

sumed five pounds of flour which had been given them to carry—exactly one-third of the precious store on which the lives of all five men depended. For this offence, at such a time, of course there was but one punishment. It would be a nice question for the courts to decide, whether Mr. Pike, being in the position of the captain of a ship, would not have been justified in taking this extreme course and putting an end to both of them with the shot gun he carried. As it was he decided on grounds of expediency to let things take their course. On a subsequent occasion Mr. Pike did not scruple to secure obedience by a threat of death. By so doing he saved the life of one of the white members of the party; and both here and elsewhere there is abundant evidence to show that if a less resolute or less skilful man had been in command the whole party must inevitably have perished, or worse. For sheer dramatic force there is nothing in the book to surpass the lines in which Mr. Pike tells how near the five starving men on the Rockies were to re-enacting the tragedy of the *Mignonette's* boat.

"Our situation seemed utterly hopeless as we crouched over the fire that with difficulty maintained, and apparently the end had come. There was none of the kindly sympathy for companions in misfortune which men who share a common danger should have; a mutual distrust was prevalent; hatred and the wolfish madness of hunger ruled the camp, and to this day I cannot understand how it was that the fatal spark was never struck, and the tragedy of murder and cannibalism enacted on the banks of that ice-bound river without witnesses save the great silent mountains and the God who made them."

Mr. Pike has not forgotten the Greek canon which requires a certain air of calmness at the close of the drama. The last scene is laid in the centre of civilisation, and as Mr. Pike pens his final sentences in a "fashionable garret" in St. James's he remembers only the good times, and feels a longing once more "to pitch his lodge at the edge of the Barren Ground, to see the musk-ox standing on the snowdrift and the fat caribou falling to the crack of the rifle, to hear the ptarmigan crowing among the little pines as the sun goes down over a frozen lake and the glory of an Arctic night commences." Mr. Pike has felt the power of nature in that strange country in a way that is not given to all of us dwellers in cities. In the winter he was oppressed by the "deathly stillness" that makes a man "glad to cry aloud to break the awful spell of solitude"; and in summer he knew the strange beauty that made Sal-tatha, the Indian, ask of the priest who told him of heaven, "Is it more beautiful than the country of the musk-ox in summer, when sometimes the mist blows over the lakes, and sometimes the water is blue, and the loons cry very often"? His is no mere bowing acquaintance with nature, but an intimate friendship; and it is to this that the special quality of his work is due.

W. BASIL WORSFOLD.