

FRIDAY.

BY FRANCES.

CHAPTER V.

"It was all along of us sailing of a Friday."

The audience was heard to sigh faintly, having had a large experience of the ills attending a Friday's sailing.

"But Columbus did set sail on Friday," the audience was also heard to remark with a tinge of rising hope.

"I never knew no good come of sailing of a Friday," said the narrator obstinately. "We sailed from Peterhead in the expedition vessel, by the name of the 'Good Hope,' under command of Captain John Broke, R. N., aforesaid. I've heard tell that Government paid part expenses, but it was the Captain's own expedition and it fell most on him. The Captain's idea was to find—well, Master Friday, you not having been in them parts, you won't be knowing places by the names, no more than if I said we was above such and such a parallel. But to put it rough to you, we'll call this here lettuce a pint to the N. W., the rhubarb lying due north. This here line I make with my timber-toe gives you the line of coast on St. George's Sound; this here hole as I prod gives you Fort St. George. Well, you see, Master Friday, sailing up the Sound, you come to Fort St. George, and beyond that lies what they call Desolation Land, no one—leastways known to us—ever having gone further north than the Fort. Now the Captain's idea was that if a man crossed Desolation Land far enough, he'd come to open water on the further side, and he held this would open out a many waters as was blocked to us by the ice, and no one could say where the end might be. I don't know what made him run so on the idea of open water, but he used to work it out with the currents so as would convince a cleverer head than mine. I don't know how it might be myself, but there was one old chap amongst us as grew to believe in it hard and fast, and didn't go short of saying it would be that same sea as flows round the Pole itself. It's a very old tale among seamen, Master Friday, that there's open sea round the Pole, if a ship could get to it, and a many clever men have held to that before my day; but the times has changed. Well, this was a queer old chap, and he told it for gospel true, and he said the Captain's open water was that same. The Captain didn't, so to speak, set much account by the old tale; but his open water had been—as one may say—the longing of his life. Said he dreamed he saw it over and over, and heard the waves a-breaking, and couldn't rest for it. And the Captain knew what the Arctic was too, for he'd been on two expeditions before, one as a young man, and had to turn back being under command, and the other he'd brought as far as Fort St. George, and he had to turn back for sickness in the party. I've heard him tell that he waited seven years for that chance, and had to turn back at last. So he waited seven years more, and bless you, Master Friday, I couldn't tell you how he worked and saved. And then he got Government to listen to him, and to promise some help, and then he put everything he was worth into it, being a poor man. It was same as if he staked all on it; but he believed so faithful in his open water, and said nothing should stand in his path now but death. He couldn't be turned back the third time, after his years o' waiting. So he got the expedition together, and we sailed from Peterhead in the 'Good Hope,' and everything as well arranged as mortal man could do.

"But that there Friday stood in our light first and last. Everything as could go contrary to us went that same. How's ever we touched at Goodhaven in time, and went on north creeping up the coast. And we made arrangements with the people to bring us a complete furnish of sledges and dogs up to Fort St. George, by a whaler as was to put into the Sound in a while, we were not able to take them with us, this being early in the season, and the Sound not open. So we crept up the coast, and the Captain mapped out a unfinished chart, and completed the line up to the Fort.

"Well, we got there as soon as the Sound was clear, but ran some narrow escapes in the ice, the 'Good Hope' being doomed to bad luck. However, nipped

and strained a deal, we got her to the Fort, and laid her up, and passed our time repairing and such till the dogs was to come. Eh, well, if ever a man was tried, it was the Captain that summer! There we waited day after day till weeks passed, and the whaler never showed, and the season was getting on, and all our good start gone by. It was a puzzle to me to see him keep his patience day after day. And when the rascals turned up at last, they'd cheated the Captain out and out, and not brought near the number they should ha' done by the bargain. The Captain knew he'd been done, but they was slippery rascals, and he couldn't do naught, and was all for getting off without any wuss delay.

"So we set out, the picked men as was to go with the Captain, I being among 'em, and left the smaller party with the ship, and the main part of the stores. We took all we could carry, the carriage being cut so short, and the boat the Captain had built under 's own eye, long and light, for to try on that unknown water we was to find. And so we set off, bearing due north across Desolation Land. Well, we went on and on, and made good way too, but it was awful work, Master Friday, seeing we had to level the road before the dogs. So it was slow travelling at the best, and we'd started too late in the season. And then them rascal Eskimoes played us that dirty trick that was the losing of us. We'd noticed that they seemed down like for a week or more, and talked among themselves; but we didn't know what they were up to, only the Captain looked a bit anxious. Then it come on us one morning like a thunderclap. The half-breed that ordered them about and spoke for 'em, comes up and tells the Captain that they'd come as far as they'd bargained for, and they was going back. The Captain faced 'em like a man, cool and determined, and said they'd bargained for double that; any man as was afraid might go back straight, but the train was a-coming along of us. So they was cowed for the time, and we went on as hard as we could push, and thought they'd had their lesson. But three days after that, leastways of our days, it being the polar summer, we got up and found that they'd packed up and gone, dogs, sledges, and all. The boat they'd left us, so as to travel light, but they'd taken some of the stores. It was what you might call a knockdown, that was, Master Friday; but it was then that the Captain's pluck began to come out.

"He stands up before us all, and says, 'I hold no man to his word in this pass. I am going forward on foot, alone if need be. Whoever will, let him go back to the ship, and whoever will, let him come on with me.'

"Well, well, Master Friday, not one man of us stood there but said he was after the Captain till death."

"I thought you did! I hoped you did!" cried Friday, his eyes alight.

"Yes, sir," said Zachary, with a mixture of humility and pride, "we followed the Captain. He thanked us all, like the gentleman he was, and on we went. Ay, and that was a journey too! Afoot, mind you, Master Friday, and the boat mounted on a rough frame, as we dragged every step o' the way, with our stores inside. We took it in turn and relieved parties, one lot ahead to level a way with picks and shovels, and one to drag the boat. And then the snow started to fall, and after that our troubles began in right down earnest. Ay, and it wanted some pluck to go forward into that Land o' Desolation, as it was rightly called, when a man bethought him that every step he took was so much further from the ship. But the Captain was like as if he had heart for us all, and he worked the foremost, and was up early and late, and lay hardest, and stood short commons oftenest—ay, he was a good man!

"Well, with the snow the road for the boat got worse. Sometimes not all of us a-tugging together could get her over the hummocks, and then it came to unloading and dragging her over empty, and carrying our goods. And you must bear in mind, sir, that 'twixen the hummocks was filled wi' snow as a man would sink into, sudden, up to the chest, and have to be hauled out. And at the best, if the snow fell fresh, only up a chap's legs, the crust would get that froze that he couldn't kick it afore him, but had to lift each foot straight and high every time. Ah, and it's that for giv-

ing your legs a cruel ache! Sometimes we went on hands and knees, and not being as strong and fresh as we'd been at starting, we couldn't do as much. And mercy on us!—the cold!—the biting cold as kept a man from 's sleep at night. And we was beyond the line of living animals, and all our stores was so froze that they had to be thawed afore we could have a bite, and we began to feel bad the want of fresh food, and we knew the Captain was thinking of scurvy, though he did all a mortal could do to keep us in health. Well, and the scurvy wasn't the beginning neither. I mind it well. It was when we was tugging the boat up a rise, all together, and a powerful hard tug it was too! And just as we got anigh the top of the ridge, we drew up a minute to take breath. And the Captain—I mind how sore his hands was, and he was pulling hardest of all, and he says, 'Now, my lads, heave all! A long pull and a strong pull, and it's done!' And then he gives a mighty heave, and up comes the boat like a living thing. And with that, without a word or a sign, Amos Dwyer falls flat on his face right among us, just where he stood. The Captain knew. He gave a kind of groan."

"Was he dead?" asked Friday, in a hushed voice.

"Stone dead. Cold, and hardship, and exposure. We chose out a place at the foot of the ridge, and dug his grave with our picks, and the Captain read the Book over him."

"That was like a man in Master Fro-bisher. It says he died in the way by God's visitation, and it says nothing more."

"Ay, well, Amos Dwyer died just so; and he was a trim lad and a good one. We'd looked on him as one of the strongest. We'd buried another in a week, and two was down with scurvy. They had to be laid in the boat, and dragged all the way, and more than they was beginning to fail, and our hearts was getting leaden like. Only the Captain kept us all up."

"I mind well one time we was clearing the ice before the boat, and old David Crabb, that old chap I named to you, he was with us, and it was hard work on short commons, and by-and-by he lets out with a oath. By-and-by he lets out again. It was a way he had. He was a good seaman and a clever, queer old chap, but he did use to rap out free with em."

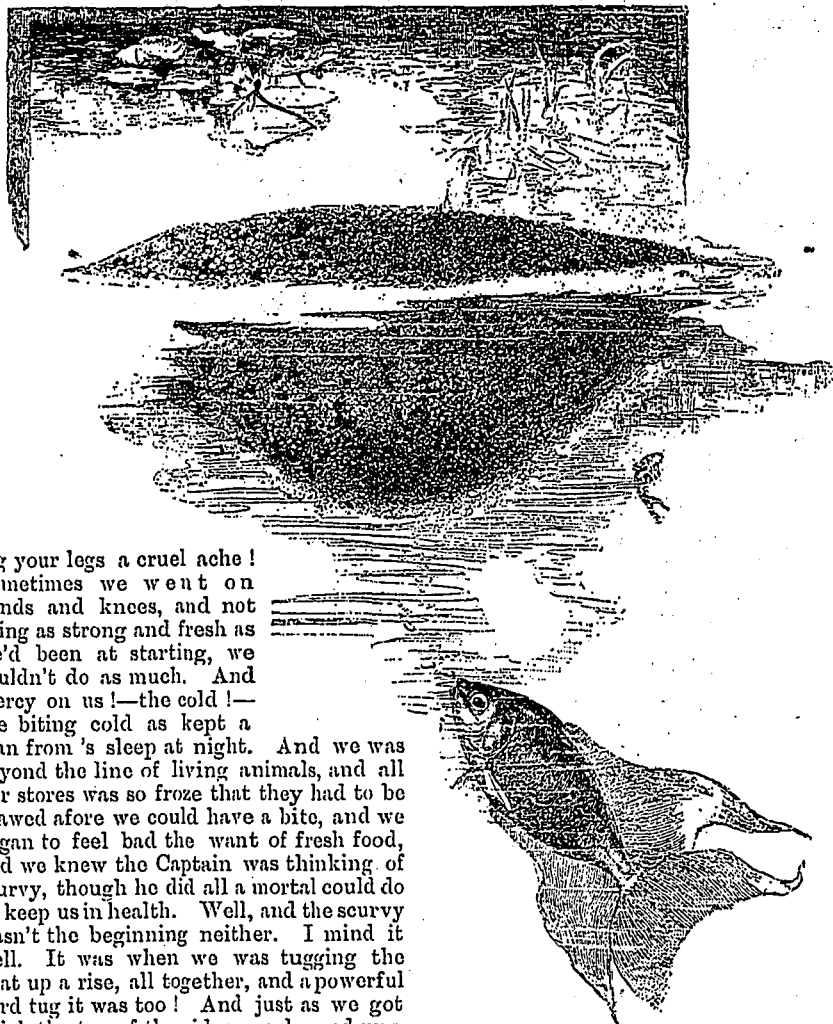
"With what?" asked Friday.

Zachary cleared his throat, and recollected his audience.

"Langwidge," he said comprehensively. "He didn't mean nothing by it, but he was too free with it. So a man called Sum-mers as was working shoulder to shoulder with him, says, 'Don't, man. I'm too sick to hear it. It's time some on us was saying our prayers.' David held in a while, and then out it comes again. The Captain lifts his head sudden, and he says verry sharply, says he, 'Who dares blaspheme here?'

"David says, defiant like, 'It was me. I'm obeying orders, I am, and my tongue's my own.'

"And then the Captain's face went very sad when he looked at that gray-headed old chap, and he steps up to him, and says very gentle, with 's hand on his shoulder, 'David, I don't order an old man like you. But I ask you, I ask you, as a favor to me, not to do that again.' And David says,



A HOUSE OF BUBBLES.

'So help me I won't!' And no more he did. That man as had been such a free swearer, no one never heard him use a wrong word again. He used to look at the Captain, and follow him about as it might be a dog. So we struggled on till we was less by the two sick men, and then another fell ill, and still we came to no open water, and the Captain grew older and grayer till it seemed you could see him growing. And at last some on us put it respectful to the Captain that we didn't see we could hold out no longer; and the Captain hearkened, and his head went down on his breast. And then he spoke thick, and said, 'Give me one more days, lads.' And old David standing by, says, 'Ay, we will! One more day, mates.' And we went on. And that day the Captain gave his rations to the sick men, and he walked on ahead, and, oh, Master Friday, but it was pitiful to see him with his eyes straining on afore! And when that day was done, he said, 'Men, can you give me one more?' And old David stared round fierce, and said, 'Well, lads, are ye all turning cowards? Who's for another day?' And we all went on again. And it was ice, ice, ice, from first to last.

"And then the third day come, and the Captain said never a word. And David says, 'Sir, will another day do it?' And the Captain says, 'God knows, David, not I.' And the old chap says, 'We've pluck left for one more.'

(To be Continued.)

A HOUSE OF BUBBLES.

The paradise-fish makes his house entirely of bubbles. He expels the bubbles from his mouth until a nest of them is formed—often as large as shown in this illustration. Not less curious is the way in which he brings the eggs from the bottom into the nest. Unable to carry the eggs in his mouth, he places himself beneath them, and suddenly exhaling a large quantity of air, they are carried to the surface by multitudes of little pearls. Some time ago a paradise-fish built such a nest in Professor Rice's room in Fulton Market, which attracted a great deal of attention. In Paris, also, one built its nest in a private aquarium. This is the only case I know of where bubbles are used for a nest, and the raising of the eggs to the surface by means of air floats is certainly very ingenious.—Harper's Young People.