

FRIDAY.

BY FRANCES.

CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

"And we goes on. And at the end on't, we lay down in our sleeping bags on the snow, and I heard the captain groaning; and old David scrawls near him and lay anigh his feet, and said never a word, for it wasn't for a man to comfort him in that pass. And I believe he never slept—no, neither of them.

"So when we got up, Tom Richards went to the Captain and said, 'Sir, we've tried to do our dooty.' And the Captain says, 'You have all done it—heaven knows you have.' And Tom says, 'And I'm not the man to shirk, but that case of meat has gone mouldy. Likewise Jack Wilson is down; likewise Barret can't walk, his toes being bit; likewise Sampson is a deal worse this morning. There'll be more down to-morrow, owing to short commons.'

"And the Captain covered's face with his hands, and bowed his gray head down, and he never spoke. And we was all silent, and stood round waiting; leastways, all as was not on the ground; and it might ha' been a burying we was at. And it seemed like an hour before the Captain spoke, and then he raised his head; and he might ha' been another man, he was so old and gray, and drawn about the face; and he says, 'Lads, I thank you all. No man could do more than you have done. It must end. Lay up the boat against this ridge, and make such a shelter as you can. I ask you for twenty-four hours more, and that is the last thing I will ask for myself as long as I live. I swear it, God help me!'

"And he got up, and began to walk away. And Richards and I, we said, 'Sir, if you do aught, let's be in it.' And he says, 'No; I couldn't ask it. In twenty-four hours I will come back, if I live.'

"And old David trots after him, and says, 'Let old David go along, Captain. He's a deal of life left in him, he has.' The Captain turned round and said, 'I must be alone, I thank you all.' And his head dropped again, and he went away over the top of the hill north'ard. We waited there all that weary day, in cold, hunger and such sickness of heart as pray you may never know, Master Friday. We hadn't the spirit to talk much, but now or then a chap would say a word. It was most about the Captain. Barret said we didn't ought to ha' let him go by himself, for he'd be lost for certain. And I said he'd never come back, for he was like as if his mind was beginning to wander, and he'd just go walking on and on till he dropped. And old David sat brooding, huddled up all of a heap, like a sick old dog. And so we passed our time, and Sampson died, and I know more than one of us wished we could die just then, and go away as easy as he did. And three hours after he died, the twenty-four was out, and old David stands up, all gaunt and hungry as he was, and says, 'I'm a-going after my Captain. We mout ha' found open water together.'

"And he took three strides up the hill; and with that we saw the Captain standing on the top, and he was standing still and looking to the north'ard. And David gives a wild sort of cry, and the Captain stares at us, and begins to come down the hill; and when he got among us all, he looked straight before him with a look same as if he saw something we couldn't see, and he says—oh, what a voice it was! so hoarse, and sunk, and quiet, and as it might ha' been a dead man speaking. And he says, 'I have found it.'

"And old David falls a-shuddering and trembling, and says, 'O Lord, have mercy on us all! It's mazed with the suffering he is.' And the Captain raised his head, and looked not so much at us as nyont us, and says, 'I have found it. The open sea with the waves breaking on the shore.' And Richard says, 'Sir, is that so?' And he says, 'It is.' And then he seemed to waken like.

"And David says, 'Then we're after you, sir.' And poor Barret chimes in, 'I can crawl, sir.' And Jack Wilson, lying under the boat, pipes, 'Ay, ay, sir.' What's the orders?

"And the Captain stood up to's full height, and he was a tall man, too, but latterly a deal bent in the shoulders, and drawn about the face, and he says, 'The

orders are, back to the ship. There has been enough suffered for me.'

"And Richards says, 'Sha'n't we do it, sir?' And the Captain says, 'No.'

"So old David starts crying and sobbing, and says, 'I'll carry the boat along for 'e, Captain. It'll kill 'e, sir, if we turns back now.'

"And the Captain's face was all of a deathly white, and he holds up his head high, and says, 'I could not do it. Water from the well of Bethlehem.'

"I didn't rightly know what he meant then, but I read it after in the Book, and now I know."

"And didn't you go on?"

"No, sir, we did not. We couldn't barely crawl, and the Captain ordered us back to the ship."

"And had he really found the open water?" asked Friday, with the tears running down his cheeks.

"Ah, sir, that's known to no one but God A'mighty. Some on us thought his mind wandered with grief, but some on us, and David was one, said he had found it, and seen it there by himself, and come back to us. I think myself he had found it, Master Friday, and he'd turned back for our sakes, as it might be at the p'int of success. But however it might be, his heart was broke. Ay, his heart was broke; and when I come to think it over afterwards, it seems to me like as if he was braver when he laid his heart down and turned back, than ever before. Ay, ay! cold, and hardship, and hunger, and exposure, were light to him; but there come heavier, and then he broke his heart of his own free doing, and a man couldn't well do more."

"And you went back?" said Friday, sobbing.

"We did, sir, and I never goes to sleep of nights without praying I mayn't dream of that journey. We couldn't sleep for cold, the men dropped down one by one, and at last we hadn't the strength to pull the boat; and then it come to so many being sick that we couldn't go forward, and we just lay where we was. And there we wintered, and lived through the dark in a sort of hole place we made under the shelter of the boat, and put a tent over the face of it. No words I could say to you, Master Friday, would tell you what that time was. We'd only a few stores left now, and some mouldy, but we ate 'em; ay, and thankful. We ate a many of our clothes before the end, and moss stuff as we scraped off the rocks. We used to lie with our sleeping bags froze to the ground, in general without light, the place frosted over. And the scurvy come again, and we buried so many in the ice that we began to think who'd bury the last man. The Captain kept us up, he read a deal out of the Book to us at that time, and always over the dead; and at last there was only nine on us left, and then Johnny Morris fell sick. He'd shammed sick for two days to make a weaklier man take his share of rations. He couldn't get him to take 'em at first, so he shammed sick. He said poor Wilson had a wife at home, and he hadn't none; and he saved him too. Wilson lived to go home to her."

"Wasn't Johnny Morris a hero, don't you think?" said Friday.

"He was, sir; it's no matter whether a man's great or small if he cuts hisself short in any way and suffers true and patient, then he's a hero to my mind; and so he fell sick in downright earnest; he was a fine lad, was Johnny. Such a great, strapping fellow, and he lay there as gentle as a child, and that uncomplaining that it was a lesson to us all; and the Captain would sit by his side and hold his hand, and read to him."

"Out of the Book?"

"Yes, sir, and say hymns and such. I mind one time, Johnny was a bit wandering, and he kept saying a scrap of a hymn as run in his head, and asking of us to finish it and none on us could. It was a piece out of "Jerusalem, my happy home," a old hymn as I reads of Sundays. He kept on a-saying that about Thy gardens and Thy gallant walks, and asking for the next verse."

"And the Captain comes in, it having been his turn to go and scrape for moss. And he hears the talking and he says, 'What is it, Johnny?' and Johnny says, 'What comes after Thy gardens and Thy gallant walks? My head seems light like.'

"And the Captain took off his cap, and just says, as simple as if he'd been a lad at school—

"Quite through the streets, with silver sound,
The flood of Life doth flow,
Upon whose banks on every side
The wood of Life doth grow."

"And after that Johnny fell asleep, and slept very peaceful, and bye-and-bye the Captain laid his hands together, and said he was gone. We buried him in the ice, and the Captain read over him, and gave thanks for his blameless life. I mind his words well."

"I think dear Johnny Morris was worthy, Zachary," said Friday.

"I think he was, sir, worthier than me. We missed him sorely, too; well Johnny was the last to go then, for by that time the worst of the winter was over, and the rest of us being able to crawl, the Captain thought we might reach the ship. So we left the boat, for we couldn't drag her, and we crawled toward home, for we'd called Fort St. George so all the winter. Ah, but how we used to talk about it, and think of our mates, and cheer ourselves up with it; it was only that as got us back across Desolation Land. Well, we got nearer, and at last we come to the bit of hill where you could see the flagstaff. And Tom Richards was ahead, and he got up the slope, and stood; and then he come down towards us with a face like a sheet, and he says, 'Captain, the flag's down.'

"And old David sets off wild-like up the hill, and we after him; but he was first, and then he comes and falls down by the Captain's knees, and sobs and sobs, and says, 'If I could die for ye I would! if I could die for ye I would!' And the Captain says very gently, 'I know you would spare me, David, tell us the worst.'

"And David says, 'Captain, the ship's gone.'

"And the Captain goes on his knees where he stood, and says, 'O God and Father Almighty, grant Thy children faith and patience.' And that was all. Never a word of a murmur, and we set ourselves to be same as he. And then we'd learnt to take things very quiet in that winter; maybe we hadn't just the strength to fret. Ay, the ship was gone."

"And didn't she come back?"

"No, sir, she never came back, we never had a word or sign; a man can only guess, but we thought she'd been nipped in the ice and when it began to crack after the winter, she'd been carried away and gone down. We never saw so much as a splinter of her, nor ever saw the men aboard of her, that was the end of her, and it had liked to ha' been our end. Well, when we'd got over it a bit, we asked the Captain what we was to do next; and he said the only chance was to go back to the boat, and to put out down the Sound as soon as it was fully open, and trust to the ship picking us up, as was to call some time in the summer. And that's what we did; we crawled back to the boat and tugged her to the Fort. Eh, but some men can live through a deal, and them as went first was happiest."

"Well, we'd got halfway back on the return journey, and we was tugging on, nigh played out, when old David just lets go the rope, and lays him down quiet on the ground. And he says, 'Captain, I'm done at last.' And the Captain says, 'Couldn't you hold out a little longer, David, for love of me?' And he says, 'Ay, could I, but I'm called.'

"So we lifted him into the boat, and wrapped him up, and went on. He was quite clear to the last, he was, but he had all his queer notions strong on him; and one was, he prayed us to bury him under some sort of a tree. For he said he'd been used all his life to the wind in the rigging, and he should sleep the sounder for hearing it still. So we went on, and one day's march from the Fort, it come. Said he heard the Captain's open water a-breaking on the shore, and so saying he died. And we found a poor thing of a willow, but it was a tree, and the Captain read the book, and we left him there."

"And it was in that return journey my foot was frost-bit. But we got to the Fort, and the Sound being open we trusted ourselves in that little boat, and put out, seven on us, and all the food we had left, and then it began to fail, and we hadn't the strength to care where the boat went, and we just lay and drifted, and waited to die."

"And it was so the Captain was called. "So after that we was only six. And we got fast in the pack, and drifted south'ard, and we lost count of the days and Hughie Powell lay in the bottom of the boat, and never stirred hand or foot, and I laid alongside. And I thought I was going, and I hoped I were, and then as it might ha' broke in on a dream, I heard old Tim Sanderson a-saying, 'Glory be to God for ever and ever!' and Tom Richards burst out a-sobbing, and I opens my eyes, and the Danes' boat was alongside."

"And afterwards Hughie Powell died?"

"He did, sir. One day out from Upernavik, and he was buried at sea."

"In Master John Davis' ship there was a young man who died, and so, according to the order of the sea, with praise given to God by service, he was laid in the sea. And if you please," said Friday humbly, "could you tell me about Captain John dying, unless you mind very much?"

"It isn't a thing a man can tell very steady, sir. He was dying for three days, and we'd naught for him, for it was giving up his rations to us as had brought him down."

"He rambled a deal, though too aged to struggle, but it wasn't about his open water. He seemed to ha' gone back to his boy's days again, and he talked constant about his home, and said he heard Calderwood bells ringing clear and sweet. And on the third day, about evening, he was himself again, like as if he woke; and he said he had got his discharge. And he thanked us all, ay, so he did," said Zachary, with tears running unheeded down his rugged cheeks. "And he lay quite spent, and just smiled at us, and all the trouble seemed cleared away, and he might ha' been a little child falling asleep. It puts me in mind of that proverb of your'n, Master Friday."

"A passage—perillus—makyth—a port—pleasant," said Friday, between his sobs.

"Ay! He was tired out, and near that blessed, blessed port. And he asked us if we could say a prayer for him, to commend his soul. And Tom Richards, as was holding him up in his arms, says, 'I don't know any by rote, sir, only Our Father.'

"And the Captain says, 'Say it, for no man could have a better.'

"And Tom Richards started to say it, and when he come to 'Thy will be done,' the Captain says, 'Pray that again for me, for I've been learning that lesson all my life, and not got it by heart yet. I'll learn it perfectly by-and-by.' And Tom went on to the end."

"And the Captain says, 'Amen.' And we saw he was going, and he says, 'Into Thy Hands, O Lord.' And then again, 'Amen.'

"And his good gray head fell back; and he didn't need Tom's arms no longer, for I think myself he was in God's."

"And so the old rag of a flag we'd kept through all, we wrapped about his body, with the old anchor, and laid him in the waves till the Kingdom come. And Tom Richards read the Book over him, and we thought on what the Captain had said over Johnny Morris, and we give thanks for his life."

"With praise—given—to God—by service," sobbed Friday.

"Ay, ay. For we'd need give praise for such a life as that. He give up his desire, and it broke his heart; but surely he had his comfort at the last. Him so brave, and so cheerful, and patient, and he never had no reward here, for no one knew him. And so God A'mighty took him, for I reckon He knows us all."

(To be Continued.)

DANGER OF SULK.

Discipline of the right kind is as good mental training as arithmetic. It is not of the right kind unless it requires intellectual effort, mental conquests. An experienced official in an asylum was led to make the following remark by seeing a girl give way to the "sulks." "That makes insane women," she remarked, and told the story of a woman in an asylum who used to sulk until she became desperate, and the expert said, "You must stop it. You must control yourself;" to which the insane woman replied, "the time to say that was when I was a girl. I never controlled myself when I was well, and now I cannot."