

face was steep and the climbing difficult, so that by the time I had almost reached my point, Bert had found and shot at another bear, and mine, hearing the shots, had moved away. When I got down again to the level, Bert was hauling driftwood together for a fire; but on my appearing he looked doubtfully at the darkening sky, and consented to try to reach camp that night. We had far better have caught a salmon and stayed where we were, for in a couple of hours the darkness had become complete, and we had, in an attempt to make a short cut, waded so many of the arms of the main stream that we found ourselves out in the middle of the river-bed, with more streams to wade, wet to the waist, and the next stream so swift and deep that the old man, after trying it for a little way, came back to me.

'It's too deep and too tarnation strong, Cap.; we couldn't make it, and we'll drown if we try.'

'Then what are we to do?' I asked.

'Make a fire, if we can; walk about all night or freeze solid if we can't. Scratch round in them drift piles under the snow and ice if you can't find a bit of bark.'

As luck would have it, I found a piece, and then stood and shivered whilst Bert filled his hat with shavings, and watched with interest whilst the tiny spark of light flickered and struggled, the only bright thing in that great gloom. But Bert nursed the little flame well, and in half an hour the drift-pile itself was on fire; we had poured the water out of our snow-boots and stripped ourselves to dry our clothes, and were being burned by the fierce sparks whilst we stood in the snow, the wind meantime curling like a whip-lash round our bodies. All that night we stood, scorching on one side and freezing stiff on the other, watching our hour-glass, the moon, sail so slowly across the broad valley, until she dipped behind the western ridge, and then the grey of morning came and we began to wade again. When we reached camp it was midday, and we had eaten nothing since dawn the day before; and the old man's only comment was, 'By George, the Cap. never let a grunt [*i.e.* grumbled] all night.' *He*, an old man of sixty-five, praising a stronger man twenty-five years his junior for bearing what he had borne! What must the measure of that old man's endurance be for himself? But these are the men who still push our frontiers to the North; men who are never heard of, who do not even know themselves what fine fellows they are, but talk with regret and bated breath of the colonial politicians, railway chartermongers, and booblers whose doings fill the papers, and who sit in the high places in the synagogue.