

away from home and the folks down in Pembroke and Bytown and wherever we come from are just getting on their duds to go to mid-night Mass about now ; and the young ones are gone to bed to listen for old Santa Claus. Now, boys, you know that we are the Santa Claus ourselves, and God is good to the folks down at home, so how would it be, for a change, boys, to sing a Christmas hymn to-night ? I know one they sing in the church, so just join in lads and heave away. We are rough up here, but God can hear you in the bush just as well as at church." The men answered with a cheer of agreement and the foreman, taking his stand upon the camboose edge, sang in good style, "*Les Anges sur nos Montaignes.*" The chorus was a hearty one ; and many a one of those rugged souls prayed with fervor, that the new born Saviour would watch over his home, and not a few eyes were misty with tears, and the big strong men were not ashamed to weep.

While this scene was taking place inside the shanty the elements were unchanged without. The sun had gone down in a red sea that evening, and the stars one by one came out from their hiding places and gazed down upon the scene of a coming strife. Calmly they appeared to contemplate the ravages of an approaching storm, like Infinite Power, sublime, tranquil, omnipotent, looking upon the petty wars of pigmy man. Lazily the smoke curled aloft, and there was not a breeze to waft it one way or the other. Later on a loud and distant booming could be heard—a mighty noise like the roar of a giant flood. On it came, growing louder and louder. On it came like the tide upon the Atlantic, when its tempests lash the shores of the north. On it came like the hurried march of a hundred thousand men !

The wind howled and hissed through the endless corridors of the forest ; it raged and shrieked above and around the trees ; it squealed in agony as it struck headlong on a projecting rock. The giant of the north was on his march. The spectre of the Arctic seas was approaching. White were his garments like the shrouds of the dead ; cold was his touch like the embrace of the dead ; and wild was his voice and hollow his tones like the sepulchral cries of the dead. "God help any one who is out this night," said the fore-

man, as the last notes of the hymn died away and the men sat burried in deep thought and listened to the tempest. Down he came, the grim giant, and all things bent before him. He crushed the maple, the birch and the poplar in his march ; he grasped the dry pines and snapped them asunder, and flung them to the earth ; he grappled with the living pines and shook them Sampson-like, until their lofty heads bowed and swayed and reeled before his might ; and finally he wound his arms around them and wrenched them by the roots from the earth. The tempest of the north was passing down until it would break "self upon the barrier of the Laurentians, and then scattered into fragments, would visit in divided attack the valley of the Ottawa. The partridges hid themselves in the snowbanks, the rabbits made for their burrows, the foxes crouched in their holes and the majestic moose, forgetting their own dignity and strength, in the presence of this great giant of the skies, sought the shelter of some rocks in the lowlands and there trembled before the terror of the storm. How like the mighty and powerful of earth ! Proud of their own strength until the hand of an unseen and more terrible power comes upon them ; exulting in their own vigor, until the pent up wrath of the Omnipotent is let loose, until the hand of death touches their frames and the trumpet-voice peals a note of warning in their ears !

The storm did not last more than a couple of hours. As it began to abate, the foreman went to the door and looked out. A slit in the clouds for a moment appeared, and through the rent he caught a glimpse of a solitary star that shone as bright and as calm as if no war of the elements had taken place. Like the star of the wisemen, it seemed to beckon him on, to inspire him with a desire to follow it, or rather stand and gaze long and fully upon it.

While thus contemplating the storm sky and the one jewel of the night, Malois thought that he heard a faint cry as if a child was in the snow beyond the main road. At first he thought it was a fox, or a noise made by the wind ; but again the cry was repeated louder and clearer than before. Malois, no longer doubting, turned into the shanty, lit a lantern, and with the cook sallied forth in quest of the