

OUR OWN.

If I had known in the morning
How wearily all the day
The words unkind
Would trouble my mind,
I said when I went away,
I had been more careful, darling,
Nor given you needless pain;
But we vex "our own"
With look and tone
We may never take back again.

For though in the quiet evening
I may give you the kiss of peace,
Yet it might be
That never for me
The pain at the heart should cease.
How many go forth in the morning
That never come home at night!
And hearts have been broken,
By harsh words spoken,
That sorrow can never set right.

We have careful thought for the stranger,
And smiles for the sometime guest,
But oft for "our own"
The bitter tone,
Though we love "our own" the best.
Ah! lips, with curse impatient!
Ah! brow, with that look of scorn!
'T were a cruel fate,
Were the night too late
To undo the work of the morn.

JOTTINGS FROM THE KINGDOM OF COP.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "QUEBEC PAST AND PRESENT."

LOSS OF THE FRENCH FRIGATE "LA RENOMMÉE"
ON ANTICOSTI, 14TH NOV., 1736—A WINTER
OF HUNGER, STARVATION AND DEATH—A
MISSIONARY'S CAREER.

Of the many shipwrecks, which gave the lower St. Lawrence, in former days, an unenviable notoriety, there were none, we believe, more harrowing—none so fully described, and certainly none so little known, as that of His Most Christian Majesty's sloop-of-war *La Renommée*, of which the full account in English appears now for the first time, being a translation from a narrative written by Father Crespel, one of the few surviving passengers.

La Renommée, a French sloop-of-war, of 14 guns, commanded by Captain de Tremeuse, was stranded on the 14th Nov., 1736, on a ledge of flat rocks, scarcely a mile from shore, about eight leagues from the south point of Anticosti, at the entrance of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. On the 3rd of Nov., 1736, *La Renommée*, bound for Rochelle, France, and consigned to the King's Treasurers, Messrs. Pacaud, sailed from the port of Quebec, with a complement of 54 men. All went well until eleven days later, when the vessel, whilst standing over under a stiff breeze from the south, towards Anticosti, and in the act of wearing, suddenly touched ground and commenced to ship heavy seas. All was confusion on board. The gunner's mate, alone, had the presence of mind to rush below to the store-room and remove some biscuit and provisions, together with fire-arms—a barrel of powder—cartridges: these things were stowed in the jolly boat. A heavy sea, having struck the vessel, wrenched off the rudder, when the commander ordered one of the masts to be cut, which, in its fall, made the ship careen over. Cool and collected, in the midst of danger, Captain de Tremeuse quietly gave orders to have the long boat hung to the davits. Twenty persons jumped in; as the last was entering one of the blocks gave way. Half of the inmates were precipitated in the sea—the rest clung to the sides of the boat, dangling in mid-air. Without moving a muscle the intrepid commander ordered the rear tackle to be let go, but as the boat straightened and touched the water two seas struck her. At last she shoved off.

One of the officers steered with a bad oar, and with a drenching rain passengers and crew made for the shore, where the ominous roar of breakers fell dismally on their ears. The boat, carried onward on the crest of a billow, was soon capsized and dashed on the iron-bound coast. The foresight of a sailor who jumped ashore, holding the painter, afforded the rest the means of dragging the craft out of the retreating billow. The sea had disorged its prey, but the position of the shipwrecked mariners was not much improved. They were huddled on a kind of small island, which the high tides evidently submerged. To reach the main island itself they had to cross the Pavillion stream; this was high costing them their life.

Some hours later the jolly-boat, manned by six persons, re-joined them. The crew reported that Captain de Tremeuse was still on board of *La Renommée*, with seventeen men, and that he refused to quit the ship.

One can imagine the prospects of those who had reached the shore—on the dreary island of Anticosti without fire or shelter of any kind, whilst those that had persisted in remaining on the deck of the doomed ship expected her to break up every instant. At midnight, the storm was at its height, all hope of surviving had vanished for them. At dawn it was found that *La Renommée*, being a new and staunch frigate, still held together. Not a moment was lost in making preparations to leave. Provisions, carpenters' tools, tar, an axe, and some canvass were deposited in one of the remaining boats; and Captain de Tremeuse, with a heavy heart, rolled up the flag of his good ship, took it in the boat with him, and quitted, the last of all his companions, the quarter deck of the noble frigate.

The second night passed on the island was still more dreadful than the first. Two feet of snow had fallen, and without the shelter of the canvass all would have succumbed to the inclemency of the weather. There was no time, however, to despond. All set to work. The

mizzen-mast of the ship had drifted on shore. It was cut up to make a keel for the boat; the latter was carefully caulked and made seaworthy. Whilst a supply of fuel was obtained by some of the crew, the others did their best to melt snow. Active occupation was thought would deaden sorrow, but on any interruption taking place despair would again reappear. Six months' captivity awaited the ill-fated mariners on a dismal isle, until navigation should open on the ensuing spring. Their stores stood thus:—

Quebec ships homeward bound carried provisions for two months only. At the date of the shipwreck *La Renommée* had already been eleven days out. The salt water had destroyed a portion of her ships' stores, and even with the strictest economy, in doling out a scanty daily ration, there was barely enough for forty days' subsistence. With the arctic temperature of winter the floating ice forming round the ship was rapidly cutting her out from connecting with the shore. Snow was lying deep on the ground, and as a crowning evil fever set in. A final decision must be arrived at immediately. It was known that a party of French, that winter, intended to pass the season at Mingan, on the north shore, to be ready for the spring seal-fishing. To meet it, it was necessary to travel forty leagues over the sea shore before the north-west point of the island was reached, and then twelve leagues of open sea had to be crossed. Would it be better to divide into two groups, one of which would winter at Pavillion river, whilst the other would push for Mingan to secure assistance? In theory the proposition had much to recommend it. The trouble arose, when it came to a decision, as to who should go to Mingan, and who should remain behind. None would consent to remain. In this emergency Father Crespel resolved to seek counsel and succor from God.

On the 26th of Nov., he celebrated Mass. This over, twenty-four of the crew then would resign themselves to the divine will and winter at Pavillion river, no matter what the consequences might be. This was sundering the Gordian knot. All that night the missionary was engaged in hearing confessions. Next day, after leaving provisions for their forlorn companions and swearing on the Holy Evangelists to return as soon as possible to take them away, Captain de Tremeuse, Father Crespel, and M. de Senneville, with thirty-eight followers, set off for the unknown shores of Mingan. The sense of a common danger having obliterated all distinctions of rank, a hearty and solemn greeting was exchanged all round. Alas! to many it was a final one! Two parties were formed by the commander.

This mode of travel was dreadful. By dint of tugging at the oars six to nine miles per day was the most they could achieve. The snow was their couch at night. A diminutive quantity of dry codfish, a few teaspoonsful of flour diluted with snow water, such was their evening meal.

A bright day was the 2nd December: a gentle breeze springing up, hope revisited their emaciated countenances, when, on attempting to double the south-west point of the island, the long boat, under sail, met with a heavy cross sea, and in wearing, the jolly-boat next to them was lost sight of. "Later on we found out," says Father Crespel, "what had happened it; it was swamped." Being forced to run for shelter, we at last succeeded in landing after infinite trouble. A large fire was lit on the beach to indicate, if possible, to the missing boat the spot where Captain de Tremeuse's party in the long-boat were located. After gulping down a little of the flour mixture, we sank down weary to sleep amidst the snow. All slept until the roar of a terrible storm, which threw the long-boat on the shore, awoke us. We set to repairing the damage done to our craft; the delay had the good effect that we succeeded in capturing, in a trap set for the purpose, two foxes who were prowling in the neighborhood.

On the 7th December Captain de Tremeuse was able to set out again, but with a heavy heart, having, despite all his resources, failed to obtain any tidings of the other boat. The craft had scarcely held her way for three hours, when another storm struck her. Not a harbor, not a creek to run into. This was one of our gloomiest nights—having to keep cruising, in the surf and floating ice, in a bay in which we could get no graplin to hold. A landing was effected at dawn. The cold got so intense that the bay froze over, the boat ceased to be of any use. Further we could not go. The stores were landed; huts erected with spruce boughs, also a depot for provisions in such a position that none could have access to them without being seen by all. Rules were framed for their distribution. Four ounces of paste daily to each man, and two pounds of flour and two pounds of fox meat constituted the daily allowance for seventeen men.

Once a week a spoonful of peas varied the fare. "This," adds Father Crespel, "was our best meal." Bodily exercise became a necessity. Leger, Basile and Father Crespel used to go and cut branches for fuel; another party carried the wood to the huts, while the care of keeping the forest path beaten and open devolved on a third. In the midst of these associations treats were not wanting. Having no change of clothing vermin soon preyed on these unfortunates; the smoke in the huts and the whiteness of the snow brought on ophthalmia; while unwholesome food and snow water had engendered constipation and diabetes—but the energy of these hardy men failed them not.

On the 24th December Father Crespel succeeded in thawing some wine for sacred purposes. Christmas was at hand, and midnight mass was to be solemnized. It was celebrated without pomp—without church ornaments, in the largest

of the huts. A touching spectacle it must have presented. These forlorn castaways, amidst the solitude of Anticosti, waiting their tearful adoration to the helpless babe in the stable of Bethlehem.

New Year's Day, 1737, was marked by a terrible reverse. Foucault, sent at dawn to reconnoitre, came back with the appalling news that the ice had carried away the long-boat. For five days nothing was heard but sobs and wailings. All, then, was lost. The idea of death took possession of every one's mind; the idea of suicide was rapidly invading all their diseased brains. Father Crespel, during these dark hours, unceasingly held forth on the duties revealed religion imposed—on the sufferings undergone by the Son of God to save mankind, beseeching his hearers to rely on divine mercy. The mass of the Holy Spirit was again solemnized on Epiphany Day, to call down on the deserted mariners strength from above—courage to accept the decrees of fate.

On the impulse of the moment, Foucault and Vaillant consented to go and search for the lost boat.

Their generous zeal met with its reward. Two hours later they returned with the news that, whilst looking round, they had come on an Indian wigwam and on two bark canoes, concealed under branches. They produced, in corroboration of their statement, an axe and the fat of a seal, taken from the wigwam.

This proved conclusively that the island was inhabited. Noisy demonstrations of joy replaced the deep set gloom. Next day another cheering incident was added. Two sailors, who had wandered from the rest, discovered the long-boat, stuck fast in a field of ice, and, in returning to camp, they had the inexpressible satisfaction to find on the shore a chest, containing wearing apparel; it had floated there. Their joy, however, was of brief duration. On the 23rd January, the master carpenter died suddenly. Distressing symptoms were manifesting themselves among the crew; every seaman's legs began to swell.

On the 16th February, an astounding blow, like a boomshell, fell in their midst. Captain de Tremeuse's brave spirit, on the wings of prayer, was wafted heavenwards. Next, expired Jerome Bassemain, next, Girard; lastly, died the master-gunner, a Calvinist, whose recantation, Father Crespel said he received in due time. Religion claimed its rights, and dispensed around its soothing balm in those moments of anguish. Simple, indeed, was the burial. The dead were dragged out by their fellow-sufferers; snow piled over the livid remains close to the entrance of the hut. This was all their physical exhaustion permitted them to do. Even the elements seemed leagued against them. On the 6th of March a snow storm over-whelmed the hut of Father Crespel, who had to seek shelter in the sailors' hut. For three days raged the blinding storm, keeping them prisoners in the hut, without fire, without provisions. They had snow water to drink. Five more of the party succumbed to cold and want. The snow had completely covered over their hut, to them a species of living tomb. By their united efforts they forced open the door, emerged from the snow-drift and sought out provisions. The temperature outside was such that half an hour of exposure sufficed to freeze the hands and feet of Basile and Foucault; their comrades carried them back in their arms. Their sadly reduced number procured a little flour from the depot. After these three days of abstinence, it was so ravenously devoured that, at one time, death seemed likely to be the result for all.

Encouraged by the example of Basile and of Foucault, Leger, Finai and Father Crespel went to the woods to gather fuel. The scanty supply was exhausted before eight o'clock that night. The cold was so great that Vaillant, senior, was found next morning frozen stiff on his bed of spruce boughs. It was judged prudent to seek another shelter, Father Crespel's hut being smaller, might, when dug out of the deep snow, be more easily kept heated.

Nothing was more heart-rending to view than the dismal procession which took place on the removal to the small hut: the less broken down of the seamen loading on their shoulders Messrs. Senneville and Vaillant, jr., whose flesh was falling to pieces, whilst Le Vasseur, Basile and Foucault, whose limbs had been frozen, dragged themselves on their knees and elbows.

On the 17th March, their familiar, death, ended the sufferings of Basile, and on the 19th Foucault, who was youthful and athletic, closed his career after a frightful agony. The festering sores of the survivors were wrapped up and bandaged with the clothes taken from the dead bodies. Twelve days later, Messrs. de Senneville and Vaillant's feet dropped off, and their hands began to mortify; christian resignation at times made room for despair.

On the 1st April, Leger, whilst reconnoitering in the direction where the bark canoe had been found concealed, captured an Indian and his squaw, whom he escorted to the camp. These were the first human faces seen since they had left Pavillion river, and Father Crespel, versed in Indian dialects, explained the state of affairs of the pale-faces, urging them with tears to go and hunt for game for the party. The Indian solemnly promised. One, two, three days expired, and still no word of the Indians. Leger and Father Crespel dragged themselves as far as the wigwam, where they found to their utter consternation that one of the canoes had disappeared. Misfortune having sharpened their wits, the two walking skeletons harnessed themselves to the remaining canoe which they drew to their wig-

wam, fastening it securely to the door, so as to render the escape of the owner from the island impossible without visiting the wigwam.

Alas! no visitor came to them, except the dreaded and familiar visitor—death—which successively carried off Le Vasseur, Vaillant, jr., aged sixteen, and de Senneville, aged twenty years, son of a King's Lieutenant, at Montreal—who had in his youth been a page of Madame La Dauphine of France, and had served in the *Monsquairs*.

Having no more sick to look after, Father Crespel re-assembled the survivors in council, when it was resolved to quit the deadly spot and to travel in a canoe. The frail craft in custody was accordingly repaired—smeared with fat—rude paddles were hewn in the woods, and the 21st of April fixed on as the day of departure.

Their commissariat consisted of the meat of a fox. It had been arranged that the juice alone of this meat, when boiled, was to be served out that day to the famished mariners, the meat itself being reserved for the morrow; but on the smell of the cookery reaching the olfactory nerves all ravenously attacked and eat the meat, which disappeared in a trice. "Instead of giving us strength this surfeit weakened us. We awoke," says Father Crespel, "next morning more debilitated, and what was worse without any food to fall back on."

Two days thus elapsed in hunger and despair; death was waited as a welcome deliverer; the famished men were repeating on the seashore the Litanies for the dead; when all at once was heard the report of fire-arms.

It was, adds Father Crespel, our friend the Indian who had returned to ascertain what had become of his canoe. At this juncture the unfortunates dragged themselves towards the Indian, uttering pitiful cries, but the savage chose to consider himself deaf to all their entreaties, and shortly took to his heels. Father Crespel and Leger, though insufficiently shod, under the sting of this new desertion, decided to give chase—crossed over Becon (sheldrake) river, and managed closing on the fugitive, whose flight was retarded by the weight of a seven-years child slung to his shoulders. The savage, to make safe his escape, pointed out to them a spot in the woods, where, he said, he had stowed away a quarter of bear's meat, half cooked. All that night was passed mutually watching one another. Next day Father Crespel intimated to the Indian to conduct him to the Indian encampment. The seven-years old Indian had been detained as a hostage, and placed on a sledge. Leger and Father Crespel yoked themselves to it, whilst the big savage walked before as their guide. After journeying on for three miles, the party struck on the sea, and as this seemed the shortest route, it was decided to go by water. The canoe could only contain three persons: Father Crespel, the Indian and his child. Load was the lamentations when the missionary got into the canoe, after beseeching his companions to follow on foot along the shore.

On the evening of that day the savage in hood Father Crespel to land and make a fire, to which the Father acceded the more readily that the wind was high, but having ascended a hummock of ice to look round, the red skin took occasion of the kind father having his back turned to fly into the woods with his child. Nothing now remained for Father Crespel to complete this chain of disaster but death. Deserted by all around, the brave missionary leaned on the barrel of his gun, poured out his sorrows to God, and, as he said, recited the verses of the Book of Job. Whilst thus engaged he was joined by Leger, who, with eyes swimming in tears, informed him that his comrade Furst had fainted and fallen down on the snow some distance away, and that he had been compelled to leave him to his fate. At that instant a gun-shot rent the air, in the direction of an opening in the forest. Leger, still buoyed up with hope, pressed Father Crespel to follow him. When in the act of entering the wood, a second gun report was heard. Instead of firing off their own muskets in reply, the Frenchmen advanced silently in the direction from whence came the sound, when soon they hit on a clearing, in the centre of which stood the hut of an Indian chief, with smoke issuing therefrom. The chief greeted them with kind words, explaining to them that the singular conduct of the Indian guide in running away from them was the effect of fear of the scurvy, small-pox, and "bad air."

But where was poor Furst? The missionary tempted the Indian by an offer of his gun if he would go and fetch their missing comrade. It was all in vain. Furst spent the night lying on the snow, where God alone protected him from the intense cold; "as for us," says Father Crespel, "though under the shelter of our hut, we suffered intolerably from the temperature, and it was only on the morrow, when we were starting to meet Furst, that he returned to us."

Two days more were allowed for recruiting, and mindful of the solemn pledge given to return with help from those who had remained at Pavillion River, they embarked on the 1st May for Mingan. Father Crespel reached there in advance of the others, having exchanged from the boat to a light canoe, which alone he paddled the space of six leagues. M. Volant, the head of the Mingan post, received his French compatriots with considerate kindness. Not a moment was lost to hurry on relief to the survivors of *La Renommée*. A large, well-equipped, and amply provisioned boat, under the guidance of Mr. Volant, shoved off, bearing also Father Crespel, Furst, and Leger.

On the craft nearing the Pavillion river, a volley was fired by the crew; instantly from