear. The hut had two windows of parchment, which glowed with the light inside, but through which they could not see, except by means of one or two very small holes, to which eager eyes were instantly applied. A most comfortable scene was presented, and jovial sounds smote the ears of those who listened. As far as they could make out every man of the crew was there, except, of course, Big Swinton and Jim Heron. Some were playing draughts, some were mending nets or fashioning bows, and others were telling stories or discussing the events of the past day.

But a great change for the better was perceptible both in words and manners, for some of the seed which Paul Burns had let fall by the wayside, had, all unexpectedly, found good ground in several hearts, and was already bearing fruit. Dick Swan and Spitfire no longer quarrelled as they played together, and Bob Crow no longer swore.

“Heigho!” exclaimed the latter at the end of a game, as he stretched his arms above his head, “I wonder if we’ll ever play draughts in Old England or see our friends again!”

“You’ll see some of ’em to-night, anyhow, God bless ye, Bob Crow,” cried Grummidge, as he flung open the door and sprang in, while his snow-sprinkled comrades came tramp, tramp, in a line behind him!

Who can describe that meeting as they shook hands, gasped, exclaimed, laughed—almost cried; while Blackboy leaped around wildly joyful at the sight of so many old friends? We will not attempt it; but, leaving them there, we will conduct the reader down to a small creek hard by, where a curious sight may be seen—a small ship on the stocks nearly finished, which will clearly be ready to launch on the first open water.

From the wreck of the old ship, tools, and timber, and cordage had been recovered. The forests of Newfoundland had supplied what was lacking. Ingenuity and perseverance did the rest. Need we add that the work went on merrily now that the wanderers had returned?

Hendrick stayed with them till the little ship was launched. With a pleased yet sorrowful expression he watched as the eager men tested her stability and her sailing powers, and rejoiced with them on finding that she worked well and answered to her helm smartly.

“Good-bye, friends, and God watch over you and me till that day after which there shall be no more partings,” he said, as they all shook hands for the last time.

He was left standing beside his Indian friend on the rocks when the *Morning Star* finally set sail. The tall forms of the two men were still visible when the little vessel rounded the neighbouring headland and turned its prow towards England. They stood there sadly watching the lessening sails till the ship became a mere speck on the horizon and finally disappeared.

Then Hendrick slowly re-entered the forest, and, followed by Strongbow, returned to his own home in the beautiful wilderness of Newfoundland.

The End.

| Chapter 1 | | Chapter 2 | | Chapter 3 | | Chapter 4 | | Chapter 5 | | Chapter 6 | | Chapter 7 | | Chapter 8 | | Chapter 9 | | Chapter 10 | | Chapter 11 | | Chapter 12 | | Chapter 13 | | Chapter 14 | | Chapter 15 | | Chapter 16 | | Chapter 17 | | Chapter 18 | | Chapter 19 | | Chapter 20 | | Chapter 21 | | Chapter 22 | | Chapter 23 | | Chapter 24 |

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