

wild beast, mingled with incessant and ungovernable laughter. Checking our course, and turning to behold the cause, we observed, about a hundred yards below us, the sledge of the D'Egville, from which the almost convulsive laughter proceeded, and at a considerable distance beyond this again, an object the true character of which we were some time in discovering.

"It appeared, on subsequent explanation, that Cranstoun, who had been whispering soft nothings in the ear of Julia D'Egville, (here the captain was observed to prick his ear without materially altering his position) hem! Cranstoun, I say, it appeared had also taken it into his head to give her a specimen of his agility, by an attempt to clear a space between two masses of ice of somewhat too great a breadth for a heavy grenadier, buttoned up to the chin in a ponderous bear skin coat. He succeeded in gaining the opposite piece of ice, but had no sooner reached it, than he fell, entangled in such a manner in his covering that he found it impossible to extricate himself. To add to his disaster, the force of his fall broke off, from the main body, the section of ice on which he rested. Borne down by the current, in spite of his vain struggles to free himself, he was unable even to call for aid, his fingers moreover being so benumbed with cold that he found it impossible to unbutton the straps which confined his mouth. In this emergency he could only utter the strange and unintelligible moan which had reached our ears, and which, mingled with the bursts of laughter from Julia D'Egville, formed a most incongruous melange.

"The best of the adventure remains, however, to be told. Numbers of the peasantry from either shore, provided with poles, guns, and ropes, were now to be seen rushing towards the half congealed Cranstoun, fully imagining—nay exclaiming—that it was a wild bear, which, in an attempt to cross the river, had had its retreat cut off, and was now, from insensibility, rendered harmless. Disputes even arose in the distance as to whom the prize should belong, each pursuer claiming to have seen it first. Nay, more than one gun had been levelled with a view of terminating all doubt by lodging a bullet in the carcase, when, fortunately, for the subject in dispute, this proposal was overruled by the majority, who were more anxious to capture than to slay the supposed bear. Meanwhile the Canadian, harnessed to the sleigh of the D'Egville, roared out with all his lungs for the two parties to hasten to the assistance of the drowning British officer. In the confusion produced by their own voices, however, they did not appear to hear or understand him; yet all pursued the aim they had in view. Cranstoun's body was so doubled up that it was impossible for any one, who had not witnessed the accident, to imagine it anything in nature but a bear; and this impression, the strange moaning he continued to make, tended to confirm.

"The party of Canadians, favored by the nature of their floating ice-bridges, were the first to come up to him. A desperate effort of his cramped muscles had enabled Cranstoun to extend one of his legs, at the moment when they were about to throw a noose round his neck, and this was the first intimation the astonished peasantry had of their supposed prize being a human being, instead of the fat bear they had expected. Poor Cranstoun was of course liberated from his 'durance vile,' but so chilled from long immersion, that he could not stand without assistance, and it was not until one of their companions had approached with a sleigh that he could be removed. He kept his bed three days, as much I believe from vexation as illness, and has never worn his unlucky bear skin since; neither has he forgiven Julia D'Egville the laugh she enjoyed at his expense. Cranstoun," he concluded, "you may turn now, the story is told."

But Cranstoun, apparently heedless of the laugh that followed this—as indeed it did every—narration of the anecdote, was not to be shaken from his equanimity. He continued silent and unmoved, as if he had not heard a word of the conclusion.

"Poor Cranstoun," exclaimed the joyous De Courcy, in a strain of provok-