

In the evening he was able to show her the wide pitiless snow ranges of Labrador, whence blew a keen desert air. Perpetual pine-woods—looking like a black band set against the encroaching snow—edged the land, whence the brig was some miles distant, tacking to gain the benefit of the breeze off shore.

Presently came a strange and dismal sound wafted over the waters from the far pine forests—a high prolonged howl, taken up and echoed by scores of ravenous throats, repeated again and again, augmenting in fierce cadences. Jay caught Mr. Wynn's arm closer. "Like wolves," said Arthur; "but we are a long way off."

"I must go and tell Edith," said the child, evidently feeling safer with that sister than in any other earthly care. After he had brought her to the cabin, he returned on deck, listening with a curious sort of pleasure to the wild sounds, and looking at the dim outlines of the shore.

As darkness dropped over the circle of land and water, a light seemed to arise behind those hills, revealing their solid shapes anew, stealing silently aloft into the air, like a pale and pure northern dawn. At first he thought it must be the rising moon, but no orb appeared; and as the brilliance deepened, intensified into colour, and shot towards the zenith, he knew it for the aurora borealis. Soon the stars were blinded out by the vivid sweeping flicker of its rays; hues bright and varied as the rainbow thrilled along the iridescent roadways to the central point above, and tongues of flame leaped from arches in the north-west. Burning scarlet and amber, purple, green, trembled in pulsations across the ebony surface of the heavens, as if some vast fire beneath the horizon was flashing forth coruscations of its splendour to the dark hemisphere beyond. The floating banners of angels is a hackneyed symbol to express the oppressive magnificence of a Canadian aurora.

The brothers were fascinated: their admiration had no words.