

He shook the snow from the sack, and threw it at the boy's feet. 'Here is a stranger, also, who seeks our hospitality.'

He said this as if asking for Jamie's consent, and as if the stranger were one of the good things that had been brought. The boy's thin face and sunken eyes gave him a look of almost inexpressible interest, which the stranger returned as he took a seat on the end of the settle.

When the supper was laid on the rude table, and the three sat down, the stranger said, 'Shall we not thank our Father?' He put a strange emphasis on the last two words, very noticeable to the old man and Jamie. He bowed his head, and they felt constrained to do the same. Then he uttered a few simple words of thanksgiving.

They listened to the roaring of the storm, which had increased in violence. The trees cracked and moaned, and those near the cabin swept it with their branches. Presently the young man, turning to Jamie, said: 'And are you contented, my lad, to live here alone with your grandfather, and never go out into the great forest?'

'Oh, yes, sir; grandpa is so good to me; and then sometime I shall go out of the cabin and be buried in the forest, where I can hear the birds sing in summer, and be warmly covered with the snow in winter.'

Tears came into the old man's eyes, and trickled down his cheeks.

'But would it not be delightful,' said the stranger, 'if you could now walk among all the trees in the happy summer days, and also trudge through the snow in winter?'

'Indeed it would sir; but I cannot with my poor, withered limbs.' His lip quivered with the emotion he tried hard to conceal. 'It is best to be thankful for what I have,' he added, 'as you told us when you blessed the supper.' The old man was astonished to hear Jamie.

'Yes, thankfulness is right, my child. But you shall go into the forest. Your songs and laughter shall echo in its depths. The birds shall sing, and the trees whisper to you. I will make your withered limbs whole.'

He spoke so confidently that the old man thought he must be some physician of greater skill than he had ever known. How could the boy's back be made straight? How could his withered limbs be made whole? Were ever such things done except in Palestine by the Master? But Jamie was more incredulous still. He looked at his withered hand as it lay on the table, and felt his back against the back of the chair. He recalled the long years of suffering he had endured. And yet when he smoothed his long, flowing locks, he felt a rather strange sensation of hope.

'Grandpa is good and learned,' he thought to himself; 'and he has taught me much of all that he knows, but this man is strange.'

'Oh, sir, when will it be?' he quavered aloud. 'I shall be so glad if I can walk as grandpa does, even with a walking-stock.'

'Neither stick nor staff shall you need, my lad. You said that sometime you should sleep in the forest. Think you that?'

Jamie looked at his grandfather, who sat silent, gazing wistfully into the stranger's face.

'Why, sir,' said Jamie, 'grandpa says that sometime we shall be buried side by side in the forest, and that we shall live again, and that I shall then have no poor, hunched back and withered limbs. Just in what way we shall come to live again, he cannot tell me; but I believe grandpa.'

He said this slowly between sobs; and the stranger waited patiently until he had finished.

Finally he said: 'I will tell you in what way. The Master said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." And he knew, for he was buried, although not in a forest like this, my lad; and he rose again. So shall you and grandpa.'

'I wish I knew more of the Master,' exclaimed Jamie; 'for he could tell me so many things. And if I walk, sir, through the forest or to the town, can I not find him?'

'To find him,' replied the stranger, 'you need not walk. He will come to you; and now that you have invited him, you may expect him.' He smiled sweetly as he spoke.

The wind outside continued to wail among the tops of the pines, and beat in fitful gusts against the cabin. The ice on the lake cracked with a loud noise in the keen cold. The old man barred the heavy door, threw a fresh log on the fire, which for a moment burst into a bright flame. Then he took a light, and invited the stranger into the only other room in the cabin. Within the room was absolutely nothing but a bed of savory pine-needles.

As the stranger arose, he said pleasantly, 'Shall we not ask for our Father's care while we sleep?' He knelt down by the side of Jamie's chair, and in plain and unpretending phrase he besought God's care.

As he lay upon his bed, Jamie could not get out of his mind the promise the stranger made, that, without any deformity whatever, he should walk some day. 'He meant after I die,' he thought, and fell asleep.

The morning soon came. It was still cold, though the wind had subsided. Just before dawn the old man arose. The cabin was still save for the slow breathing of Jamie. The old man busied himself a while in the half-darkness. He unbarred the door, and, looking out, saw the stars still glowing through the white tree-tops. Passing by the room where he had put the stranger, he saw that it was empty; indeed, the bed had not been disturbed. He was astounded and disappointed. Stirring the fire, he sat down before it, going over in his mind afresh all that the stranger had said. Suddenly he was startled from his reverie by hearing Jamie cry out, 'Oh, grandpa, grandpa!'

As he hurried across the cabin to discover the cause of Jamie's exclamation, the lad leaped out of bed and rushed into his arms. Before the old man could express his amazement, Jamie dropped to the floor and ran joyously about. The old man rubbed the moisture out of his eyes, through whose mist he thought he was surely deceived.

When Jamie had grown somewhat calm, he cried out, 'Grandpa, where is he?'

'Sh!' the old man said; 'he is gone. The room is empty.'

Jamie went to look for himself, and then he came and sat on his grandfather's knee, laying his head on the old man's shoulder. Then he asked again, as if he expected the old man to answer, 'Where has he gone?'

'I cannot tell you, lad,' he replied. 'It was a terrible night for him to go out in. We will go to town to-day and see whether we cannot find him.' How strange and sweet those words sounded to both of them, they only knew. 'Would you like to go, Jamie?' the old man asked.

'Oh, yes, grandpa; but I want to find him.' He raised his head from the old man's shoulder, and looked into his face. 'I know he came to me last night,' he added, 'when I was fast asleep, and laid his hand on my forehead. I know it was he; for I saw the lovely face, and flowing, bright hair, and kindly eyes. As he touched me, he whispered, "Jamie, dear, you shall walk to-morrow."' Jamie laid his head

again on the old man's shoulder, and broke into sobs.

The yellow sun rising over the tree-tops pierced the cabin with its rays, and they knew it was fully morning. Together they walked, hand in hand, to the door. They saw in the cold, white, glittering snow, footsteps departing from the cabin door, on each one of which was a large crimson spot. They understood then who the stranger was.

Christmas on Crusoe's Island

One Christmas morning not many years ago I found myself up a tree in Crusoe's island. I was hunting meat for my Christmas dinner shortly after daybreak that morning, and as the most abundant supply was promised by the peccaries, or wild hogs, that ranged the island, I had left camp and started out after them. It was great fun for a while, for I fell in with a herd of about a dozen and had secured two of the 'varmints' when the survivors, seeming to think that 'turn about is fair play,' began hunting me. . . . Fortunately for me, a great gum tree stood conveniently near, and by means of the lianas that swung from its branches I was soon safe from harm and looking calmly down upon the little black beasts as they raged around the trunk. . . . I had only a few rounds of ammunition suited to their needs, but I killed three more before it was exhausted, and peppered the hides of several others. The limbs I sat astride of were not so soft as they might have been if they had been made to order, and I was getting uncomfortable when I noticed a commotion in the herd. The leader of the band, a grisly old tusker with recurved fangs like Turkish scimiters, suddenly stood up and sniffed the air; then he uttered a 'whoof' of rage and despair, struck a zio gait and disappeared in the jungle, followed by all the survivors. I was saved by a black man and a dog.

The man who appeared at this juncture was the only other in that forest save myself, my sable servitor, Pappy Ned. He had been out all night hunting crapauds, or forest frogs, and was on his way back to our camp with a back-load of patrachians, the legs of which were to be served up in a style which only Pappy Ned knew to perfection.

'It's yo', massa!' he exclaimed in astonishment. 'Was dat yo' gun goin' off pam! pam! lak yo' shootin' a reg'munt ob sogers? Ki, but it's lucky ole Pappy Ned come 'long, hey? Dem hawgs done know Pappy Ned an' jes' c'lar out when dey hear um a'comin' along wiv dis yer dawg.' . . .

'You came along just in the nick of time, old friend, and I owe you another reward for saving my life a second time.' He had nursed me through a fever a few months before. . . .

'Oh, me, massa, dat ain' nuffin.'

Pappy Ned set to work dressing (or, to be exact, undressing) the peccaries, being careful not to taint the flesh with the contents of the peculiar musk gland which the species carries on its back, and while he is thus engaged seems a good opportunity for me to make my explanation as to the exact location of Crusoe's island.

It is not, as ninety-nine persons in a hundred think, the island of Juan Fernandez, on the south-west coast of South America, but it is a good many miles nearer the coast of the United States, in the south-eastern part of the Caribbean sea. I will not waste any time, either the reader's or my own, in argument, but respectfully refer the earnest inquirer to old Crusoe himself. Robinson Crusoe, Esq., mariner, of Bristol, England, whose adventures