

of. Still, I believed I should be able to find the water, even without the compass, and set off briskly. But the wood got thicker and thicker, the upturned trees lying across and through each other became more and more numerous; and the sun was already high when I at last took the compass from my pocket, and with its help I followed a straight course and I fortunately arrived at the lake. I found a great flock of ducks; but, apparently made shy by other hunters, they kept the middle of the lake, and very few swam around by the margin.

This was another difficulty; but as the lake did not seem to me to be large, I made up my mind to go around it.

I had killed three ducks, one by one; and somewhat ardently pursuing the game had not observed the progress of the day. Now I all at once noticed that the sun had declined very far toward the west. To get around the lake before sundown was, as I recognised, not possible, for as I could see at the clearings, I had not traversed half the distance; and in the northeast were gathered heavy masses of clouds which had almost overtaken the fleeing sun and sent the wind in advance whistling and roaring.

I saw nothing for it but to camp here. The few pieces of hard bread which I found in my pocket had little effect in allaying my hunger; and I did not take the time to roast one of the ducks. Moreover, the weather appeared to be on the point of becoming very disagreeable. I had got into very bad humour when, just at the right time, as I was going slowly along the shore, I found a canoe hewn out of a tree trunk. It was made fast to a root. Without a second thought I climbed in and paddled some two and a half English miles to the other shore, a huge, high, dead tree serving me as a mark to steer by.

The wind blew strong and the waves pitched the rudely-built and clumsy vessel about to such an extent that I had to apply all my strength and skill to keep in equilibrium and to propel it through the waves. In the meantime the sky began to be clouded over with snowflakes to such an extent that I was covered in a short time and only with difficulty could I keep my eyes upon the dead tree, and so hold my direction. At last I landed, fastened the boat to the shore and tried to find a road to some settlement.

In the meantime it had become quite dark; but a short distance ahead I was fortunate enough to discover a narrow foot-path, off which the snow melted in consequence of the wet and which led me through the wood like a faint line. I followed it confidently; and, at length, after walking perhaps an hour and a half, the glow of a distant light appeared, to which I hastily and joyfully made my way. I quickly reached it and soon was knocking at the outside door—which was at the same time the room door—of a farmer's house.

A German voice asked, "*Wer ist da?*" (Who is there?), and this streamed like balsam over my whole frame — particularly over the stomach.

It was the wife of a German wagon-maker who opened the door. Her husband had ridden to the small village a few miles away, but was expected back at any moment. The warm stove called back to new activity my nearly frozen animal spirits; and a cup of warm coffee which she set before me restored me quite to my former self. After the lapse of an hour or so, the husband, a friendly German, arrived. He had been three years in the country; he had come over without a red cent, but now he had acquired a very pretty little house, a bit of land and plenty of custom.

As it had snowed very hard all night, I promised myself a good hunt.