

moment about to spring at the other's throat, but he thought better of it.

With an insolent chuckle, that other snapped his fingers, wished the men "luck, and a full net," and then, turning on his heel, went briskly back to where his fort gates opened beneath the red eye of that great lamp which was the terror of the tribes.

At once almost without words the men took their places in the canoes, and before the Governor had reached his den their black craft had glided from the beach into those dim channels which make the highways of the north.

Silence fell upon them, and with it blindness, or something so akin to blindness that only vague shapes, islands were they or sea monsters bristling with spines, stood out now and again indistinctly from the sea of gloom over which, and through which, the Cossacks paddled.

These men had passed out of a World of dry Earth into a waste that was all water.

Beneath them the sea muttered incessantly; above them the rain poured with a steady insistence, which spoke of no beginning and held no promise of an end. There were no land voices to reach them in the darkness, only now and again the silence was outraged by the heavy splash of some great sea monster, or was swallowed up in the roar of an angry tide rip.

To the man in the grey coat it seemed as if his very spine was melting, and his entity being washed away in this hell of waters, in which he knew nothing, understood nothing.

At last, towards morning, when the sky was just grey enough for men to mark the misery in it, and see the weird outlines of the rugged shore, the leading steersman pointed to a gap in the line of coast, and uttered the words.

"The Shaman's village."

At once there was a stir in the boats, a muffled giving of orders, and an ominous handling of weapons, amongst those "reasoners" sent by Baranoff, and then the leading canoe passed out of the current where the great kelp streamed

against the rowers, into a deep inlet of still water.

Looking back along the canoe's wake, from the murky darkness of the inlet, Stroganoff saw a round head with bristling whiskers rise. It made no sound as it rose, and after a long look, sank silently, leaving no trace.

If it was a scout of the amphibious people of this strange world, he cared nothing. They had warning enough if any watched, for as the canoes came in towards the beach, there arose a roar of wings, and the splashing of heavy bodies which could barely lift themselves clear of the waters.

The wild fowl were full fed and noisier than the seal.

The beach up which the canoes glided with a soft oily sound, was a mass of sea leavings, ocean mud littered with the relics of fish, and heavy with the strong smell of the rotting kelp. It was more like the hauling ground of sea beasts than the harbour of a human village, but at the top of it, just above high water mark, a long line of canoes was ranged, covered for the most part with cedar mats.

Behind these, standing cheek by jowl, were nine or ten huge buildings, each capable perhaps of containing a hundred men beneath its roof tree. Before the low doorway of each, stood a grotesquely carved figure, not of one sea monster but of many, growing as it were the one out of the other, until each ended in the winged image of a raven.

Colour there was none to contrast with the grey of the fog curtain, except that here and there the yellowish moss had patched the buildings and the totem poles with leprous blotches, the earmarks of rain and decay.

Everything suggested a war between land and water, in which the slow insistent waters won. Even the rigid ranks of pine which closed up in rear of the buildings were grey and bearded with sea mildew and the trailing mosses which it begot.

But whatever lived in the log houses still slept, taking no note of Nature's sentinels, so that the Cossacks, under Yaksheem's directions, passed through