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OVER THE FALLS. Page 37.

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FIRE IN THE WOODS.

BY

PROF. JAMES DE MILLE,

AUTHOR OF THE "B. O. W. C.," "THE BOYS OF GRAND PRE
SCHOOL," "LOST IN THE FOG," "AMONG THE
BRIGANDS," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED.

BOSTON

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FIRE IN THE WOODS.

I.

On a Visit. — A Fascination and a Temptation. — Secret Plans. — An exciting Letter. — Where's old Solomon? — Arrival of an Opportunity. — The Opportunity seized. — A hazardous Adventure. — The Island in the Falls.

BART DAMER lived at St. John, and on his return home he had brought with him his two friends, Phil and Pat, to pass the vacation with him. Solomon had also accompanied them, for the purpose of visiting some relatives who lived in the vicinity. Neither Phil nor Pat had ever been in St. John before, and they found the place full of attractions of no common order.

Indeed, it may safely be said, that St. John possesses attractions sufficient to excite the interest even of those who have travelled far and seen much, and can lay claim to far more experience than could possibly have been possessed by two lads like Phil and Pat.

Situated as it is on a peninsula between two seas, and on a declivity which slopes steeply down on three sides, its houses rise one above another, and thus produce an effect which is in the highest degree imposing to those approaching. Before the city and behind it two furious floods pass and repass, in one place filling up the broad channel with sand, but in the other mingling with the torrent of a mighty river, which, after flowing for five hundred miles, at this place pours all its accumulated waters into the bay.

All around the city are many striking scenes; the sea, with its tides and currents; the sky, with its clouds and fogs; the rocky ledges, the surf-beaten islands, and the far-folded headlands; the low marshes, and broad sand flats; the bold, rocky hills, whose summits, rising one behind another, fade away in the distance;—and over all these an ever-changing atmosphere, which at one time veils all the scene in thick mists, and at another time gathers up all its clouds to lend additional glories to the setting sun.

But, amid all these objects of interest, one stands forth preëminent, and that is the river. After flowing for many a mile through every variety of scenery, it at length approaches its termination, where, within the space of a few miles, it gathers together the extremes of the grand and the beautiful. Here it expands into a broad lake, and receives into itself, by a wide mouth, another tribu-

tary river; after which it contracts into narrow dimensions, and winds its way between rocky precipices till it reaches the suburbs of the city. Here it expands once more, and then, flowing onward a little farther, it comes to a place where towering cliffs rise abrupt, giving signs of some primeval convulsion of nature, which has rent the solid rock asunder to open a pathway for the waters. Here, through a narrow and gloomy gorge, it rushes onward, past rocky shores and between small islands, and at length, with a majestic curve, sweeps into the harbor, and thence into the bay.

Now, the surface of that bay is forever changing, as the mighty tides ebb and flow, and the difference between the extremes of its elevation is great. At low tide all the river pours in foam and fury through this gorge, forming what is called the Falls; at high tide, on the contrary, the outer waters run swiftly up the river with resistless sweep; while between the two there is a time when the waters are so still that the most fragile boat can pass with perfect safety in any direction.

The scene is magnificent. At the beginning of the Falls the river grows narrow, showing two rocky islets on one side, and a promontory on the other. Then, after widening again, it once more contracts, and lowering cliffs of solid rock arise on either side. Across this abyss a suspension bridge has been flung, from which there is a view

full of grandeur. Here at high tide the river may be seen rushing up; at low tide it may be seen pouring down with the fury of a cataract; while at intermediate tide may be seen steamers, and schooners, and scows, and timber-rafts, and sail-boats, and row-boats, all passing through in perfect safety.

After exhausting the possibilities of the place, Phil and Pat both settled down upon the Falls as the one grand distinguishing feature of the city, at least in their estimation. Bart's house was not very far away, and so they used to come here often; sometimes sitting on the suspension bridge, and watching the flood below, or the vessels passing underneath, or the foam of the thunderous cataract; at other times scaling the sides of the precipice, and working their way down to the edge of the river, so as to look up from thence and watch the suspension bridge overhead, with the people and carriages that passed to and fro. Thus the whole immediate vicinity of the Falls became at length perfectly familiar to them, and there was not a single spot worth seeing which they had not thoroughly explored.

When I say this, I must make an exception. There were some spots which yet baffled them. These were two islands which lay in the channel of the river, and, when the flood poured down, received its shock upon their rocky borders. These islands lay out of the reach of the boys, and for

that reason became particularly attractive to them. An island is always an object of unutterable fascination to a boy; but these became still more fascinating, for the reason that they seemed to be more inaccessible than was generally the case. At the same time they were very provokingly near. From one shore the distance was so slight that it seemed almost possible to jump across. But the possibility was only apparent; the island was in reality inaccessible, except by boat, at certain times of tide, and so Phil and Pat only found themselves tantalized by the sight of an object apparently so near, yet in reality so remote.

Each of the boys began at length to be filled with a consuming desire to reach the islands, and each soon began to think over some plan by which their purpose might be effected. Of the two, Pat was the more eager; in fact, if it had not been for him, it is not at all likely that Phil would ever have felt the desire so strongly; but Pat seemed to be completely carried away by this one feeling; and his excitement was gradually communicated to Phil, till at last one was as eager as the other to reach those inviting shores.

As for Bart, he was in a different position altogether. He had been taken there once, and consequently knew all about them; and thus there was no mystery to attract him. In the second place, his father had forbidden him, most positively and most solemnly, from ever having any

thing whatever to do with any boat above the Falls. The prohibition was one which was so final, that the idea of disobeying it never for one moment entered into his head; and when Pat had mentioned his wish to visit the islands, he had refused so positively, and had warned him against it so earnestly, that Pat from that moment never alluded to it again in his presence. In this matter Phil was influenced by Pat, rather than by Bart; that is to say, he listened rather to Pat's enthusiastic descriptions of those mysterious islands than to the somewhat unsatisfactory warning which Bart had given; and the only result of that warning was, that he and Pat began to devise in secret some plan by which they might achieve their desire.

The result of this was, that Pat volunteered to go forth and make some inquiries about boats. There were plenty of boats above the Falls, and it was easy enough to procure one. The only difficulty was, that people might not be willing to let one to inexperienced boys. But Pat was fully a match for this emergency. He was ready with any amount of professions as to his ability to manage any boat; and indeed in such professions he was not deceitful, for he could handle an oar as well as any boy of his age. And so his offer was accepted very readily by Phil; and the consequence was, that Pat took occasion to make his search, and made it with such success that he at

length found a boat every way adapted to their purpose. He did this, too, quite unknown to Bart.

This must not be considered as a violation of confidence, or anything of that sort; for Pat was, after all, not capable of direct deceit. The fact was, he regarded Bart's objection as due to his father's command, and that command he did not consider as at all binding either upon himself or upon Phil. He did not suppose that there was any actual danger, nor did he stop to think that Mr. Damer's prohibition might be founded upon wise precautions and a knowledge of the perils of the place; for, as a matter of fact, though this fact was unknown to Pat, the Falls are sufficiently dangerous to cause the loss of one life per year on an average, besides many accidents which do not result in an actual loss of life; and it was this knowledge of the dangers attendant upon boating in these waters which had led to Mr. Damer's prohibition.

Thus Pat went innocently and confidently to work, and obtained a boat; and Phil entered with the utmost eagerness into Pat's plan. Bart's strong objections and earnest warnings had, however, produced sufficient effect upon them to make them anxious to keep their plan a secret from him, and to carry it into execution at some time when he might not be with them. But this was not very easy, for Bart was always with one or both of them; and so, even after they had found a

boat, it still seemed as difficult as ever to make use of it.

At length an event occurred which gave them the long desired opportunity of making use of the boat in a voyage to the islands.

This event was the receipt by Bart of a letter from Bruce Rawdon. It was as follows:—

“DEAR OLD BART: How are you, and how have you been enjoying yourself? Are you aware that four weeks have passed, and that our holidays will soon be over? I’ve got several things to say, and others to propose, and therefore I take my pen in hand on the present occasion.

“First of all, Tom is with us, and has been all along. A week after we got home, he, received a letter from his father, who told him that he was going to England with his mother, and that he might stay with us, and go back to school with us. Well, Tom was a little disappointed, but not so very much, after all. So he’s been here ever since. The next thing I have to tell you is, the arrival here of a mutual friend and benefactor. You see it happened this way: The other day I was down on one of the wharves, when I was struck by a familiar-looking craft, and on going nearer it became still more familiar. So I jumped on board in a state of high excitement, and put my head into the opening of a very familiar cabin, when suddenly it encountered another head that

was putting itself out. And who do you think it was? I won't keep you in suspense. It was Captain Corbet! Yes, it was himself, as meek, as mild, as paternal, and as venerable as ever. He came here after oats. With him is Mr. Wade, whose 'ole 'oman's name he still insists is Gipson, and he also asserts that we won't find many of that name in this country.

"Well, now I come to the point of my letter. We have persuaded the venerable Corbet to give up oats for the present, and charter his ship to us. We have organized a campaign around the Bay de Chaleur. We are going to operate by sea and land. Now, what do you say to it? Will you come? Is Phil with you, and Pat? Have you got Solomon? What do you say? Can you resist? Can you keep away when you hear that the Antelope is once more upon the waters, and that the flag of the B. O. W. C. is again floating from her masthead? Resist? You know you can't.

"And so I merely remark that we shall be at Shippegan, on the Bay de Chaleur, on the 15th of August. This gives you two or three weeks to reach us. We shall expect you. Bring Phil. Bring Pat. Bring Solomon. Without the glow of his beloved countenance shining upon us as it beams over the cooking-stove, no expedition is worth having.

"We start in a few days. You need not answer, as there will not be time to get your letter. We

all count upon meeting you at Shippegan on August 15.

“The venerable Corbet sends his blessing.

“Yours in B. O. W. C.

“BRUCE RAWDON.”

This letter created the wildest outburst of joy that is possible to the effervescing spirits of enthusiastic boys. It came at the very time when the holidays were beginning to grow a little dull; when all its first pleasures had been exhausted, and no new ones remained. Coming thus, it brought the prospect of new excitement, and met with but one response. Bart eagerly appealed to his father, and received his permission to meet his friends. Then followed long discussions as to their journey to the Bay de Chaleur; and first and most important among the preliminaries of their journey was the necessity of preparing Solomon for what was proposed.

Solomon!

But where was Solomon?

Shortly after their arrival, he had taken his departure, and had not been seen since. Bart, however, knew where he had gone, and supposed that he might be there yet; so he proposed that they should all drive off in search of Solomon early on the following day.

There soon arose a difficulty, however, which interfered with this. The place was fifteen miles

away, and Mr. Damer would not trust the horse to Bart alone. If the servant drove, there would not be room for them all, and so one, at least, would have to stay behind. Pat and Phil each offered to stay; and as it would be lonely for only one to remain, it was finally decided that both should stay, while Bart went off alone to search after the Grand Panjandrum.

This arrangement was the very thing that was most satisfactory to Phil and Pat; and thus chance threw into their way the very opportunity for which they had been waiting so eagerly and impatiently.

Early on the following morning Bart started: while Phil and Pat waited a little while, in order to have a convenient time for setting forth upon their own enterprise. The sky was clear, and the sun was bright overhead; but half way down the harbor there were heavy fog clouds, which increased until all the distance was concealed from view. But as these fogs belonged to the bay, and did not affect the land, they had no anxiety about their excursion, since it was to take place on the river.

They waited leisurely about the house for an hour after breakfast, and at length left without saying anything to anybody, and went at once to the Falls. As they came in sight of the river, they looked with eager eyes over its surface to see whether the time was a suitable one for their

enterprise. Their first glance was highly satisfactory. As far as they could judge, it seemed the very best time that there could be to make the attempt. The water was quite smooth, and the stream was moving along rather slowly. Upon reaching the suspension bridge, they stood still and looked down. As they stood there, they saw several wood boats approaching them from the upper part of the river. They came along slowly, and with as little motion of any kind as though they were in the placid waters farther up. The two boys watched them as they passed under the bridge, and then followed them with their eyes as they half sailed, half drifted, onward to the harbor.

This sight greatly encouraged them, and there seemed now not the slightest doubt of the perfect feasibility of their enterprise. Without any further delay, therefore, they at once set out for the place where the boat was kept that Pat had engaged.

The Falls are about a quarter of a mile above the suspension bridge. At this place, as has been said, the river contracts, and is hemmed in between the projecting precipice of a rocky promontory on one side, and a small, shaggy, wooded island on the other. Between these it pours its flood, which alternates between the swift influx of the sea-water at high tide, and the swift, thunderous outpour of low tide, when the river flings

itself in wrath and foam down a declivity of rocks that form its bed. Above this place there is a wide expanse, and on the upper side of the promontory is a cove which affords an excellent shelter for boats, rafts, and schooners. It was in this cove that their boat was kept, and towards this they now directed their steps as fast as possible.

On reaching the place, they found the boat afloat, with its oars inside, and fastened by the painter to the wharf. Here they stopped for a short time, and again looked forth over the surface of the water.

Immediately in front it was as smooth as a mill-pond, and farther out it appeared to be quite as calm. The two islands to which they wished to go were out there, full before them, on the other side of the river, yet not so far away but that they could be reached by a moderate effort. A brief survey satisfied both of them; and without waiting any longer, they cast off the line, and rowed away towards the islands.

A quarter of an hour's vigorous pulling brought them well out of the cove, and soon they reached the channel of the river. Here the water was still smooth; but they noticed that the current was much stronger than they had expected to find it. After all, however, there was as yet no very great force in it; and so they pulled on. But the current made some change in their plans; for, whereas they had at first intended to go to the

upper island, they now found the sweep of the tide dragging them so far out of their course, that they decided to land upon the lower one.

This one lay nearest now. They were between the two, and the rocky shore of the island was close by. It was the part of the island which lay farthest up stream. They thought it best to visit this one first, then the other, after which they could return to the shore, or continue their explorations in other directions, as the fancy might seize them.

With these intentions, they turned the boat's head towards the island, and in a short time stepped out upon the rocky beach.

II.

The Island in the Falls.— A Discovery of a startling Kind.— The sullen Roar.— A mad Risk.— The Struggle for Life.— On the Verge of Ruin.— A last Effort.— Over the Falls.— Ingulfed and drawn down by the Vortex.— Where is Pat !

THE boys secured their boat to the rocks and then clambered up the bank to the top of the island. Arriving there, they found but little to be seen. The island was of very small dimensions, and the thick woods that covered it made it impossible to gain any view of the whole scene around. They crossed to the lower side, and came back; after which they sat down on the edge of the bank, just above the boat, and looked out. They could see up the river from here—the wide cove, the rocky shores, the saw-mills, the rafts, the scows, the tug boats, the wood boats, and the river steamers. Now that they were on the island, there was certainly not much to reward them, except this view; and even this was not equal to that which might be had from the suspension bridge. But, then, they were not alto-

gether destitute of a reward. ° The island was small and insignificant; but, then, it was an island, and that was something. Besides, their position here meant that they had achieved their enterprise; and the consciousness of success was of itself a sufficient reward.

“I wonder,” said Phil, “why no more vessels go through the Falls —”

“Through the Falls, is it?” said Pat. “O, sure it’s just because they don’t want to; an that’s all, so it is.”

After some more conversation, they began to grow tired of the island; and since they had exhausted all the pleasure that a landing upon it, combined with the consciousness of success, could afford, there remained nothing more to do but to complete their enterprise by effecting a landing upon the other island also.

This one lay farther up the stream; and as they launched their boat and rowed towards it, they became at once sensible of a great increase in the difficulty of their task. With their utmost efforts their progress was very slow, and it took far longer to reach it than it had taken to come from the shore to the first island. At length, however, they reached it, and secured the boat.

“Ye see,” said Pat, who always was ready to account for everything, — “ye see we’ve had the tide dead agin us this time. Whin we crossed the river it was on’y on one side. Whin we go back, it’ll be all fair and aisy, for we’ll have it on one side agin; and that’s how it is.”

They now began to explore this second island. It was larger than the other, but did not seem so large. As it was free from woods, its small extent was perceptible at a glance, which was not the case with the other. The absence of woods made it also even less interesting. But the boys were not at all exacting; and as there was nothing in particular to see on the island, they naturally turned their eyes to the scene that lay beyond. This scene was now very extensive. They could look around in every direction, and enjoy an unobstructed view. Up the river it was the same as it had been before — the same assemblage of rocky hills, and schooners, and steamers, and rafts: but down the river a grander view unfolded itself before their eyes.

The river there ran on till it seemed terminated by a wall of rocks, at the foot of which a steam saw-mill was clattering and howling. On each side of the water arose perpendicular cliffs, and between these was the suspension bridge, whose frail pathway was sustained by cables that passed over granite towers at the edge of the precipice, and overhung a tremendous gulf of treacherous waters.

Suddenly Phil put his hand on Pat's shoulder. Pat turned, and saw him looking anxiously out over the water and pointing.

"What's the matter?" asked Pat.

"I wonder what makes it so white over there," said Phil, in an anxious tone.

He was pointing to the water between the island and the promontory. Here the surface was agitated, and foam was emerging and floating on in ever-increasing masses, while a deep, dull roar began to be slowly perceptible to their ears.

"What is it?" repeated Pat, after looking for a little while in silence at the place where Phil had pointed. "What is it?" he repeated, after a little hesitation. Then his hesitation vanished, and in his usual confident way, he proceeded to account for the foam.

"Sure an it's the foam," said he, "an that's what it is."

"But there wasn't any foam a little while ago," said Phil.

"Deed, thin, an I wor jist thinkin that same," said Pat, in a candid tone.

The boys stood now for a little while in silence. The low, dull roar increased as they listened, and excited very singular feelings in the minds of both.

"The tide is certainly stronger," said Phil—"a good deal stronger. I wonder if—if—it's too strong for us."

"Niver a bit," said Pat, shaking off his uneasiness. "Sure an we'll have no throuble. We're jist a good bit above the Falls—so we are—an there's no danger—not the laist in life."

Again they stopped, and looked, and listened.

And now the foam had increased, the dull roar

was perceptibly louder, and its deep cadence reverberated in their inmost hearts, exciting dark apprehensions.

"Deed an I'll jist tell ye what it is," cried Pat, suddenly. "It's no use standin here all day; we must hurry out of this."

"But can we now?" asked Phil, uneasily.

"Sure an why not?"

"The tide — it's so strong."

"Sure an that's nothin," said Pat. "All we've got to do is to head the boat up strame, half up an half across, an we'll slide over that way in spite of the tide, so we will."

Pat's confident tone reassured Phil, and as Pat set off quickly to the boat, he followed without a word of further objection. Under the impression that there was now not a moment's time to lose, they pushed the boat off; and seizing the oars, they began pulling with all their strength, Pat taking the stroke oar, and striving to head her in that mysterious direction which he had described a short time ago. For a few minutes they exerted all their strength; and both boys, as they pulled, kept turning their heads, so as to see the shore, which they wished to gain. Those few minutes served to put a considerable distance between them and the island which they had left. But the interval was not exactly the kind which they wished to see between them and it. It was evident that their progress forward was not very

great, but that at the same time their progress down the stream was fearfully rapid. And that stream was setting full towards the Falls.

Phil noticed this first, and his cry aroused Pat, who was still too much interested in watching his destination to regard his actual situation. But that situation, as the two boys looked around upon it, was calculated to administer a shock to the strongest nerves, and quicken the action of the stoutest heart.

The river current was running down at such a rate of speed that their efforts to counteract it while crossing were quite unavailing. Its force had already dragged them down stream about half way between the two islands, while the actual progress which they had made towards their destination was small. Their downward drift had brought them nearer to the Falls, and as they took their hasty look around, they were aware again of that low, sullen roar which they had heard on the island; but now that roar was deeper and nearer, and the low, droning sound of the agitated waters struck more menacingly upon their ears.

At this moment there was still one chance, and one only. That was to head the boat back for the island which they had just left. Had they done so, and rowed for their lives, there was a possibility of emerging yet from the clutch of that hungry current, which grew more and more tenacious as they advanced, and from which escape was only

possible by a retreat. But at that moment Pat did not fully realize the danger that impended. He was quite cool, and the mistake that he made arose from an error in judgment, rather than from anything like panic. He had only the idea of resisting the current, and was unable as yet to give up his purpose of returning to the boat's wharf. So he headed the boat up stream in such a way that their own force should be brought as much as possible against the current, and yet secure to it a slight advance.

They now pulled, as before, in silence, using all their strength. The head of the boat was almost up stream, and as they pulled they could see all that could be seen of the danger below them. For about five minutes they thus struggled, and at the end of that time there began to force itself into the minds of both of them the dread conviction that the strength of the current was too great for their efforts. Pat saw this first, and, seeing this, made a final relinquishment of his efforts to cross, and put the boat's head straight up stream, so as to make all their efforts tell against the tide itself. But by that time they had brought themselves to where the tide was strongest, and that tide was growing stronger and stronger every minute. This they both saw and felt; and they knew enough of the nature of the Falls to understand now the mistake that they had made. For they had crossed to the islands when the tide was falling, and, in

their attempt to return, had been caught by a tide that had been increasing in force ever since they had last crossed it, and was still increasing and directing all its might down towards the Falls.

Their efforts to resist the tide were overpowered. The river was gaining; their strength was failing. One last, faint hope remained—to turn the boat back, to pull towards the islands; it might yet be possible by strenuous effort to drag the boat forth from the clutch of the mighty waters. The lower island was as yet below them, on their left; if they could only bring the boat out of the middle of the stream, they might reach it.

For the last time, then, Pat changed the direction of the boat, turning it but slightly, however, just enough to aim at the upper island. Then again, as before, they put forth their last remaining energies. With feverish anxiety they fixed their eyes upon one or two objects on the land, to watch whether the boat was losing or gaining. That it was still being drawn down by the tide was at once certain; but they yet had a hope that their advance towards the islands might serve to bring them there before it was too late. And now they had fairly reached the crisis of this tremendous struggle. Rousing up the very last of their exhausted strength, they exerted themselves with the convulsive energies of despair, working in silence, with eyes fixed on the shore.

In vain!

They saw themselves drawn down in a line with the lower island, and there, tree by tree, and rock by rock, they saw that island slipping past them; while the distance between them and it had been lessened so slightly that it afforded no prospect whatever of their being able to attain it. At length the last vestige of hope died out. The howling, wrathful vortex was just before them, and now the islands were forgotten, and all their efforts were directed towards saving themselves as long as possible from that fate which they felt was inevitable.

Of the two, Pat was the least affected. Phil was pale, and sat with his eyes glaring at the flood, straining himself at the oars with all his strength, his brows contracted, his lips parted, his breath coming and going in quick, short gasps. As for Pat, the ruddy color of his honest but freckled Irish face remained unchanged; and though he was working with all his might, he as yet showed no signs of any very extreme exhaustion; for his muscles were harder, and his frame more inured to labor, than the slender limbs and lighter frame of his companion. Nor did he gasp or sob, nor were his brows contracted, nor was there any other expression on his face than that same jovial, healthy, and withal rather impudent self-confidence which it usually wore.

Yet, if anything could have reduced Pat to de-

spair it was the sight that now appeared immediately before him.

The boat had been dragged for some distance out of the middle of the stream, and was nearer the island than it had been, though still out of reach. The tide was fearfully strong. At every desperate pull the boat would stand still; but between the strokes the tide would bear it down. Thus their efforts only served now to stop the boat for a few moments at every stroke, without in any way enabling them to elude their fate.

The Falls were close at hand — just in front.

These Falls were not, however, a thunderous cataract, though at the lowest stage of the tide, their furious surges, as they sweep over the rock-strewn descent of the river bed, would be, perhaps, even more dangerous than a cataract itself. But now they were not at their most furious stage. Still, as the boys gazed there, they saw enough to appall them.

All across was a white line of foam. Immediately in front, the water seemed to come in contact with some hidden reef, for it lifted itself up in a heap, and, rounding over, tumbled in thunder on the other side. It was towards this that they were drifting. This was sufficiently formidable, but where the foam tossed and the boiling waters seethed in a long flood of white, it seemed equally so; and thus even if Pat had been inclined to make a choice of some particular place to direct the boat,

he would not have been able to select one, since all places appeared equally repellent. The fact was, however, Pat had no such ideas, but was thinking of some other way of encountering the coming fate.

There, then, full before them, was the long line of boiling breakers; there was that upheaving mass of water rounding itself over the sunken ledge. The hiss of the foam was in their ears, while beneath it was the gloomy menace of the roar of many waters.

"Phil," cried Pat, "can you swim?"

"A little," said Phil.

"It's our last chance. Will ye do what I tell ye?"

"Yes."

"Take off yer coat, howld on to yer oar, and jump whin I give the word."

"What!" cried Phil; "stop rowing? Why, we'll be lost—"

"Lost, is it? We're sure to be that—row—or no row—so do as I say—will ye?"

Phil was silent for a moment, and still tugged at his oar, for neither of them had stopped during this conversation. In that moment of extremest peril there was no time to be taken up in deliberating. He had either to consent to Pat's proposition, or refuse, and that at once.

"The boat'll upset," cried Pat, "sure. You jump out wid me whin I give the word. But ye'll

have to take off yer coat first. Yer bound to get a duckin, ony way, an ye'd better do as I say."

"I'll do it," cried Phil, suddenly and decidedly.

"Aff wid yer coat, thin," cried Pat.

Both boys flung down their oars, and whipped off their coats in an instant.

The boat was dragged now, without any further resistance, straight towards the Falls.

"Grab howld of yer oar," cried Pat, quickly. "Stand up, an' jump whin I give the word—ony mind, whin ye do jump, jump for'ard as fur as ye can."

"Yes," said Phil, quietly.

The two boys now stood up, each grasping an oar, and watching the water before them. The boat drifted down—nearer and nearer! Phil's heart throbbed fast in the suspense of that dread moment, but Pat stood cool, collected, with his sharp, eager glance watching for the right time to jump.

And now that mighty mass of water, that lifted itself up in a heap, as it rose and rounded itself over the sunken ledge, grasped the boat, and raised it on high in its tremendous embrace, and impelled it forward. For a moment the boat seemed to linger there hesitating. Then it trembled in every fibre. Then it slowly turned round, till its broad side was presented to the waters below. Then one side was slowly drawn down under the water, while the other side rose up. Behind it a wall of water rushed.

Suddenly Pat gave a loud yell —
“Jump!”

Phil was already standing with the oar poised in one hand, and the other hand outstretched, waiting for Pat's word. Every nerve, every sinew, was on the alert, and before the whole word was fairly spoken, and before Pat himself had sprung, Phil leaped forward. His feet touched the water first. He went down. A tremendous grasp seemed to seize upon him, dragging him downward, and ever downward. He gave himself up for lost. In the whirl of his senses, he seemed sinking into fathomless abysses, and in his ears there were the howling and the abhorrent uproar, and the deafening thunder-peal of a thousand cataracts. Then, in the midst of all this, another grasp clutched him, and dragged him swiftly forward, and whirled him round and round. Then he seemed to be thrown upward by the resistless upheaval of some mighty mass beneath him; and then suddenly he shot forth, out of the darkness and the uproar of the engulfing waters, into the upper air and the glad light of day.

Clutching his oar, which he had held all this time with the grasp of a drowning man, he drew a long breath, and looked all around. Above him was the blue sky; farther on, across the sky, hung the suspension bridge; behind him was the howl of the Charybdis that he had just escaped.

Where was Pat?

As he thought of this, an involuntary shudder passed through him. He himself had escaped, and he now felt comparatively safe, for the oar was of immense assistance, and with the help of this it needed only a slight effort to keep his head above water. As to progress in any direction, the water was settling that question for him; for the mighty, resistless tide held him in its embrace, and was bearing him onward helplessly. There was no place to which he might look for escape, and no one to help.

But where was Pat?

III.

Bart off on an Expedition. — The Search after Solomon. — The aged Toiler. — The Flaming Fury. — The brandished Broomstick. — Collapse of Solomon. — Extinction of the Flaming Fury. — Solomon vanishes. — Terrible Tidings. — An anxious Search. — Despair.

MEANWHILE Bart had started off, as we have seen, on his expedition after old Solomon. The place in which he proposed to seek after him was distinguished by the euphonious and historical name of Loch Lomond, which name originated from the existence of a small but very pretty lake in that locality, which was in the neighborhood of a hill. Now, this lake and this hill bore a fanciful resemblance to the famous Scottish lake and hill, and the names were applied to these by some enthusiastic Scotchman. The lake was one of a chain, all of which were small and rather pretty, and the whole region round about went by the name that properly belonged to the lake.

Two or three miles away from this lake there

was what is called a "colored settlement," which, of course, means a settlement inhabited by people of color. This was also called the "black settlement," and also the "nigger settlement." Solomon had informed Bart that he intended visiting this place, and Bart thought of this as the only place where he could be heard of.

The colored settlement was founded by some slaves, brought away from the Southern States by the British during the war of 1812. They had been presented with land here, and had been told to chop down the trees, clear the land, and become farmers. The settlement had not been a very great success, however, and it was generally admitted that the genius of these people did not lie in colonizing new countries.

It was a beautiful morning, and though Bart saw high fog banks piled up to the skies in the harbor and in the bay, yet he soon left behind him all thought of this, and entered the country. The scenery was attractive, the air was clear and exhilarating, the horse was fast, and everything conspired to fill him with joyous feeling. His mind reverted to Bruce's letter, and he passed most of his time during the drive in speculating about the coming excursion, and in rejoicing over the happy accident that had taken Captain Corbet to Prince Edward Island, and brought him within sight of Bruce before he had engaged about the oats. Amid such pleasant thoughts as these his

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mind busied itself, and at length he reached the colored settlement.

He stopped at a rude log hut, which had a roof of poles and mud, from which a flour barrel projected, and served as a chimney. Here some squalid children were playing on the turf, and an elderly colored lady was engaged in washing. Her Bart accosted with a polite inquiry about Solomon.

"Solomon!" said she. "Wha dat ar? What? dat ar ole man?" Mrs. Franklin's ole man?"

Bart didn't know anything about Mrs. Franklin, but he gave a description of Solomon, which was sufficiently accurate for this lady to recognize it.

"Dem's um," she said, in a positive tone. "Wal — dat ar ole man's libben at Mrs. Franklin's—

"And where is Mrs. Franklin's?"

"Jes you go ahead till you come to de meetin' house, an it's de sebent house after you get to de meetin-house."

Bart drove on, and in due process of time reached the meeting-house, and then began to count the houses. He found a little difficulty about this, as he could hardly distinguish between what might be a house and what might also be a barn, and was stopping at a place in the road opposite a hut like the one at which he had first stopped, when his attention was arrested by the sight of a man in the field on the other side of the way. The man's back was turned towards him,

and he was toiling with all his might over a stone and a crowbar, occasionally straightening himself up and rubbing his back, and uttering groans which reached Bart's ears even at that distance, and smote upon his heart.

That aged figure, — aged it was, — could that indeed be Solomon? and was this the way he enjoyed himself while on a visit to his friends? With a crowbar, prying up granite boulders? What a thought!

In a moment Bart was out of the wagon, and was running over the fields towards the old man. He came up close just as the old man was rubbing his back. He caught him by the arm. The old man gave a wild leap, and turned round with an expression of awful fear.

But the object of his fear resolved itself into the pleasant face of Bart, and all the terror fled, and a smile of joy illumed the venerable, yet dusky face. Tears started to his eyes, and, reaching out both hands, he dropped the crowbar; then, coming forward with a low moan of happiness, he exclaimed, —

“You! Mas'r Bart. You, Mas'r Bart — you — you — Mas'r Bart —

Yes, it was Solomon.

Full of wonder and pity, Bart seized the hands of his old friend, and began asking him a thousand questions. What was he doing here? What did he mean by keeping away? And then, without

waiting for an answer, he went on to tell about Bruce's letter, and their proposed expedition, and the necessity which there was for him to accompany them. Finally he urged him to get ready as soon as possible.

To all this Solomon listened in silence, without saying a word. He stood with his hands clasped together, with his eyes fixed at times on Bart, and at times half closed, while his lips kept muttering low, inaudible words. At length, however, his face and manner underwent a change. He started back, his eyes were fixed on something in the distance, and that same expression of terror came over his face which Bart had seen upon it when he first accosted him.

At this Bart turned instinctively to see what it was that inspired such terror in the mind of Solomon.

He saw a colored lady — tall, gaunt, with a turban on her brow of flaming red, with a look of fury on her face, and a broom in her hand, which she was brandishing wildly. She came with great strides at a run, and was evidently coming towards them. Bart's first idea was, that she might be a mad woman, and he had a vague impulse to run; but the next instant his mind connected this woman with Solomon, and suggested her as the cause of his fear. As for Solomon, he was now quite beside himself with terror. His hands fell nerveless by his sides, his jaw dropped, his head shook

as with a palsy, his knees knocked together, he seemed scarce able to stand erect, and could not utter one single word; all the while his eyes were fixed on the advancing Fury with the flaming turban, and his look was the look of one who expected instant annihilation.

The Fury of the flaming turban drew nearer. Her course showed that she had emerged from the house on the opposite side of the road. As she rushed on, and as she brandished her broom, she howled out the most terrible threats against somebody, which somebody Bart now supposed must be Solomon, and at once, full of pity, determined to defend the old man from her fury. He therefore stood in front of Solomon, and was just about to call to his servant to come and help him, when the idea struck him that the Flaming Fury seemed strangely familiar to him; and as she came yet nearer, he recognized her perfectly. To his utter bewilderment and unbounded amazement, the Flaming Fury turned out to be no other than one who, for the last few years, had been quite a visitor at his father's kitchen, and a dependant on his father's bounty. "Black Betsy" was the name by which she was known. A silvery voice, a truly humble and grateful mind, a meek and quiet spirit, a winning demeanor, a smile that always charmed every one upon whom it beamed,—such was the Black Betsy that was known and loved in the Damer kitchen. But what was this? What had happened?

This Black Betsy? This Virago, this Terror, this Flaming Fury? This! Impossible. Yet there was the astounding fact. There was only one explanation. Black Betsy was mad!

No, Bart, she was not mad; she was only drunk; —mad drunk, if you like, but not what is generally called mad.

And thus, mad drunk, the Flaming Fury came bounding up, howling and brandishing her broom. The moment that he recognized her, Bart felt not the slightest fear of her. He stood in front of Solomon. He looked at her fixedly, and raised his hand with a quiet frown.

It is just possible that, if Bart had been a stranger, the Flaming Fury would have swept him away with her broom, as she would have swept a straw. But seeing him, and recognizing him, produced an effect instantaneous and most astonishing. She stopped, still staring at him. The broom for a few moments remained poised in her hands, and then slowly sank towards the ground; while, at the same time, the hard ferocity of her face died out utterly, and was succeeded by a smile so gentle, so amiable, and so motherly, that Bart looked at her in fresh amazement.

“Why, ef it ain’t de dear chicken! Ef it ain’t de dear little Mas’r Bart, his bressed sef. De sakes, now!”

This exclamation was uttered in the softest, and most silvery, and most winning of those tones

which Bart had always associated with Black Betsy. This additional proof of the identity of this amiable being with the Flaming Fury only increased his wonder.

"An' how is dat ar bressed angel, your mudder, Mas'r Bart? Clar ef dese yer ole eyes ain't farly achin to see her agin."

"She's very well, thanks," said Bart, slowly.

"Dat's good; dat's lubly. Clar ef it don't go clean to my ole heart! An so you dribe out to see de ole man! Wal, I allus sez, dat ar Mas'r Bart, I ses, ef he ain't de 'stror'nest, 'fecsh'nest chicken! All heart, I sez, he is; all clar lub — no mistake. An what is dis life wurf widout lub? Why, it's notin but de soundin brasses an templin simplum. Clar ef it ain't!"

While this conversation had been going on, Solomon had regained consciousness; and seeing the change that had come over the woman, and that the Flaming Fury had subsided into the gentlest of beings, he began to gather together his scattered senses. Bart's back was turned to him, and so he did not see him. But Solomon did not care for that. His one idea now was to save himself for the time, at least.

So, first of all, he edged away a little, very slowly and very cautiously. No notice was taken of this, and he ventured to retreat still farther. Still Black Betsy went on talking in her silvery voice, and with her winning smile. So Solomon

retreated still farther. Black Betsy saw all this movement, and once she raised the broom and held it in the air. But her face was wreathed with smiles, and her soft, gentle accents flowed on in a mellifluous strain; and so it was, that the up-raised broom, instead of calling Solomon back, only hastened his retreat. He thereupon turned abruptly, and making his way as rapidly as possible to the nearest woods, he soon disappeared.

Black Betsy still went on, mellifluous and voluble. The warmth of her nature seemed boundless. Tears stood in her eyes as she told Bart how she loved his mother. Finally she stopped with a sob, overcome with emotion, as she related the kindness she had received from his father, and began to cry.

At this Bart, who had been trying in vain to understand her, finally gave it up, and thought of Solomon. He turned around to speak to him.

To his amazement Solomon was not there.

And now this completed his bewilderment. He drew a long breath, and gave up altogether every effort to understand anything at all.

"Why, where has Solomon gone?" he asked.

"Berryin," said Black Betsy, gently—"berryin. De ole man dreadful fond o' berries."

"Berries? Well, that's odd. Why, I want to see him."

"He tink he gib you pleasant 'prise—go pick berries for de dear chicken," said Black Betsy, in a tender voice.

"But I want him," said Bart. "I want him now. Where did he go?"

"Don-no, Mas'r Bart — no mor'n a chile. You call out real loud, — you got to call loud fore dat ar ole man'll har you. He's got dreadful deaf an hard o' hearin o' late — dese times."

Bart now shouted over and over again, but there was no response. He asked his servant if he had noticed Solomon. The servant had noticed him, and told him about the retreat to the woods. Bart did not know what to make of it all. The apparition of the Flaming Fury had gradually lost its force, and he thought only of the gentle, silvery voice of Black Betsy. The retreat of Solomon, therefore, did not seem to arise from fear of so gentle a being, but from something else — and what could that be?

"De ole man tinks you gwine to spen de day," said Black Betsy. "He gone off to dig sassy-prilla to make beer. You wait and he come back soon."

So Bart waited a little while, hoping that Solomon would return.

But Solomon did not return.

Black Betsy entertained him with remarks in her usual strains, chiefly of an affectionate and endearing character; but Bart was so disappointed that he paid but little attention to her. He had come out to get Solomon's consent to go with him, and had not been able to do so. What was the

reason? Could it be possible that Solomon did not want to go, but did not like to refuse, and so had taken this way of getting out of the difficulty? It seemed very much like it.

Bart waited an hour or so, and then drove away to an inn on the borders of the lake. Here he dined. Then he drove back again to see Solomon. To his deep disappointment he learned that Solomon had not made his appearance since. He therefore left a message to the effect that he would drive out again on the following day, or, if it was stormy, on the first fine day. This was all he could do; and so, mastering his disappointment as well as he could, he drove home again.

It was evening when he reached home. Here a fresh surprise awaited him; for on asking after Phil and Pat, he learned that they left the house after breakfast, and had not been seen since. He wondered at this, as he could not imagine what would take them away, particularly on an occasion like this, when they ought to be naturally anxious to learn the result of so important a thing as his search after Solomon. He concluded, however, that they had gone off on some long walk, or out in the harbor in a boat, and had been detained.

After a time, as he was wandering about, the servant who had driven him to Loth Lomond met him, and told him that there was a report of some accident that had occurred at the Falls that morning.

In a moment Bart's most anxious excitement was aroused, and he asked about the accident. The servant did not know anything in particular. He had only heard that a boat had been upset in the Falls with two men. Some said they were boys. People had seen them swept under the suspension bridge. It was said that they were drowned.

At the mention of this, Bart felt for a few moments as though he were turned to stone. He could not move or speak. In those few moments there flashed across his mind the remembrance of what Pat and Phil had said about a visit to the islands, together with mysterious hints and casual remarks that he had heard afterwards, to which at the time he had paid no attention, but which now all came back to his memory with fearful distinctness and accuracy. From all this there arose within him the fear that Pat and Phil had made the attempt against which he had warned them, taking advantage of his absence, and that the boat that had been upset was no other than theirs.

What was to be done?

He did not know what. By this time his father was home, and he at once went to him and told him all about it. At this story Mr. Damer's anxiety was equal to that of Bart. He himself had heard, in the course of the day, about the accident, but had never imagined that it so nearly affected

him. The moment that he learned this from Bart, he at once went forth to make further inquiries, to see what could be done, and to commence a search in any possible way in which a search might be made.

He went first of all to the suspension bridge, and made inquiries of the toll-keeper. That functionary was able to tell him all that could be told. It amounted to very little. He had heard shouts on the bridge, over which two or three people were passing, and had gone out to see what was the matter. He had just got out in time to see two men — or two boys, he did not know which — swept by the current under the bridge. There was a boat also, bottom upwards. He and all the rest stood staring in horror without doing anything. To do anything was in fact impossible. The bridge was far above the water, precipices intervened, and the current was running so fast that the figures were swept away before they could fairly understand what had happened.

Were they alive, or dead?

This was the question which Bart asked in intense anxiety and dread.

The toll-keeper could not say, but his impression at the time was, that they were alive; he also had an idea that one of them was clinging to a bit of wood. But he would not be sure.

“Could he make out their clothes — what they were like?”

No; for only their heads were above water. They had no hats. They uttered no cry, and made no noise whatever, but he did not think that they were dead. Still they did not seem to be swimming, and the whole thing was a puzzle.

Unable to get any more satisfaction from the toll-keeper, Mr. Damer next went to the town, and made inquiries among the boatmen and fishermen. There was but one reply from all of them, and that was, that they had seen nothing. They informed him that there had been a thick fog in the harbor all day, and a boat might drift out to sea without being noticed. All of them thought it very unlikely that any men, after being upset in the Falls, could avoid drowning, although, at the same time, they were willing to allow that it was just possible. But if so, the only chance that they could have was to be picked up while in the harbor. If any men were to drift down the harbor, in the fog, without being observed, out into the bay, there did not seem any chance of their being saved.

Such was the opinion of those who knew most about it. Full of anxiety, and almost despair, Bart and his father then went elsewhere on their hopeless errand. They visited the tug-boat men, the ferry-boat men; they questioned many of the scow men and rafts-men; but though most of these men had heard about the accident, none of them had either seen or heard of any men, or of any boat, drifting down the harbor.

This took away from Bart and his father almost their last hope. Yet still they were not willing to give up their search, but continued until late into the night their now apparently hopeless task.

IV.

At the Mercy of the Tide. — Ears deafened. — Eyes blinded. — A fresh Struggle for Life. — The Roar of the Steam Whistle. — Where are we? — Pat explores. — A desolate Abode. — The falling Tides. — Without Food and Shelter.

WHERE is Pat?

Such was the terrible question that came to the mind of Phil, as, clinging to the oar, he felt himself swept onward by the resistless current. Far on high was the suspension bridge; on either side were dark, savage precipices, and the sweep of the tide hurried him along helplessly between these.

Where is Pat?

At that dread question his heart sank within him. The remembrance of his recent plunge beneath the furious billows where he had been hurled down, and whirled round, and thrown out again, was still most vivid. He thought of Pat as being engulfed beneath them still. His own escape seemed little short of miraculous, and he could not hope that both of them were safe. Such an

escape was astonishing for one, but for two it was too much to hope for. He did not dare to look back. He was afraid to know the worst, and that look back, he thought, would show him only the dark water. For a time he felt as though he would rather fear the worst, than actually know it; and so, despairingly, he was swept on, and passed under the bridge in the same attitude in which he had emerged from the Falls.

Suddenly from behind him there sounded a cry, —

“Hooray!”

A thrill of joy passed through Phil. It was Pat's voice. In an instant his terror fled, and he looked back. There, to his amazement, close behind him, he saw Pat, drifting along, with his face above water fully revealed, and showing, even at that dread moment, the calm self-reliance and good-natured ease that always distinguished him. Phil was so overcome with joy, that he could not say a word.

“Sure an it's rather wet, so it is,” said Pat, in as natural a tone as though he were walking along the road in a rain shower.

Phil made no answer.

Again they drifted on in silence.

Now, as for Pat, at the moment when the boat hung hovering on the edge of the fall, he had stood, keen, watchful, observant, with every one of his wits about him, and had shouted out to Phil.

Phil had jumped first, but Pat followed immediately. His experience was like that of Phil, with this difference — that he was under water a little longer. On emerging, he saw Phil a little in front of him, and so he felt at ease on that score. His first thought now was about the boat. He looked back, and saw it not more than six feet behind him, bottom upwards. Upon this he was seized with a very strong desire to gain the boat once more ; and so he floated on for a time, thinking what to do. At length he made an effort to swim back towards it. The progress that he made was scarce perceptible, and he could hardly have gained the boat by his own efforts ; but, fortunately, the river current favored him, for the boat reached a place where it was whirled round so that its stern came close to him. A vigorous effort enabled him to seize it, and it was his joy at this which had elicited the cry that had first given to Phil the knowledge of his safety. The other remark, about the wetness of the place, was merely owing to the same exultation, and was intended to convey to Phil something of the same cheerful confidence that filled his own mind.

The boat was bottom upwards, but that was rather an advantage ; for a boat can bear a heavier weight under those circumstances than if it is filled with water in its natural position. Pat knew this very well, and proceeded at once to avail himself of this knowledge. He did so by climbing

upon it.— a task which required some effort, but in which he at length succeeded. In doing so, he was compelled to let go his oar. This, however, did not trouble him, for the boat was better than any oar could be, and so he straddled upon the bottom; and began to think how he could get Phil into the same comparatively easy position.

At last he hit upon a plan.

“Phil!” he cried.

Phil looked round, and saw the boat, and Pat seated on it.

“Shove us yer oar, darlint,” said Pat. “Can ye shove us up your oar, jewel?”

Pat spoke in a coaxing tone, just as though he was asking some favor from Phil.

At this request Phil pushed the oar along the surface of the water with one hand, using the other to keep himself afloat. The boat was near enough for him to reach it, and Pat, stooping down, grasped it. Then pulling at it, he drew Phil towards him, until at length he also was able to grasp the boat.

“Now,” said Pat, “I’ll take the oar, and you jist climb up here.”

He took the oar in one hand, and reached out his other to assist Phil. Pat’s help was of great value in such a difficult task, and by means of it Phil was at length able to clamber up, and straddle upon the boat behind his friend. They found, to their delight, that the boat supported both of them

with the greatest ease. Now, had it been filled with water in its ordinary position, right side up, it could scarcely have given assistance to one of them; but as it was, it gave the most perfect support to both of them. The reason is easy to explain. When a boat is turned completely over, bottom upwards, so suddenly as this was, there always remains a certain amount of air confined inside. This gives it an immense amount of buoyancy, and until that air all escapes that buoyancy continues. Of course, after a time the air will all escape, and then the boat must sink beneath the weight imposed upon it. But if the boat is tight, the air will be retained, and consequently the buoyancy will remain for a long time. Now, fortunately for Phil and Pat, the boat that they had was new, and well calked, and as tight as possible; and so there was no immediate danger. Fortunately also for them, they had thus far suffered nothing from cold; for it was the end of July, and the water was rather warm, and the air was warm also. And so, though they had experienced such a plunge into the water, and such a prolonged immersion, and though they now sat thus in their wet clothes, yet, after all, they suffered nothing whatever from either damp or chill, but, on the whole, were rather comfortable than otherwise.

Thus far they had uttered no cry for help, nor had they heard any call of any human voice that might indicate the neighborhood of any human

sympathy. They had passed under the suspension bridge. They had swept past shores that were crowded on either side with wharves, houses, and steam saw-mills, but as yet had seen no efforts to assist them. In fact, as it afterwards proved, no one had noticed them. Whether it was that every one was busy, or that they had been carelessly regarded as an ordinary boat in its ordinary position, could not be known; certain it was that no one offered to assist them. Thus, then, they swept along, until at length they reached the place where the river enters the harbor. Just here, the boat, in its drift, came near to the oar which Pat had dropped when he clambered into it. He grasped Phil's oar, and reaching out, he drew it towards him and regained possession of it.

"There's no knowin'," said he, "what use this may be. It's best to take it whin it comes to us handy."

Saying this, he gave Phil one oar, and keeping the other himself, he waited for some chance of escape.

But their troubles were far from ending as yet, and soon the prospect of escape was removed still farther from them. For as they reached the place where the river enters the harbor, just as they saw a man on the beach, and began to shout to him to try and attract his attention, they drifted on, and plunged into a thick, dense cloud of fog.

That fog was no common fog. It was the ad-

vance guard of a fog that covered the bay, and seemed to be thrown forward into the harbor to take possession and hold it until the main army should be ready to advance. It was dense, damp, and obscure. Through this they passed, trying to peer through the gloom, and find out where they might be going. Several times they shouted, but soon found out the uselessness of this. For the noise and riot all around showed them that shouting was simply absurd. Around them they heard the yell of steam whistles from tug-boats, from ferry-boats, and from what seemed to be a thousand other places. For it was now about midday, and that is the time when all the steam whistles of all the steam saw-mills of the city let off one simultaneous blast. The yells seemed to arise in every conceivable direction. Amid such an uproar, their loudest cries were feeble, and could not be heard; so they soon became convinced of the uselessness of this, and remained silent, but watchful. Watchfulness, however, was equally useless; for if it is in vain that one shouts amid the yells of steam whistles, so it is equally in vain that one tries to keep up a watch in the midst of a dense fog. Watching could reveal nothing but that obscurity which surrounded them.

In this way, then, they drifted down the harbor, while the steam whistles were yelling around them so as to stifle all their cries for help, and while the fog was gathering round them in its

dense folds so as to obscure their sight. But the boat bore them well, and it was at least a subject of rejoicing to them that they were thus seated in comparative comfort on that boat, instead of floating up to their chins in the water, clinging to their oars.

Neither of them spoke a word as they thus drifted. Both of them were anxiously on the lookout for some means of escape. But no way of escape presented itself. They drifted on. The time seemed long indeed as they thus drifted, though how long it really was they had no means of knowing, and could only conjecture. On they went, and still on, and no help appeared, and no way of escape was visible.

At length Pat began to make use of his oar by putting it over the boat into the water, and working it in the way called sculling; in such a way, however, as to give the boat as strong an inclination as possible to the right. It was not easy to scull, for there was no socket in which to insert the oar; but Pat did the best he could, and by holding one foot he managed to keep the oar in a steady enough position by holding it between his foot and the keel. Phil watched him in silence for some time, and Pat went on working at the oar with all his might.

"What are you doing, Pat?" he asked at last.

"Well," said Pat, without stopping, "there's jist a ghost of a chance for us. We're dhriftin

out to sea, an ef we sit still we'll be miles out before we know it. Now there's Partridge Island afore us yet, an it'll be on our right as we're dhriftin out, an I'm strivin to see if I can give a twisht to the boat, so as to draw her in nearer to the shore."

"Can't I help?" said Phil.

"I suppose ye may as well thry," said Pat.

Upon this Phil took his oar, and began to use it in the same way as Pat. The efforts of the boys were directed, not towards resisting the current, but towards effecting a movement of the boat to the right, and drawing it away from the middle of the stream to within reach of Partridge Island. This place was now their last hope.

"Ef we can only get out of the sthram," said Pat, "we'll get to the island. The boat's hard to move this way, but we may do something."

No more was said, but they both worked silently and vigorously. Soon the water grew somewhat rough, and waves began to rise. These were not of any size, but the boat was so low down that even the little wavelets broke over them as they sat there. After a time these wavelets grew larger, and at length they encountered several in succession that were worthy of being considered as waves. After this the water continued rougher, and their drift was by no means so quiet and uneventful as it had been. The fog, too, remained as thick as ever. Around them was still the sound

of whistles and fog horns, and high and loud and clear above all the din arose one far-penetrating yell.

"That's the island whistle," said Pat — "the fog whistle, so it is. We're comin nearer."

After a time this whistle seemed to be no nearer, but to have changed its direction.

"Where in the wide wurruld are we dhriftin to?" said Pat, trying in vain to peer through the fog.

"We must have passed the island," said Phil, uneasily.

Pat shook his head in silence.

But now new anxiety came to the two cast-aways, and the faint hopes that had arisen began to subside. The wind was blowing somewhat fresh, the waves were growing larger and more aggressive every moment. They appeared to have been carried beyond the island, and if so, they had no hope of any escape, unless they should come upon some vessel. But in that dense fog such a hope was faint indeed. Even in broad day their situation would have been dangerous, but now it was nothing less than desperate. These thoughts now came to each of them, and they said nothing, but they still worked, as if mechanically, at the oars.

Suddenly something dark loomed immediately before them through the fog, and in a few seconds, as the swift tide bore them nearer, they saw rocks and sea-weed.

"Hurrah!" cried Pat. "It's the island, afther all."

But at that moment the great fog whistle sent forth its blast, which sounded far away over the waters.

"'Tain't the island, ayther, sure enough," said Pat. "I wondher if it's the shore."

By this time they were close up to the rocks, and Pat leaped off. It was not deeper than his waist. Phil followed, and they pulled the boat forward. It was a shelving ledge of rock, covered with sea-weed; and drawing the boat as far up on this as they could, they stood still, and rested, and looked around.

But little could be seen, for the fog was thick, and shut out all except what was within their immediate vicinity. Nothing but rocks and sea-weed appeared. The rocks were rude and jagged crags, upheaved in wild disorder, with huge boulders lying in the interstices and hollows. Over all these was a vast accumulation of sea-weed.

"It's ashore somewhere that we must be," said Pat; "but where it is I don't know at all, at all, so I don't; somewhere on the Carleton shore, so it is. The island's over there, and this ought to be the baich. I'll tell you what I'll do. You stay here by the boat, and I'll go off and see if I can make out anything."

Saying this, Pat started off to explore the rocks and see the country. Phil sat down on the wet

sea-weed, holding the painter. His heart was full of fervent gratitude for his astonishing escape, and as his memory brought back the terrible events that had happened since he left the island, a prayer of thankfulness was breathed forth from his inmost soul to the One who had preserved him.

In a short time Pat returned. He looked disappointed, vexed, and somewhat puzzled.

"We're not on the baich at all," said he, in a tone of vexation.

"Where are we — on an island?"

"Niver an island," said Pat. "It's a rock that we're on. It's what they call a rafe. But what it is I don't know. It's big enough, and runs over iver so far. Anyhow, we're not far from the harbor, or from the island. If I ony knowed how far we were from the shore, I'd like it better. But I can't see anything, or hear anything of it."

"Perhaps we're close by the shore," said Phil.

"No; I'll tell you where it is. I have it. I knowed it," cried Pat. "I was sure of it, ony I couldn't get hold of it. Ye know that rafe lying off the Carleton shore — Shad Rocks?"

"Yes," said Phil.

"Well, it's that same that this place is; and we're standin here now, so we are, as sure as you're alive."

"Shad Rocks!" cried Phil. "Shad Rocks!"

"Shad Rocks it is," said Pat, "an no other place.

An now I undherstan it all. Out there is the say," said Pat, turning and facing where he supposed the sea to be. "Up there on the lift is Partridge Island, where ye hear the staim whistle, and back there's the Carleton shore."

This discovery cheered them both greatly ; and the moment that Pat suggested this, everything confirmed it. The sounds of whistles in various directions could now be identified with various steamboats with which they were acquainted, while the lowing of cattle and the reports of guns in other directions showed where the land was.

They now looked forward with perfect calmness towards escaping. Before very long the tide had retreated far enough to leave the boat exposed. The first thing that they did was to turn her over and set her right. They then put inside her the oars, which had saved their lives in the falls, and which they had fortunately brought with them all the time of their drift on the bottom of the boat. This gave them the means of effecting their escape.

All that they now had to do was to wait till the boat could float again. As near as they could calculate, the tide would not be back again sufficiently to float the boat until eight o'clock in the evening. They had therefore nothing to do but to wait as patiently as possible. They were wet and hungry ; but in that midsummer day, the wet did not make them at all cold, and in the course


of time their clothes dried upon them; and as to hunger. they were too much overjoyed at their escape to make any allusions to such a trivial thing. They amused themselves by hunting after shrimps in the interstices of the rocks and in the water pools that lay about.

Thus the time passed, and at length the tide rose high enough to float the boat. Fortunately for them also, the fog lessened somewhat, and thus they were able to direct their course much more easily. Soon they were on the waters again, rowing along, assisted now by the rising tide, and thus finally succeeded in reaching their destination.

On arriving at the house, they learned about the search of Bart and his father. They had not yet got home. Servants were at once sent to tell them the news, and it was at the very lowest point of their despondency that the tidings came that the lost were found.

V.

Flight of Solomon. — In Hiding. — Solomon is himself again. — Up the River. — Through the Country. — A long Drive. — An Indian Village. — An Indian Guide. — Preparing for the Expedition.

 HE joy which Pat and Phil had felt over their safety was certainly not greater than that of Bart, as the lost ones were at length restored. His intense anxiety was followed by a happiness as intense, and his excited feelings resulted in a somewhat sleepless night. But in the wakeful hours of that night his mind was taken up by other things than the affairs of Phil and Pat, and his thoughts reverted to the earlier events of that day, to Loch Lomond, and to Solomon. He still wondered at Solomon's precipitate and mysterious retreat, and obstinate staying away from the house. It looked as though Solomon did not want to go on the expedition; yet he felt in his own heart, that without Solomon the expedition would lose its chief charm. Consequently Solomon must go. But how could he overcome his objections? It would be necessary to see him at once, to drive

out to Loch Lomond as early as possible the next morning.

The next morning he was up early in spite of his sleepless night, and swallowing a few hasty mouthfuls, he hurried to the barn to see about harnessing the horse. The harness was put on, the horse was already standing between the shafts, Bart was watching the preparations impatiently, standing in the doorway of the barn, when, suddenly, he felt his shoulder touched.

He turned at once.

He stood thunderstruck!

For there, close beside him, full before him, was no other than the actual real bodily presence of Solomon himself.

Bart was so amazed, that for some time he could not utter one single word.

"Solomon!" he exclaimed at last.

At this, Solomon held up both hands with a warning gesture and a face full of fearful apprehension. The look and gesture would have been in every way appropriate to some criminal hiding from the law, and fearful of discovery; but it was utterly out of place in one so virtuous and so honored as the venerable Solomon. This incongruity was felt by Bart, and only added to his amazement.

"When did you come?"

Solomon retreated behind the door, dragging Bart after him.

"Last night," he answered.

"Last night? How?"

"I walked ebery step — I did."

"Walked?"

"Yes, ebery step. I rund away, you know."

"Ran away? What do you mean?"

Solomon's eyes rolled wildly; he looked all around.

"Drefful doins 'out dar. Drefful place. An dar's no noins what would hab ebber become ob me ef you didn't hab come yesterday. I'd been a pinin an a whinin in Gypsum bondage, but couldn't get away. She kept tight hole ob me, — mine, I tell you, — an she'll be arter me to-day, mighty quick, — ony you keep me hid, Mas'r Bart. Don't gib me up; don't let her take me."

"She? Her?" replied Bart, to whom all this was quite unintelligible. "What do you mean? What woman are you speaking of?"

"Black Betsy," said Solomon, with a groan and another fearful roll of the eyes.

"Black Betsy? Why, what has she to do with you?" asked Bart, in wonder.

"Why, she my wife, you know."

"Your wife? Your what? Your wife?" cried Bart. "What! Black Betsy! You married to Black Betsy! What in the world do you mean by this? When were you married? Last week?"

"Ben mar'd ober twenty year," said Solomon, dolefully.

This was a period of remote antiquity with which Bart had no connection, and he could only listen in amazement to Solomon's strange and startling disclosure. He had never heard of this before. He had no idea that Solomon had a wife, or that Black Betsy had a husband. But this thing required examination, and meanwhile the horse was all ready. As for the horse, he could only give orders to have him taken out, and then he was able to bestow his undivided attention upon Solomon.

"Ben mar'd mor'n twenty year," replied Solomon, dolefully. "An you nebber see sech a storny creetur in all your born days. Fight? Why, dat ar woman did nuffin but fight from morn to night, all de year roun. An drunk? Why, she nebber sober, night or day; an de life she led me! Beat? Why, she beat me black and blue; so I rund off to sea, and a bressed ting it was, for I ben dead an gone long ago. Den I heerd she gone off Boston way, an I come back yer, an den went to de Cadmy. Well, I got a mar'd darter out-Loch Lomon way, an I come yer dis time to see her and de chil'en; an dar was Betsy. She nabbed me. She beat my life out, made me a slabe, and I done nuffin but grub about ebber since I come yar. Beat? Why, ebery day she pound me to a jelly. Clar if she didn't! An de way she did lay dat ar big broomstick ober dis ole head. De sakes, ony to tink ob it."

) From all of which Bart learned that Black Betsy was the wife of Solomon; that her character, according to his showing, was by no means that gentle, and affectionate, and motherly one which he had supposed it to be; that her life was disorderly, and her conduct outrageous; that she was in the habit of getting drunk; that Solomon had to run away from her years ago, and become an exile and a wanderer; that it was only his yearning after his daughter that had drawn him back; that, on meeting his daughter, he had found himself, to his horror, once more in the presence of his merciless wife, who had at once seized him, appropriated him, beaten him, and reduced him to a state of abject slavery. From this slavery he had just escaped. He now appeared before Bart in the attitude of a fugitive slave, dreading discovery and capture, imploring Bart's sympathy and assistance, and eager, above all things, to fly far away, and follow the fortunes of the boys on a new expedition; once more to join the ranks of the B. O. W. C.; once more to officiate as Grand Pandrum; once more to furnish forth the banquet; once more to sail under the orders of Captain Corbet.

Solomon's position was a truly painful one, and excited Bart's profoundest sympathy; but there were other things in his position which were not altogether painful. In the first place, he was delighted to find that, whatever the reason might

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be, Solomon's eagerness to set forth upon the expedition was equal to his own, if not greater. In the second place, Solomon wished to remain in hiding, and implored Bart to conceal him and keep his secret. So Bart found himself suddenly called on to become the benefactor and protector of a cherished friend, and also the depository of a tremendous secret, which he had to guard like his heart's blood. It was a secret which must be communicated to none, not even to Phil and Pat, not to his father or mother, in fact, not to any living soul. Fortunately, the servant had not seen Solomon, for that wary old party had discovered himself to Bart so cautiously, and had drawn him back into the barn to talk to him so carefully, that he had not been seen.

So Bart undertook the task. He found a safe place for Solomon behind the hay, and at regular intervals through the day he brought him food and drink. These regular intervals occurred so frequently, that Bart spent the greater part of that day in vibrating like a pendulum between the house and barn. Had Solomon remained in this hiding-place for any length of time, it is certain that Bart's assiduous attentions and air of mystery would have led to a discovery; but as it happened, the concealment was not needed for any longer time.

All that day, while Bart had been thus performing the part of a faithful friend, he had also been

forwarding to the utmost the preparations for the coming journey. These preparations consisted chiefly in fishing-tackle of various kinds. One day was quite sufficient for this, and so, on the day after, the whole party left. Their departure took place at sunrise. Solomon had left before them, and had gone in the early morning twilight to the steamer in which they were to embark, where he had concealed himself behind a row of flour barrels. At seven o'clock the boat started. The boys walked forward, and there, to the utter amazement of Phil and Pat, the first object that met their eyes was Solomon. They had only heard Bart's account of his unsuccessful visit, and had given him up. But now he appeared, radiant, joyous, ecstatic; and though a large, white smouch was over his right cheek, caused by his lying down with his face pressed against a flour barrel, yet that white spot did not at all detract from the exultant and triumphant expression that overspread his face. His little black beads of eyes twinkled with delight; his legs went hopping up from the deck in all directions; and he would certainly then and there have indulged in a real, original, genuine, plantation break-down, had not rheumatiz gently reminded him that there were limits to the exercise of his muscular powers.

The route which they took to the Bay de Chaleur was apparently a roundabout one; but in reality it was the shortest way to get to their

destination. First they went up the river St. John, and after a time they intended to turn off into the country.

As they sailed up that beautiful river, they gazed with admiration upon the varying scenes that opened upon them every moment. With that river and its features Bart was quite familiar; but the others had never seen it before, and were never tired of looking out upon the surrounding valley. First of all they found themselves in a narrow gorge shut in by precipices. Emerging from this, they entered a broad expanse of water looking like an extensive lake. Traversing this, the river narrowed again, and the sheet of water ran on before their eyes in a straight line, for many miles, with high hills, some wooded, some cultivated on either side. Passing on, they left this behind; and now the course of the river was a winding one, leading them on amidst varied scenery of high hills and fertile valleys. Beyond this, again, the high hills departed, and a broad extent of meadow land, dotted with groves and orchards and white farm-houses, and covered over with luxuriant vegetation, spread away on every side as far as the eye could reach. Here the scene was not so varied as it had been at first, but it was rich and glorious, showing to them a favored land, a land flowing with milk and honey. This rich and fertile land continued till the steamer stopped at Fredericton.

Here they passed the night, and hired a carriage to take them to the River Miramichi, a place which lay on the way between Fredericton and the Bay de Chaleur.

On the following morning they crossed the ferry, and after a short drive they reached another river, a branch of the St. John, which rejoices in the name of the Nashwaak. The river was small, but they thought it one of the most beautiful that they had ever seen. High hills covered with forests arose on every side, now coming up close and shutting in the waters, again receding and leaving rich meadow lands, through which the river flowed with many a winding.

At midday they stopped at a pretty little inn by the road-side, and beguiled the time during which they had to wait for dinner by trying their hands at trouting. Bart and Phil caught two small trout apiece; Pat hooked one; while Solomon actually landed a salmon — an event which created intense excitement in the whole party.

In the evening they reached another place, where they stopped for the night. The next day they resumed their journey, and in the afternoon arrived at the village of Chatham, which is situated on the banks of the River Miramichi.

And now the boys made a discovery, which, strangely enough, had not suggested itself before. It was the simple fact that they had started altogether too soon. This was the third of August,

but the Rawtons and Tom would not meet them until the fifteenth. There was therefore nearly a fortnight's time on their hands. No thought of regret, however, arose in the minds of any of them; but the fact that they had so much time to spare, at once set them all to work to contrive some way of enjoying themselves. Various suggestions were made. One was, that they should visit the different settlements in all the country around; another, that they should go straight to Shippegan, get a schooner or a fishing-boat, and explore the Bay de Chaleur. Both of these plans, however, were rejected, in favor of the superior attractions of a third plan.

This was, to plunge into the woods, wander about, fish, explore, and rough it generally. They could take a little stock of provisions with them, but trust chiefly to the fish which they might catch. They could build camps, and sleep in them, and cook their fish themselves by their own fires. Bart spoke to the landlord about the feasibility of this plan, and that worthy approved of it highly, but told them that they would have to take some Indian guide with them.

Had the guide been English, Irish, Scotch, or American, the boys would probably have felt some objections; but being an Indian, the idea had overpowering fascinations for them. There was a dash of romance about an Indian guide that lent additional attractions to the proposed excursion.

The landlord informed them that there was an Indian settlement opposite, and that if they went over there they might find a guide, and make a bargain with him.

All this was settled on the evening of the day in which they had arrived, and early on the following morning they crossed the river on a visit to the Indian settlement, in search of a guide.

The Indian settlement was not a very extensive one. It consisted of about a dozen wigwams. These camps are constructed of poles set together in a conical shape, and covered over with birch bark, a substance that with them is made to serve a wonderful number of purposes. On entering the settlement, a number of dogs came up and smelt them very deliberately. They saw a number of children, who, at their approach, darted inside the nearest camp. Old squaws were busy cooking. One or two Indians were engaged in making baskets. The whole scene had a peaceful, primitive, and romantic character. It was clean, too; for though an Indian camp has no architectural pretensions, yet it rarely gives forth those overpowering odors which are encountered on approaching many of the houses of the more civilized races.

An Indian advanced to meet the boys.

"Good day, brother," said Bart; for in this country it is the fashion to address an Indian by this fraternal title.

"Good day, broder," said the Indian, in a friendly way.

He was rather old, fearfully wrinkled, and his long, coarse hair reached to his shoulders. As Bart looked at him, it struck him that this man would be a most desirable guide; his age made him trustworthy, while, at the same time, his sturdy frame and sinewy limbs showed that he possessed all the powers of endurance that might be desired.

With these thoughts Bart made known to him the object of his visit. As he spoke, the other Indians listened with much interest, and addressed remarks to one another, accompanied with glances at the boys, which seemed to afford them great amusement; for smiles came over their grave faces, and some of the younger squaws giggled, and numbers of little heads were poked out through the doors of several wigwams, and numbers of little sparkling black wild eyes were fixed upon the visitors to the camp.

The Indian whom they had accosted thought for some time over Bart's question, and then addressed some remarks to the others. Some conversation followed, which, of course, was not intelligible to the boys, since it was carried on in the language of these Indians. At length the one whom Bart was talking with informed him that he would be willing to go himself as guide.

"Me go; me go; takum you troom wood. Me good guide; fus rate; go often. My name Sam."

At this Bart was overjoyed.

"You wantum shoot?" asked the Indian.

"No," said Bart, with a feeling of intense regret, "only to fish."

"Berry well, fishum; all same. Me show all aboutum. When you go?"

Bart said that he wanted to set out that very day, if he could.

"Me all ready," said Sam. "Go now, or to-morrow; all same."

Upon this Bart said that they would go back to get their things, and return by noon, when they might all set out together.

They now went back and gathered together the things that they considered necessary. The Indian went over with them. After further conversation with Sam, Bart thought that it would be better to drive for about twenty miles, and then take to the woods. That would save them a long and useless tramp, and bring them at once to the very scene of action.

VI.

*A long Drive, and a long Walk. — The wild Woods.
— An Encampment. — The blazing Fire. — Lo!
the poor Indian. — The Wolf and the Watch-dog.
— The Spring of the Wild Beast. — Solomon to the
Rescue. — A Fight, and a Flight.*

AFTER a drive of about twenty miles, they came to a place where the road turned off towards the east. They had been heading thus far in a northerly direction, and at this turning-off place a path went from the road in the same northerly direction in which it had gone. At this place they got out of the wagon, and prepared to follow their guide into the woods. Each one took the load which he had already made up for himself, and the wagon then returned.

They did not care to burden themselves too greatly upon this expedition, and so the load which each one took was as light as possible. Bart, Phil, and Pat had each a basket slung from the neck, and a fishing-rod. In each basket was a parcel of ham sandwiches, which they had procured at the inn, with the intention of using them as a kind of relish, in addition to their ordinary wood fare.

Solomon contented himself with a basket only. His fishing apparatus he carried in his pocket. He wasn't gwine to bodder his ole head, he said, with dem poles — he could cut one in the woods when he wanted one, and throw it away when he got tired of it. Solomon's years seemed to be adverse to his taking part in an expedition like this, but in spite of this he waddled along quite as fast as any of them. One precaution he had taken which none of the rest had considered necessary, and that was, to bring with him a check shawl, which Bart had lent him. This he did for fear of his ever watchful enemy, the rheumatiz.

The path was at first very well beaten; but after about a mile or so, it gradually faded away, and the track that they followed after this was so faint as to be scarcely discernible. The woods consisted chiefly of pine trees, with birch and maple intermixed. None of these trees were very large, and they did not see any of those forest giants which had met their view in other places. In some places the underbrush was very dense, but in other places there was scarcely any. Sometimes the ground was quite bare and slippery with the accumulation of pine spires that had fallen there; again, they came to immense growths of fern; and yet again to the young growth of the forest trees, springing in wild luxuriance, all tangled and matted together.

At length even the faint outline of a path which they had been traversing for some time faded away,

and they walked on after the guide, without following any path at all. The land was quite level. They found no hills, and no rocks even. Sometimes a fallen tree lay in front of them, but it was never of sufficient size to create any obstacle. The chief irregularities in the ground were caused by an occasional mound, that seemed to mark the place where a tree had once been. Frequently they came to little brooks that babbled along beneath the trees, their borders overgrown with moss; and often they came to bogs and swamps, in some of which they got wet enough to acquire a very good foretaste of the experiences that now lay before them. But this was a trifle beneath their consideration, and the ease with which they advanced filled them all with the greatest delight.

At length they came to a stop.

It was in the midst of a pine forest. Overhead, the trees interlaced their branches. Beneath, the ground was dry, and covered with slippery pine spires. It was a slight declivity, and at the bottom a brook ran along. No better place could be wished than this for a night's rest.

"Good place dis," said Sam; "him dry — sleepum safe — wakum all well."

The boys were all very well pleased to find their march at an end. They had been on the steady tramp for at least two hours, and had penetrated far into the forest. Already the sky above was overcast, and the forest shades were deepening.

All things betokened the approach of evening and of night.

They flung down their baskets and poles, and then flung themselves down too, and stretched their weary limbs upon the ground. Solomon took off his basket, and put it down in a more leisurely fashion, and took up more time in depositing his own aged frame upon the ground.

"Well, boys," said Bart, after a short time of rest, in which he had stretched himself and yawned to his heart's content, "it's all very well to sit down and rest, but it's rather dark here under the trees, and it's going to be darker, and we can't expect to get to sleep for at least a couple of hours. How can we manage to exist, sitting here in the dark? I'm sure I can't for one; so let's make a fire."

The proposal was at once adopted with the utmost eagerness. They had all felt a certain degree of cheerlessness, and did not know exactly what the cause was; but now they saw that it was the darkness, and they knew that any friendly firelight, however small, would make all the difference in the world.

They now distributed themselves in different directions for the sake of procuring fuel. Under that pine forest it was not very easy to find any. At length, by dint of careful search and unwearying industry, they succeeded in gathering a very respectable amount, which they deposited in a heap near the place where they had first sat down. The

wood which they thus gathered was not very promising. What was dry was rotten twigs, and what was sound was green wood; but they did not complain. In order to find a fuel that was midway between these two extremes, they went off after pine branches. These they cut from the smaller trees with their pocket knives. Then they gathered some pine cones and bits of dry bark, and with these succeeded in kindling a fire. Over this they put the dry twigs, then the pine branches, and last of all the green wood. The fire thus carefully prepared was quite a success; the flames rose up merrily, and soon the friendly blaze illumined the gathering gloom.

Around this they now sat, and partook of their evening repast. The repast consisted of ham sandwiches, and their drink was water from the neighboring brook.

While they were seated round the fire they noticed that their guide drew forth a black junk bottle, and began to take large and frequent draughts from it. The smell showed them plainly that it was spirits, and this discovery filled them all with uneasiness. They were afraid that their guide would make himself drunk at the very outset of their expedition; and if so, what could they do with a drunken Indian? Sam had probably procured the villanous "fire-water" when he crossed with them to Chatham, before starting, and had brought it here with the express purpose of swallowing the whole of it that night.

The effects of the intoxicating liquor were soon only too apparent. He began to talk with such volubility that his broken English was scarcely intelligible. As far as they could make out, he was trying to tell them about the best places there were for fishing and shooting, and illustrating his remarks with incoherent anecdotes about various parties which he had accompanied through these forests.

But as he went on he grew more and more excited, and at length gave up broken English, and spoke to them in his own language. Of course this made him totally unintelligible. There was now something that seemed to them uncanny in the sight of this man, as he sat there, half out of his senses, talking at them vociferously and volubly in his unintelligible jargon. It put an end to all their own conversation, and to all their pleasure. It was bad enough to be here; but to be here with a drunken Indian, a crazy savage, was too much.

But the Indian kept on. He still applied the bottle to his lips at short intervals, and continued his wild gabble as before. At first, he had been speaking to them, and now he seemed to be addressing his remarks to space; for his eyes were not any longer turned towards them, but were rolling in all directions,—sometimes resting on the trees, sometimes on the fire. He grew more and more excited. Holding the bottle in one hand, he

swung it around, and with the other he made energetic gestures, which he used to give emphasis to his statements. His voice also gradually changed. At first it was natural; and so long as he spoke English, there had been nothing in it to excite particular attention; but when he broke forth in his native language, it grew deeper and more guttural, and stranger and more barbaric.

The long Indian monotone and drawl became intensified by him, and was developed into something that sounded like a strange, unearthly chant; and this fierce sing-song chant only served to increase the wild and savage effect of the whole.

Here, then, were the boys, in the midst of the lonely forest, face to face with a drunken Indian. The fire was flaming up, and its blaze shone upon the Indian, and threw a baleful glow upon his dusky face. He sat opposite to them, his long hair tangled and matted, his brows contracted, his bright, black eyes rolling restlessly in their orbits, the deep-wrinkled face revealed with startling distinctness against the dark background of the forest, and showing all the incessant working of its muscles, and the rapid play of its features. With his bottle clutched in one hand, and the other hand making fierce gesticulations, all the time he kept howling out unintelligible sounds in a whining guttural—a monotonous, but furious sing-song chant. Such was the scene before them; and it was no wonder that it excited some uneasiness.

What could they do?

They did not know.

What would this Indian do?

This also they could not know.

There was nothing in his appearance that could reassure them. Every moment he grew worse and worse. If this sort of thing went on much longer, he might grow violent enough to make an attack upon them. Already he looked far more like a wild beast than a human being. The maddening fumes of the liquor might excite the natural ferocity of his race, and urge him on to deeds of horror. They had no security whatever against such a suspicion, and no means whatever of defending themselves from any sudden attack.

As for Solomon, he had been watching the Indian most attentively all this time, and the sight of this wild associate had produced upon him quite as strong an effect as upon the boys, though of a totally different kind. Had the boys not been so fascinated by the Indian as to be unable to withdraw their gaze, and had they looked at Solomon, they would have been astonished at the change that had suddenly come over him.

He had been seated a little in the background, in a lazy, reclining posture, when his attention was aroused by the conduct of the Indian. He started up and sat erect for a time. Then, as the Indian grew worse, he became more excited. He rose up on his knees, and remained in that position—

watchful and eager. At length, as the Indian grew more furious, the excitement of Solomon increased to a proportionate degree. He rose gradually to his feet, and stood there, eager, attentive, vigilant; every nerve on the stretch; his body advanced, his arms bent, his fists clinched, his brows contracted, his lips compressed, his eyes kindling with a dull glow; and as the flames illumined his dusky face and figure, they revealed a sight which was quite as impressive as that other spectacle upon which the eyes of the boys were fastened.

The old man was transformed. He was no longer the shambling, free and easy, indolent, gabbling, ridiculous, affectionate, rheumatic, pottering, and apparently feeble old Solomon, whom the boys had known and loved. He was changed. He was another being. As the feeble woman is roused to frenzy, and becomes transformed at the approach of danger to her child, so Solomon, at the suspicion of possible danger to his boys, his "chickens," his "chil'en," whom he loved with all the strength and devotion of his faithful and affectionate old heart, dropped his old self altogether. He became changed into the fierce, watchful, vigilant champion and defender of those whom he loved. Perhaps there was also some of the savagery of his African blood, and the natural ferocity of his race, which, long slumbering, had burst forth at that moment, at the impulse of his brother

savage. But as it is difficult to imagine any taint of savagery, however faint, in one like Solomon, his present attitude may best be accounted for on the ground of his living watchfulness over the boys.

At any rate, there he stood, firm as a rock, and rigid as steel,—like a watch-dog awaiting the onset of the wolf. His “rheumatiz” was forgotten in the excitement of that tremendous moment, just as the soldier, in the ardor of battle, is unconscious of dangerous wounds.

At length a crisis approached.

The Indian had gone on as before, growing more and more furious every moment. His eyes rolled fearfully. He had drunk most of the contents of the bottle, and his brain was on fire. His voice grew hoarser and hoarser, his gestures more violent, and his manner more threatening; his utterances were still of that sing-song character already mentioned, but they had now become almost unearthly in their intonations. What mad thoughts there might be in his mind at that time could not be known; nor could they imagine the exciting visions that were wrought in his distracted brain. Whatever they were, they at length passed away; and his eyes, that had been rolling at vacancy, now steadied themselves, and suddenly fastened themselves upon the boys with a look of concentrated hate and fury that was terrible.

So terrible was that look, that the boys all

shrank back in horror. Then they started up to their feet, and stood close together, in silence, each nerving his young heart for the coming struggle, which now seemed imminent. As they thus stood, they were on a line with Solomon; but their attention was so occupied with the Indian that they neither thought of him nor saw him.

"Let's stick together," said Bart at length in hurried tones — "it's our only chance."

"Stick it is," said Pat, who had recovered his coolness, "through thick and thin."

Phil said nothing, but stood his ground with the others, and waited.

The movements of the boys had excited the Indian still more. A furious cry escaped him. He looked at them for a moment, and then moved to the right, and flung his bottle into the fire. The spirits poured out, and the blaze threw a bluish, ghastly glare over the scene. Then the madman gave a terrible yell, and rushed towards the boys.

The boys saw him coming. They stood firm. They gathered up all their strength.

But suddenly a dark shadow darted forward, and a dark figure flung itself against the Indian.

It was Solomon. Watchful, eager, fierce, he had waited for the onset, and as the Indian advanced he made his spring. Rushing upon him, he struck him on the side, and the onset was so unexpected that the Indian had not time to guard against it. He fell to the ground. In a moment Solomon was

upon him. He twined his legs around him. He grasped the savage by the throat. To that throat he clung with a death like tenacity, never relaxing that iron grasp, that convulsive grip, but clinging, holding, tightening his clutch all the more as his enemy strove to shake him off.

The boys stood there looking on in speechless amazement. They recognized Solomon, but could scarcely believe their own eyes. Where had Solomon gained that bounding activity, that tremendous strength and energy, which now availed him even against the madman's fury? Could this be Solomon—the one who was afraid of his own superstitious fancies—the one who had just been in miserable thralldom to a drunken wife? It seemed incredible. Yet that this was Solomon himself they saw plainly.

The struggle was most violent. The Indian gasped, and groaned, and writhed, and sought to free himself from the grasp of his assailant. But Solomon's grip could not be shaken off. He devoted all his strength to that one thing, and did not waste any of his energies in any useless efforts. The Indian's struggles grew weaker. He was suffocating from that grasp on his throat. Had he been younger, he might have overpowered Solomon; but he was an old man himself, perhaps quite as old as Solomon, and therefore he was not so superior in strength as might be supposed.

And now a mighty feeling of triumph swelled

through Solomon's heart, and chased away the furious impulse that had animated him to this assault. The fainting efforts and the relaxing limbs of his enemy showed that the victory was his. A softer feeling now came over him, mingling with his triumph—he thought of the boys whom he had saved.

He turned his head and raised himself slightly. "Nebber you fear, chil'en," he said—"he do you no harm now."

Suddenly the Indian made one last convulsive effort. Had Solomon not been speaking to the boys he could have resisted even this last throe of despair; but as it was, his attention was for the moment distracted, and he was taken by surprise. The Indian tore himself loose from Solomon's grasp, jerked himself up by a mighty effort upon one knee, and threw himself free from his assailant. Both were now on their feet, facing one another, panting heavily. Once more the fury of the fight raged in Solomon's heart. He stood poised—he prepared for a spring. The Indian's strength lay in his madness; the strength of Solomon lay in his devotion to the boys—in the frenzy of his love and anxiety for their safety.

The boys came forward. This time they would not let Solomon fight their battle. They would assist him, and lend all their united strength to crush their savage assailant. It was one common impulse, part of self-preservation, part of regard

for Solomon, that animated them, and they sprang to his side and waited.

All this was the work of a moment.

Another moment and Solomon would once more have made his tiger-spring, and flung himself upon the madman.

But that moment had sufficed for the Indian to take breath, and to receive a new impulse. This time it was not hate or destructive fury. It was terror. The terrible struggle from which he had escaped with such difficulty had given a new turn to his frenzied thoughts. Fear overmastered him. A stifled exclamation escaped him. He started back.

Then he turned and ran.

He ran for his life; and in a few moments he had passed out of sight, and was lost amid the gloom of the forest and the night.

VII.

Passing the Night. — On Guard. — The watchful Sentinel. — Plans, — Through the Woods. — The winding River. — Fishing. — The overcast Sky. — Arrival of Pat with startling Tidings. — A useless Search.

FOR a few moments the whole party stood confounded by this new and sudden turn which events had taken.

"He's gone, anyhow," said Pat, who was the first to break the silence.

The other boys said nothing. As for Solomon, he stared for a few moments all around, and then quietly seated himself by the fire.

"Well, of all de cur'ousest an stornarest things!" he exclaimed. "Ef dis don't beat all creation holler, den I'm a niggar. An me in a fight—a rail battle; no play, mind you; but a fight for life and def. Clar ef I can understan it."

And Solomon buried his head in his hands, quite overcome.

"Anyhow," he resumed after a pause, "ye see how it was, chil'en. Dat ar demon was a plingin

an a jumpin, an I see he was makin for you; so I 'termind I'd hab a shy at him. Couldn't stan dat ar nohow. Ain't a fightin man; but dat ar Ingin war so dreadful aggravatin; mor'n flesh an blood could stan. Anyhow, I did gib him nuff ob it for one spell; an he'll tink twicet afore he tackle any ob us agin."

"I never was so astonished in my life," said Bart. "And how you did pitch into him!" he continued, admiringly. "Why, you gave a leap like a tiger. Down he went, with you on top — at his throat."

Solomon laughed long, joyously, and uproariously. He chuckled, he giggled, he slapped his knees, and finally he threw himself flat on his back, and lay there, laughing, chuckling, crowing, and making a confused medley of noises, all of which were intended by him to be expressive of triumph and exultation.

"Clar ef I know what ebber did git hold ob me dat time," he said, in the intervals of his laughter. "Specs I mus hab gone clean mad an rabin stracted. Didn't tink dar was so much clar fight in me. Ain't such a rheumatic old nig, arter all. Fight any drunken Ingin on de face ob de erf. Ki yi! Yep! Ho-o-o-o! Dat's so."

At all this the boys looked on without saying anything, wondering at the change. Could this be the same man, thought Bart, that had always seemed so helpless? whose "rheumatiz" seemed

always to prevent the slightest exertion? Could this be the same Solomon who allowed himself to be captured by a parcel of Gaspereaugian boys? Could this be the same man whom he had seen only a day or two before, cowering and cringing at the sight of an angry woman? Was the Solomon over whom Black Betsy had tyrannized so remorselessly indeed the same one who had just flung himself at the throat of a madman, and overpowered him? It seemed incredible.

Yet it was no other. Already Solomon was himself again, his old natural self. Already he began to investigate his joints, and to murmur doleful anticipations of a fresh attack of rheumatiz. But the boys had other things than this to think of. The question now was, how to pass the night. They did not feel altogether safe. The madman who had just threatened them had fled; but it seemed to them as though he was still lurking somewhere near them in the shadow of the gloomy forest, waiting his chance; waiting till they should go to sleep, so that he might rush upon them unawares. If they wished to sleep at all, it would never do, they thought, for them to sleep here with the firelight shining upon them, and revealing them to the gaze of their enemy. They must seek some other place.

On mentioning this to Solomon, he objected very strongly.

"Dar's no danger, chil'en," he said. "Dat ar

Injun won't ebber come back agin. He darsn't. He nebber forget my grip. I frikend dat ar Injun away forebbermo."

"O, that's the very reason why he'll be back," said Bart. "He'll wait till we're all asleep, and then attack us. He'll make a sudden spring at you first."

"No, he won't," said Solomon; "nebba. He don't do dat ar wid dis chile."

"How can you prevent him if you're asleep?"

"Cos I don't 'tend goin to sleep; dat's how," said Solomon. "Got him dar, anyhow. Yah, yah, yah."

"What! do you intend to watch?"

"Jes so. I pose on dis yar solemn casion, my spected friends, to keep de fire a goin, and to hole a watch an a guard ober de party."

"Do you think we'd let you do that?" said Bart. "Do you think we'd go to sleep, and leave you to watch us all night? No. If there's going to be any watching, we'll take turns."

"Dat ar am all berry well," said Solomon, with a dignified wave of his hand, "stremely well, an proppa for ordinary casiums; but dis yar casium's a berry strornary casium. Dar's danger; and de man dat's goin to keep watch mus be able to face de enemy in a fight. Dat ars de reason, den, why I pose to keep a lookout. I'll set heah, keep de fire a goin, an you can all sleep safe an sound. Dar's no use for you to set up."

"But you must sleep," said Bart.

"O, I'll wake you up early in de mornin, an hab my sleep den. So now don't talk no more, for I'm a goin to do dat ar, an watch dis bressed night."

Some further conversation followed, in which the boys insisted on watching for a part of the time, at least. They were so urgent, that Solomon at last had to consent. He insisted, however, that he would sit up during the first part of the night, as the danger would be most likely to take place then, if it took place at all, and promised to wake them towards morning. With this understanding the boys lay down by the fire, and in spite of their recent excitement, they soon fell asleep.

Solomon sat there by the fire keeping watch with all his senses on the alert. No danger was there of this faithful old sentinel sleeping at his post. The very possibility of danger to the boys was enough to keep all his mind wakeful and attentive. After a time he moved back a little, and rested his back against a tree.

The hours of the night passed on slowly and tediously. The boys slept soundly, and were lost in the land of dreams. Occasionally Solomon amused himself and beguiled the time by going forth and collecting sticks for the fire. The flames smouldered low, and the sticks that Solomon was able to gather were not sufficient to kindle them afresh to any great extent, and so the consequence was, that at length it nearly died out. It was

profoundly dark; but still Solomon watched, and felt no inclination to sleep.

He had promised to awake the boys towards morning, but they slept so soundly that he had not the heart to keep his promise, and so he let them sleep on. At length Bart awoke, and, starting up, he looked all around. It was early morning twilight; the sky was brightening overhead, and the forms of the forest trees were visible around. As he started, Solomon got up, and walked towards him.

"Well, Mas'r Bart," said he, "all right so far. De Injun gone off forebbamo."

"Why didn't you wake me before?" asked Bart.

"De gracious sakes, now, chile!" said Solomon; "dar wasn't no casium. 'Tain't mornin yet."

"Well, you lie down now, and go to sleep," said Bart.

"All right," said Solomon; and going back to the tree where he had been sitting, he curled himself up on the moss at the foot of it, and, drawing his shawl over his head and shoulders, was soon in a sound slumber.

And now the morning advanced; slowly the shades of night faded away, until, at length, the day dawned, and a thousand birds awaked the echoes of the forest in all directions, and filled all the air with a flood of melody. Bart looked up at the sky, and noticed that it was overcast. There was also a very peculiar appearance there which

excited his attention. There seemed clouds overhead; but the clouds had a sickly, yellowish color, which was unlike anything that he had ever seen. After a short time, Pat and Phil awoke, and Bart drew their attention to this. They, however, thought nothing of it.

"It's only common clouds," said Phil.

"Deed, an it's a good sign, so it is," said Pat, in his usual tone of confidence. "The trout bite wondherful whin they see a sky like that over thim. It's lucky for us we've got sich weather."

Bart had his doubts about this, but he kept them to himself, and then the boys began to consider what they had better do. The loss of their Indian guide made a change in their circumstances of a very important nature. As long as they had him with them, they had no care or anxiety, for they knew that he would take them to all the best places in the country. But, now that he had gone, what ought they to do first?

The idea of going back occurred, but it was at once dismissed. To go back would be very fatiguing, and would be of no particular use. For, if they did get another guide, he might turn out as badly as the one whom they had lost; and besides, their experience with Sam disgusted them with guides and with Indians altogether.

"If I only had a compass," said Bart, "we'd be all right, for we could at least be able to choose some direction, and have some idea of where we

went. But, as it is, we shall have to wander at random."

"Sure and that's the very best way there is to wandher, so it is," said Pat. "It's a mighty sight better to go sthrollin' along as you like than it is to be taggin' afther a big drunken Injin, any day."

"Yes," said Phil, "that's the best way. Let's go strolling along, fishing at every brook we come to; and enjoy ourselves. We can make camps, and if we come to any pleasanter place than usual, we can stay there for two or three days. Why, this is the very best way of enjoying ourselves. I'm sure I couldn't imagine anything more glorious."

"I wonder if there are any fish up that little brook," said Bart.

"Sure an we'd betther try."

"One of us had better stay behind with Solomon," said Bart.

"I'll stay," said Phil; "I'll get some sticks and build the fire again, and if you do get any fish, we'll be able to have some for breakfast."

Upon this, Bart and Pat prepared their rods, and lines, and went off up the brook. It was not very large, but it had the general appearance of a good trouting stream; and the appearance did not deceive them, for after a short time, to their great joy, they succeeded in hooking ten or a dozen very respectable trout, with which they returned to the "encampment." Here they found a brisk fire, beside which Phil was sitting awaiting

their return. As they reached the place, Solomon awoke from his nap, and joined them at the fire. Then followed breakfast, which consisted of broiled trout, and, as they had brought plenty of salt and pepper in their baskets, there was no lack of relish, and the fish was pronounced delicious.

After breakfast, they once more noticed the appearance of the sky. It had still that dull, sickly, yellowish hue which had first struck Bart's attention. Although the day had advanced since then, the sky had not changed, and there was no increase of light.

"It's smoke," said Bart. "I wonder what's the cause of it."

"De woods are burnin'," said Solomon.

"I wonder if it is anywhere near," said Phil.

"O, no!" said Bart; "it's some distant fire or other. Perhaps they're clearing land."

"Dar's allus smoke a floatin about dese times in de woods," said Solomon. "Dey keep a clearin an a choppin — no end."

"Sure an it's all the betther fer us," said Pat, "for an overcast sky is the thing for the throat; an sure they niver know the difference whither it's smoke or clouds, so they don't, an they bite all the same, so they do."

They now prepared for the day's work; but before starting, Bart said that they ought to appoint some place of meeting, in case they got separated. On discussing this point, however, they soon found

that they were not in a position to appoint any place of rendezvous, since no one place was known to them except where they were sitting. They did not care about remaining in the vicinity of this place, but wished to ramble on at leisure, and at liberty.

"Sure an there's no nade," said Pat; "we can all kape widin hearin of one another, so we can."

"At any rate," said Phil, "we can start now, and stay by one another as long as possible. If we come to any place where we have to separate, we can easily make an arrangement to come back to that place."

This last remark seemed satisfactory, and as it was really the only thing that they could do, they said no more on the subject, but set forth at once.

They walked on for about an hour, and at length emerged from the pine trees, and came to woods where the trees were largely birch and maple. Thus far, their progress had been very easy, as the ground under the pine trees was smooth, and there was very little underbrush. At this place, however, it became more difficult. Small trees and underbrush arose on every side in great profusion, and the ground rose in a succession of gentle eminences, while an occasional swamp intervened. Still, it was not very difficult walking even there, and the chief difference was, that their course became much more circuitous. Through this they wandered for another hour and more, without finding any place that was at all suitable.

At length, to their great joy, they found themselves upon the edge of a small rivulet, which was not more than forty or fifty feet in width. Its bed just here was strewn with pebbles and cobblestones; but farther up and down, they saw hollows and deeper places in the river-bed, which promised some sport. Here they prepared for action. Phil and Pat offered to go down the stream, while Bart and Solomon could go up. Before parting, it was settled that they should come back to this place. On the other side of the stream there were two birch trees growing close together, which would serve as a sufficient landmark to enable them to recognize this place on their return; and with this arrangement the two parties separated, Phil and Pat descending the stream, while Bart and Solomon went up the channel.

Bart and Solomon went up the river-bed for some distance. They found no difficulty in going along, for the stream was shallow, and they could wade it in most places. Occasionally they came to deeper places, which they traversed by going round them. At length they reached a place that looked favorable to their designs, and began to try them. A few bites rewarded them, and two or three small trout were soon deposited in their baskets. They now began to enter more into the spirit of the occasion, and continued slowly ascending the stream, stopping sometimes a long while in some particularly good place, till they

had exhausted it, and then resuming their tramp. The consequence was, that their baskets soon began to be unpleasantly heavy, and they had to confine themselves more exclusively to one spot, and indulge to a less extent in their wanderings. All this time these two had had no occasion to keep a lookout on each other, for Solomon, with his instinct of fidelity, had no other idea than that of simply following Bart wherever he went.

All this time the sky had maintained the same yellowish hue, and was as much overcast as ever. Here and there they reached places where the view upward was more extensive, and their gaze could command a larger part of the sky. They saw rolling clouds which seemed most unmistakably to be smoke, and these they thought the sure indications of some fire, which, judging from these appearances, was larger than usual. Beyond an occasional glance upward, however, and a stray remark, these appearances excited no particular notice on the part of either of them.

At length it began to grow somewhat late, and they decided to return. Their long march and still longer fishing excursion had greatly fatigued them; and in going back, they found the distance far greater than they had supposed. At length they recognized the landmark; and here they both flung themselves wearily down upon the bank, and waited for the return of the others.

For a long time they waited there. It grew

later and later, but there was no sign of either of them. At length they saw some one coming, and as he drew nearer they recognized Pat. He was very much out of breath, and soaking wet from head to foot.

"Where's Phil?"

Those were the first words that Pat spoke, and he spoke them in hurried, anxious tones.

"Phil!" cried Bart. "Why, don't you know?"

"Hasn't he got back yit?" said Pat, with something like a wail.

"No," said Bart, as a dark feeling of apprehension came to him.

"Och, thin," cried Pat, "it's fairly heart-broke I am, so I am; and no one knows what I've suffered this blissed day. Sorra one o' me knows what has become of him. An I've been scourin the whole country back'ards an for'ards, an yellin meself hoarse, so that I can't utter one blissed howl more, so I can't."

At these startling words, all Pat's anxiety and more communicated itself to Bart. He hastily questioned Pat about Phil's disappearance.

"We wint down," said Pat, "for iver so far, an we came to one of the foinest holes iver was. We fished there a half hour an more, and thin Phil says, says he, 'I'll go, says he, over beyont,' — for there was a moighty big rock jist forninst us. So he wint for to climb the rock, and he says, 'I'm goin further down,' says he. So I thought no more

about it, but wint on wid me fishin. It wasn't for iver so long that I thought of him; but at last I begins to fail anxious, and wondhers to meself what iver have become of him. So I started off. I didn't climb over the big rock, as he did, but crossed the sthram and wint down the other side. Well, I couldn't see a sign of him. I called, an yelled, an howled, an walked iver so far down an back agin; an that same I've been doin iver since, till I thought, at last, he might have somehow got back here. An he ain't here."

This story caused terrible anxiety. Bart at once started down the stream, and reached a high, rocky bank covered with trees. He stood here and called. It was now too dark to see much. His calls awaked no response. He then returned, full of the most anxious fears, with a faint hope that he might find Phil on his return.

But on his return there was no Phil to be seen.

VIII.

*The Loss of Phil.—Deep Gloom and heavy Grief.—
A Night of Terror.—The torrid Atmosphere.—
—The Smell of Smoke.—The Darkness that might
be felt.—Morning brings Relief.—The Search.—
The Rock and the Precipice by the River-side.—
The Track of Phil.—Following the Trail.—The
Trail lost.—Persevering Search.—The End of
the Day.*

THE loss of Phil produced a terrible effect upon the little party. Pat's grief was expressed by sighs and groans for some time, until at length his elastic nature rebounded from its depression, and he began to hope for the best. Solomon was deeply distressed, and said not a word; while Bart was also silent, and he tried in vain to conjecture what had been the cause of Phil's departure. To him it seemed perfectly unaccountable how he could have got lost. There was the stream, and it seemed to be easy enough, even if one had wandered from it, to retrace his steps. From Pat's story, Phil's departure from him by that rock was the beginning of misfortunes. At

some time after that he must have begun to wander in a wrong direction, and gradually gone farther and farther away till he was lost.

All that night none of them slept. For a time they kept up a series of cries, which awakened no response. Then they built a fire, thinking that the glow would penetrate to a distance beyond where their cries could go. They made the fire on the bank, and kept it up for two or three hours; but at length they could find no more fuel, and allowed it to die out.

While thus watching and using these efforts to make known their situation to the wanderer, their excitement and suspense were too great to allow of any thought of sleep. Eyes and ears were constantly on the stretch, and every sound, however faint, awakened within them the hope that it might be Phil. But the hours passed on, and not a single sign appeared to them as they watched, and listened, and waited.

"I wonder whether he is wandering about in this darkness or not," said Bart, in an anxious voice. "But I don't suppose it is possible for any one to walk in these woods now."

"Niver a walk," said Pat; "not he. He's tin times comfortabler thin we are. He's jist gathered some moss, an he's made a comfortable bed for himself over beyont, somewheres under thim trays. Deed an he has. An what's more, he's asleep now, sound as a top, so he is; an I wish

I wor as sound aslape as he is this blissed moment."

Bart shook his head mournfully.

"No," said he, with a sigh, "he won't have much sleep to-night, poor old Phil; he's got too much to think of. If he had some one with him, he'd feel all right; but it's a terrible thing to be all alone this way. And it's a miserable night; so horribly dark; so hot. I can scarcely breathe. I never knew such a night."

"Thru for you," said Pat. "It's fairly suffocated I am. But at any rate, that makes no differ to Phil. Sure its betther for him to be too warrum thin too cowl'd, so it is."

"I can't understand it," said Bart, after a pause. "I don't see why he should be lost. I wonder whether — but that's nonsense."

"What's that?"

"I wonder whether Sam could have been following us," said Bart, half shuddering at the frightful thought that had occurred.

"Sam? What, the Injin?"

"Yes."

"An what'd he be a follerin of us for?"

"O, I don't know. But you remember how he looked last night. He looked like a demon. He certainly tried to kill us."

"Sure but he was dead dhrunk an mad intoirely, so he was."

"But his mad fit may have lasted till to-day;

and he may have been sneaking after us through the woods, and watching for a chance to do some mischief. And so —”

Phil hesitated.

Pat was silent for a few moments.

“O, sure,” said he, at last, “what are ye givin way for to sich mad deludherin notions? What’d he be wantin of a boy like Phil?”

“He might have vowed vengeance on us.”

“Vingince is it? By the powers, thin, if it’s vingince he wanted, it ud be Solomon that he’d track, not Phil, that niver so much as spoke one word to him, good or bad, all the time he was with us. And as for vingince, sure my iday is, that the Injin’d give up all the vingince that ivir wor for a glass o’ whiskey, so he wud.”

Bart made no reply. The subject was too terrible to be discussed. He tried to dismiss the thought from his mind. But the idea, having once suggested itself, was not to be got rid of so easily. Do what he could, it came back to him over and over again, taking possession of his mind more and more strongly.

A terrible thought it indeed was that had thus come to him — the idea of that demoniac being who had sprung at them on the previous night, and had only been repelled by what seemed almost a miracle, being still animated by furious hate and a thirst for vengeance, — the idea of this implacable savage, thirsting for their blood, following

stealthily on their trail all that day, maintaining his pursuit with that inexhaustible patience and tenacity of purpose which a bloodthirsty savage alone can show when on the search for vengeance. Had he indeed done this? Had this been the secret history of that day? Was this blood-hound indeed on their track? Could it have been possible that he had devoted them one by one to destruction, and had bided his time, and had made Phil his first victim the moment he wandered away from the others? It was a horrible, a sickening thought.

Now, Bart's mind was full of stories of Indian warfare and Indian vengeance, accumulated during a course of reading in Cooper's Leatherstocking series, and kindred works; and so it is no wonder that this idea came to him. Besides, he had yet fresh and vivid in his mind the assault of that drunken fiend the night before. All these things combined to fix this fearful idea in his mind. As the hours passed on it became more deeply seated, until at length he was in an indescribable state of anxiety and alarm.

Thus the hours of that night passed away—a night even worse than the preceding one; for then the terror had come and gone; but now it hung over them all the time. In addition to this, the night itself was most depressing. It was intensely dark. After the fire had died out, it was impossible to see anything whatever—not even the hand

before the face. The deepest shadows surrounded them on all sides, and wherever they looked their eyes encountered nothing but the blackness of darkness. Besides this, it was exceedingly hot and sultry, the air having a certain indescribable oppressiveness which made them sometimes fairly gasp for breath. The only relief that they were able to gain was by making frequent applications to the water of the river, sometimes dashing it over their faces, at other times dipping in their heads, or feet. This sultriness oppressed them all in an equal degree, and united with the intense darkness to throw them into a state of bewilderment and perplexity. Taken in connection with Phil's disappearance and the terrible event of the preceding night, it produced such an effect upon the mind of Bart, that all the fears which were suggested by his vivid fancy became more formidable and irresistible. Solomon said nothing at all, but appeared to be quite overwhelmed. Pat alone struggled against the evil influences of the time, and endeavored most energetically to put the best appearance on things, and to rouse Bart from the deep gloom into which he had fallen. So the night passed; and it was at length with a feeling of immense relief that they saw the darkness begin to lessen.

As the day dawned, a faint breeze sprang up, which brought a gentle, cooling influence with it. They rose and inhaled with long breaths the more

grateful air. Gradually the darkness disappeared, and the daylight increased, and the forms of things around them became revealed.

Overhead there was no change from the day before. The sky was all covered over with dense clouds, which seemed to hang much lower down than on the preceding day, and now appeared whirling round and rolling over the heavens in vast vortices. This movement on their part was, no doubt, caused by their encountering the breeze which had sprung up, and which, meeting them now in their course, arrested that course, and whirled them back in confused heaps.

And now a new day lay before them, in which they would have to employ every hour in the search after Phil. What that day or that search might bring forward, they could not tell; but they were eager to begin it as soon as possible. While it was yet morning twilight, they ate their breakfast, and discussed the best plan of procedure. Solomon, as usual, made no remark upon the subject, being content to abide by Bart's decision, while Bart and Pat talked over various ways of carrying on their search. To separate was not to be thought of, for that would only lead to fresh troubles. So it was decided, that wherever they went, they should now keep together. They further decided that they should go down the stream till they reached that rock already spoken of, which had been the point of Phil's departure, and

try if they could not get upon his trail, so as to see, at least in a general way, what direction he had taken.

During this deliberation about the course which they should take, Bart still exhibited the despondency which had characterized him ever since Phil's disappearance. The gloom of night and the oppressive sultriness had passed, daylight was at hand, and the breeze brought fresh life to them; but still Bart's spirits were deeply depressed. Against this Pat rebelled, and the cheerfulness and confidence which he had tried to maintain through the night now assumed a prominent place in his thoughts and in his manner.

"Yes," said Bart, dolefully, continuing some remark which he had been making, "if we can only get on his trail, we may at least find out the general direction that he has taken. But I'm afraid there's no hope."

"Arrah, be off now wid yer nonsinse," cried Pat. "What's the use of givin up at the very fust, afore ye've made a single trial? Sure an he'll turrun up all right and safe yit."

"I wish I could think so."

"Think so! Why, I know it. Sure am I this day that he'll turrun up safe an sound. An why shouldn't he?"

"These woods. If he once gets tangled among them, how can he ever find his way out?"

"Tangled among them, is it? Sure an it's not so

very bad thin. He can only walk on an walk on, an he's sure to come out somewheres. Besides, he'll hit upon a road some place or other, and wandher along that."

"There are no roads here."

"How do you know? Ye don't know. Thur may be fifty roads widin a mile of this very place, so there may. So what's the use of givin up?"

"No," said Bart. "This is a wild, unfrequented place, and the woods are unbroken for an immense distance. If Phil has got among them he will wander on till — till he drops."

"Ah, come now, none of that. Sure, what do ye think of Phil? Do ye think now that Phil's an idiot? Sure now, what'd ye do yerself if it was you that was lost instead of Phil? Do you think that you'd wandher about till you dropped, or do ye think ye'd work yer way out somewheres? Come now, ye know ye'd work yer way out, so you would. And so would I. And so will Phil, so he will."

This process of reasoning struck Bart so forcibly that he had not a word to say. Pat in fact was right in his estimate of Bart's confidence in himself. Bart really did feel sure that if he were lost in the woods he'd get out.

"Sure now imagine yerself in Phil's place," continued Pat, cheerily. "What'd you do? I'll tell you what you'd do. Whin ye found yerself lost, ye'd thry, of coorse, to git back. Well, thin, ye'd

go wandherin about. Very well. Ye'd sit down an rist, and think what ye'd best do nixt. Then ye'd start off afrish. Maybe ye'd climb a tray to see if ye cud see anythin. At any rate ye'd work away as long as the daylight lasted. At steeted intervals ye'd let off howls as loud as ye cud howl. Well, thin, it 'ud grow dark, an so ye'd go to work an make up your mind to pass the night here, an ye'd thry, of coorse, to make yerself as comfortable as possible. So ye'd collect any quantity of moss an ferns, an spread them out — perhaps ye'd make a fire — but that's neither here nor there; anyhow, ye'd make a comfortable bid for yerself, an thin ye'd take a bite of somethin to ate, and thin ye'd lie down an doze off into the comfortablest slape ye ever knew. That's what ye'd do — an ye know it, so ye do. Now wouldn't ye? Answer me that. Isn't that jist what ye wud do?"

"Well, I suppose I would," said Bart; "but perhaps the Indian has had something to do."

"The Injin. O, bah! Bother the Injin. That does to spake of in the middle of a dark night, but not undher the bright daylight. That Injin's safe in his own camp by noo, I'll warrant ye."

By this time they were ready to start, and accordingly they set out on their way down the stream to the rock already mentioned. It was not quite day when they started, but by the time they reached the rock it was full day, so that they would be able to detect any trace of Phil's path.

way if any such trace might remain. The rock was about thirty or forty feet high, and rose upon the edge of the river which flowed along its base. Phil might have crossed the river, and gone down, as Pat did, on the other side; but he chose this, probably thinking that it was only a few steps. On reaching this place Pat was able to point out pretty nearly the spot where he saw Phil mount the bank. Here the underbrush seemed to show signs of having been trampled upon, and they at once ascended the bank in this direction. For some distance the marks continued, and they followed very carefully. At last, shortly after they reached the top of the bank, these faint marks died out utterly, and there remained no trace whatever of any footsteps that was discernible to their eyes. Here, then, they paused, and again considered what they should do.

After careful consideration of everything, it seemed to them that the best thing for them now to do was to advance from the river bank directly into the woods in as straight a line as possible. If they were to do this for several miles, they might get upon the wanderer's track. They therefore set out, walking away from the river, trying by every possible means to make their course a straight line. They also tore off twigs from the trees as they went and strewed them behind them to leave a trail. Thus they went for about half an hour. Then they began to shout, and still going

onward for another half hour, they continued their shouts. But at the end of this time and these efforts they were no better off than at the beginning, and to all their cries there came no response whatever.

Here another discussion took place. It seemed to Pat that Phil must have wandered down the stream, how far he did not know, but perhaps miles, and that on his return he had left the river at some point, and thus been lost. If this were so, it followed that the best place to search for him would be the woods lying on a line with the river, and extending along its banks. If they were now to turn to the right, they would be going in a course parallel to the river, and through those very woods in which it was most likely that Phil might be. Pat's statement and argument seemed so reasonable that Bart at once adopted it; and so, with the utmost care, they took up a course which seemed as near as possible at right angles with their former one, and consequently as nearly as possible parallel with the flow of the river. In this direction they now went, trying as before to keep a straight course, and to leave a trail behind them. Above all, they kept shouting and calling all the time.

They went on in this course for as much as two hours with no more success than before. They came to woods where the underbrush was so thick, and the ground so swampy, that further progress

was out of the question. Here, then, they once more deliberated as to what they should do. To go back seemed inexpressibly irksome, as well as useless. It seemed better to change their course in some new direction, which might be favorable to their hopes. On the whole it now seemed best to get back to the river. Phil might be there somewhere along its banks. In the evening they could go back to their former stopping-place by ascending the course of the river. So they took up a new line of march, which seemed to be exactly at right angles with their last one, and thus went on.

All this time they had been taking the utmost pains to leave a trail; but now, as they were going back to the river, it seemed no longer necessary: so they walked along much more easily and quickly, merely trying to make their pathway as straight as possible.

They walked on for a long time.

The river seemed much more distant than they had supposed.

Still they cheered themselves with the thought, at almost every step, that the next step would bring them in sight of it.

One more pause.

Still the river did not appear.

Another hour passed.

Still no river.

Nevertheless they toiled on, for having set before themselves this river as a certain place to be reached, they were not willing to stop short of it.

But the farther they went, the more hopeless did their attempt seem.

At length there began to come over them a vague idea that they had lost all idea of the direction of the river — that they had been wandering in a wrong direction, altogether; and this vague idea grew stronger and stronger, and began to grow into a full conviction that they, as well as Phil, were utterly and hopelessly lost.

IX.

Lost.—Deliberations.—Trying to regain the Course.—The Smoke of the Burning.—The stagnant Air.—Onward.—An Opening in the Forest.—Hope and Enthusiasm.—A Rush forward.

LOST!

Yes, Lost!

Lost in the woods!

It was Bart who first received this idea in its full force in his mind. He stopped abruptly, and looked all around.

“Well,” said he, “it’s my opinion that we’ve been keeping this sort of thing up too long altogether. For my part, I haven’t the faintest idea in the world where we are. One thing is certain: we’re utterly astray in what we may suppose to be our reckoning; and wherever the river may be, it certainly isn’t anywhere near us. And I’m going to knock under for the present.”

With these words, he flung himself down upon a knoll under a neighboring tree, threw off his bag, and pitched it away to some distance from him, and then, drawing his knees up under his chin, he sat gazing fixedly at the ground.

"Well," said Pat, "I've been thinkin that same for the last hour, sure; but, as ye seemed inclined to laid off, an as I hadn't anythin more to offer, why, I jist follered after. An sure I think it ain't a bad idea at all, at all, to sit down, if it's only to rist ourselves, an take a bite of somethin to ate, an thry to git up some schame for our nixt attempt."

With these words, Pat took a seat upon the ground, and Solomon, without any remark, sat down near them.

And there they all sat, silent, with the same thought in all their minds; and that was, that they were utterly, completely, and hopelessly lost in the woods. None of them felt inclined to speak. They felt discomfited, disheartened, mortified. So this was the end of their elaborate plans, so carefully discussed, so carefully followed — that they who came to seek their lost friend should themselves be lost also! They were confident that they had made some mistake somewhere, and at some time, and they were now busily engaged in recalling the different events of their journey, so as to see where and when the mistake had been.

Bart thought that their mistake was in not continuing to leave a trail behind them, after they had made the last change in their course. Up to that time, it seemed to him that all had gone on well, and he lamented that fatal carelessness and over-confidence that had led to this neglect.

Pat's idea was, that they had not calculated the

direction of the river, and that they had somehow missed it.

Solomon declared that, ever since he left the river, he hadn't had any idea at all of any direction.

"Dat's so," he said; "I heerd you go on in dem ar long-winded 'scussions bout right 'rections, an poppumdiklars, an rytanglums, an sich, but hadn't no more notium ob whar we was goin dan a chile. An you hadn't nudder. Yah! yah! yah!"

Solomon's idea was, after all, much nearer the truth than the theories of either Bart or Pat. For although these two had supposed all the time that they were carrying in their very clever brains a perfectly distinct plan of their course, yet, in reality, this belief was utterly unfounded, and the supposed plan was a mockery, a delusion, and a snare. Here they were — lost! — that was the end of it.

For, in point of fact, their whole journey had been one constant series of mistakes. From the first step to the last, there had been nothing but self-delusion.

First, they had deluded themselves into the belief that they could go in a straight line. Now, in those woods, there had been incessant obstacles, in the shape of clumps of trees, underbrush, bogs, rocks, fallen timber, and a hundred other things of a similar character, which necessitated a departure from a straight line at every few steps. To sup-

pose that they could walk on, under such circumstances, in a straight line, was absurd. The consequence was, that their course had, all along, been exceedingly crooked, leading them towards all the points of the compass in turns.

Another mistake which they made was, in the supposition that the river had any definite course. They had acted on the theory, not only that their own course was straight, but that the course of the river was straight, also: Now, this river, like every other river, had a flow in one general direction, but its actual course was a winding one, and not far below the rock from which they had set out, it turned in a direction which was totally different from the one in which it was flowing when they left it.

Thus they had been wandering in a very irregular course ever since they started. They had gone onward for mile after mile; and every step had carried them farther and farther away from the places in the neighborhood of which they wished to remain, and now, at this bewildered halt, they were in reality far, very far, away from that river which they had believed themselves to be approaching.

Some such conviction as this came to their minds now, — that is to say, the conviction that they had wandered far away from the river, — but they had no idea how far away from it they really were, and they thought — that is to say, Bart and Pat thought

— that their wanderings had begun only at their last change of course, near the wooded swamp.

Thus far, the weather had been warm, but not so sultry as on the day before. The air appeared to have become cooled by that gentle breeze which had sprung up in the morning. The sky, however, had been overcast as before, and all the view overhead was covered with those rolling smoke clouds before mentioned. They noticed this now as they sat there, and it seemed to them that the sky was more enveloped with this sombre covering, and that the light was dimmer, and the scene more gloomy. The birds also seemed to have all fled away from that smoky sky.

Their long tramp had sharpened their appetites, and they now began to think of lunch. Fortunately, Solomon, with his usual forethought, had saved the fish that had been left from their repast on the previous day, and these, with some sandwiches, furnished out a meal. They were without anything to drink, however; but a little search in the neighborhood revealed a slender rill of very warm water, which, warm as it was, they were glad to drink. On the whole, this frugal repast refreshed them and invigorated them; and after its conclusion, they began to consider once more the important question of the course which they should take next.

What perplexed them most was the impossibility of knowing anything about the direction in

which they ought to go. The points of the compass were all unknown. North, south, east, and west were all alike a mystery. The smoke clouds that covered the whole sky made it impossible even to conjecture, with any approach to accuracy, the possible position of the sun.

Their situation was perplexing in the extreme. In fact, it was a double perplexity. They did not know where Phil was, and they did not know where they themselves were. They wanted to find Phil; but by reason of their loss of all knowledge of locality, they were unable to form even a theory of the particular direction in which it might be best to renew their search after him. And this it was that made any discussion particularly difficult.

Then, again, though they had a distinct remembrance of the river itself, yet they had formed no definite idea about its course. Bart thought it ran north. Pat thought it ran south. Why they thought so, neither could give any reason. But this mattered nothing now. Even if they had known most perfectly the actual course of the river,—nay, even if they had been perfectly acquainted with the geography of the district,—it would have availed them nothing whatever in their present position, nor could they have been in any better position to decide about the best direction which they could take.

“We ought to be moving,” said Bart; “but where? I’m sure I don’t know.”

"Well, thin," said Pat, "I'll tell you what it is. Let's be off, and thrust to luck. Let's walk ahead anywheres, and we'll come out somewheres."

"Can't we tell something by the clouds?" asked Bart, looking up at the rolling masses overhead.

"Deed an I've thought o' that," said Pat, "an I've been watchin thim; but sorra one o' me can make out any thin about thim same at all, at all. They're jist rowlin an tumblin every which way. An that samè they were doin this mornin; for I watched thim, an cudn't make any thin out o' thim at all, at all, no more'n I can now at this blissed momint. An they won't be afthèr tellin you any more'n they towld me, I'll go bail."

"It seems to me," said Bart, "that they are moving in some direction. I remember noticing this morning that they moved, or seemed to move, across the river. Now, if the river ran north—"

"South," interrupted Pat.

"North," persisted Bart. "If it ran north, why, these clouds must be moving east."

"West," cried Pat.

"East," persisted Bart. "If I'm certain of any-thing, I'm certain that they must be going east."

"Deed an I'm dead sure that they're a goin west. An I'm as likely to be right as you are."

"O, well," said Bart, "we can't come to any decision at all."

"Surely no; not from thim clouds," said Pat. "For afthèr all, I don't think they're movin any-

wheres. They're jist rowlin' round and round. Niver mind thim clouds."

"But we must go somewhere," said Bart, impatiently.

"Deed an so we must; an so I say."

"Then where shall we go?"

"Jist wheriver you say. You laid ahead, an I'll foller till the wurruld's ind, so I will, an that's all about it."

Bart now rose, and so did the others; and after a little natural hesitation, they all set out once more upon their journey.

This journey was thus resumed on the principle that it was better to be moving than to sit idle. Something had to be done, but what it was they did not know. Bart had formed some vague idea of his general direction from the clouds, and was trying now to find his way back to the neighborhood at least of the place from which they had set out. At any rate, he thought he would thus be more likely to come upon Phil's track, for this was still the idea that was uppermost in his mind. The direction in which that place lay seemed to him to be west; and so, with this thought in his mind, he set out and led the way.

Of course, Bart's idea about going west was of the vaguest possible description. Bart's west was Pat's east; and each of them was equally likely to be wrong. For it might have been either north or south; and in addition to this, there was the fact

of their circuitous march, which set straight lines at defiance, and bore them along in a winding course, that might lead to every point of the compass in turn. However, there was actually no other course possible, and Bart and Pat were both satisfied; for while Bart thought he was following the course which seemed to him best, Pat thought that they were going in no particular direction at all, but were wandering at random. Of the two, Pat was far more in the right. As to Solomon, it was a matter of indifference to him, so long as Bart led the way, and so long as the aim of their march was a search after Phil.

They walked on now in silence for some hours. The woods were just the same as they had been all along. Sometimes they came to a wide extent of pine trees, where the walking was easy, and they were able to maintain some definite direction. At other times they came to woods filled with hard-wood trees, where the underbrush was thick and the obstacles numerous. Here they were compelled to wind along in a circuitous way, making numerous detours to avoid dense thickets or impassable bogs.

At length the evening drew on, and all of them were nearly worn out. It had been a long and a difficult march. They had exerted themselves severely all that day. Besides, it was not a time that was favorable to severe exertion, for the warmth of the atmosphere affected them all. As

the evening approached the warmth increased, for the slight breeze that had been prevailing all the day, and mitigating the sultriness of the weather, now died out, and at once that same oppressiveness of which they had been aware on the preceding day made itself manifest again. Exertion became more and more painful. Their progress became more and more laborious, and they walked with ever-increasing difficulty. At length Bart stopped.

"I won't go any farther," said he. "This isn't much of a place to pass the night in, but I've been on the lookout for the last hour, and this is as good as any that I've seen. We can't do any more to-day. So I move that we stop here and rest, and settle down for the night."

To this the others agreed; and so, flinging down their baskets, they began to make preparations for the night. The preparations were simple enough, consisting in nothing more than a collection of moss and fern leaves, which abounded all around, and of which they soon heaped up a quantity sufficient for their wants. After this they sat down and partook of an evening repast from their rapidly diminishing stock of sandwiches.

"By the powers," said Pat, "if we're in the wuds much longer, we'll have to git howld of a stock of frish provisions, so we will."

That night they all slept soundly, for they were worn out by their long sleeplessness and by the

fatigues of their weary march. In that march they must have traversed many miles, for they had been walking from very early morning till dusk, with only one intermission. Their sleep, therefore, was deep and heavy, and it lasted until comparatively late in the following day.

On awaking they found the air oppressively close and sultry. The smoke clouds were nearer, and appeared to touch the tree-tops. There was also an unpleasant smell of smoke which irritated their nostrils and dried up their throats. One thing only was evident from this, and that was, that the woods were on fire. It also seemed equally evident that they were approaching the scene of conflagration. It was already very oppressive, and how much longer they would be able to maintain their journey was a matter of doubt. Yet there was no desire to give up. The one thought present to all of them was, that Phil was lost; and the rolling smoke clouds now suggested to their minds a danger impending over him of which they had not thought before. Thus far Bart had been more or less subject to fears about the Indian's being concerned with Phil's disappearance; but now, as these natural terrors were revealed, his thoughts of the Indian gave place to others of the most painful and harassing character. For if Phil was really lost, it amounted to this — that he was wandering about in a burning forest, far from all hope of human aid. They themselves

had suffered, and were suffering, enough to know well what his state must be. The lively imagination of Bart portrayed before his mind in vivid colors the situation of poor Phil, all alone, wandering helpless and despairing, surrounded by smoke and flames, oppressed by the heat, and sinking under the weight of his anxiety and fatigue. His little store of provisions must soon fail — he would not dare to stop to try to catch fish; he would hurry on as long as strength lasted, seeking to escape from the advancing fires. At last all strength and all hope would fail, and a terrific fate would seize upon him.

The others had something of the same feelings about Phil, although less vividly, and were ready to keep up the search after him as long as they could move. So they snatched a hasty breakfast, and at once prepared for the day's march. That breakfast exhausted the last of their stock of provisions, and they could only hope to reach some brook where they might catch a few fish. At that moment, however, their thoughts about themselves were disregarded in their anxieties about Phil; and so they set out full of eager desire to find him before it might be too late.

Thus far they had continued to shout at certain intervals, and the last thing on the preceding night, and the first thing on this morning, had been a series of loud calls. But the calls had never been answered, and Phil seemed still to be as far away

from them as when they first set out. Still it was the only thing that they could do; and so, as they went forward on this day, they kept up, as before, their practice of calling at certain intervals of time.

They wandered on for hour after hour. The air continued close and sultry, and the smoke was most unpleasantly perceptible; but this, instead of deterring them, only nerved them to fresh efforts, since it never ceased to suggest to them the thought of poor Phil's terrible situation. One thing consoled them; and that was, the discovery that the sultriness and the smoke had grown no worse since they started, but if anything had rather lessened. This they were glad of on Phil's account; as for themselves, however, it was certainly bad enough, and as the hours passed, their efforts became more and more difficult, and their labors more overpowering.

At last the woods in front of them grew thinner, and through the trees they were able to see more and more of the sky. To emerge from the thick woods into any open place whatever was a pleasant thought to all of them. They wondered what it could be. Solomon thought that it was some barren district bare of trees, and overgrown with low brush, such as sometimes occurs in the forest. Pat thought it was a lake, or a river, or a swamp, or something of that sort. Bart expected to find

a clearing in the woods, and his heart beat fast with joy at the idea of finding some human being who could tell them where they were. With these various thoughts and feelings they hurried forward.

X.

The Opening. — The Sea, the Sea, the open Sea. — The Priest. — The Promise of Help. — Pat takes a Walk, and passes a mysterious Building. — He takes a Swim. — Return of Pat. — A terrific Discovery. — Pat in a Panic. — The Scene of Horror. — Smoke and Flame. — The Fire Glow by Night.

IT was late in the afternoon when they reached that opening in the woods which had suddenly appeared. They had been fearfully exhausted; they had also been almost famished, and were without any prospect of either rest or food, when that opening appeared before them. But the sight of it acted upon them like magic, and seemed to drive away both hunger and weariness. Instantly their pace quickened from a languid, laborious walk to a trot, and then to a run, as they hurried forward, eager to learn what this place might be. Bart, with his hope of finding a settlement with living human beings, from whom he might receive information and assistance, was most excited, and was the first to quicken his pace; and the sight of his excited eagerness af-

fectured his companions with the same feelings. Thus they rushed forward, and in a short time emerged from the woods.

An open field lay before them, in which stumps arose here and there. The field rose with a slight ascent to an elevation which shut out the scene beyond. It was not the "Barrens," which Solomon had expected, nor yet the lake or swamp which Pat had mentioned. Bart had been right. It was a space cleared by the hand of man; but still the question remained, what kind of a settlement was it, and of what extent. For a moment they paused as they emerged from the wood; and then they all hurried rapidly forward.

As they hurried forward the prospect opened more and more, until they gained the eminence; and then what a scene lay before them!

There, full before them — there, to their speechless amazement — lay — what? Could it be possible. Did their eyes deceive them. No. It was a fact. Yet, how amazing!

The sea!

The wide and boundless sea!

Yes, there it was, beyond the possibility of doubt — the sea — the sea itself — no river — no lake — but the sea, and nothing else.

Overhead the smoke clouds still rolled, as before, in vast voluminous folds, curling, and turning, and rolling, and lowering down close to the earth, giving to all nature a gloom that was peculiar,

and not without terror. But beyond this lay the sea; and it stretched far away to the horizon, reaching along that horizon to the right and to the left as far as the eye could wander. It was the sea, the sea itself; and they had wandered far from the place from which they had set out, to reach such a goal as this.

And what was the place?

It was a settlement on the sea-shore. Between them and that sea-shore there extended cultivated fields, and numerous houses dotted the green meadows, and groves, and out-houses, and barns. Farther away, and nearer the sea, they noticed a long, low, white building, that looked like a straggling farm-house, or, rather two or three farm-houses joined in one. Some people could be seen at the door, and a high fence surrounded it. Between this building and the place where they were standing a road ran, and along this road some cattle were passing. Beyond the building lay a sheet of water that looked like a harbor, between which and the sea extended a narrow spit of land; in several of the fields cattle were grazing; and within stone's throw they saw a rude farm-house, built of logs, and whitewashed.

Pat was the first to break the silence into which they had been thrown by the utter astonishment and bewilderment of this discovery.

"Sure an it's dead beat I am, and dumb entirely," he exclaimed. "Ony to think of our coming out

of the wuds to the say. Sure an it must be Miramichi itself, so it must, an we've been a wandherin through the wuds sthraight back to the place we dhruv out from wid de Injin. Och, an, be the powers, but it's a quaire wandherin that we've been havin. Och, but I'll nivir git over this."

"It isn't Miramichi," said Bart, whom Pat's wild remarks had roused from the stupor into which his amazement had thrown him. "It isn't Miramichi," he repeated; "for that's a river, and here we have the open sea itself. But where in the world we have got to, and how we've got here, I confess I have no more idea than a stone."

Bart's surprise was certainly greater than that of either of his companions, and very naturally too. For he had thought all along that he was going west, and that his back was turned to the sea; but now he found that his actual course had been the very opposite of what he had supposed, and intended it to be. He had been trying to get to where Phil was, but now discovered that he had been going away from him all the time.

The discovery of the truth was amazing, bewildering, and at the same time humiliating to one who had been officiating in the dignified part of leader in this adventurous and eventful journey. But humiliating as it was, there was the actual fact, and it only remained to find out the name of the place where they had so strangely arrived.

In spite of his anxiety about Phil, and his mortification about his own mistake, Bart was not altogether without a feeling of relief at this sight that revealed itself, for he saw human habitations at any rate; and he thought that he would now be able not only to find out where he was, but also, perhaps, to get assistance, and thus resume, under more favorable circumstances, the difficult task of exploring the woods in search of Phil.

"Well," said he, at length, "there's no use standing here. We're somewhere, and the best thing we can now do is to find out where we are. So come along. We're in a place where we'll be able to get food and shelter, at any rate."

Saying this, he started off for the nearest house, and in a short time reached it. At first no one was visible; but on knocking at the door a woman made her appearance.

"We've lost our way in the woods," said Bart. "Can you tell me what place this is?"

The woman stared at him for a moment, and then at Pat and Solomon. Then she said,—

"This place? Why, don't you know this place? This is Tracadie."

"Tracadie!" repeated Bart. The name was familiar to him, for he had often seen it on the map, and had often heard it mentioned. He knew it as a small settlement on the shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, though how in the world he could ever have wandered here still remained a profound mystery.

Bart then informed her that one of his party had been lost in the woods, and asked her if any boy had made his appearance, or had been heard of, in the settlement. The woman shook her head. Upon this Bart asked her if they could get any one in the place to help them go off in search of their lost friend. The woman did not know, but advised them to see the priest, and offered to take them to the priest's house.

This house was not far away, and it did not take long to reach it. It was a pretty little cottage surrounded by trees, situated a little distance away from the road. Fortunately, the priest was at home. He was a wiry little man, with a benevolent face and most engaging manners. The moment he understood their errand, he insisted on giving them something to eat and drink, and refused to hear anything more until they had all satisfied their hunger.

Thus, then, they found themselves once more under a roof, after their long and eventful wandering. This was the fourth day since their departure from Miramichi. The first day they had driven for some twenty miles or so, and had walked far enough to reach a point which must have been nearly thirty miles from their starting-place. The second day they had walked ten or twelve miles farther, to the little river, where they had fished. The third day they had lost themselves, and had wandered from early dawn till dusk. The fourth

day they had walked since daybreak, and had reached Tracadie towards evening. The last day had been the most fatiguing of 'all; partly on account of the oppressiveness of the atmosphere; partly because their provisions had given out, so that they had to walk for an immense distance without any food; and partly, also, because their hopes of finding Phil had died out, leaving them in a state of deep depression.

On hearing their story, the priest showed the deepest sympathy, and promised to do all that he could.

"You wish," said he, "to go back to the woods again, and take a guide?"

"Yes, if we can find one."

"Well, I think I know of one or two men who will be suitable; and if they are at home, they will be able to start as soon as you wish."

"How near do you think this fire is?" asked Bart, anxiously. "Is there any likelihood that it is at all near?"

"I'm afraid there is," said the priest.

"Are these woods often on fire?"

"Pretty often, in different places. These woods, in fact, are famous for fires. You've heard of the Great Fire of Miramichi? I can tell you all about that — but not now. These woods are a younger growth; the old forest was all swept away."

At the mention of this Great Fire, of which he had heard, Bart's heart sank within him. It was

indeed a place of ill omen where poor Phil had lost himself; and what chance could there be for him in the presence of the merciless fire?

"I can't make out the place where your friend was lost," said the priest; "but I dare say the men I'll bring will be able to understand where it is. They've been all through the woods in all directions, and ought to know every stream and every rock in it. Big rocks are not common here, and the one you speak of ought to be a very conspicuous landmark. But I won't delay now any longer. I'll go off at once; and I hope you'll make yourselves comfortable till I return."

The priest was a Frenchman; but he had lived here many years, and he spoke English almost like a native. His eager offer of help and active assistance greatly encouraged them, and they hoped for the best. Pat, in particular, showed this feeling in the strongest manner. He had been quite silent during the latter part of the walk, owing to fatigue and hunger combined; but now the short rest had refreshed him, and the repast had strengthened and cheered him. He accepted the promise of the priest as almost a certain token of success, and at once regained all his habitual confidence, and indulged in a long series of rattling, joyous remarks as to Phil's present condition, and the probable state of his mind when they should find him.

At length he rose from his seat, and said he was

going out to take a walk. He asked Bart and Solomon to go with him; but both declined. In spite of his long walk Pat could not sit still, but was restless and fidgety, and wanted to be moving about, even though his legs were yet aching from their long and arduous tramp. So, leaving Bart and Solomon, he went out of the house and along the road. After a while he came to another road, which led down to the water. It led to that irregular whitewashed building which they had seen from the eminence as they first emerged from the wood. Pat's idea of the place was, that it was an inn; and so he sauntered along with the intention of reaching the water and having a swim.

As he approached the house, he noticed something very dreary and repellent in its appearance. The high fence around the adjacent ground gave it the air of a prison. Several people were in front of it, most of them sitting down. As Pat passed on he noticed that some of these had their heads bound up; others had their arms in slings; others had faces that were pale and emaciated. All of them watched him with wistful, curious eyes; with such looks as prisoners give through their jail windows at the passer-by. This strange look filled Pat with still greater surprise.

"It must be a hospital," he thought; "but what 'ud they be wantin of a hospital in a scrap of a place like this?"

"Perhaps," he thought again, "it's a watherin

place, an these are sick people that have come here to be thraited wid the custhomary rimidies."

Passing by this place, he at length reached the beach, and walked along it for some distance before he found a place which appeared altogether suitable for his swim. About a mile away there ran a long spit of land, which seemed to shut out this piece of water from the outer sea, and made it seem like a lake. The water was calm and deliciously warm. Pat sprang in, and dived, and swam, and floundered about for a long time; and when at length he returned to the shore, he felt reinigorated in every limb. All his fatigue seemed to have departed, and he felt almost fresh enough to begin a new tramp through the woods.

The priest returned after a short absence, bringing two men with him. They were both French, and spoke only broken English. They listened to the story of Bart, and asked a number of particular questions about the stream and the rock. They declared that they knew the place perfectly well; that there was only one rock of that description in the country, and that the place was about thirty miles away; by which Bart began to understand more clearly the full magnitude of his tramp. The men expressed a willingness to go whenever they were wanted, and it was finally agreed that they should start at daybreak on the following morning. With this understanding, the men took their departure.

It was dusk when Pat returned. He came towards the house whistling as cheerily as a bird, and the moment he entered he began telling what a delicious walk he had had. He then thought of the strange building near the shore, and asked the priest what it was.

"That?" said the priest. "O, that's the Lazaretto."

"The Lazaretto?" repeated Pat, not understanding him.

"Yes," said the priest; "have you not heard of it?"

"The Lazaretto — niver a word surely. An what is the Lazaretto, thin?"

"O, it's a place where we keep lepers."

"Lepers!" cried Pat, in a voice of horror; and his ruddy face changed to a sickly pallor.

"Lepers?" said Bart. "Lepers? What, lepers here, in this country?"

"Yes," said the priest. "It's a miserable story. A great many years ago a French ship was wrecked in the Miramichi River. There were some clothing and bedding on board that came from the Levant, and the people here used them; and it is said that from this clothing they caught this terrible disease. It has continued here ever since, and the place has been established here for the poor creatures."

"Lepers!" groaned Pat again. "An me walkin by that place, and thinkin of goin in."

"It's a terrible thing," said the priest. "The patients who go there are dead to their friends. They never can hope to see them again."

"Och, murdher!" cried Pat, starting up. "What'll iver become of me? Och, murdher! Why didn't somebody tell me?"

"What's the matter?" asked the priest, in surprise.

"Och, everything's the matther. Sure, an' didn't I go an swim for over half an hour in the leper wather, down yondher?"

"Leper water?" said the priest. "What is that?"

"Sure, the lake down there, or the cove, or whatever ye call it. Don't they all go there an bathe?"

"I dare say they do; but what of that?"

"Och, murdher! The wather's all fairly pisoned wid the leprosy, an I'm lost and gone intirely."

"Nonsense," said the priest; "don't be alarmed. It isn't contagious."

"Sure, an how do I know that it isn't?"

The priest smiled.

"Why," said he, "I'm a proof of that, I suppose. I've lived here a great many years, and I've visited the poor creatures all that time regularly. I've shaken hands with them, and attended to all the duties of religion among them, but without any evil consequences."

As the priest said this, Pat rose slowly to his

feet, with a face of perfect horror. Even Bart experienced a slight feeling of repugnance as he thought that he was in familiar intercourse with one who had been so much in contact with lepers. But the priest's calm, good-natured face, and his assurance that the disease was not contagious, quelled his rising fears, and the thought of that priest's self-sacrifice made him feel ashamed of that cowardly feeling.

But with Pat it was different. The thought that the priest had touched the lepers; that on this very day he may have been there shaking hands with them; that he had been coming and going for years between his house and the Lazaretto, — all this filled him with terror. If that disease had been originally communicated by means of clothing, why should it not yet communicate itself in the same way? The whole house might be reeking with the insidious seeds of the deadly disease.

The thought was too horrible. {A

He murmured some inarticulate words, and went out of the house.

The priest went on talking with Bart, and for a long time no notice was taken of Pat's absence. But hours passed, and bedtime came, and still there were no signs of him. Bart went out to call him.

Pat was not visible; but Bart saw a sight that drove all thoughts of Pat out of his mind. Pat, in

fact, had fled, determining to sleep anywhere rather than in the priest's house; and so Bart saw no signs of him. But the sight that he did see was awful beyond description.

There, where his eyes first turned, he saw the gloomy shadow of the forest. Overhead the sky was filled with rolling smoke clouds; and immediately above the range of the forest trees there was a long line of red, — dull, lurid, dark, — yet sustained and unintermittent, lying like a foundation of fire under all the moving mass of smoke.

The priest had followed him out. He looked at it for some time in silence.

"The fire is nearer," he said, at last.

"And there is where we must go to-morrow," said Bart; "and Phil is there!"

The priest said nothing.

Where — where — O, where is Phil? Such was now the one thought of Bart's mind.

XI.

Where, O, where is Phil? — The Wanderer in the Woods. — Struggles with Difficulties that always increase. — Approach of Night. — Gloom. — Despair. — Climbing a Tree. — No Hope. — Rallying from the Assault. — A Midnight Meal. — Overworn Nature seeks Repose.

HERE, O, where was Phil?

Had he indeed fallen a victim to the vengeance of the Indian? or had he wandered away through those terrible woods to encounter the fires, and to perish by them?

While Bart is racking his mind with these anxious questions, and trying in vain to answer them, let us leave him and follow the fortunes of the wanderer.

The rock that had risen on the shore of the river extended for about a hundred yards. Phil could have crossed the river and gone down on the other side, but it seemed swampy over there, and he thought it would be easier to pass over the rock. He also thought that there might be some view from the top which would give him a general idea of the country.

He therefore started off, and clambered to the top of the rock. On reaching it, however, he did not find any view in particular, for the trees around it rose so high that they intercepted the prospect. He therefore went on, intending to reach the river again lower down. On traversing the rock and reaching its lower end, he found that it terminated in an abrupt precipice. This precipice here ran back from the river into the woods, and if Phil still wished to reach the lower part of the stream, he saw that it would be necessary to go back into the woods till he found a place where he could clamber down the side of the rock. He therefore set off in that direction, expecting that he would only have to go a short distance. But the rock ran on much farther than he had supposed; and it was still too precipitous for him to descend. Along the edge there was a dense growth of underbrush which prevented his walking close to it, and forced him to go along at some distance away from it, and penetrate from time to time to the edge, to see if he had reached any place which offered a descent.

At length the rock subsided into the ground, and then Phil was able to seek the river. He walked along for some time in that direction, keeping the line of rock in sight as a guide; but at length the woods became so exceedingly dense that it was quite impossible to keep the rock in sight always. He therefore wandered off at times

to avoid difficult places, returning again as soon as convenient to seek the guidance of his landmark. At length he plunged into a very dense and difficult part of the forest; where he had to make so many turns and detours to avoid the obstacles that rose in his way, that he soon lost all idea of the right direction. He struggled onward, however, striving to get into the open from which he might gain sight of his rock; but the farther he went onward, the more difficult did it seem to grow, and the less prospect was there of any open ground. Upon this he turned, and tried to retrace his steps, anxious at all hazards to get free from this entanglement. But to retrace his steps was not so easy. He had got in, but to get out was a different matter altogether. His frequent turnings and twistings had already bewildered him; and as he had still to keep up the same crooked course, and turn and twist as much as ever, his bewilderment increased. Still he was not at all alarmed as yet, for the thought of any actual danger had not begun to occur. He was only perplexed, and at the same time slightly vexed at the continuance of the jungle into which he had tumbled. There was no help for it, however; and so he toiled on as well as he could, and at length, to his satisfaction, found the underbrush diminishing very perceptibly. This discovery encouraged him, and he kept on in this direction, for now his chief desire was, first of all, to get to some place where he

could regain sight of the rock; and so he walked on as rapidly as possible, until at length the woods became sufficiently open to make his progress as easy as he could expect.

It seemed to him now that he had been a long time wandering, and he began to be anxious to discover the rock. How to do so he did not know, and could only think of climbing a tree so as to take a survey of the country. Unfortunately none of the trees were very large; but he selected the tallest one that he could find, and climbed up as high as he could. He now looked all around. The prospect gave but little satisfaction. On every side other trees arose above the level of his outlook, and shut out from view the scene beyond. He therefore learned nothing whatever from this survey, and was compelled to descend disappointed. What now to do became a serious question. There was the rock, and there was the river, either of which it would be equally advisable to regain; but in what direction did they lie? It seemed to him that the rock ought to be west of his present position, and the river south. If he could go either westward, or southward, or in any intermediate direction, he would regain his course. Yet that was the very thing that he was unable to do. He had no compass, and now bitterly regretted that he had not brought one. Overhead there was nothing that could afford him any assistance, for the sky was all overspread

with that smoke which he had noticed all along, and the sun could not be seen. There was nothing left, therefore, but bare conjecture.

He now tried, as far as possible, to recall his confused wanderings. Although he could not, of course, recall the details of his journey, yet, as he thought it over, it seemed to him that, on the whole, he had been making progress in some one direction; and that, if he could but go back, he would be more likely to reach the river or the rock than in any other way. As he looked back over his course, it seemed to him that the west lay there, and to the left of that was the south; so that if he could now only effect some progress in that direction, all would be well. He therefore made up his mind to go back again, as far as going back over his lost track was possible; and as he could not think of plunging again into that thicket, he thought that when he reached it he would turn to the left, and avoid it if possible in that way.

Accordingly, he now set out in the endeavor to go back on his path. No vestige of anything like a trail appeared to him, nor was there a single thing that he remembered having seen before. He walked on now for a long time, expecting every moment to reach that tangled thicket which he had considered as the chief difficulty in his way back. To his utter amazement, he came across no tangled thicket of any kind whatever. The

woods, instead of growing denser, seemed to grow more open, and his progress grew easier. The woods now were precisely like what they had been during their walk early in the day.

At first he felt only surprise ; but soon surprise deepened into uneasiness, and uneasiness into anxiety. Where was he ? In what direction was he going ? What should he do if he were going wrong ? Such were the thoughts that came to him. At length his anxiety grew so strong, and he became so convinced that his course was altogether wrong, that he stopped, and again tried to think how he might rectify his error. Once more he climbed a tree, but with the same result as before. The tops of other trees were all around. Nothing appeared which could act as a guide. Overhead, the smoky covering which overspread the skies shut out all traces of the sun ; and when he descended to the ground, there began to dawn upon him the conviction, which grew stronger and stronger every moment, that he was actually lost ! hopelessly and utterly lost ! and that, too, in a trackless and uninhabited forest.

His only hope was, that he had not gone very far away, but was still, if not within sight of his friends, at least within hearing. So upon this he began to do what he now knew he ought to have done before. He began to call in a loud voice after Pat, and Bart, and Solomon. After each call he stopped and listened for an answer. But

no answer came, and his own calls echoed far away through the forest aisles, and it was only the mocking sound of these echoes that came to his ears. Still he thought that if he persevered long enough, some response must finally come. He thought they must be near enough to hear him, but were too intent upon their fishing to think of him, or to notice his cries. Besides, he took comfort in the thought that they had not yet missed him, and consequently would not be on the alert. His cries might be faint in their ears, and not excite any notice.

The time passed, and still he kept up his cries. He called in every possible tone, and made use of every shout that his voice could compass, sometimes calling their names, sometimes uttering shrieks, and howls, and shrill yells. But all these were unavailing, and he was at last compelled to desist, from utter weariness and loss of voice.

And now he noticed that it began to grow darker. At first this discovery gave him an unpleasant shock, but immediately he began to find comfort in this circumstance.

"When it grows dark," he thought, "they'll miss me, and they'll come to hunt me up. They'll hear me if I call—or, better yet, they themselves will now do the shouting, and I'll hear them."

With this thought he kept perfectly still. The darker it grew, the more intently did he listen; for he was convinced that by this time they must

have discovered his absence, and must be searching after him. The only thing that troubled him was the remembrance of his last words to Pat. He had told Pat that he was going down the stream, and they might make their first search after him in that direction, and this he did not think would bring them within hearing; for though he had no idea where he was, he still had every reason to believe that he was nowhere near the river.

It now grew darker and darker; yet still to his strained ears there had not come a single sound to tell him that his friends were near; not a single cry, however faint, however remote, to make known to him that they were on the search after him. As the time passed away, the long, long suspense and the protracted disappointment began to fill him with the deepest gloom — and he began to know to its fullest extent that “agony of hope deferred that maketh the heart sick.” At length it grew so dark, that even his hope, tenacious as it was, could no longer shut out from his mind the conviction that whatever anxiety his friends might feel, it was simply impossible for them at this time to make any search whatever. If they had missed him, and had sought for him, they must have gone in a direction different from that in which he had gone, and must have been altogether out of hearing.

As soon as he fully recognized this fact, all his

energies gave way, and he sank down upon the ground. Not until this moment had he known how exhausted he was, and how oppressive the sultry atmosphere. Thus far his excitement, first to regain his lost path, and latterly to communicate with his friends or hear from them, had so taken possession of him, that heat or fatigue, or any other bodily sensation, was not noticed. Anxiety, eager effort, pertinacious hope,—all these had by turns influenced him; but now, as there seemed no further chance either for action or for expectation, his strength collapsed, and he gave way utterly. He lay upon the ground, his head resting upon some moss, and yielded himself up both in mind and in body to the misery of his situation. The severe exertions that he had made had utterly exhausted him; the conflict of soul that he had endured, had intensified that exhaustion; and for a long time he remained motionless, gasping for breath, and in a state of utter despair.

Now, the night came down—sultry, torrid, oppressive, suffocating. Its intense blackness covered everything in an impenetrable veil. Its effect upon the others has already been described, and upon Phil it produced results more fearful still. Had it not been for that unusual oppressiveness and that Egyptian darkness, he might have roused himself; but as it was, he gave up utterly, and remained sunk in the profoundest despair for hours.

At length a change came over him. In spite of the heat of the night, the long rest had been beneficial, and it was not in the nature of things that emotions so strong should last very long. Phil's mind was buoyant, his temper cheerful, and hope was always strong in his soul. As he lay there sleepless, his thoughts began to revolt against the gloom that had overwhelmed him.

"What a fool I am!" he thought, rousing himself, and sitting up. "After all, what is it? and why should I knock under this way? Me, too — of all fellows! after that tremendous adventure at the Falls."

The moment his thoughts reverted to that fearful adventure his gloom vanished. He now recalled the incidents of that terrific event. He thought of the frenzied struggle against the grip of the resistless waters; he thought of the wild plunge into the seething flood, and of that horrible moment when the rolling torrents overwhelmed him, and hurled him downward into awful depths. Then he recalled the events of their drift down the harbor, and out towards the bay; when there seemed not the faintest chance of escape.

In comparison with this his present situation seemed trifling. To be lost in the woods, what was that? Was it equal to being lost in the terrible tide, and environed in impenetrable fogs? Could it under any possibility be so bad as being swept out to sea, a helpless victim of the pitiless

waves? There was no comparison between the two cases.

And now his depression fled, and the buoyancy of his soul lifted him up to hope. He began to think over his prospects cheerfully, and to make plans about the following day. As soon as daylight came, his friends would at once come in search of him. He would listen and hear their calls. If he could not think of any direction in which to go, he could wait. But as to that, he did not expect to be so puzzled as he had been. The sun would surely shine, and that would give him an idea of east, west, north, and south. He might then choose his route, and follow it up. If his friends did not come, he could go off himself, and doubtless he would reach some place eventually. He might find some stream, and follow it to its mouth, where there would be sure to be a settlement; or perhaps he might light upon some clearing in the woods where he might obtain help, and perhaps regain his friends.

Thus Phil's thoughts grew more and more cheerful; and he looked forward most hopefully, and persisted in putting the best appearance on things. At length he began to think that his long fast was not good for him, especially as he might have some hard work to do on the morrow; so he opened his basket, and taking out his sandwiches that he had carried there all the day, he made a hearty meal. The effect was most beneficial; the hollow, craving,

gnawing feeling that had distressed him passed away, and was succeeded by a sense of comfort.

And now drowsiness began to steal over him. He had satisfied his hunger; he had overcome by his long rest the first painful exhaustion and fatigue consequent upon his severe exertions; above all, his mind had attained a pleasant state of cheerfulness and hope. There were no longer any despairing thoughts or terrible fears to excite him and keep him awake; and so at length he fell into a sound and refreshing sleep.

XII.

The Wanderer on his winding Way. — The Bewilderment of the Forest. — Swamps and Bogs. — The friendly Brook. — Following the Flow of the running Water. — A pleasant Course. — An encouraging Discovery. — Astray once more. — He sinks to Rest. — The last Sandwich.

IT was very late when Phil fell asleep, and his fatigue and exhaustion combined to make his sleep heavy and prolonged. As there were no sounds to break in upon his slumbers, he continued sleeping until late on the following day. On awaking he raised himself up, and looked around in surprise, for in his dreams he had been wandering among familiar scenes, and it was some time before he could comprehend his present situation. But his mossy bed at the foot of a large maple tree, and the woods that extended all around on every side, soon enabled him to recall the events of the preceding day, and to understand how he came here.

These recollections were not cheerful, nor was it a pleasant change to turn from happy dreams to

such an awakening as this; yet Phil was not cast down. He still felt the beneficial effect of those better thoughts of the night before; and still retained that buoyancy of spirit and that hopefulness which he had felt on going to sleep.

And now another day had dawned, with its possibilities for good and evil. His watch told him, to his amazement, that it was after ten o'clock. Ten o'clock! After ten o'clock, and yet no signs of Bart and the others! What did this mean? Had they neglected him so long? Neglected him? No. They could not do that; but was it not possible that during his sleep they may have wandered about these woods near him, and called to him while he could not hear them? This was a most distressing thought, and if such a thing had happened, its result would bring a twofold evil; for in the first place, he would have missed the chance of deliverance, and in the second place, they would not be likely to pass by here again. But these thoughts were not of a kind that he chose to entertain. He was in no mood now to sink into despondent inaction. He was tired of this place, and was anxious to leave it. He was also wearied of inaction, and was eager to do something. Far better did it seem to him to do anything, and go anywhere, even if he should be unsuccessful, than to remain here waiting for those who might never come. So he at once dismissed all idle thoughts and useless regrets, and ad-

dressed himself to the task of arranging his own course of action:

He saw at once that the points of the compass were as much a mystery as ever. The first glance upward showed him that the sky was darker than ever, that its covering was more opaque, that the smoke was nearer to the earth. The air also, was close and oppressive. The sun was not visible, and therefore his hope failed of finding some course which he might pursue by this means. What, then, was he to do?

The first thing that he decided on doing was, to take his breakfast. Now, he had eaten pretty freely on the preceding night, and therefore it was with some concern that he opened his basket and examined his stores. That concern was certainly not at all lessened when he found that he had only two sandwiches left.

Two sandwiches!

Rather a small supply of provisions for one who was lost in the midst of the forest, and had no idea whatever when he might be able to find his way out. Phil would not allow himself to feel anxious about this, yet at the same time he was prudent enough to look out for the future; and so, though he was hungry, and felt the need of a good breakfast, yet he did not feel inclined to devour all of his slender stock at that one meal. He chose rather to exercise some self-denial; and so he contented himself with only one sandwich, and put the other back, reserving it for a time of need.

He now felt thirsty, and began to look around for water. He could not find any for a long time. Meanwhile, as he walked about, the exertion made him much more sensitive to the closeness and heat of that torrid atmosphere, and so aggravated his thirst that it began to torment him to an intolerable degree. At length, to his great joy, he found a swampy place; and, stooping down, he tore out the moss and sods, and scooped up the black mud that was underneath, until at last some black, discolored water appeared. He took a few mouthfuls of this without hesitation, and then, scooping out some more mud, he waited till the water should grow clearer. The particles of mud after a time settled at the bottom, and the water became clear enough for Phil to drink it; and though it was disagreeably warm, it yet refreshed him.

He now resumed his course. This swamp lay in a slight hollow, and seemed to extend for some distance. He was loath to leave it, for the remembrance of his recent sufferings was strong within him; and so he walked along the swampy hollow. To his surprise it extended for a long distance, and to his great gratification the moisture of the ground increased, until at length the bog became more and more marshy, and pools of standing water became visible. He skirted the edge of the swamp, still walking on, and at length reached a place where a small brook flowed on out of this swamp into the woods. Along this he

walked for a little distance, and then took another draught of the water, which he now found quite pure, and not so warm as to be unpleasant. Much refreshed, he sat down by its edge, and once more began to deliberate about the best course that he could take.

He did not like the state of things altogether. It was bad enough to be lost in the forest; but there were other things superadded which made his situation far worse. For he now felt the oppressiveness of the air most painfully, and the exertion of walking was far more exhaustive than he had ever known it before. Besides, the atmosphere had a smoky character, which was distressing, and the thick smoke clouds overhead showed that something was going on in these woods that might ere long make his situation much worse. There was, indeed, something ominous, in that sickly, leaden sky, in those rolling smoke clouds that hung so low, in this suffocating air which he could not breathe with comfort, — something ominous in the oppressive heat, and in the stagnation of the atmosphere. There was, however, a breeze; its signs were visible overhead, but the woods were so dense that he could not gain any benefit from it. What the meaning of it all might be, he could easily conjecture; but the thought was too formidable to be entertained, and so he tried to dismiss it from his mind.

And now, while he thought of what he ought to

do, a plan of action suggested itself which was so simple, so feasible, and so full of promise, that he at once caught at it and proceeded to act upon it. This plan was nothing else than to follow the course of the brook. It would of course enlarge as it ran on. It might lead into a larger stream, and that stream would be sure to bring him out somewhere. Besides, to be near a stream would be of great advantage in many ways. It would be more open, and lighter, and more airy than the thick recesses of the forest; its bed would offer a comparatively easy footpath, except where it might become too strong or swampy; and he would always be in the neighborhood of water.

On this idea he proceeded at once to act, and so resumed his journey, walking in the bed of the little brook. The bottom afforded an easy path; and though the water was over his ankles, yet its coolness was refreshing, and served to alleviate very materially the effects of the sultry atmosphere.

But on resuming his course, Phil saw that if he hoped to make any real progress, he must divest himself of all useless encumbrances. His basket and his fishing-rod were of this description. He therefore sacrificed both of them to the necessities of the occasion; but before he threw them down, he removed the hook and line from the rod, so as to have it in case of need. And now, as he went on, he felt the benefit of this disencumbrance; for

the weight and inconvenience of these had been excessively troublesome all along. Yet the line and hook were the only essential part of the rod, and the sandwich was the only necessary part of the basket; and these things were carried far more conveniently in his pocket.

The brook flowed on, and gradually increased in volume by the occasional addition of other brooklets, which joined it in its course. The channel grew broader, and the waters grew more abundant, sometimes spreading themselves out wide over a pebbly bottom, at other times collecting into deep pools, which Phil preferred avoiding. In spite of the irregularities and inequalities of its course, Phil preferred walking here to wandering at random through the woods; in the first place, on account of the reasons above mentioned; and in the second place, for the reason that it led to some definite point, and would not allow him to wander about blindly in a circle. The hopeless bewilderment which had resulted from his forest wanderings on the previous day, made his present course seem quite certain and definite in comparison.

At last, to Phil's great delight, the brook joined another brook, which was fully twice as large, though not as large as that stream where he had been fishing. A vague hope had arisen in his mind that this brook might lead him to that very stream, in which case he counted confidently.

on finding his friends; but now he had walked so far that he gave up this hope altogether, and had made up his mind to seek his own safety, irrespective of his friends. The new brook was quite as easy as the old one; in fact, it was somewhat more so, for it was less irregular, and presented fewer inequalities of depths. Over its bed, then, Phil trudged on, sometimes stopping to dash water over his face and head, at other times thrusting in his hands, and occasionally bending down to take a drink. The presence of the brook thus proved of the greatest advantage to him, and its cool waters prevented him from feeling that exhaustion under which he might otherwise have sunk utterly. In the broader pathway that this brook afforded, he had also the chance of gaining advantage of any slight breeze or movement of the air that might take place; and thus in every way he was a gainer.

At length he came to another brook, into which this one discharged itself. The new brook was very much larger; and though not quite so large as the stream where they had been fishing, still it was not much smaller. At first the only thought that came to Phil was, that he had come back to this very stream itself from which he had started; but soon, as he came to reflect upon the length of his wanderings, and upon the probability that many streams ran through the forest, he gave up this idea, and contented himself with following out

the plan that he had adopted. This stream he thought might lead to some larger one, and that larger one to some river, which might eventually bring him to the habitations of man.

The fresh hopes that were now aroused within him lessened his fatigue, and stimulated him to new efforts. The bed of this stream was shallow and pebbly, sometimes deepening into pools, at other times bringing him into the midst of swamps, and grasses, and rushes; but, on the whole, it was no more difficult than its predecessor had been; and his progress was very satisfactory.

At length he came to a place where he saw something that sent a thrill of joy through his whole being.

It was a path!

It was an unmistakable path, narrow and rough, it is true, yet still a path. It seemed like one of those roads which are used in winter to draw logs out of the woods, or fuel; yet whatever its purpose might be, there it was; and here at last Phil saw something that proved that he was not cut off altogether from all association with human kind. That path seemed to promise escape, and seemed to lead him forth from the wilderness track to life and liberty.

He stood and looked at it long and carefully. It ran across the brook, and on either side it presented the same appearance. The question that now arose in his mind was, which side should he

choose — the right or the left? There was nothing in the path that helped him to a decision; no footmarks were visible to show him where to go; he was left altogether to chance and to his own instincts.

At length he decided to take the path on the right hand side, and accordingly he at once went on in this direction. The path was about six feet wide, and was comparatively smooth; so smooth, indeed, that it seemed almost luxurious when compared with the irregularities of the brook, with its alternations of gravel and swamp, which was also deep in water. Here, then, Phil walked along rapidly, and was so full of hope that at every turn in the path he expected to see some house.

The path, as has been said, seemed like one of those which are used in the winter only for lumbering purposes. At the present time it bore no marks whatever of recent use. No traces of wheels were visible, no footprints of any kind; yet it was level, for the ordinary irregularities seemed to have been smoothed away by the attrition of logs which had been hauled over it.

Phil walked on for several hours. He was very much fatigued; but the new excitement that had arisen consequent upon this discovery had prevented him from giving way to his weariness, and had, in fact, roused him above it to such an extent that he was unconscious of it. His expectation of meeting with some signs of humanity clung to

him incessantly as he walked along; and though he was constantly disappointed, yet he constantly hoped, and persisted in the hope, in spite of disappointments.

At length, it began to grow darker, and he saw that evening was coming on. He had been walking incessantly, with but one short rest, ever since eleven o'clock. Under ordinary circumstances he could not have maintained such a prolonged effort; and had he not met with this path he would have sought rest long before this. But his intense desire to escape, which had been stimulated by this discovery of the path, drew him on, and nerved him to new efforts. At the end of each hour he still hoped that the next hour would bring something; and so he kept on even after the darkness began to deepen. Now, as the darkness increased, the path grew less and less perceptible, and at last he happened to get out of it at a place where there was a wide opening in the woods. Leaving it here, he wandered about until he discovered that he had lost it altogether. On making this discovery, he made no effort either to retrace his steps, or to find out the lost path. He was too much worn out to think of doing either. He simply gave up.

A moss-covered mound was close beside him; and taking a seat here, he determined to remain for the night, and leave all further effort for the following day. He was fearfully fatigued, and

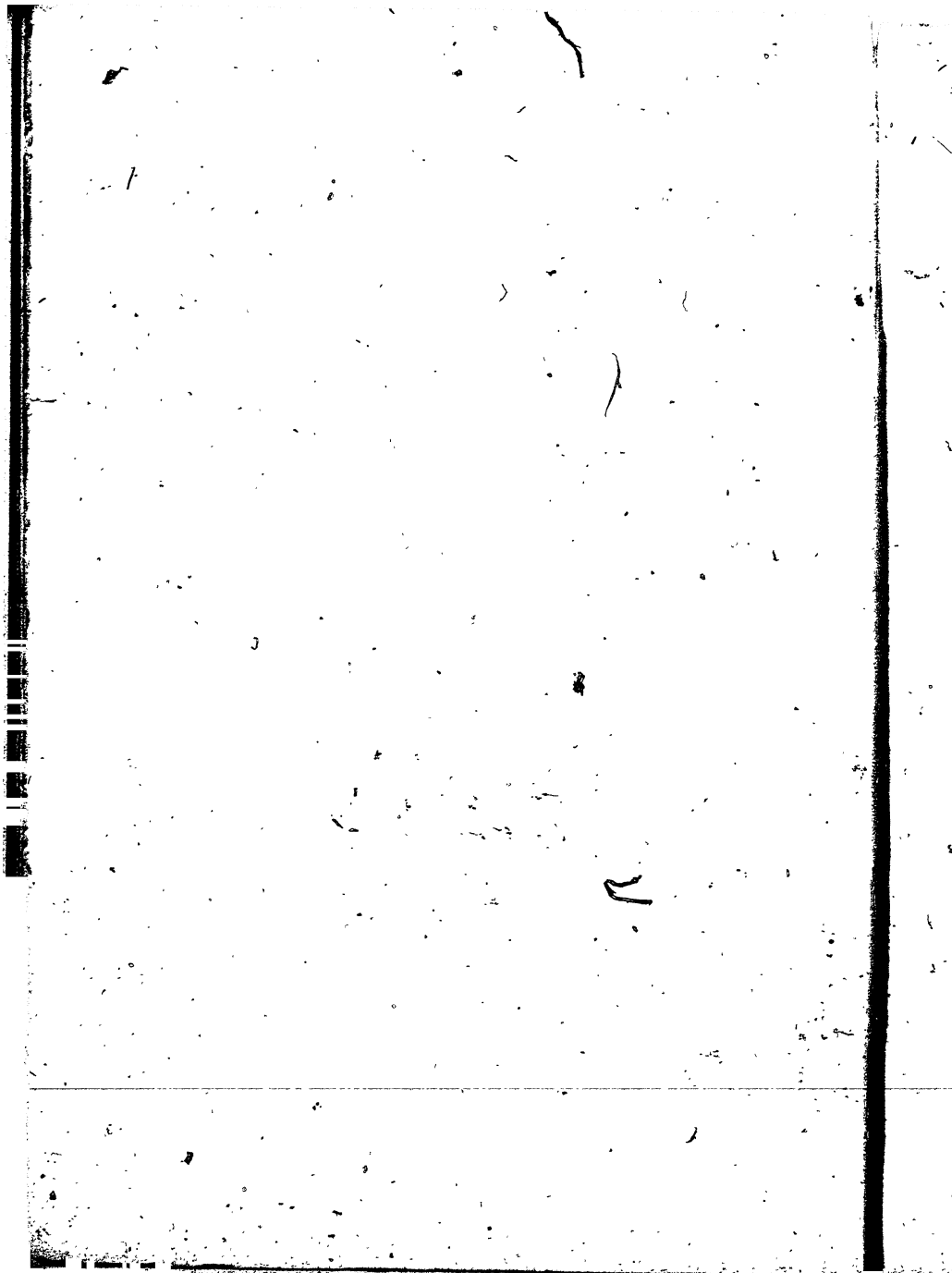
utterly worn out. When he gave up he gave up completely. His only thought now was for his immediate wants, and those wants comprised the two essentials of food and rest. Rest he could find here, on the mossy mound, under the forest trees. As to food, thanks to his forethought and self-denial in the morning, something yet remained. It was that sandwich which he had reserved for a time of need. The time of need had come, and he drew the sandwich from his pocket.

He looked at it for a moment solemnly and thoughtfully. It was his last sandwich — the very last of his little stock of provisions. Should he eat it all, or should he still preserve a little of it? It seemed unwise to eat it all. He broke it into two portions, and wrapping one up carefully, he proceeded to eat the other. But on eating this he found his appetite unappeased, and his craving for more was irresistible. He unwrapped what he had reserved and looked at it. Should he eat it? Dare he eat it? To eat it would be to deprive himself of his last mouthful, and on the following morning he would have nothing with which to begin the day.

He looked at that small fragment of food with longing eyes, and the longer he looked at it the more tempting did it seem, and the more irresistible did the temptation grow. At last he thought that it would be better to strengthen himself now after his long journey, and secure a good night's rest.



THE LAST SANDWICH. Page 174.




On the morrow he could look out for food and get something to eat — somewhere, he knew not where — somehow, he knew not how. This thought appeased his cautious scruples. He hesitated no longer, but ate what remained of the sandwich.

And so his last particle of food was gone.

But he gave no thought to this. He was too tired, and worn out with exhaustion he lay down and fell asleep.

XIII.

Clouds and Vapors. — The exhaustive Heat. — Thirst. — Muddy Water. — The Pangs of Hunger. — How to fish. — The River. — The placid Lake. — A Plunge into the Water. — The Midday Meal. — The Pine Woods. — The rocky Cavern. — Preparing a Night's Rest. — The Evening Repast. — Night once more.

 N waking the next morning, Phil's first impulse was to look above and around to see what might be the prospects for the day. To his disappointment he found those prospects not at all changed for the better. Overhead he saw the rolling smoke clouds, which now were gloomier and denser than before, and still nearer the earth. The atmosphere caught from them a very perceptible odor, which showed the character of the clouds above, and was pungent enough to create some degree of irritation in the nose and throat. The spot where he was appeared to be somewhat more open than usual, and in some directions he could look over a space several rods in extent. In this direction the smoke haze was very apparent.

He felt both hungry and thirsty. But he had nothing whatever to eat, and knew it. He had eaten his last mouthful the evening before, and there was nothing whatever left now to satisfy the demands of his appetite. But for the present his thirst was stronger than his hunger; and so parched was his throat, and so painful was his craving for water, that he at once started up, and set out in search of some.

His object was now to regain that path which he had lost the night before, and follow it until he might find another brook, or at least a swamp. But though he sought most diligently, and most thoroughly, in all directions, still he could find no trace of it whatever. Bitter experience had already taught him his own utter incapability of finding his way back through these woods to any point from which he might have wandered, and so he soon gave up this search as useless; but in addition to this, his thirst was altogether too pressing to allow of any search after lost paths. The one thing of his desire became water, and so he turned his attention towards finding this first necessity. He did not have to undergo a very long trial. The woods were intersected in many places by small brooklets, and before long he came to a bog, in which he obtained sufficient water to allay his thirst. By carefully examining this, he found a place which was the outlet of a brook, and he now pursued the same course which had been

followed by him the day before; that is, he walked along in the bed of the brook, hoping that it would lead to a stream.

As he walked along it grew larger and larger; other brooks joined it; and at length it ran into a stream which was quite as large as that one from which he had originally wandered. On reaching this he sat down on the bank and rested. The stream was about a dozen yards wide here, and the waters were shallow, running on among gravel and cobble stones. The banks were bordered with trees, which rose to the height of about forty feet, and threw their branches across the stream till they nearly met.

Sitting here and resting, Phil began to feel more hungry than ever. His walk had only served to sharpen his appetite, and the alleviation of his thirst had brought out his hunger more prominently. And now what could he do? To struggle forward all day without anything to eat would be almost impossible. Already he felt exhausted from his walk thus far without food; and to commence again seemed out of the question. In his hunger he now tried to find something in the woods. He tore up some grass, and chewed the roots; he peeled off some maple bark, and tried to chew this; but the grass roots and the maple bark had no perceptible effect in diminishing his hunger. At last he thought of his fishing-line, which he had carried with him after throwing

away the rod. Wondering why he had been so stupid as not to think of this before, he proceeded to search for a suitable rod. This he found after a short time, and attaching the line to the end of it, he proceeded to try his skill at fishing. He walked down the stream for some distance, but for some time he met with no success. He began to feel a little alarm, and to think that the heat and the smoke prevented the fish from rising, when suddenly, in the midst of his discouragement, he felt a nibble at the hook. He jerked it up, but missed his prey that time; still the circumstance encouraged him greatly, for it showed him that there was hope, and he continued his task with fresh spirit. At length, to his intense delight, he jerked out a fish. It was quite small, but still it was indescribably welcome; and without waiting any longer, Phil at once proceeded to kindle a fire. He did this with little difficulty, and placing the fish on the blazing sticks, he watched it until it seemed sufficiently cooked to be eaten. Although his hunger had made him too impatient to wait till the fish was thoroughly cooked, yet that same hunger made him indifferent to little deficiencies of this sort, and the half-raw trout seemed to him, without exception, the most delicious morsel that he had ever eaten. He now resumed his rod, and before long hauled out another, which was soon followed by another, and yet another. By this time the fire had died down to the coals, and on these Phil laid

his fish. This time he waited until they were so thoroughly cooked that they would have satisfied the most fastidious appetite. On these Phil made a right royal repast; and this supply of food seemed to him to be sufficient for any effort that he might have to make that day. Before starting, however, he was provident enough to wait until he had caught three more trout, so as to secure himself from again coming so close to absolute starvation as he had been that morning; and then, putting these in his pocket, he rolled up very carefully his precious hook and line, and once more resumed his journey.

He had thus been able to satisfy both that thirst and that hunger which had each assailed him so fiercely on his first awaking; and this fact gave to him a glow of satisfaction, and a confidence in his own resources, which dispelled the last vestige of his gloom, and filled him with energy, and hope, and cheerfulness. In this frame of mind he set out on the renewal of his journey, not knowing any better than before where he was going, yet hoping for the best.

The brook ran on for some miles, receiving other brooks, and growing gradually larger. As a general thing, its bed afforded a sufficiently easy pathway for Phil to traverse, without any unusual exertion, and was preferable; on the whole, to the forest with its underbrush. Occasionally, however, he was able to take advantage of favorable open-

ings among the trees, and on several occasions gained very much by taking short cuts, and avoiding certain bends in the river. On such short cuts it is needless to say that he never ventured, unless he was able to see plainly where he was going. In this way he went on for some hours, and in that time he certainly succeeded in getting over a large extent of ground.

But such exertions as these were not made easily; and soon the energy with which he had started began to relax. He became more sensitive to the heat, and it seemed to him that the smoke was growing more dense and more distressing. He began to think that he must be drawing nearer to the fires from which all this smoke and this oppressive heat arose. The thought was a most disheartening one; for if it were true, it would transform what seemed to be his pathway to safety into a blind rush to danger, and make of no avail all his long struggles that he had put forth so perseveringly. It was a thought, indeed, which was too depressing for him to entertain, and so he strove to drive it from his mind; but it was one of those unpleasant ideas which cling to the mind in spite of itself, and so, notwithstanding Phil's efforts to hope for the best, there lowered over him a very dark and dismal foreboding that his present course would at length bring him face to face with the fire.

And what then?

Ah, that he could not tell.

Should he turn back now? No; that was a thing which he could not bear to think of. Wherever he was going, he could not turn back yet — not till he was convinced that it was all wrong — not till the very presence of the fire itself should force him to give up all hope of farther progress in this direction.

In spite of his surroundings of oppressive heat and distressing smoke, of rough pathways and alternating wood and water, — in spite of his fatigue, of body, and despondency of mind, — Phil still kept on his course, and struggled most heroically to maintain his onward march, wherever it might lead. At length he reached a place where the stream ran in almost a straight line for a considerable distance; and looking down this, he could see at the farthest extremity the smoky haze; but at the same time he felt confident that it was not a whit denser than it had been in the morning. This discovery encouraged him; and now, if he felt the smoke and the heat more keenly, he was able, with great apparent reason, to attribute it solely to his own weariness of body.

“I will rest soon,” he thought. “I will take a long rest, and get something to eat, and that will be sure to restore me.”

With this thought he went on; and though he had made up his mind to rest, yet he kept constantly postponing the period of that rest. At

length the stream took a turn round a wooded declivity, and as Phil went up this to cut across, he suddenly beheld lying immediately in front of him a small lake, into which the stream ran.

The sight of this at once decided him to make this wooded declivity his resting-place. So he took his seat here on the shore, and looked out upon the scene before him. The lake was of no very great extent, and was surrounded on all sides by trees. In front of Phil the beach was pebbly, and the waters clear and transparent; but on the right there was a wide extent covered over with green rushes, and water lilies, both yellow and white. As Phil looked forth upon this pleasant scene, the waters seemed so inviting and so clear, that he determined to take a bath. No sooner had he thought of this than he was on his feet again, and in a very short time had divested himself of his clothes and plunged in.

He plunged down into those sweet, clear, tranquil waters. As his head sank under the embrace of the cool flood, it seemed to convey new life and strength to every fibre of his wearied frame. It was one delicious moment in a day of toil and trouble. He struck out and swam far off into the middle of the lake. Then he dived again and again; and then, rolling over on his back, he lay floating, with his eyes closed, and his form reposing luxuriously upon its soft, watery couch. The water here was sufficiently clear and sufficiently

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deep for his purposes, the rushes and lilies were over upon the shore on one side, and there was nothing to mar his enjoyment. Here he forgot the heat and the smoke. The cool waters took away from him all that sense of oppression which he had so long felt, and when he at length landed, it was as though he had enjoyed some prolonged rest for hours, or some profound and refreshing slumber.

Now he resumed his clothes, and thought of those fish which he had been carrying. On examining them, he found them slightly stale, yet not at all crushed, and thereupon he proceeded to kindle a fire upon the shore of the lake. Thus far he had found no difficulty in making his fires, for he had matches with him, and there was no lack of dry twigs; so, in a short time, a fire sufficient for his purposes was blazing merrily. Phil was in no hurry; so, lying down near it, and leaning on one elbow, he watched it lazily, until sufficient coals had been formed, upon which he might lay his fish.

The fish this time were even superior to what they had been on a former occasion, for Phil's practice had shown him, to some extent, how they could be broiled to the best advantage. All that they needed was a little salt and pepper; but he was too hungry to miss either of those seasonings. He found, indeed, in his case, the truth of the old saying, that hunger is the best relish; and never in his life had he eaten any meal with half the

zest that he had known at the eventful meals of this eventful day. A draught of water from the running stream completed his repast, and he now lay down refreshed, and began to meditate over his journey. He had now rested for nearly two hours, and he began to feel like resuming his march. It would be necessary, he saw, to walk around the lake till he found its outlet, and then go along as before, and keep on as long as his strength might hold out.

Once more, then, he rose strong, eager, resolute, and cheerful, hoping for the best, and willing to go on in this course until he reached some destination, wherever that might be. He walked along the lake shore, and on reaching the other end, he found the outlet. This was nothing more than a continuation of the stream down which he had been going, but there was more water, for the lake probably received other contributions; and what was more important, the bottom was muddy. Fortunately, however, the woods here were free from underbrush, so that he had no difficulty in walking through them, keeping the stream in sight. After going about a mile or so, he found, to his great delight, that he had come to a pine forest. To him, after his long, rough walk, this fact gave the greatest possible joy. For now the trees rose up around him, at wide intervals, and no tangled underbrush stood in his way, forcing him to wind through them or lose himself in the at-

tempt to go around it. The pine forest allowed him to choose his own course and walk almost as freely as though he were in an open field. Besides, the ground under his feet gave a firm foothold. It was not like the soft moss or long ferns of the other woods; it was not like the pebbly bed of the stream; it was hard, and smooth, and afforded an easy pathway.

As Phil went on, he noticed that the stream grew much wider, though it still remained shallow. Its waters flowed sometimes in the middle of the bed, sometimes on the right bank, and sometimes towards the left; while again they distributed themselves over the whole of its wide bed, and brawled, and gurgled, and bubbled onward among the stones and pebbles with which its bed was again filled. At one place its channel divided, and a little island covered with trees arose in the midst, while the waters, after flowing past in two streams, once more reunited. About a half mile below this another stream joined it, and the waters were very considerably increased.

Phil walked along for several hours, and at length began to feel once more that excessive weariness which he had felt before bathing in the lake. Once more the atmosphere grew exceedingly oppressive, and the smoke distressed him. At length he came to a ledge of rocks, by the borders of the stream. As he came up he noticed something like an opening, and walked towards it. He

saw that a huge mass of rock lay tilted over and resting against another mass in such a way that it formed a covered chamber about ten feet long and six feet wide. The floor was a flat, rough rock, and the end consisted of damp moss. Immediately beside this the stream flowed along in a deeper channel than usual, for all its waters had gathered on this side, leaving the rest of its bed bare. Phil was so struck with the appearance of this place that he examined it quite closely, and began to think that it would be an excellent place to pass the night in. He could not have found it at a better time. Already it was growing a little dusk, and he was thoroughly worn out. In fact he was so tired that after stopping here one minute he found it impossible to go forward any farther; so he at once resolved to stay.

On the top of the rock was a quantity of moss, and as he was going to pass the night here he proceeded to gather it, and collected a sufficient quantity to make a comfortable couch when strewed on the rocky floor of his little cave. But there were other things to do before he should be able to rest. He was once more in a state of starvation, and the only thing for him to do was to resort to his fishing-line. He found a pole without much trouble, and then threw his line. At first he met with no success. But he persevered, and walked farther up the stream till he came to a place that looked more favorable. Here

his efforts were crowned with success, for in a little time he had hooked no less than six trout, one of which was large enough for a meal by itself.

After this he took a bath in the running stream, and felt once more the same invigorating and restorative effects from the cool water which he had experienced during his bath in the lake.

Then he kindled his fire on the edge of the stream, near his cave, and cooked two of the fish, reserving the others for the next morning.

This meal was as great a success as the former ones had been, and at length he retired to the little cave where he had already spread the moss for a bed. Here he could not help recalling the events of the day. He had hoped, on starting, by this time to have reached some human abode. He had not done so. But this, instead of exciting his regrets, gave way altogether to emotions of gratitude. He had been saved from thirst and from hunger in a most wonderful manner, and, even at this moment, instead of feeling utterly exhausted, he had little else than a sense of languid weariness. All this filled him with thankfulness, and kneeling down in his little cave, he offered up his most grateful thanks to the merciful Being who had protected his wanderings during the day.

After this he lay down on his moss and soon fell asleep.

XIV.

Bart. — An anxious Night. — Suspicions. — Reappearance of Pat. — The Woes of Pat. — A hideous Thought. — The Leper. — Off to the Woods. — Indian File. — The Rear Guard. — Defection of Pat. — He makes a Circuit. — “Hyar! Hyar! You dar? Whar Mas'r Bart?”

THE sight of the lurid glow which had burst upon Bart's eyes as he looked from the priest's house excited within him anxious thoughts, which kept him awake for hours on that night; the thought that Phil was wandering in those woods, and that all around him were these wrathful flames; the thought that perhaps he might have already fallen a victim; the thought that his search could scarcely be made now, since they could hardly hope to penetrate the woods for any distance; the thought that now any search, however extensive, might perhaps be too late. He slept but little. Every little while he would rise from his bed, and look out of the window towards the woods, to see if that lurid glow continued. It was visible for a long time, but at

length died out altogether. But this did not lessen Bart's anxieties, for now the smoke grew thicker, and the smell of it was most unpleasantly perceptible, exciting the very natural thought that the fire glow was no longer visible, not because the fires were extinguished, but rather because the smoke had grown so dense that it hid it from view.

When Bart arose it was not yet daybreak, and on coming down stairs no one was visible. He went out of doors, and paced up and down the road uneasily. After a while two men made their appearance, whom Bart recognized as the ones who were to be the guides in their exploration of the forest. He felt too anxious and too sick at heart to ask them anything, for he thought that anything they would say would only confirm his worst fears, and as yet he did not wish to know the worst. He wished to cling to his hopes, faint though they now were, until hope should be no longer possible. After a while Solomon made his appearance; but Bart had nothing to say to him, and the old man, seeing by his manner that he did not wish to be spoken to, held aloof, and sat down in silence on the doorstep.

It was now day, and still the priest had not made his appearance. Bart wondered at this, and attributed it to his oversleeping himself. This made him feel somewhat impatient, and he thought hardly of the priest for yielding to his drowsiness

at such a time as this, when it was a question of life and death; but he waited, and checked a rising impulse which he had to hunt up the priest's bedroom and wake him. While he was fretting and fuming, the two French guides had placidly seated themselves on the doorstep in a line with Solomon, and began to smoke, chatting with one another in French.

Suddenly Bart heard footsteps behind him. He thought it was the priest, and turned hastily. It was not the priest, however, but Pat. Bart had actually forgotten Pat's existence ever since that moment on the previous evening, when he had gone out doors to look for him, and had seen that terrible appearance over the forest trees. As he now recognized him, he wondered at his long absence, and noticed at the same time that Pat looked very much agitated. At once he thought that Pat had heard bad news, and had come to tell him. This idea was so terrible that he stood paralyzed, and could scarcely utter a word.

Pat came up and gave a heavy sigh.

"It's dhreadful — it's terrible. Och, wurrooooo!"

Bart looked at him with an awful face, not daring to ask the question that was upon his lips, and now feeling sure that Pat had heard the worst.

"Och, what'll we iver do?" cried Pat; "what'll we iver do? Sure an me heart's fairly broke widin me, so it is."

"How did you find it out?" asked Bart, in a trembling voice.

"Sure an wasn't it the praste himself that tould me," said Pat, in a tone of voice that sounded like a wail of despair.

"The priest?" said Bart. "You saw him then — did you. Where — where is he?"

"The praste," said Pat, dolefully; "sorra one o' me knows. I seen him dhrivin' off. I wor sleepin undher a tray behind the fince. I wasn't goin to thrust mesilf in their leper houses, so I wasn't."

"You saw him. O — he has gone, has he — gone — to — to — to see about it," stammered Bart, feverishly; "and what did he tell you?"

"Tell me?" said Pat, dubiously.

"Yes. You said you saw him."

"So I did."

"Well — what did he say about it?"

"Sure an he didn't say anythin jist thin."

"But he told you about it, you said."

"So he did; but it was last night."

"O, in the night — you saw him in the night — he must have been out then — and I thought he was in bed. O, why wasn't I with him? Why didn't he take me? But I suppose he thought I'd be too much overcome, and so he didn't want to tell me — and did he tell you this, Pat? Tell me all. Tell me all — don't keep me in suspense."

At these incoherent words Pat stared at Bart in

utter amazement, and for a moment thought that he had lost his senses.

"Suspinsé?" he said — "suspinsé? What do you mean? You talk as though you'd lost your sivin sinsis! Sure an didn't you hear it yerself, ivery word? Sure an worn't ye in the room yourself, listhening? Didn't ye hear it all?"

"Hear it all? Hear what?" cried Bart. "About what?"

"Why, about the lepers, sure. Sorra a thought I've had iver since, except about that same. And I went off, so I did; for I didn't dare to slape in that leper house, wid a man that lives among the lepers and shakes hands wid them."

"The lepers!" cried Bart in impatience, but with a feeling of inexpressible relief — the relief which is felt at a respite, however brief, from sorrow. "The lepers! Why, I was talking about Phil. Have you heard anything about Phil?"

"Phil?" said Pat. "Arrah, sure he's all right. I ony wish I wor in his shoes. It ud be a happy boy I'd be if I cud change places wid Phil. Och, wúrroo — but it's a bitther day whin I came to this place."

"You haven't heard anything at all about Phil, then?" said Bart.

"Niver a word," said Pat. "I've heard too much about other things."

Bart turned away.

As for Pat, he wandered disconsolately to the

fence by the road side, and leaning against it, he stood there in a woe-begone attitude,— the very picture of despair.

Bart now resumed his melancholy walk ; but, before he had taken many paces, he heard the rapid gallop of a horse, and in turning, he saw a rider approaching the house, who, on drawing nearer, turned out to be the priest. Bart now saw that he had done his kind host a great injustice in supposing that he had been oversleeping himself, and felt a natural sorrow at his suspicions. As the priest dismounted, the very first words which he addressed to Bart made the compunction of the latter over his unjust suspicions still stronger, since they showed that, so far from sleeping while Bart was wakeful, in his anxiety over Phil, he had left Bart in bed, and had been traversing the country for miles, in order to institute a general search after the lost boy.

“ I took a few hours' sleep,” said he, “ and rose between one and two. I've been up the road for twelve or fifteen miles, and have persuaded a number of people to make a search of the woods as far as they are able to. They are all full of the deepest anxiety about the poor lad, and you may rest assured that the good people will do all in their power for him. My people are not very intellectual, nor are they what you call progressive ; but they are affectionate, simple-hearted, and brave ; and there is not one of them that I have

spoken to who will have any peace until that poor lad's fate is decided. So when we go off to search after him, you may console yourself with the thought that our party is but one out of several that are engaged in the same search."

At this disclosure of the real business of the priest, Bart was so overcome with mingled emotions, that he could scarcely say a word. He could only murmur some confused expressions of gratitude.

"O, never mind me," said the priest, "and my poor efforts. I assure you I am as eager to find him as you are. Pray to God, my boy. He only can save your friend. And now let us set out at once."

With these words the priest hurried up to the two guides, and spoke a few words to them in French. The guides answered, and after a short conversation the priest went into the house. The guides took his horse and put him in the stable; and by the time they had returned, the priest came out, and they all went off towards the woods.

"Don't be discouraged," said the priest to Bart, "about the fires. After all, they may have driven your friend away in this direction. For you see he would naturally keep as far as possible away from them, and as they advanced he would retreat. And so, if they are really coming in this direction, he would be forced to come this way too. If so, I think some of my friends would be likely to meet

with him. The only real danger is, that he may be tired out, and be unable to endure the fatigue. But you say he is an active boy, and that he had a little food with him; and so I really think that there is every reason for hope. You must try, then, to keep up your spirits, and remember that even if we don't find him he may yet be safe, and may meet with others; or he may even get out of the woods unassisted."

These words were very encouraging to Bart, and excited his best hopes. As he was naturally light-hearted and sanguine, he determined to struggle against his depression, and cling as long as possible to the hopes that the present held out. The consequence was, that he at once surmounted his gloom, and dismissed from his mind those desponding thoughts which had taken possession of him ever since he saw the glow of the fire. He became more like his old self, and commenced the exploring tour, full of life, and energy, and hope.

Far different was it with Pat. His trouble arose from a dark, dreadful terror which had taken full possession of him, and which not even his buoyancy of soul and natural cheerfulness could withstand. It was the terror that had been awakened by the mention of the leprosy.

And so it was that as the party entered the woods, Pat held back; and he who was usually among the first, now lingered the last. He had a

terrible fear that he had run a risk of catching the loathsome disease by bathing in what he considered the "leper waters," and by entering the house of one who was on such familiar terms with the lepers as the priest professed to be. It seemed to him, now, that the only possible chance that remained for him was to keep as far away from the priest as possible. He remembered with horror that he had eaten at the priest's house on the preceding evening. He had not eaten anything that morning, nor had any of them as yet; for the guides carried provisions, and it was intended to breakfast in the woods. But to Pat all thoughts of eating were obnoxious; the sickening thought of the leprosy drove away all his appetite; and if he followed them into the woods, it was at a distance; and then only because there still remained a loyal regard for Phil, and thus the tables were completely turned. Bart, who the day before had been despondent, was now hopeful; while Pat, who had then been the hopeful one, had now sunk down into a state of depression to which language fails to do justice.

After walking into the woods for some distance, they sat down and made a breakfast off some ham and crackers, which were carried by the guides. Pat sat at a distance from the rest, and resolutely refused all invitations to partake, pleading a slight sickness; nor was poor Pat's plea altogether a feigned one; for by this time he had worked him-

self into a state of utter panic, and the miserable feelings resulting from his loss of a night's sleep and from hunger were attributed by him to the approach of leprosy. So poor Pat stood aloof from the rest, pale, anxious, and already beginning to think that he had made a great mistake in accompanying them at all. The more he thought upon this, the more convinced did he become that his presence there in company with them was both unnecessary and unwise, — unnecessary, for, as it now seemed to him, Phil was perfectly able to take care of himself; and unwise, for he was only destroying his chance of escape from the leprosy, by thus remaining in the company of those who had its terrible seeds clinging to their clothes and to their persons.

A prey thus to his anxiety, Pat's generous desire to help Phil gradually weakened in the presence of his instinct of self-preservation, and his belief that Phil was safe somewhere made him all the more eager to secure safety for himself. The wretchedness which he felt, from the loss of his night's rest, and want of food, and terror, all combined, tended to turn all his thoughts upon himself; and the more wretched he felt, the more did he attribute it to the awful disease which he so greatly dreaded. And so, at last, by the time they had finished their repast, Pat had felt so overcome by his terrors, that he determined, at all hazards, to free himself from his dangerous associates, and

escape somewhere before it was too late. Having thus made up his mind, it only remained to find some favorable opportunity of slipping away unobserved, and thus securing that safety for which he longed.

After their breakfast they began to go forward. The two guides of course went first, one behind the other. Then followed the priest, and after him came Bart. Pat wanted Solomon to go next; but Solomon declined, from a feeling of humility natural to him, which made him seek the lowest — that is to say, the last — place on the line of march, and partly also from a desire to be in the rear, so as to see that no one straggled away. Thus they all went on in Indian file, and after Bart came Pat, while Solomon brought up the rear.

As they thus went on, one after the other, in Indian file, through the woods, it was, of course, impossible for any one to see all the rest of the party. It was enough if each one should see the one who might be immediately in front. This was especially the case when the woods grew thicker and the march more laborious. Bart then could only see the priest; and Pat, Bart; while Solomon could only see Pat. In this way they went on then, and this mode of progress soon suggested to Pat a simple, easy, and perfectly natural mode of separating himself from the others. He had only to slacken his pace a little for a short distance. He had only to fall back slightly, and he would

easily be able to put between himself and the others such obstacles that they would be able neither to see him nor to find him. This, now, became his fixed resolve.

So, as he went on, Pat allowed Bart to go gradually farther and farther ahead, until at length he was out of sight. But even then he was not satisfied. He still kept on, but chose a course which swerved slightly from the one which the others were following; and entering upon this course, he sought to make it more and more apart from the track of the others. As he went along he kept constantly turning to the right, and thus before long he had made a complete circuit; and then, when he thought he had turned far enough to be heading towards the place from which he set out, he tried to go in a straight line. In all this he was completely successful; that is to say, so far as concerned his desire not to be noticed; and so he kept on for so long a time that at length he began to be on the lookout for the open land and the sea.

But suddenly there was a loud cry behind him, —

“Hyar, Hyar! you dar! Whar Mas’r Bart?”

It was Solomon.

Pat had forgotten all about Solomon; but now he remembered that Solomon had been behind him, and he saw that he must have been following him all the time, though he had been too excited to be conscious of that important fact.

X V.

Solomon in a Rage. — Flight of Pat. — The Explorers penetrate the Forest. — The missing Companions. — New Fears and Anxieties. — A baffled Search. — Onward. — The Recesses of the Forest. — An open Space. — Halt!

“**H**YAR, Hyar! you dar! Whar Mas’r Bart?”
The cry at once arrested Pat. He stopped short, and turning round he found himself face to face with Solomon.

“Whar Mas’r Bart?” said Solomon again. He was excited and agitated, and looked all around, and peered into the forest ahead with most anxious curiosity.

“Bart?” said Pat, in a dejected tone; “sure an I don’t know.”

“Warn’t you follerin him?” cried Solomon, in an excited voice.

“Sure an I wor,” said Pat; “but I lost sight of him iver an ever so long ago. An wheriver he is now, it ud take more’n me to tell.”

At this Solomon made a gesture of despair, and looked wildly all around.

"Mas'r Bart lost! Mas'r Bart lost!" he murmured, clutching his wrinkled hands together.

"Och, you needn't bother about him. Sure an he's follerin the praste an the Frinchmin, an he's all safe an right. The last time I see him he was close on the hails of the praste."

Solomon did not seem to have heard him. His eyes rolled wildly. He looked all around eagerly, wistfully, with unspeakable anxiety in his face.

"Mas'r Bart lost! Mas'r Bart lost!" he murmured, still wringing his hands.

"But I till ye he ain't lost," cried Pat. "He's wid the praste, so he is. Didn't I see him?"

"Don't see no use," cried Solomon, angrily, "for de likes ob you to go foolin round dis yer way, leadin folks eberywhar, out ob de right track. I bound to foller Mas'r Bart, an heah you go a foolin an a gittin lost. What's de sense ob dis yer proceedin? What do you mean, anyhow? Ef you tink I'm goin to stan any such tomfoolery, you precious mistaken. You better begin now and go ahead, and find out whar Mas'r Bart is."

Solomon's tone was full of a certain angry menace, which was so utterly unlike his usual manner that Pat stared at him in wonder.

"Ah, howl yer whist," he exclaimed, at last; "sure I ain't the only one, that's got lost in these wuds, so I ain't. You can find him yerself betther'n me, so ye can, if ye want to. How can I find him! Sorra one of me knows the way any-

wheres out of this; and I'm fairly broken-hearted, so I am, and that's all about it."

And saying this, Pat flung himself down, and buried his face in his hands. He felt overwhelmed by his troubles. His fears of the leprosy were still strong within him, and in addition to this he felt a keen sense of self-reproach at his desertion of Bart. Had it not been for Solomon he might not have thought of this; but the sight of the old man's anxiety about Bart brought before him in the plainest manner the fact that he had been disloyal to his friend, and had deserted him, in this hour of need.

As for Solomon, he took only one look at him, and then turned away. In his faithful heart there was only one feeling, one desire; and that was, to get back to Bart. He had no idea of the actual state of the case. He did not know what a circuit Pat had made, but merely supposed that they had got off the track that the others were following. With this idea in his mind, he proceeded to call after Bart, so as to open up a communication with him. This he strove to do by means of a series of the most unearthly yells, shrieks, and howls that ever echoed through the recesses of a harmless and unoffending forest. Yell followed yell; howl succeeded howl; and a long series of hoots, halloos, shrieks, whoops, and hullaballoos followed in swift succession. After each effort Solomon stood listening attentively, waiting for a response before

beginning again. But his listening and his waiting were all unavailing, for no response came, and all his unearthly cries only echoed through the dim forest aisles, without bringing back any answer from the one whom they were intended to reach. And no wonder; for by this time Bart was very far indeed out of hearing.

At last Solomon gave up in utter discouragement. He stood for a time in deep dejection, and then turned towards Pat, who had all this time remained in the same attitude, sitting with his head buried in his hands.

"How long ago is it," asked Solomon, "sence you lost sight ob Mas'r Bart?"

"O, iver so long," said Pat; "more thin an hour, surely."

"Why didn't you call?"

"Sure an how did I know?" said Pat, evasively; "wasn't I bothered out of my life, an fairly heart-broke? so I was. An sure an it's been a bad time for us all intirely. Bad luck to the day whin we came out to this leper place, — an me goin a bathin in the leper wather, an aitin their leper dinners; the more fool I was for that same. Sure an the praste's the desayver, so he is, for laydin a poor feller in this way."

Not one word of this did Solomon understand, nor did he try to understand it. He had other things to think about. His one idea was to find Bart once more. He did not think that he was

far away, but believed that he had been going on in the same general direction, though he had swerved, to some extent, from the true course. So he now determined to go on, and hoped that he might find Bart before long.

"No use waitin in dis yer place, dis yer way," said he. "I'm a goin to hunt up Mas'r Bart."

And with these words he left Pat, and went onward into the woods, continuing the same course which Pat had been leading. As to asking Pat to go with him, the thought never entered his head, — partly on account of his deep disgust at Pat for losing sight, as he believed, of Bart, but principally from the fact that his mind was so filled with the desire of reaching Bart, that there was no place in it for any thought of any other person. And so the poor old fellow plunged into the woods, and took up a course which was about as far away from that in which Bart was going as it well could be.

At Solomon's last words Pat raised his head and saw him go. He watched him till he was out of sight, with varied emotions. He supposed that Solomon was now on his way to Tracadie, while believing himself to be following after Bart into the depths of the woods. There seemed, therefore, no danger before him, and Pat had no fears for his safety. Had Solomon taken another direction, Pat would probably have told him so; but as it was, he saw no necessity for doing so. He

would get back, he thought, in the course of time, to Tracadie, and on finding himself there, he would probably wait for Bart's return, and all would be well.

He sat there motionless, until Solomon was out of sight, and then began to think of himself. One thing only was in his mind, and that was, the desire to fly, as soon as possible, far away from this abhorrent place, to some other place, where he might be safe, and where he could watch to see if the terrible disease had really taken hold of him or not. So with this purpose he arose, and after a look all around, he chose his course; and went on through the woods.

Meanwhile the others had been walking diligently onward; first the guides leading the way, next the priest, and then Bart. Not a word was spoken by any one of them; the guides were too intent upon maintaining a correct course; the priest was too much absorbed in watching the movements of the guides, and in observing the scenes through which he was passing; and Bart was too much occupied with conjectures about the probable course of Phil's wanderings to think anything about the members of their own party. Bart had a perfect conviction that Pat and Solomon were behind him; so perfect, in fact, that it remained in his mind as a foundation underlying all his other thoughts; so perfect that those thoughts never reverted to those behind him, but turned only to that one who

was at a distance — the object of their present search.

Deeper and deeper, and farther and farther, they advanced into the forest, encountering every variation of woodland scenery, and every alternation of forest travelling; sometimes finding it easy, again finding it difficult, yet at no time encountering any very serious obstacle. Their pace was somewhat rapid, for the guides led them on without much regard to the possible weakness or clumsiness of their followers; and judging them by themselves, they maintained a pace which soon began to tell very seriously upon Bart, and forced him to put forth his utmost strength and energy in order to keep the priest in sight.

At last, after a walk of several hours, the guides stopped, and offered to rest. They were coming, they said, upon a more difficult part of the forest, where greater exertion would be required, and it might be well to rest for a time. The priest approved of this, and mentioned it to Bart. He also approved of it most heartily, for he was almost exhausted, and then turned to mention it to Pat. To his surprise, however, Pat was not behind him, nor was there any sign of Solomon.

This discovery gave him a great shock, and the priest also was equally amazed; but both he and Bart supposed that they could not be far away, and so they looked back through the woods to gain sight of their advancing figures. Not perceiving

any signs of them, they listened to find out if they were approaching. No sounds, however, arose of any kind; no crackle of dry twigs announced coming footsteps; and as they listened, there was nothing perceptible to their hearing save the intense and drear silence of a vast solitude.

At this Bart threw a look of anxious inquiry at the priest.

"They were following you?" said the priest, in an inquiring tone.

"Yes," said Bart, doubtfully.

"Have you noticed that they fell back?"

"I didn't notice them at all. I took it for granted all the time that they were behind me."

"How long is it since you saw them last?"

"Well, really, I don't believe I have looked behind me once since we started."

"I hope they haven't lost sight of us. I hope they haven't lost their way," said the priest.

The evident anxiety of his tone affected Bart very seriously. His own experience in the woods, as well as the loss of Phil, made him quite ready to believe the worst; and though it puzzled him greatly to conceive how Pat and Solomon could quietly lose them, and go off on a strange course, without a single word, at the same time he began to fear that such must have been the case.

"Well," said the priest, "we may as well sit down and rest. There's nothing else to be done. Perhaps they'll be along presently. I'll make the

guides call for them. They can do it better than we can."

He then spoke to the guides; and the latter, as soon as they understood the state of the case, began to call for their lost companions. They did this by setting up a series of cries so loud, so shrill, and so sharp, that Bart actually started. He had never in all his life heard such sounds. Pitched upon a high and very peculiar key, they seemed to have a far-penetrating power which would suffice to carry them for an incredible distance.

Again and again the guides uttered these cries, and after each cry they listened; but though they listened long, there came not the slightest response. At length, at a suggestion from the priest, one of them went back along the track which they had traversed. He returned after about half an hour. He came back alone, and reported that he had seen no sign whatever of either of those who were lost.

The priest now looked worried and uneasy. He sat for some time in silence, thinking over this fresh difficulty.

"Well," said he, at length, "they seem to have lost us — most mysteriously; and now the only question is, shall we go back to try to find them, or shall we go on? Which needs our help most, the one who has been lost for two or three days, or those who have just left us?"

"O, as to that," said Bart, "they are both better able to take care of themselves than Phil is; and besides, they are nearer to the settlements, and they must know the way back, for the woods have not been very thick, and we have been going in a straight course, and so it seems to me that we had better go on and try to find poor Phil."

"I think so too," said the priest. "At any rate we shall rest for an hour yet, and perhaps before we start they will find us."

They remained for an hour longer, but there was no sign of the lost ones. No sound of crackling twigs, no calls for help, awakened the deep silence that reigned in the surrounding forest.

At length they rose to resume their journey in accordance with Bart's decision. This new calamity broke up that cheerfulness and hopefulness which he had been maintaining since the priest had spoken to him those encouraging words; and the thought of Pat and Solomon wandering about, without food and without guides through this trackless forest, gave him more than his former anxiety. It seemed a succession of misfortunes that was destined to end in some kind of a tragedy, and there arose within his mind the dark anticipation of some inevitable calamity as the natural termination of all these pieces of ill-fortune.

Struggling as well as he could with these gloomy forebodings, Bart once more set out after his guides on what he now began to think a hope-

less errand. But now there came other things to distract his mind from the anxieties that were harassing it in the shape of the difficulties of the way. The guides were right in their warning about the toil and labor that now lay before them. There were dense underbrushes to penetrate — so dense and so close that every step was a struggle; there were streams to ford, in which they sank to the armpits; there were swamps to cross, where there was nothing but one long struggle from one extremity to the other; and added to this there were long pathways that led over fallen trees, and through tangled weeds, and tall ferns, which impeded the feet at every step, and necessitated the most painful and the most unremittent exertion. In his progress through the woods before, Bart had found nothing like this, except for very short periods of time, and he thought that if such a journey as this had been before him he could never have escaped.

Thus far the heat had been very great. There was no wind. The air was still and stagnant; and the effort of walking, even when the walk had been easy, as at first, had been somewhat exhaustive. But now the exertion required was far greater, and what was worse, the heat far more intense. There was a torrid heat in the atmosphere that exceeded anything which he had thus far experienced, and made all exertion doubly toilsome and exhaustive. Yet in spite of all this,

his deep anxiety about Phil seemed to sustain him, and though he felt ready to drop, yet he managed to maintain his march, and follow on after his guides.

At length they emerged from a tangled thicket which had offered extraordinary obstacles to their progress. They came suddenly into a wide, open place, quite bare of trees, and overgrown with low brush and trailing evergreen vines. Here there burst upon them an extraordinary sight, — so extraordinary, indeed, that they all stopped with one common impulse, and gazed in silence upon the scene before them.

XVI.

The wide open Space. — The terrific Scene. — Arrested and driven back. — New Purposes. — The Story of the Great Fire of Miramichi, and the Ruin wrought in one tremendous Night.

THE wide open space upon which they had come extended for some miles away on the right and on the left. About a mile off on the other side arose the trees of the forest again. Above these the smoke was rolling in vast, dense, voluminous clouds, while underneath them shone the red glare of a mighty conflagration. It was in those very woods which rose before them. They could see and feel its terrible presence. They could see, behind the line of trees that stood nearest, the dash of the surging flames as they seized upon the dry foliage and resinous wood of the forest; and the angry glow of the red fire, as, following the advance of the flame, it grasped and held in its blighting, withering embrace all that it seized upon. At the breath of the flame the forest shrank away; at the touch of the fire it crumbled into dust.

The foremost line of trees stood there, black against the glow of the fire that raged behind, like the bars of some vast, immeasurable furnace. Beneath, behind those bars, gleamed the fire; overhead rose the smoke, spreading over the sky, and filling all the air with its hot and suffocating fumes.

The whole party stood there looking on in silence. The guides conversed with one another and with the priest in French, of which Bart understood nothing. By the expression of their faces, and by the shaking of their heads, however, he learned, — if indeed he did not know well enough already, — that any farther progress in that direction was impossible.

“What do they say?” asked he at length of the priest.

“Well, of course, you see yourself,” said the priest, “that it’s impossible to go any farther, and consequently we must give up the idea of reaching that part of the forest where your friend was lost.”

“What shall we do?” exclaimed Bart, in deep distress.

“Well, that is what we are thinking of now. It all depends upon whether your friend has come in this direction or not. Now, you came in this direction, and you must have been within a few miles of this place; but you reached Tracadie safely, and saw no fire.”

“No,” said Bart, “only smoke.”

"But you must have been near it, for you saw the flames last evening. They were concealed by the trees when you were in the woods. Besides, the fire has, no doubt, been spreading in this direction ever since. Now, as for your friend, if he came in this direction at all, he may have reached a place to the north of the fire, and I am of the opinion that we might go in that direction. We shall thus see something of the other parties that are searching the woods up there. In fact there is nothing else to be done. If we don't find him farther to the north, then I shall take it for granted that he has wandered in another direction altogether, and perhaps may come out at the Bay de Chaleur."

"You don't think, then, that there is — reason for despair?"

"Despair? Certainly not. Why should there be?"

"O, I don't know. I was afraid that this fire extended everywhere, like the great fire that once raged here."

"The great fire? O, no. Such a thing as that can only take place once in centuries. That was the result of a combination of circumstances so extraordinary, that it is not likely that they will ever occur again. And just now, such a fire as that is a simple impossibility."

"But this fire seems pretty bad," said Bart, "and it's certainly increasing."

"This fire? O, this is nothing," said the priest. "In these woods, there is a fire somewhere every summer, — and it runs on till a rain shower comes. This is only a local affair, confined to this particular district. It may possibly extend for ten or twelve miles, and have a width of two or three miles. It is troublesome, and you perceive the heat in the air, and it sends out smoke for many miles; but there is nothing in it that is at all extraordinary. There is nothing in it that a man cannot escape from. It is not like the swift and hurricane speed of the great fire, that swept in one night through all this country, and made one vast waste of ashes and death before morning. O, no. As for your friend, he ought to be able to get along; and every brook that he comes to will give him fish to eat. It's the greatest country for trout and salmon in the world. In fact, I don't see the slightest cause for anxiety about him."

These words gave Bart a relief that was inexpressible, and he was now freed from the terrible anxiety that had so long devoured him. The opinion of the priest was of great value, for he, no doubt, knew perfectly well just what danger there might be. His estimation of the fire afforded still greater relief. Bart had feared that it was some universal conflagration; but it now turned out to be a local affair, so commonplace that no one here regarded it.

"I think," said the priest, "that we had better go back at once."

"Go back?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"To Tracadie."

"But I thought we were going to search farther for Phil — to the north."

"So we are," said the priest; "but we'll have to go back. If we were to walk through the woods, we would only be losing time. Now, I propose to go back, and drive along the road to a place about fifteen miles away, where some men are already in the woods engaged in this search. We can either go there, or go farther on; in fact, it might be well to go as far as the Bay de Chaleur, and get people there to keep a lookout. But first, we must go back, and we can see what the prospects are."

They now retraced their steps in accordance with what the priest had said. It was a deep disappointment to Bart to find himself returning again without having accomplished anything; and in addition to this, he was very greatly troubled by the disappearance of Pat and Solomon. By the time they reached Tracadie it was evening, and as nothing more could be done that night, Bart once more took up his quarters for the night with the priest.

While sitting together that evening, the conversation was very naturally drawn to the great fire, of which the priest had already spoken several

times; and at Bart's request he now gave a more particular account of it.

"It was in the year 1825," said the priest. "The summer had been the hottest and the dryest ever known, not only in this province, but all over North America. There was no rain for months. The hay crop was a total failure everywhere, and the garden vegetables all wilted and withered. Corn, turnips, potatoes, almost everything failed. The roads were all covered with fine dust, the fields were all cracked, and the grass was as if it had been scorched. The woods were dried and parched in the same way, the sap seemed to dry up in the trees, and the leaves and branches were ready to flash into a blaze at the slightest approach of fire.

"Fires, indeed, were in the woods in different places from midsummer till autumn. These burned steadily, though without making any very great progress. There were fires in these woods, and up at the head of the bay, and near the Nashwaak. The most extensive was one near Fredericton. There were also fires in the woods of Maine. And in Canada some of them had reached very serious dimensions. As a general thing, none of our people thought anything of it. Fires are so common that they excite no attention, and so it was with us. It was so dry that there was every reason to expect them, and if they were even larger than usual, that was no more than might be expected under such unusual circumstances.

“At last the month of October came, and in the early part of that month various causes contributed to spread the fires. On the 6th it was noticed that they had increased very greatly, and their extent was now far beyond anything that had ever been known before. People wondered at this, but thought that before long it must come to an end. Rain must come and put a stop to it.

“On the following day, the 7th, it was far worse. All through the preceding night the fires had been extending everywhere, and when day came it had an appearance different from anything ever known before. The sky had a deep purple tint, and immense clouds of black smoke rolled over the whole heavens. There was not a breath of wind, but everything was sunk into a calm so deep and profound that it seemed like the death of Nature. The heat was suffocating, the air thick and stagnant, so that breathing was difficult. No one could put forth the slightest exertion. Everybody lay about in a state of utter lassitude and listlessness, or tried in vain to find some cool place where the heat might be less oppressive.

“The most wonderful thing was the effect of all this upon the lower animals. The birds had all fled. The cattle in the fields seemed bewildered and terrified. They collected in groups, lowing piteously, and looking wildly around, eating nothing, but standing as though paralyzed. The dogs moaned, and crouched, and wandered restlessly

out of doors and back again. But what was yet more astonishing was the behavior of the wild animals. Wolves, and bears, and hares, and foxes came from the woods to the open places, overcome with terror, and seeking refuge among the domestic animals.

"In spite of all this the people did not show much excitement. In the more lonely places they may have been frightened, but in the settlements they seemed simply listless. No one anticipated the terror that was approaching, or had any idea of the doom impending over the whole country. Strangely enough, the instinct of the lower animals was truer than the reason of man. As the fire was not yet visible, the people in the settlements made no preparations against it, nor did they even think that preparations were necessary. They knew, of course, that the heat and the unusual appearances were produced by fires in some place, but where it was, or how near it might be, they did not think.

"Evening came on, and at about seven o'clock a brisk wind suddenly sprang up. The sun set, and the darkness was intense beyond all description. And in that darkness nothing whatever was visible; there was something terrible beyond words in such deep gloom; but the wind went on and increased to a wilder degree, until at last it blew with extraordinary violence. Now, through the darkness a terrible sight became visible. All over the west and towards the north-west there shone a

red glow, which grew brighter and brighter, until at last the whole skies were lightened up with flaming fires. The wind increased, coming from the west, until at length it blew a perfect hurricane; fiercer, more furious, more terrible than any in the memory of the oldest inhabitants here. Driven on by this fierce tempest, the fires spread with inconceivable rapidity, and all the west became a sea of fire, and above the woods vast flames shot up, furiously, far into the sky. There was no darkness now. It was driven away, and light had come; but the light was worse than the darkness had been.

“The hurricane increased, and the fires drove onward before it, and the fierce flames towered far up into the sky. Then there came a low moan from afar, which increased, and strengthened, and deepened, until at last it grew to a loud, appalling roar—a roar like sustained thunder, which still grew louder, and deeper, and nearer, and more awful. In the midst of this came the sound of crackling, like musketry volleys, and loud, tremendous explosions, like the discharge of cannon. And all this increased every minute, the fires sweeping onward more terribly, the roar of its advance gathering in intensity and volume, until at last the vast sheets of flame seemed to rise almost to the zenith. Overhead all the black smoke was now reddened in the glow of the fire, and there passed away over the sky a fierce torrent, bearing with

it innumerable sparks, and blazing twigs, and branches of trees, which had been torn from the forest by the fire, and were now hurled through the air by the hurricane.

“Now there arose the wildest panic. All had been so sudden that there had been no time for thought—but even if there had been time, no thought could have availed. There was only one common impulse in all living things, whether man or beast, and that was escape. One cry only arose—the cry, ‘To the river! To the river!’ In this direction every one hurried, a confused crowd,—men, women, children, horses, cows, and dogs,—some carrying the old or the sick, others assisting the weak; fathers carrying their children, mothers their infants. Each seized what was most precious, and fled. All the time there were wild outcries—some of fear, others of hope, others of command, others of despair from some who had been separated from relatives, and were trying to find them again. Then they all hurried to the river; and some stood plunged in the water, others sought boats, others rafts, others floated on logs, while others sought the opposite shore, from which, however, the fires that spread even there soon drove them.

“And now the whole country, in all directions, blazed. The whole forest was as dry as tinder, and everywhere the floating sparks would fall upon the trees, and there would kindle fresh

flames, which would sweep away before the hurricane like those behind. It was this that made the conflagration so swift and so universal.

“The morning at length came after that night of horror — the morning of the 8th of October; and never did human eye rest upon such a scene of desolation. The vast forests, the green meadows, the flourishing villages, the pleasant homes which a few hours before had formed one of the happiest countries in the world, was now one vast expanse of dust and ashes, out of which lowered the smouldering, blackened shafts of giant pine trees that had not been all consumed. The half-burned corpses of men, women, and children, cattle and wild beasts, strewed the forests, and in the dried-up beds of brooks and rivers lay the blackened bodies of burnt fishes. Six thousand square miles had been suddenly blasted by that unparalleled fire. And all this ruin had been wrought on that one night of horror.”

Such was the priest's narrative of one of the most terrible fires on record — the great fire of Miramichi; a fire most remarkable for the astonishing rapidity of its course, and the thoroughness of its devastation. For, apart from other more immediate evils, it ruined the timber of all that country, turned fertile districts into barren wastes, and annihilated in one night all the resources of a great commerce.

To all this Bart listened with deep attention,

and gained from it increased hope for Phil. For now he saw how different was this fire from the one of which he had been hearing, and how different the circumstances were. These woods were not dried like tinder, nor was it possible for a fire to spread so fast but that any living being could escape it. Besides, the woods were full of brooks and streams, and all these streams were full of fish; and Phil had his rod and lines, and was an expert fisherman. From all these thoughts he drew hope and confidence.

He was greatly puzzled, however, by the disappearance of Pat and Solomon. Their departure in the woods had greatly perplexed him, but he hoped that he would find them on his return to Tracadie. There were no signs of them. The night passed, but they did not make their appearance. Morning came, but brought them not.

He did not know what to think about it, and felt perplexed. Still he had no anxiety. Neither Pat nor Solomon was likely to come to any trouble in the woods, for they were perfectly well able to take care of themselves.

The party was now all broken up and scattered — Phil, Pat, Solomon, and Bart, all in different directions, and none of them knowing where the others were. But Bart's mind was now intent upon finding Phil; and so, after a hurried breakfast, he got into the wagon with the priest, and they both drove off together.

XVII.

Phil awakes. — A morning Bath and a morning Repast. — A pleasant Discovery. — Once more upon the Move. — The rough, impenetrable Woods. — The River. — A new Mode of Travel. — The friendly Log. — I'm afloat, I'm afloat. — Arrested. — The secret Place of Fire.

ALL that night Phil slept most soundly in the little rocky chamber where he had made his bed; and early on the following morning he waked and crawled forth. It had been much cooler inside that little cavern than outside, and he was very much refreshed; but on emerging into the outer world, he was at once sensible that the heat of the atmosphere was most oppressive. The smoke, too, was thicker now than ever. Overhead it was darker, and descended nearer to the ground; while the smell of the air was more irritating to the throat and nostrils. Everything showed him, most plainly, either that the fires were increasing, or were steadily drawing nearer to where he was. In either case, the prospect was sufficiently unpleasant to make him look forward

with uneasiness to his future; for as he could see nothing at any distance ahead, and as he was still in ignorance of the direction which he ought to take, he was quite incapable of forming any definite plan of escape, and could only adhere to his former plan of following the course of the river.

On finding out the heat of the atmosphere, his first impulse was to prepare himself for the toils of the day by a bath, which he proceeded at once to take. The water was still cool; and the rushing torrent, as it passed over his head and dashed against his limbs, gave him a delicious sense of enjoyment. Then followed his breakfast. The fish which he had saved for the night before were used for this purpose. He kindled a fire close by his rock, and cooked them upon the coals with his usual success. While eating his fish, he noticed at a little distance some shrubbery that seemed strangely familiar, and suggested the idea of a luxurious addition to his repast. He at once went towards them, and found that his surmise was correct. They were blackberry bushes, and were filled with berries, in such numbers that in a very short time he had picked as much as a quart. These he caught in some strips of bark folded so as to make a dish, and with this addition to his provisions he returned to his former station, and finished his breakfast with uncommon relish and enjoyment.

After finishing his repast he waited for some

time, trying to think upon what might be his best course of action through the day. The more he tried, however, the more unable he found himself to devise anything better than that which he had been doing; and so at length, finding any further thought useless, he determined to set out on his daily tramp, leaving his course to be determined by the events of the day.

His course was at first precisely like what it had been on the previous day. Dark pine trees arose all about him, standing at intervals sufficiently wide to allow of easy progress, their innumerable shafts rising on every side as far as the eye could reach. The shadow of the forest beneath caught a peculiar leaden tinge from the smoke that now surrounded everything, and in some places was so dark that it seemed as though the fire might be smouldering there. There was no underbrush of any consequence, so that Phil could go on whatever course he pleased; and as the ground was firm and hard, his progress was made without undue effort. Thus he was able to keep the river in sight, and follow its course for a long distance.

As he went on the brook grew gradually larger, and at length ran into a stream very much larger than itself, large enough, in fact, to deserve the name of river. This Phil saw with delight; for he saw in this the hope of encountering the haunts of men. As he looked down the course of this

river, which here afforded a much wider opening in the forest than he had yet seen, he was struck by the density of the smoke clouds, and the peculiar character of the atmosphere. The sight inspired him with far stronger fears than any which he had hitherto known. Thus far he had considered the fire as arising from some one spot, and had thought of being able to evade it, even if he should reach the place where it might be burning; but now he began to feel as though the fires were all around him, rolling forward from every side towards him, and sending an advance march of smoke to bewilder him and lead him astray. This thought gave him a momentary pang, and a transitory feeling of despair crossed his mind. But this weakness was only short-lived. It soon passed, and his buoyancy of soul and sanguine temperament reasserted themselves.

At length, as he went along by the river side, he noticed, to his deep regret, that the pine woods ended, and were succeeded by a forest like that which he had traversed on the first day of his wandering. What was worse, it could not be avoided. He could not walk along the river bank, for it was lined with trees and shrubbery. He could not walk in its bed, for it was too deep. There was therefore nothing left to do but to make his way through the woods the best way that he could.

On entering these woods, the change was unpleasant in the extreme. It was necessary for

him to keep near the river, and in order to do this he had to encounter without shrinking all the obstacles that lay in his way. He did not dare now to attempt to go round any of them, or to make short cuts, for he was afraid that if he got out of sight of the water once, he would never be able to find it again; and, therefore, at all hazards, and at every cost, he determined to keep it within sight.

These new efforts soon exhausted him, and he was forced to sit down and try to recover himself. As he sat there gasping, there seemed to be a more intense warmth in the air, a dry, torrid heat, a suffocating closeness, which was far worse than it had been yet. He felt that under these circumstances his progress would be small indeed. He had only one thought now, and that was, to recover from his heat and exhaustion; and to do this he knew of only one thing, which was—a plunge in the water.

Tearing off his clothes now, he flung himself in the water, and felt once more its reviving influence. At this moment a new idea occurred to him, which filled him again with hope. It was, that he should remain in the river, and go on as he was, carrying his clothes with him. At this rate his progress would be far more rapid than it had just been; and he would be far less liable to feel fatigue. Acting upon this suggestion, he rolled his clothes up into as small a bundle as

possible, but kept his boots on his feet, so as to walk without difficulty over the sharp sticks or stones that he might encounter; and now, slinging his bundle behind his back, he went on, walking near one of the banks, in water that was about up to his waist. His progress was certainly not very fast; but the plan was highly satisfactory, since he no longer suffered so much from that intense exhaustion to which he had been subject while forcing his way through the tangled brushwood. But at length he found himself assailed by myriads of mosquitos, and this infliction became so intolerable that he had to go into the deeper water of the mid-channel. Here, however, his progress was slow, and carrying his bundle was a great trouble.

Suddenly he saw a log lying near the shore, entangled among the brushwood. It was of cedar, and looked as though it had been cut for a telegraph pole. This at once offered him an easy and agreeable mode of progress, which was in every possible way superior to anything that he had yet tried. Walking towards it, he drew it out, and then placing it before him he bound his bundle upon it. He now pushed it in front of him, down the stream, and clinging to it, he struck out after it, sometimes swimming, sometimes walking. So buoyant was the log that it easily sustained his weight; and the complete success of this contrivance made Phil determine to make the rest of

his journey in this way. So he once more stopped, and taking off his boots, bound them upon the log also. He was now divested of all his clothing, keeping on only his hat, which was useful both against the heat and the flies; and thus prepared, he once more pushed his log before him, and seeking the centre of the stream, began to move slowly down. The water here was now over his head; and the current was running at the rate of about three miles an hour. A very slight effort on his part served to increase his motion to a rate which was faster than any which he had been able to make yet; and he found himself going onward in a way in which he was able at once to secure both speed and coolness.

The musquitos were troublesome from time to time, but not continuously; and these he was able to evade by plunging his head under, hat and all, after which plunge the drip of the water from his hat about his head seemed both to cool him and to repel his assailants.

He now floated along, and was thus borne onward by the river, with many a turn and winding, amidst the forest. On either side arose the trees, — dark, solemn, and silent, for not a sound of any kind could be heard. The birds which usually made the forest vocal with their melody had fled to other places. In that torrid and smoky atmosphere there was no place for these children of song. Phil, as he floated in the cool current of

the river, felt himself withdrawn completely from the heat and the smoke; but as he looked up he saw enough to make him feel grateful that he was where he was — that he had found a stream deep enough to sustain him in its waters, and swift enough to carry him onward without any severe exertion on his part. The smoke lowered darkly and menacingly overhead, and before him, where the river ran, it seemed accumulated in gloomier and denser masses. The air seemed even hotter, and as he at times plunged his head under the waters, he rejoiced to think that he had so near him such a perpetual remedy for heat and exhaustion.

He had now been in the stream for some hours, when at length he noticed a rising ground before him. It was a hill of no very great height, rounded and covered with trees; but behind this there seemed to be an agitation among the smoke clouds, as though there was concealed there the unseen cause of all these stifling vapors that filled the skies. This place Phil began to watch with deep interest and curiosity. He did not feel fear, for in his present position he did not anticipate any danger; but he expected that at this place he would reach what might be the climax of his adventures. The only real fear that he had was, not from fire, but from the water itself. He was apprehensive that he might come to a cataract, or to rapids. This danger certainly did not seem

very imminent, or very probable, for the country was generally of too level a character to allow of waterfalls; but Phil thought of this as his only possible danger, and was consequently always on the lookout. Now, therefore, as he saw this accumulation of clouds, and the agitation that prevailed there, he did not perceive anything that could immediately affect him, and so he felt no terror.

The river had a winding course; and though it drew nearer and nearer to this hill, yet it approached it slowly, and by gradual advances. At length, on taking a turn round one of its bends, Phil could see that the hill was on the left bank, and that he would soon reach it, and pass round it in the next turn of the stream. Full of curiosity, he now drifted along, and waited for the next prospect that would be opened up behind the hill.

Nearer and nearer Phil approached, and stronger and stronger did his excited curiosity grow. The smoke, as he drew closer, was more distinctly revealed, rising into the skies in dark, rolling masses, as though sent up by some mighty power beneath. Nearer and nearer he came, and at length became aware of short, dull flashes of light, which, brightening for a moment, were soon obscured. It did not surprise him, for this was in some degree what he was expecting. Where there is smoke there must be fire; and if now the flames flashed forth, it merely proved that he was

at last drawing near to that fire whose signs had filled the air for many days. And what should he see? What was it that could produce this veil of smoke that obscured the universal sky? Could it be near the haunts of men, and was it merely the commonplace process of clearing land? No; he felt that it could not be anything so ordinary as this. The signs which he had seen and felt for days arose from something more than the clearing of fields for cultivation. It was rather the march of a mighty conflagration through the forest, which devoured all things in its path, swept away the verdant trees, blackened and devastated the rich forest foliage, and sent afar in all directions the breath of its devastating mouth.

With these thoughts Phil drifted on, awaiting the disclosure of the great fire, and at length reached the hill. Past this he was slowly borne by the current which encircled it, and then, completing the circuit, swept onward upon its course.


Here, as Phil floated looking forward, the whole scene burst at once upon his sight. No obstacle any longer rose between him and the fire; he saw it in its reality — living and breathing before his eyes.

The river went on for about a half mile, and then took another turn. Half way between this hill and the next bend rose the flames of a vast conflagration, devouring the forest far and wide, extending on both sides of the river to the right

and to the left. From Phil's position he could not command any extensive view on either side, and, indeed, the smoke would have prevented that had he even been more elevated; but the scene before him was enough to convince him of the magnitude of the fire. Immediately in front, beginning from that point, lying midway between him and the next bend, the fires began, and extended till the river turned again upon its next circuit. On both sides of the stream the fires blazed up, and continued far away, reddening in the glow of a mighty conflagration. In the midst of this arose innumerable trees, standing up, black, blighted, and withered in the red fire; while over them the smoke leaped and rolled as it bounded upward. Nearer, the fires were brighter, for here they were incessantly advancing to attack new trees; and the flames could be seen darting, like lightning, upward from twig to twig, and from bough to bough, until tree after tree was enveloped in the raging fire. These were the cause of those flashes which he had noticed further up the stream, and indicated the advance of the fire in this direction. The foreground was thus most brilliant, most active, and most thrilling; but the background, with its innumerable array of blackened trunks rising from the midst of that dull, angry fire glow, and surrounded by the dark smoke clouds, formed a scene that was yet more terrible.

XVIII.

The Conflagration. — A dread Alternative. — Forward or backward. — A bold Decision. — The Hood. — A terrible Venture. — The red Place of Flame. — The Place of the fiery Glow. — The toppling Tree. — A Struggle for Life. — The fiery Atmosphere. — The last supreme Moment.

S this sight thus came upon his view, Phil drove his float towards the shore on the left, until his feet touched bottom; and standing here he looked down the river upon the conflagration. Away before him stretched that vista of fire, the pathway before him led through an avenue of flame, the burning forest glowed on either side, while overhead the vast volumes of smoke rolled along, and around him fell showers of ashes. There before him through that scene of terror lay his pathway; the way which he thought was leading him to safety had brought him here; the river, to which he had intrusted himself, had borne him along to this; and at the very moment when his hopes had been most excited, they were dashed at once to the ground.

And what now ?

What should he do ?

Could he go back ?

Go back ? No ; that was a simple impossibility. How should he go back ? Not through the woods, for he could make but small advance through the dense forest that now surrounded him ; not up the stream, for how could his strength bear him on against this current ? He would have to wander for days before he could reach the place which he had left that morning ; and of what avail would it be if he did reach it ? What would he do ? Where could he go ? No ; to go back was not to be thought of.

He saw plainly that he had now to make choice from one of two alternatives.

One was to remain here and wait for the fires to subside.

The other was to go forward.

Now, the idea of waiting here was intolerable. To wait here idle, or, perhaps, slowly retreating before the advancing fires, enduring day after day the hunger, the fatigue, and the misery of such a situation, seemed the worst fate conceivable. Where could he sleep at night ? How could he endure living in the water by day ? Besides, the fire was evidently advancing in a direction which led it up stream ; so that he would merely be driven before it back to his old quarters, to perish miserably. To be driven back before the fires

would be a lingering death. It was not to be thought of, so long as any other course was possible.

What, then, was the other course?

The other course was — to go forward.

To go forward!

This was what Phil longed to do, with longing unspeakable. To go forward would lead him farther down the river. To go forward would carry him beyond the fires. Once let him pass the place where the fire raged, and then he would be on the other side of it; out of its hot breath; away from its stifling smoke. Could he but once make that passage, all would be well. To him it seemed as though on the other side of those fires there lay the abodes of men, and open lands, and pure air, and help, and liberty, and life. It was there that he longed to go.

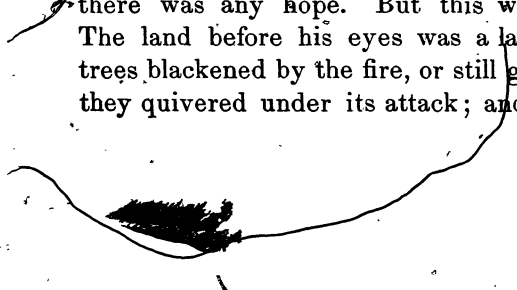
But between him and what he fancied to lie beyond, there lay a barrier, terrific, tremendous, whose fullest horrors were unknown; a barrier that seemed impassable — irremovable. How could he hope to overcome it?

Under any other circumstances, the idea of passing that barrier could not, of course, be entertained. But there was one thing in Phil's situation which made him think that the deed might be done; that it was not impossible, or even difficult. This one thing that gave hope was the river. Its stream might still bear him on its bosom, amidst

those fires ; he might find protection in its running waters. He could keep cool amid that fervent heat ; and as the stream would itself bear him on, he would not need to make any efforts except those which served to guide him in a right course.

As he thought of this, and of the possibility of making his passage, he felt eager to go, but was restrained by other thoughts.

How far might those fires extend ? How long could he endure the presence of those flaming woods, even in the waters of the river ? Could he breathe ? Would not the intense heat make breathing impossible ? That burning district might extend for many and many a mile ; and if he once ventured there, how would he ever get out of it ? Or again, might not that possible obstacle in the river waters, which he had dreaded, be found down there amid the burning forests ? And if so, what a terrible fate would be his ! — to be arrested amid raging fires by a cataract — unable to advance, unable to retreat, unable to go ashore ! If he could only form some idea as to the possible extent of the fire, — if he could only see beyond that next turn in the river, and find out how far those fiery shores ran on, — then he might know whether there was any hope. But this was impossible. The land before his eyes was a land of fire ; its trees blackened by the fire, or still glowing red as they quivered under its attack ; and there was no



way by which he might know anything more than this.

At last there came a thought which gave him great encouragement. He thought that the fire in its march must exhaust itself after a certain time, and that after the trees were actually consumed there must be a departure of the heat. It was in the advanced part of its march that it maintained this furnace glow; at a certain distance behind, the heat might not be intolerable. If, therefore, he could traverse the flames and the fire that he saw before him, he might find the country beyond not much worse than it was here.

This thought, this hope, decided him. He determined to stake everything upon this, and venture upon that fiery path.

But before he attempted it he made the only preparation possible. What he dreaded most was the scorching glow of those flames; and as he did not know to what extent they might affect him, he wished above all things to guard his head against that danger.

He therefore unbound his clothes from the log, and took his coat out, after which he again bound the remainder of the clothes to the place where they had been. His coat he dipped in the river until it was saturated with the water, and then carefully adjusted it over his head, tying the sleeves under his chin so that it served the purpose of a hood. In this way he hoped to have a

protection from the heat of the burning forest, while his eyes would be shaded from the dazzling and blinding glare, and would be able to watch without interruption or impediment the course of the river.

With these simple preparations Phil breathed a short prayer, committing himself to the care of God, and then summoning up all his courage, he directed his float down the stream once more, and then boldly launching forth, he dared the terrible journey. Once more the waters received him to their embrace; once more the river enfolded him, and bore him gently onward; once more he swept past the shores, and saw them recede on either side. The current bore him on. The fire drew near.

The fire drew near — and nearer. He felt its hot breath, growing hotter upon his brow — nearer yet — and then, at length, the flames dashed forward, the green trees passed from his line of vision, and his eyes saw nothing but one vast and far-reaching glare.

He plunged his head beneath the water, and held it under as long as he could. When he raised it again he found himself farther on in the midst of the flaming trees. The heat of the air was intense, yet not so much so as he had feared. His dripping coat hung round his head, protecting him. His course was true, for looking forward he saw that he was still in the very middle of the stream.

One look was sufficient, and then, desiring to prepare himself as much as possible for the worst that the fire might bring against him, he once more plunged his head under.

When he next raised his head, he found the scene somewhat changed. The dazzling flash of leaping, up-springing flames had passed away. He had moved past the advanced line of the fire where the flames were assailing the light twigs and foliage of the trees, and had come to that inner portion where the trees were standing bare of everything that the flame could destroy; skeletons — glowing red in the embrace of consuming fire. The glow was all around — on the ground, on the trees — and the emanation of heat was far more intense. The air was now like that of a room heated to an intense degree; yet, to his immense relief, it was not worse than he had known air to be before; and to him it seemed like the atmosphere of a room overheated on some winter day. He could breathe without difficulty, and thanks to his extemporized hood, and his plunges under water, he did not feel that scorching glow of the hot fires that he might otherwise have felt. Well was it for him that he was spared the necessity of exertion. In that atmosphere any exertion would have overcome him in a very short time. As it was he had only to cling to his float, steer it straight, and from time to time plunge his head under water.

In this way he was borne steadily on, and succeeded in preserving himself from destruction during that first entrance into the avenue of flame. He was now in the avenue of fire, and over this the flood bore him, until at length he reached that bend on the river which he had seen before starting upon this last journey.

The river turned to the right, and swept away for about as great a distance as lay between this bend and the last one. As Phil looked at it in eager and anxious scrutiny, he saw to his dismay that the fire glow covered all the land before him, and on either side. He had been too sanguine, and had not made sufficient allowance for the tenacity of the fire where it once has fixed its grasp. There rose the trees—the skeletons—red—glowing in a fervid glow; and the air was hotter here—more torrid—more stagnant.

Here, then, Phil found a severer trial than any which he had yet experienced; and the sight of these new regions, all glowing in the wide-spread conflagration, showing far and wide the withering signs of fiery devastation, filled him with awe and apprehension. There was nothing, however, which he could do. He could only do as he had been doing, and draw his hood over his face as far as he could without obstructing the view, and guide himself in the right course, and occasionally plunge beneath the waters so as to maintain the protection that was afforded by the moisture and the sheltering hood.

The time seemed long as he thus drifted on; but at length, to his great joy, he reached the next bend in the river, and began slowly to pass around it.

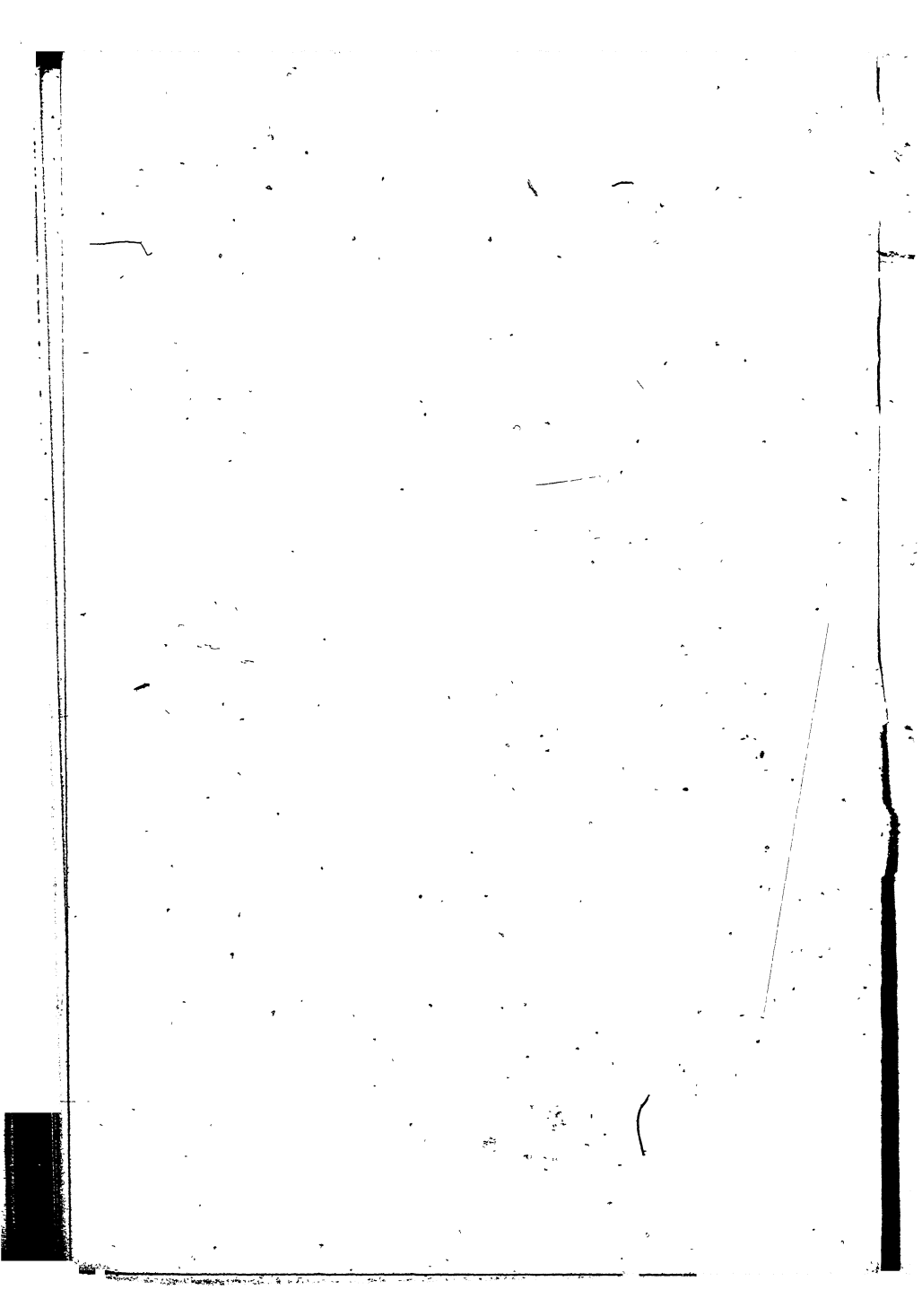
But the joy which he had felt at reaching this place soon passed away, when, on turning the point and entering upon the new course of the river, he beheld before him an unchanged scene of devastation. There, as before, the glowing fire appeared on the ground below and in the trees above; the latter rising all red in the fire, and crumbling slowly beneath its touch. One difference there was; and that was, that in this new scene the conflagration seemed to be farther advanced; giant branches fell to the ground; tall trees toppled over; and the silence that had reigned was now broken by the thunder of those falling masses.

The air here was also hotter; for as the fire had been burning longer, so everything was affected by its long intensity. Now it was that Phil first began to find something approximating to what he had dreaded—a heat which made breathing difficult, and made the air like that at the mouth of a furnace.

Through this he drifted on as before. His soul already began to yield to despondency; while hope grew fainter, and a dark dismay gradually took possession of his heart. How could it end? Would it ever end? Were there any limits to the burning woods? Must he thus go drifting on, and



THE TOPPLING TREE. Page 245.



find that every new scene, as it opened up, was worse than its predecessor?

So he drifted on.

As he thus went on, he suddenly saw immediately before him, on the edge of the bank, a tree which was slanting over the river, and seemed to him to be swaying, or toppling slowly over. It had been assailed most fiercely by the flames. Its trunk and branches were all glowing red, while the fire seemed to have burned into the ground, and consumed those roots which had thus far held it in its place. The slight movement had arrested Phil, and instinctively he turned his course towards the opposite shore. The tree was tall, but whether it could reach across the river, he could not tell. It seemed to be falling, and if it did, it would fall across the stream. Thus Phil, by a blind instinct, shifted his course slightly.

The tree slowly tilted over. It descended farther and farther. Phil at that same moment was being borne on by the current. The danger was imminent. The tree would fall upon him. With a frantic effort he threw himself nearer to the shore, and as he did so, the tree descended. Phil let go the log, and swam towards the shore. There was a rush, and a sweep through the air; a rattling, crashing sound, followed by a hiss, as the red-hot mass touched the water; there was the shower of a million sparks, and then all was still.

Phil felt every fibre of his frame tingle with

horror, and thrill with a sense of descending ruin. But the moment passed. His feet touched bottom. He turned and looked around. There, about three yards from him, lay the tree, its roots still on the other bank, and its top buried beneath the water. With a wild, despairing glance Phil looked for his float. Even as he looked, he saw it slowly emerge from the water, several yards below where the tree lay. For the tree in its descent had struck it, and dashed it to the bottom of the river; but fortunately it had become disentangled, and the current had freed it from the tree, and there it floated, ready once more to assist him.

Phil swam down the stream towards it, and almost fainting with the fatigue of this exertion, he clung to it motionless, panting heavily, and now scarcely able even to guide himself aright.

XIX.

The black Place of Desolation. — Blue Sky. — Open Heavens. — The Glory of the Sunshine. — Green Hills. — The open Sea once more. — Along the Road. — A strange, a very strange Encounter. — The Wandering Leper. — Naaman the Syrian.

PANTING heavily, and almost fainting with exhaustion; Phil drifted on, clinging with a convulsive grasp to his log, and scarce conscious of his surroundings. It was the current that now guided him, for he for some time was incapable of making any effort to guide himself. Several times he instinctively thrust his head under the water; and each time, though this did not ease his breathing, it at least caused relief by the grateful coolness and the drip of the water over his face. Drifting on in this way, he remained for some time without noticing the shores on either side, too much taken up with his own sensations to regard any external things. He had a general idea that the fires were all around him still; but he no longer sought with his former eager scrutiny to find some signs favorable to his own hopes.

But at length he regained his breath, and began once more to look around. The first thing that he noticed was, that the heat had very materially lessened. The next thing was, that the laud of the fiery glow had passed away. Around him there was now, not a fiery country, but a black and devastated country, out of which smoke was still arising in places, but from which the fire had departed, having doné its work. He now saw that while he had been in a half senseless state he had been carried along ; that the current had drifted him away from the place where the fire was now raging, to a place where it raged no longer — to a place where the air was cooler — where it was purer — where the smoke was much diminished. All around, and all before, the country was black, and there arose a forest of charred and blackened trees ; but this sight, hideous, though it might be, in itself, was inexpressibly delightful to eyes that had just gazed upon the fire in its wrath.

He began to understand his position now. This was the very thing that he had hoped for when first he ventured to make the passage. His hope had been realized. The fire was advancing up the stream. He had passed the front line of flame, the second line of fire, and now reached the blackened and desolate tract that lay in the rear of the conflagration. Here the hot breath of the fire existed no longer. Here the air was purer — it grew cooler at every yard of his progress forward.

It was, probably, this cooler air that had revived him, and given him back the breath that he had nearly lost forever at that time of his struggle near the falling tree.

He looked up. The smoke was thinner overhead. Before him the skies were brighter, and in one place the glorious blue of heaven was discernible. It was the first bit of blue sky that he had seen since first he entered these ill-omened woods; and it seemed to him to be the harbinger of safety, and liberty, and life. His whole soul roused itself in joyous hope; the last vestige of his dismay and despondency departed, and even his weakness and bodily languor left him. He gave a cry of joy; he breathed a prayer of thankfulness to the merciful One who had preserved him from a terrible fate; and then, grasping his float with a strong and nervous clutch, he once more put forth his efforts to quicken his progress, and struck out with strong and rapid strokes.

Every moment his prospects increased. The smoke faded away more and more, and the blue sky unfolded itself, until at last the glorious sun burst forth to view, and threw upon him those bright and gladdening rays to which he had been a stranger for so many days. There came up also a breeze, and it fanned his flushed face, bringing healing on its wings; and as he inhaled it there seemed in it something which was like a new life, something which gave new strength and energy to

the body, and new joy and hope to the soul. At last he could breathe freely. The air had lost all that oppressiveness which it had so long had. No longer was there perceptible the abhorrent smell of smoke. He had emerged from the fire and the smoke, and wherever he was, he had at least left these things behind. He had no idea where he was, or whither he was going; it was enough for him to know that he had escaped from the fire and the woods.

He had been long in the water, but he had no desire to leave it. The land was not inviting, while his present mode of progress was easy and agreeable. He chose, therefore, to drift on until he should reach some place where he might rest.

At length there appeared before him something green. It looked like the foliage of trees. It rose above the black land and the charred stumps of the burnt district, and seemed to be some place which the fire had not reached. Was it some green oasis in this desert of devastation, or was it some new forest as boundless, as uninhabited, and as desolate as the one in which he had been lost? At that moment it mattered not to him what it was, so long as it was some place that was free from the touch of fire.

Onward he drifted, and the stream took a turn, and swept forward. Here the green foliage appeared full before him. It was of no great extent. Beyond it there was no vast forest, but only the

sky. It seemed as though in one place there might be a broad plain, so low did it lie, and so open was it, and bare of trees. This place he watched with the most eager scrutiny. To this he came nearer and nearer. The space broadened every moment, until at last he thought that it must indeed be a wide plain — if plain it was.

Nearer he drew and nearer. Then, at length, a suspicion came to his mind that startled him greatly. Nearer he came, and nearer, and the suspicion changed to reality, for there, full before him, lay nothing less than the sea!

The sea!

Yes, the sea! The river ran into a harbor. The harbor opened out into the sea. It was not a bay. It was the sea, with the distant horizon touching the sky. Before he had reached the green spot, he came to a place where a bridge had been, and of which nothing now remained but some charred timbers. This showed him that he could not be very far from human habitations. A little below this he reached the green spot, and, landing here, he loosened his clothes from the log, and dressed himself. They were wet; but his watch was still ticking bravely, and marked three o'clock. His matches were also dry, and a piece of trout left from his morning's repast was still there unharmed. This he ate with an eager appetite.

He spread out his wet coat upon the grass, and lay down by it, and, while resting, deliberated

about what he ought next to do. Where he was he had not the faintest idea. He could not be on the Bay de Chaleur, for then the opposite shore would be visible; but here there was no shore opposite. He thought that it must be the Gulf of St. Lawrence. If so, then that bridge must belong to the road that ran along the shore, and settlements could not be very far away.

He was now too impatient to rest any longer, and was so eager to find out where the road led to, that he took his half-dried coat over his arm, and started off towards the burnt bridge. The road here seemed to be pretty well travelled, and the sight of this stimulated still more his desire of reaching some house; so he at once set off.

He walked for about a mile, through a district that had been burnt, and then came to the sea-shore again. Here the trees were green, and there were no signs of fire. There was a cool and refreshing breeze now from off the sea, and the hope of finding a house stimulated him to such a degree that he maintained a rapid walk for at least another mile.

And now, as he ascended a slight elevation, he saw a figure, on the road before him, advancing towards him. It was a boy that he saw. He was walking wearily, and seemed both tired and dejected. He was looking at the ground.

Phil hurried towards him. The boy did not notice him till he had come quite close. Then he looked up.

As Phil saw that face, he stood for a moment speechless with amazement and delight.

It was Pat!

"Pat!" he cried. "Pat!"

He could say no more. Tears of joy started to his eyes. He grasped Pat's hand in his, and looked at him, completely overcome. He was too deeply agitated to notice Pat's face or manner, but stood overcome by his own emotions.

"So you've been after me," said Phil. "Where are the rest of them? Where's Bart? How did you get here? What place is this? Only think of my getting out here — and only a few minutes ago — and then meeting with you! But where are the others? Come, I'm crazy to see Bart. I declare I never was so utterly confounded in my life! But what's the matter with you?"

In the midst of Phil's eager torrent of exclamations and questions, he was struck by something very peculiar in Pat's face, and in Pat's manner, and ended all with this abrupt question:

In fact, Pat's appearance was very peculiar.

His face was pale, and had an anxious expression. His eyes, generally so merry, and open, and frank, were now furtive and suspicious; and instead of showing any pleasure at the sight of Phil, he started back, and snatched his hand away.

At Phil's question Pat gave a very heavy sigh, and made no answer.

"Pat, Pat, what is the matter?" cried Phil

again. "Has anything happened? Where's Bart? What is the matter?"

"Matther," muttered Pat. "Matther enough, surely, as ye'll know to yer sorra."

At this Phil stared at him in amazement. Pat was so totally changed from his former self, that he couldn't comprehend it at all.

"Come, Pat," said he, "don't keep me in suspense. I see by your manner that some horrible thing has happened to some of you. Which is it? Is it Bart?"

Pat shook his head.

"It's me," said he, in a dismal voice. "Me. I'm the one."

"You! Why, what do you mean?"

"I'm a leper!" wailed Pat.

"You, what? You're what? What are you talking about?"

"You'll know soon enough. An maybe ye'll find out from shakin my hand the way ye did jist now."

"Shaking your hand!"

"Yis," said Pat. "Ayven the touch of me's on-howlsome, so it is. An I've got that on me that's goin to be the death of me afore long, so it is."

"See here, Pat," cried Phil, anxiously. "Tell me what's the matter, like a good fellow. You make me horribly anxious. What do you mean?"

"Och, sure, an what's the use? Didn't I say it? What are ye tormentin me for to say it again?"

Haven't I just run away whin it's too late intirely? An the leprosy's tuk, so it has!"

"The — the what? What's that?" asked Phil.

"Sure an haven't I been sayin that it's a leper I am," cried Pat, despairingly.

"A leper!" repeated Phil, who began to think that poor Pat was quite insane, and wondered what he ought to do with him under the circumstances.

"I've happened among lepers," said Pat. "I've bathed in the leper wather — an that's the way I tuk it. I've ate wid the leper praste; an Bart's wid him now — in the wuds — they're huntin afther you; but I ran for it — for I was hopin to get away before the leprosy tuk — but tuk it did — in spite of me; and that's all about it."

"I don't understand you," said Phil, in bewilderment, for Pat's remarks had some degree of connectédness, and did not sound quite like insanity except his allusions to leprosy. "I don't understand," said he, "what you mean about leprosy."

"Sure it's the Lazaretto, at Tracadie, I mean. I got the leprosy by bathin, so I did — an aitin wid the leper praste."

"You'll have to explain. This is all nonsense. Come, Pat, don't make a fool of yourself. You've got some absurd idea in your head. Come, tell me all about it, for I can't make it out at all, you know."

"Well, it's this way," said Pat, with undiminished dolefulness; "ony don't be kapin too nair

me if ye vally yer life — this was the way of it. Ye see we wandhered about the wuds afther ye, an sure enough before we knowed it we got lost ourselves. Well, we wandhered about, and at last we come out in a place they call Tracadie, an bad luck to it. So we mit a praste that was all smiles and blarney, an he tuk us to his house an gave us fud. Well, thin, I wint out for a walk, an I see a bit of wather, an wint to it to have a bit of a swim. Well, I come to a onwhowsome lookin place, wid ghosts of people in it, that wud failly make yer blood run cowld to look at, an I stared at thim, an walked right close to thim, an brathed their brith, an walked over their ground, an wint on to the wather, an ondrissed, an wint in. An I shwam there nearly an hour, an thin I wint back, an what do ye think the praste towld mé.”

“What?” asked Phil.

“Sure, he up an he towld us that the onwhowsome lookin house wor a lazaretto; an the ghosts of people there wor lepers — nothin else — an he said he wor the leper praste, an spint the most of his time wid thim same — sittin wid thim — talkin wid thim — feelin thim — handlin thim — an brathin the poison leper air. An he towld us that the wather was the leper wather, where the lepers bathed. An I had bathed there,” cried Pat, with a burst of despair. “An I’d tuk a shwim there,” he cried, with another burst. “An I’d been in the house of the leper praste,” — a groan — “an I’d sat on his

chairs," — another groan — "an I'd ate at his table," — a howl — "an I'd swallowed his fud," — another howl — "an I'd been gettin the leprosy meself all the time," and a cry that was something like a yell of despair terminated Pat's story.

Phil listened to all this, and felt puzzled.

"I don't know what you mean by lazaretto," said he, "and lepers. I didn't know the disease was in this country."

"Well, it is, thin," moaned Pat. "An I'll soon be there too, so I will."

"Nonsense," said Phil, impatiently. "Did you ask the priest if there was any danger?"

"Och, sure he wouldn't be aafter committin himself."

"Didn't he say anything about it?"

"He did, thin."

"What did he say?"

"Why, he said he had lived among the lepers all his life, an visited thim almost every day; but wor as well a man as anybody. An he said the disease couldn't be caught."

"Did he say that?" cried Phil. "Why, of course. I knew that. You are mistaken altogether."

"Sure, an how does the praste know? His time'll come yit, so it will."

"Nonsense! This isn't the real leprosy, at all. It's some disease that's hereditary, I dare say; but it isn't contagious. Pooh! how absurd! Why,

Pat, what could have put such a notion into your head. The leper water is all nonsense. What harm could it do you to bathe in the sea? If all the lepers in the world were bathing at the same time, they couldn't affect the sea water."

Phil now began to reason with Pat, and he spoke so earnestly and so confidently, that at last Pat's fears began to yield. Phil showed him that he couldn't possibly have the leprosy yet, and assured him that he wasn't going to have it. Finally, he told him the story of the most famous of all lepers — Naaman the Syrian. From this story he proved so conclusively that there were some kinds of leprosy that were not contagious, that Pat hadn't a word to say. The story produced a profound and most beneficial effect upon Pat's mind.

"Sure an I niver thought of him before. Why didn't I think of ould Naymin? An him the chafé gineral of the Misaypytamyins, so he was. Sure an there wer nothin contagious in that leprosy. The leper Naymin! Sure an what a fool I wor niver to think of the leper Naymin!"

XX.

Fish for Breakfast. — The Cottage and the Schooner. — A familiar Sight. — The old Boat. — Sinking in deep Waters. — An exciting and amazing Meeting. — The Flag. — Bart on the Road. — A strange Discovery. — A fresh Surprise.

THE happy suggestion of Phil brought infinite relief to Pat; and the story of Naaman the Syrian had sufficient power over him to dispel his fears, and restore his olden peace of mind. So great was the reaction now, that he went to the other extreme; and being of a very excitable and volatile temperament, he exhibited a joy as immoderate as his grief had been but a short time before. He made Phil tell him all about his adventures; and as he listened to all the dangers through which his friend had gone, his warm Irish heart overflowed with the truest sympathy, and he followed the story with a running accompaniment of ejaculations of the most animated character. As for his own story, he had already told it; but there yet remained the tale of his flight in the woods. This he confessed without

reservation, and informed Phil that he had been wandering in the woods all day, and had stumbled out upon the road only about an hour ago. He had seen no houses, and had met no people. This information at once changed Phil's plans. If Pat had seen no inhabitants after an hour's walk, it was clearly useless for him to go any farther that day. He was worn out with the exertions that he had made, and longed for rest. Pat also confessed that he was on the borders of starvation, and was too tired to go any farther. Upon this, they both resolved to remain here for the night.

It was now somewhat late in the day, but not too late to preclude the possibility of catching some fish for supper. On Phil's suggesting this, Pat received it with an enthusiasm that was altogether like his old self; and as there was no time to lose, they at once set out in search of a brook. Pat remembered passing one not more than half a mile from this place; so they proceeded in this direction, which was the same in which Phil had been going. Pat's story had served to give him some general idea of his whereabouts. Pat had been at Tracadie; and though he had lost his way, yet there was every reason to believe that they were now not very far away from that place, on the shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and most probably to the northward; for though Pat did not know exactly his position, yet he was sure that he must have come out of the woods farther north than Tracadie.

After about a half mile's walk they reached a brook and began to fish. Their success was not brilliant, but any fish at all were very welcome at such a time; and the half dozen or so which they succeeded in hooking were regarded by them as capable of affording a repast which a king might envy. They soon had a fire burning, and broiled the fish on the coals, and thus made their dinner. Among the woods here they found a district, which had escaped the ravages of the fire, and here they passed the night. They went to rest a little after sundown, and awoke the next morning before day. They then made a breakfast off the remains of their evening's repast, and were ready for a start.

There was no question now as to the route which they should take. Pat had been walking in a direction the very opposite of that in which Phil had been going, but he had no desire now to persist in it. Then he felt himself to be a victim of one of the most cruel fates that can befall mankind, and was seeking to fly from it, anywhere, no matter where. Now, however, thanks to Phil, and to Naaman, he felt himself to be a victim no longer, and was anxious to get back to the place where Bart was or might be. He felt also a kind of pride arising from the fact that he had been the first one to find Phil; and the pride was quite as strong as it would have been if he had found Phil by his own actual efforts. The circumstances under which their meeting had taken place he dis-

missed from his mind, and chose rather to dwell upon the fact that his confidence in Phil's ability to take care of himself had been completely vindicated. So now, on that morning, as they renewed their walk, there remained in Pat's mind not a vestige of his foolish fears, but instead of them there was a sense of triumph, a consciousness of superior merit, and a sweet anticipation of the glory that would now be his, as he brought back Phil in safety.

Their frugal repast did not occupy many minutes, and the sun had not yet risen when they started. They were eager to go on, and so they walked at a rapid pace. The road was a very primitive one, and had they been in a carriage, their progress would have been rough and slow; but on foot they were able to avoid the deep ruts and numerous irregularities, and make a very good progress indeed. After about an hour, they came within sight of a harbor. They had been for some time out of sight of the sea, and this prospect filled them with the hope that they were not very far from Tracadie. To Pat, the sight of the harbor gave very strong recollections of that place. The water was very smooth, and seemed like a lake. A long, narrow strip of land separated the harbor from the outer sea, and the general appearance of the place was very much like that of the "leper wather" in which Pat had bathed. As they advanced towards it, the sun rose; and as

the glorious orb ascended from the ocean, their whole sight was filled with the splendor of his appearance.

Looking now upon the scene before them, they saw at last the signs of man. On the shore was a small cottage, and near the shore, in the harbor, was a small schooner. These were both only a short distance away, and to these they hastened. On reaching the cottage they went up to it, but to their great disappointment found that it was deserted and in ruins. The door was gone, and it seemed as though it had not been inhabited for some time.

"We've got to go on further," said Pat. "There must be more houses further on."

"I wish we could find out where we are," said Phil. "I wonder if any one is on board of that schooner."

Saying this, he cast longing eyes upon the schooner before mentioned. It was anchored in front of the cottage, not far away from the shore. It was a small vessel, and somewhat shabby, and behind it there was a boat floating in the water.

"It looks as if there was some one on board," said Pat. "They've got the boat there!"

"I wish I could go and ask them where we are," said Phil; and saying this, he walked towards the beach.

As he did so he saw a boat upon the beach. It was old and dilapidated, like the house to which

it seemed to belong. No sooner had he seen it, than he was struck by the thought that he might manage to get to the schooner by means of this; so he began to examine it very narrowly. It was very clumsily constructed, and looked more like a box than a boat; but it was strong, and though dilapidated, it still looked as though it might float for the short distance that separated the schooner from the shore.

"I'll try it," said Phil.

"Thry what?" asked Pat.

"Why, I'll go out to the schooner in this boat."

"How'll we row her?" said Pat. "We haven't any oars."

"Well, in the first place, it can't hold more than one; so you'll have to stay, unless you want to go very particularly."

"Niver a bit do I," said Pat. "I'm not brakin my heart about it, so I ain't. I'll stay an welcome."

"Then I'll go," said Phil, "and you wait. I'll have to get something though, that'll do for an oar."

Saying this, he went back to the house, and looked about for some time. At length he found a pole lying near the well, and taking this, he went back to the boat. Pat and he then pushed it from the shore into the water. It floated.

"Hurrah!" said Phil. "It'll carry me out that far any way."

"Sure an don't ye see the wather, how it's rowlin an rushin in?" cried Pat.

Phil looked, and saw that the boat was, indeed, anything but water-tight, for the water was oozing in through numerous cracks and crevices.

"It'll take me out that far," said he; and with these words he jumped into the boat, and thrusting the pole into the ground, he pushed her off.

Pat stood watching his movements with great interest.

Phil pushed for some time, thrusting his pole down to the bottom, and made excellent progress. In this way he reached a point more than half way to the schooner. Here, however, it grew too deep, and he had to use the pole as a paddle. It was but a clumsy instrument for this purpose, and his progress was but slow; still he managed to draw nearer to his destination, and worked with commendable diligence. But unfortunately there was something more to be considered than mere progress forward, and that was the condition of the boat itself. For while Phil was gaining on the schooner, the water was gaining on him. By the time that he had reached half way, the water was over his ankles. Had his progress continued at the same rate, he might have reached the schooner without any very great inconvenience; but as it was, the water rushed in faster and faster, and in spite of his efforts he began to fear that he would not reach his destination. Fortunately for him, the schooner happened to be lying with her stern towards the shore, and the schooner's boat was thus

brought nearer to him. This materially lessened the distance to be traversed. He now sought to reach the schooner's boat. He paddled with desperate efforts, and as he paddled the water rose higher. At length he found himself within reach of the schooner's boat; he flung out his pole, and sought to pull it nearer. As he did so the boat began to sink under him. The water rose to his knees. At that instant the schooner's boat was within reach, and flinging himself forward, he half scrambled, half tumbled into it.

† Then quite out of breath, he sat down, and rested for a moment, while the boat by which he had come slowly drifted off. At this moment a shout of joy came from Pat, who had been watching the proceedings with intense interest.

But Phil's movements had not been unnoticed on board the schooner; and, indeed, he had made noise enough to rouse any who might be there. He was not surprised, therefore, when he heard movements on board, and voices, and footsteps. So he looked up, without rising, so as to see those on board, who might be moving.

Phil had not been surprised at the sound of movements on board; but he was very greatly surprised, indeed, at the sight of the person who met his eyes.

As he looked up some one advanced to the stern and looked down upon him. It was an aged person, with a mild face, and a gracious eye, and a

benevolent smile. He wore a pea-jacket, and his head was covered with a souwester. It was a face the sight of which almost made Phil bound out of the boat.

While this person excited such emotions in the breast of Phil, his own emotions at the sight of Phil were no less strong. There he was, in the schooner's boat, with no visible means by which his appearance there could be explained. The person in the schooner, therefore, stared at Phil, and then removing his hat with one hand, with the other hand he thoughtfully scratched his venerable head, and then slowly ejaculated, —

“Go-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-d thunder!”

“Captain Corbet!” exclaimed Phil, in indescribable amazement.

And then they both stared at each other in silence.

But the silence was soon broken. Footsteps were heard, and soon one after another heads appeared, and then bodies, and then the new comers stood by the side of Captain Corbet, staring over the stern at Phil in mute astonishment.

And Phil stared back at them all in astonishment fully equal to their own.

It was Bruce Rawdon!

And Arthur!

And Tom!

As for Phil, he could not utter a word. Nor could the others on board the schooner.

But Pat, the excited watcher on the shore— Pat had seen it all, and he was anything but mute. Mute? He howled. He yelled. He vociferated unintelligible volleys of frantic exclamations, addressed to each by turns. Then words failed, and he began to dance.

At length Phil pulled the boat up, and scrambled on board the schooner, and was seized by all the boys in turn, and overwhelmed with questions; while he, on his part, overwhelmed them with questions quite as eager and quite as numerous.

Their story was soon told. They had left at the time mentioned by Bruce in his letter to Bart, and had been cruising along the coast of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. They had arrived here the day before, and as they were in no hurry, they had anchored for the night, with the intention of doing a little fishing. Their place of rendezvous was Shippegan, which was not far away, and they had a week to spare as yet. They had no idea that Bart would leave so much before the time, and could not understand how Phil had found them.

Phil's story was soon told; for, as he was a modest boy, he did not dwell upon his own adventures to anything like the extent which I have done; and so they learned that their meeting was purely accidental, and that Phil had been lost, and had found Pat, who had been lost also, and that these two lost ones had stumbled upon them here, in Tracadie lagoon.

All of which elicited wonder, and laughter, and shouts, and no end of eager questions, and excited exclamations. In the midst of this Tom rushed off, and by way of giving proper expression to the feelings which agitated them all, he brought forth the flag of the B. O. W. C. from the cabin of the Antelope, where, strangely enough, it had been left since their last voyage; and in a few minutes he had hoisted it aloft, where it fluttered, and floated, and waved triumphantly in the fresh morning breeze.

And now Phil thought of Pat, and mentioned that he was upon the shore; whereupon Bruce rushed to the boat to go for him. As he leaped in, Phil and the others looked towards the place where Pat had been standing, and saw a wagon and two persons, a boy and a man, talking with Pat.

Now, you know, that very morning Bart had left along with the priest, on his way to the north, to carry on his search after Phil. It was early when they left, but as the road was rough, their progress was not particularly rapid. Still they did make some progress, and in process of time they reached the place where the schooner lay anchored. This schooner excited Bart's attention, for there was something in her general appearance that was strangely familiar. As they drew nearer they saw a number of figures on the deck, running to and fro, and giving all possible signs of the greatest possible excitement. Suddenly, in the midst of

this, he saw a flag ascend, and float in the breeze. It was dark in color, and of a nondescript character, and at first its emblazonment was not distinctly visible. Soon, however, he came near enough to see it. Then the whole thing was disclosed.

It was the well-known flag — his flag — the flag that had waved over the most memorable events of his life — the flag of the B. O. W. C.!

The thing was astonishing, yet not incomprehensible. He saw that the Antelope had probably been cruising about these waters on her way to Shippegan. He saw that he had come upon her in an amazing manner; but what seemed incomprehensible was the excitement on her deck. What was the cause, and what did it mean? It could not be that they had recognized him, and had done this in honor of his arrival. No; it must be something else.

He said nothing to the priest, but sat filled with excitement, waiting till they should come near. In this way they approached the old house, and beside the shore he saw a figure dancing, jumping, yelling, shouting, waving his cap, and indulging in a thousand fantastic gestures.

This figure was Pat.

The wagon stopped, and Bart jumped out, followed by the priest. In a few minutes Bart understood all. First of all, Phil had been found; secondly, he was on board the schooner, and the

excitement was about him ; and thirdly, Pat claimed the honor of discovering Phil.

In the midst of this a boat approached the shore, and soon Bruce Rawdon stood before them, giving them an uproarious welcome. The arrival of Bart had given a new turn to the excitement of the occasion, and they all went off to the schooner, accompanied by the priest, who entered most heartily into the spirit of the joyous scene.

X X I.

Where is Solomon?—The Search.—The aged Wanderer.—Recognition.—Boating.—Fishing.—Cooking.—Swimming.—The Preparations for the Banquet.—The savory Smell.—Solomon dances a Breakdown, and makes a Speech.

THEIR joy was long and uproarious. Innumerable were the questions which they asked each other; but at length they succeeded in gathering from the confusion a general idea of the fortunes of each member of the party.

And then, in the midst of their joy, there came a mournful thought. It was the thought that one was yet missing out of their number, and that his fate was involved in mystery.

Where was Solomon?

Pat knew nothing more than any of the rest of them, and his story only served to show that after leading Solomon astray, he had left him in the midst of the forest. Where he now was, none could tell; but all saw the necessity of doing something; and so, when Bart proposed that they should go in search of him, they all assented most eagerly. The priest still saw that they would require his assistance, and offered to take them where

they wished to go ; while Captain Corbet felt such intense interest in the fate of his aged friend, that he insisted on making one of the party, and bringing Mr. Wade as an additional recruit.

Some preliminaries had to be attended to before they were able to start, among which the first was to get themselves ashore. This was accomplished in two trips ; after which the boat was hauled up on the beach, and tied to a tree. Then the priest had to see to the well-being of his horse, which he did by leaving his wagon behind the house, and letting the horse go free in the meadow.

After this the priest gave them some general advice as to their proceedings. He reminded them of their former mishaps, and in order to guard against their losing the way, he advised them to go on in a line, keeping always within sound of one another, if not in sight. This they all promised to do, and made no objection, for their recent various adventures in the way of wandering had deeply impressed their minds.

At length they all started, as follows : —

The Priest,
Captain Corbet,
Mr. Wade,
Bruce,
Arthur,
Bart,
Tom,
Phil,
Pat.

The priest led the way, and leaving the road close by the old house, they went straight into the woods. Soon the forest grew thick, and as they went on, they saw that here no signs of the fire were visible, though how far the green, unburnt forest might extend, none of them could know. This, however, did not trouble them in the slightest, but obeying the priest's injunction and keeping well within hearing of one another, the whole party went forward after their leader.

About two hours after they had disappeared in the woods, a solitary pedestrian might have been seen slowly wending his way along the road that leads to Tracadie. He was rather elderly, and walked slowly. His hat was sadly battered, his hair was grizzled, and his face was of that complexion which usually denotes the man of African descent.

As this wanderer approached the place where the schooner was anchored, his pace quickened, and he walked onward quite rapidly until he reached the old house. Towards this he walked, but only to discover that it was ruined and deserted. Upon this the aged wanderer heaved a sigh, and seating himself in the doorway, gazed intently at the schooner.

As he gazed he suddenly seemed struck by some very exciting thought. He raised his head, still sitting, and stared for a moment most intently at the schooner. At that moment, the flag, which had

been drooping, suddenly shook itself out, and unfolded to his astonished gaze the escutcheon of the B. O. W. C.

At this the aged wanderer bounded up to his feet, and rushed down to the shore. There he stood in silence for a time, staring at the schooner, until at length his recognition of her was complete. Whereupon he slapped both hands on his thighs, jumped up in the air, came down on his right foot, went up again, came down on his left, wheeled about, turned about, and, in fact, indulged in a regular breakdown.

After this he stopped, and burst forth into long, loud, vehement, and uproarious peals of laughter.

After which he resumed the breakdown.

And then, once more, the laughter.

Finally, he began to bawl to the schooner.

"Ship, ahoy! Hi yah! Hollo dar! What you bout? Hi-i-i ya-a-a-a-ah! Mas'r Bruce! Mas'r Atta! Mas'r Tom! Yep. Ye-e-e-e-e-p!"

But as he called, no answer came, and no matter how loud his voice was, or how eager his cry, still no response whatever was elicited.

"De sakes!" he exclaimed, "ef dis yar casium don't beat all creation! Wonda what dey'll say to see ole Solomon! Dey're all off, suah — fishin — course. An it ain't a mite ob good to be standin heah yellin my ole head off. Wonda if dey had a boat!"

Saying this, he looked up and down the shore,

and saw the boat a little distance off on his right, drawn up and tied to a tree. The oar was inside.

So intent had he been on the schooner, that he had not looked about the house, and so had not seen the wagon which was behind it, or the horse which was placidly feeding at no great distance off. But if he had seen them, they would have had no interest for him, except so far as they showed that people were using the house, and that the owner of the horse would be back in the course of the day; and even the interest of this discovery would have been nothing in comparison with the sight of the Antelope. For this showed him that some of the boys were here, and could not be far off, and would probably be back before dark. With this conviction, Solomon proceeded to launch the boat — a task which he accomplished with little difficulty; after which he sculled the boat out to the schooner, and in a short time stood on board.

Arriving here, he had a full confirmation of his suppositions. It was, indeed, the Antelope, and there was no one on board. By the signs all around, he perceived that they could not have been gone long. Bed-clothes lay carelessly tossed about, trunks were open, provisions were lying on the boxes that had served for temporary tables.

It was with a sentiment of affectionate recognition that Solomon gazed upon the old cooking-stove, at which he had frequently officiated on

former occasions, which had been impressed upon his memory by events of such thrilling character. Over that stove he had been bowed by the weight of heavy responsibilities, and upon it he had achieved some of the brightest triumphs of his life. He gazed upon it long and lovingly. He was pained to see the rust that covered it. He touched it, and with loving hands he tried to rub the rust off one of the griddles. Alas ! he could not. That rust had fixed itself there too deeply to be easily erased. So he gave up the attempt, and wandered back to the deck, where he stood looking all around for some signs of the ship's company.

No signs, however, appeared, and Solomon now began to consider how he ought to pass the day. First of all, he decided to make things look comfortable. To this task he set himself, rolling up the mattresses, putting the trunks and boxes on one side, cleaning the stove as well as it could be cleaned, and arranging the confused medley of stores which they had brought with them. At length this task was ended, and it was about noon.

All the rest of the day still remained, and Solomon thought that it would be a delicate, a considerate, and a grateful act, if he were to prepare a dinner for the ship's company, and have it ready for them on their return. An examination of the stores showed him various things which his skill could combine into palatable dishes ; but some-

thing was still wanting; and it seemed to him that nothing could so well supply that want as the fragrant and aromatic flavor of broiled trout. In the brooks that meandered through the surrounding country, trout were plentiful; and if he should now go after some, it would not only be in the line of his duty, but he would also be able to fill up the time in the pleasantest possible way.

So Solomon prepared his lines, which he had carried in his pocket ever since the day when they had started off after Phil, and rowing back to the shore, he walked back over the road till he came to a stream which he remembered, for by that very stream he had made his escape from the woods. Up this he went, and having cut a rod from the woods suitable for his purposes, he proceeded up the stream in search of fish.

After an absence of several hours, he emerged once more from the woods, at the mouth of the stream. An ecstatic smile illumined his dusky countenance, his steps were light and active, and from time to time he cast proud and happy glances at something which he carried in his hand. And, in truth, that burden which he bore was worthy of exciting pride and happiness in any bosom, for there, strung on a willow twig, were two noble salmon, of fine proportions, sufficient for the dinner of a large company.

With these Solomon returned to the schooner, and in due time reached it. He then prepared the

fish, and kindled the fire, and began the important and exciting business of cooking them. While engaged upon this, however, an idea seized upon him which sent him off into fits, in the shape of one of those breakdowns, by which he was accustomed to let off steam.

This was what he did.

He undressed himself.

He looked all around very stealthily, and saw no signs of any human being.

Then he jumped into the boat, sculled it ashore to the place where he had found it, tied it to the tree, and threw the oar inside.

Then he jumped into the water, and swam back to the schooner.

Then he dressed himself.

And then, in the solitude of that lonely hold, he once more let off steam, and proceeded to indulge in a breakdown, which was more prolonged, more enthusiastic, more sustained, more vehement, more emotional, more expressive, more African, more hilarious, and at the same time more perfectly outrageous and insane than all the other breakdowns put together.

After which he subsided into a comparative calm, and resumed his professional duties.

Thus the hours of the day passed away, and at length evening began to draw near.

It was near sundown when there emerged from the woods the party that had gone into them in

the morning. They were all there. None were missing. There were —

The Priest,
Captain Corbet,
Mr. Wade,
Bruce,
Arthur,
Bart,
Tom,
Phil,
Pat.

They were not talkative ; they were not demonstrative ; but walked along in silence. They came out of the woods about a quarter of a mile away from the house, and in this silent and dejected way they walked towards the place where the boat was. Whether that silence and dejection arose from their disappointment at not finding Solomon, or simply from the fatigue of a long tramp, with nothing in particular to eat, need not now be considered ; suffice it to say, that they were silent, and they were dejected ; and what is more, they were all in a state of perfect starvation.

“The boat can't take more'n half of us at a time,” said Captain Corbet. “You, boys, choose among yerselves who'll go fust.”

“Won't you come now ?” asked Bart of the priest.

“O, no,” said he. “I'll wait. I must see about

my horse. You go, and I'll be ready the next time."

"Sure an I'll wait too, an help ye wid the horse," said Pat, who had so utterly overcome his fears of the "leper praist" that he had struck up a violent friendship with him. And no wonder, for the "praist" was a man after Pat's own heart—warm-hearted, cordial, affectionate, brave, and modest; a man who loved his fellow-men, and gave himself up to them, even if they were abhorred lepers; and who now was putting himself to no end of fatigue and trouble for the sake of the lost companion of a set of harum-scarum boys. Amid all this, he never ceased to cheer them up, to stimulate their flagging energies, to inspire them with hope, to rouse the manliest feelings of their generous young natures. And therefore it was that Pat fell in love with him.

Captain Corbet was not anxious to go, and so it happened that Bruce, Arthur, Tom, Phil, and Bart got into the boat, and made the first trip, with the understanding that Bruce was to come back for the others.

The boat approached the schooner.

As they drew near they became suddenly aware of an odor that was wafted to their nostrils—an odor penetrating, aromatic, fragrant, and delicious beyond all description to their famished senses; an odor that was suggestive of some great banquet; an odor so rich that these starving boys felt as though they might almost feed upon it.

They looked up in astonishment. They saw that smoke was issuing from the pipe that projected above the schooner's deck.

Some one was on board, and some one had made a fire. Some one was cooking. Who was that some one? How did he get on board? What did it all mean?

Such were the questions that each one asked himself; but none of them spoke, for in fact their amazement was too great to allow them to utter any audible words. Bruce, who was sculling, worked harder than ever, twisting his head around at the same time that he tried to see who the mysterious being was that had got on board the schooner. The others all stared in the same direction; but to no purpose, for no one was visible.

At last the boat touched the schooner's side, and they all clambered upon the deck. Bruce was last, and had to wait a moment to fasten the boat. When he had done this he sprang down into the hold.

He there beheld an astonishing sight. There were Arthur, and Bart, and Tom, and Phil, close beside him, staring in silent wonder at a figure beside the cooking-stove; while the figure beside the cooking-stove stood with a ladle in one hand, and a dish cover in the other, enveloped in the aromatic vapor of a broiling salmon, staring at them in equal wonder.

"Mas'r Bart! Mas'r Phil! De sakes now!"

The ladle and the dish cover dropped from his hands. He had expected to see only the two Rawdons and Tom; but he saw Bart and Phil also. Consequently he was overwhelmed.

"Solomon!" cried the boys; and hurrying forward, they grasped one after another his trembling, and perhaps slightly greasy hands.

"B'lubb'd bruddrn ob de Bee-see dubble 'Sociatium," said Solomon at last, in a voice that was tremulous with emotion, and with slight indications of an approach to another breakdown. "Dis yer's a great an shinin casium. De sperinces we ben an had beat all creatium. We ben a racin an a chasin arter one anoder in a way dat makes my ole head ache to tink ob. An den to tink ob me gettin lost, and de last ob all de venters to hab youns a marchin an a sarchin arter me! An me a huntin roun for Mas'r Bart, an a comin dis way on de ole schooner! An den to fine youns all heah, in good helf an sperits! B'lubb'd bruddrn, de 'motions dat 'spire dis yer venebble ole breast ain't spressible no ways. Durin de lass few weeks I ben called on to suffer 'flictiums, but I nebber knowed anytin like de 'citement dat I now feels a surgin an cumulatin inside o' me. O, you get out! Go way, now! Sakes alive! Ye-e-e-p! Hi—ya-a-a-h! Hi-i-i-i—ya-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-h!"

And Solomon here burst forth in a breakdown so tremendous and so absurd, that the boys first started back, and then all burst into roars of laughter, and laughed till they cried.

After which Bruce went back for the others, and brought them to the schooner, and they all ate of Solomon's banquet, and were refreshed; and the priest staid all night, and on the following morning bade them an affectionate adieu; and shortly after the Antelope spread her white wings to the breeze, and slowly, but gracefully, passed over the waters of Tracadie lagoon, to the outer seas.

XXII.

Away from Tracadie. — The Gulf of St. Lawrence. — The Bay de Chaleur. — The innumerable Fishing Boats. — A long Harbor — Shippegan. — The Acadians. — The Memories of Grand Pré.

IT was a beautiful morning; the wind blew fair, and the blue waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence spread far away before them as they left Tracadie. Reunited so strangely after such wonderful adventures, they had not yet satisfied their curiosity; but each one had still something to ask the other. Pat had to tell once more the cause of his desertion; Solomon had to explain his wanderings; Bart had another account to give; while, above all, Phil had to recount, for the hundredth time, the whole story of his adventures in the woods. The venerable Corbet, assisted by his mate, Wade, navigated the vessel; Solomon resumed his duties in the hold over the cooking-stove; while the eager boys gathered in knots to talk over the inexhaustible themes above mentioned.

Far away on the right extended the waters of

the gulf, till the view was bounded by the horizon. Before and behind was the same illimitable prospect. But on the left lay the land, — a low, wooded coast, — and their course lay parallel with this. Their destination was the Bay de Chaleur, around which they proposed to take a cruise; but this proposed cruise seemed now to promise but little in comparison with the adventures which one half of the party had already met with, and the fortunes of Bart's party, far from creating pity in the minds of the other boys, only excited their envy; for there was not one of them who did not wish that he had been in the burning forest.

About midday the wind grew lighter, and the schooner's progress slower. They passed two openings that led into the bay which divided two islands from the main land. The first one was Shipégan Island; and the other, which lay beyond this, was called Miscou Island. These two extended along at the mouth of the bay in such a way as to form a natural breakwater. They sailed past these, and by evening they rounded Point Miscou, entered the bay, and as the wind was now adverse, they anchored for the night.

The Bay de Chaleur is about seventy miles long and twenty wide. On account of the islands at its mouth it is sheltered from the worst gales, while on every other side it is land-locked. It thus becomes a vast harbor, affording throughout its whole extent an excellent shelter for vessels.

Around its shores, particularly on the south, are smaller harbors, upon which little villages are already rising. The bay divides the Province of New Brunswick from that of Quebec; and on account of its many advantages, it will, no doubt, become well known to the world before many years.

On the following morning the wind changed, and blew more favorably. It was Captain Corbet's design to go first to the settlement of Shippegan, and in this direction they now sailed. As they went on their way, they were amazed at the vast number of sails that dotted the surface of the sea. They were all fishing boats, and appeared to be on their way to the gulf. As they came to Miscou Gully, which separates Miscou and Shippegan Islands, they saw the fishing boats passing through; and further on, at Shippegan Gully, which lies between the main land and the island of that name, they found it traversed by a still larger number.

"I've ben in these here waters," remarked Captain Corbet, in answer to some inquiries, "onst or twist, afore, an its allers ben the same. All these craft air fishin boats; an I never see the place yet, in all my born days that can turn out on a pinch sich a lot of small fishin craft as this here bay."

Two or thrée miles of a run down a long, narrow harbor, where the waters were deep enough for large ships, brought them at last to their destina-

tion. A wharf lay there, at which the Antelope drew up, and the boys all stepped joyfully ashore.

The village of Shippegan was a small settlement, with scattered houses of very simple construction. Close by the wharf stood the most prominent structure in the place, being a huge saw-mill, which now, as they landed, sent forth that hissing, cutting, slashing, grinding howl and uproar characteristic of such establishments. Towards this place the boys first directed their steps; and on reaching it they were greeted in a very pleasant manner by a gentleman who introduced himself as Mr. Smith. He was the owner of the mills, and though the place was so remote, he was not at all discontented, but, on the contrary, showed an enthusiastic attachment to this country, which he affirmed to be the best place in the world to live in. No sooner did he learn the object of the party, than he at once began to give a glowing account of the beauties and attractions of the Bay de Chaleur. In particular he urged them to visit the Restigouche Valley, at the extremity of the bay, where he affirmed they would find some of the most magnificent scenery, and some of the finest sport in the world.

Yet it was in this very place that the boys found the greatest attraction, for Mr. Smith happened to say, in a casual way, that the people were Acadian French. No sooner had he mentioned that name than the boys asked the meaning of it. They were

informed that these people were the descendants of the Acadians, and that the ancestors of most of them had been expelled from their homes in Nova Scotia, and fled to this place. This at once excited the deepest interest in their minds. All that had reference to the old Acadians was most attractive to them, and in the persons of the Shippeganders they hoped to find reproduced the forms of those gentle, poetic, and simple-minded peasants, with whom they had become acquainted in the beautiful verses of Evangeline.

This unexpected enthusiasm of the boys delighted Mr. Smith, who at once deserted his saw-mill, and proceeded to show them the place. It was of no very great extent, and contained not more than forty or fifty small cottages. These were all built of frame, and shingled over. The road was grass-grown, and did not appear to have any very intimate acquaintance with wheeled vehicles. The people had an unmistakably foreign aspect, but were very pleasant in their looks and manners. The women wore short homespun frocks, with a jacket, and a head-dress consisting of a handkerchief of bright colors. Some of them were spinning at the doors of their cottages, others were knitting, others attending to the duties of the dairy. In the fields were the men making hay. Children laughed and danced, in their play, about the cottage doors. In the middle of the village was a small, simple chapel, with a cross upheld

from one point of its roof, and a small belfry from the other.

As the party walked down the road they were greeted with pleasant smiles, in which there were both natural curiosity and kindly welcome. Mr. Smith spoke to the people some friendly words in the *patois* used by them, which he seemed to understand perfectly; and the answers, though unintelligible to the boys, had a pleasant meaning to their minds, on account of the merry laughter and amiable faces of the speakers. The little children stopped in their sport as the strangers came along, and stood, with their round, merry faces, staring with laughing black eyes.

On the whole, the boys found in this scene all that they could wish, and more than they had anticipated. It realized very closely the ideas which they had formed from the description in *Evangeline*; and Bart, as he looked around, could not help repeating the well-known words:—

“ There, in the midst of its farms, reposed the Acadian village ;
 Strongly built were the houses, with frames of oak and of
 chestnut,
 Such as the peasants of Normandy built in the days of the
 Henrys.
 There, in the tranquil evenings of summer, when brightly the
 sunset
 Lighted the village street, and gilded the vanes on the chim-
 neys,
 Matrons and maidens sat in snow-white cap, and in kirtles
 Scarlet, and blue, and green, with distaffs spinning the golden
 Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy shuttles within
 doors

Mingled their sound with the whirl of the wheels and the songs of the maidens.

Solemnly down the street came the parish priest, and the children

Paused in their play to kiss the hand he extended to bless them.

Reverend walked he among them; and up rose matrons and maidens,

Hailing his slow approach with words of affectionate welcome. Then came the laborers home from the field, and serenely the sun sank

Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed. Anon from the belfry

Softly the Angelus sounded, and over the roofs of the village Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds of incense ascending,

Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes of peace and contentment.

Thus dwelt together in love these simple Acadian farmers;

Dwelt in the love of God and of man. Alike were they free from

Fear that dwelleth with the tyrant, and envy, the vice of republics.

Neither locks had they to their doors, nor bars to their windows;

But their dwellings were open as day and the hearts of the owners.

There the richest was poor, and the poorest lived in abundance."

After traversing the village, they approached a house at the other end, which, though of the same simple construction, was larger and better than the others. Two or three of those tall poplar trees, which were so dear to the Acadians, grew in front. A massive porch was before the door,

around which grew a honeysuckle. Two or three barns indicated the comfortable circumstances of the owner. As they drew near, they saw an old man sitting in the porch smoking, who looked at them, and rose with a pleasant smile. His figure was slightly bent, his hair, mustache, and beard quite gray, and his whole aspect venerable in the extreme.

"It's Benedict Bellefontaine!" exclaimed Bart. "I thought we'd find him, too. Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer of Grand Pré. Here he is, in life, dwelling on his goodly acres."

"No, it isn't," said Mr. Smith, with a laugh. "His name is Grousset, but he'll do very well for Bellefontaine. At any rate, you can judge for yourselves, for I'm going to introduce you to him."

By this time they had reached the house, and Mr. Smith, after shaking hands with the old man, introduced the boys. Monsieur Grousset greeted each one with a paternal smile, and upon learning their errand, at once invited them all to stay at his house while they were in the village. At first the boys refused; but the old man was so urgent, and the prospect of seeing an Acadian home was so attractive, that they at length accepted the kind invitation.

The resemblance which Bart had found between Mr. Grousset and "Benedict Bellefontaine" was; indeed, sufficiently striking to be marked even by one less imaginative. The old man, the house,

and the surroundings, all might have stood for Longfellow's description; for though there might be a difference in minor things, the general character was the same: —

“ Firmly builded with rafters of oak, the house of the farmer
 Stood on the side of a hill commanding the sea, and a shady
 Sycamore grew by the door, with a woodbine wreathing
 around it.

Rudely carved was the porch, with seats beneath; and a foot-
 path

Led through an orchard wide, and disappeared in the meadow.

Under the sycamore tree were lives overhung by a pent-house

Such as the traveller sees in regions remote, by the road-side,
 Built o'er a box for the poor, or the blessed image of Mary.

Farther down on the slope of the hill was the well, with its
 moss-grown

Bucket, fastened with iron, and near it a trough for the horses.

Shielding the house from storms, on the north were the barns
 and the farm-yard.

There stood the broad-wheeled wains, and the antique ploughs,
 and the harrows.

There were the folds for the sheep, and there, in his feathered
 seraglio,

Strutted the lordly turkey, and crowed the cock, with the self-
 same

Voice that in ages of old had startled the penitent Peter.

Bursting with hay were the barns, themselves a village. In
 each one,

Far o'er the gable, projected a roof of thatch; and a staircase
 Under the sheltering eaves led up to the odorous corn-loft.

There, too, the dove-cot, stood, with its meek and innocent
 inmates,

Murmuring ever of love; while above, in the variant breezes,

Numberless noisy weathercocks rattled and sang of mutation.

Thus, at peace with God and the world, the farmer of

Grand Pré

Lived on his sunny farm.”

For some time they remained outside, and Mr. Grousset talked with them. He spoke English very well, and seemed to be a man of much general information for one of his class, and in so remote a place. He was thoroughly simple-minded, however, unworldly, and guileless.

At length he invited them all to come inside. Mr. Smith excused himself, as he had to go back to the mill; but the boys entered, and their host introduced them to his wife and granddaughter; who were in the house. The wife was about the same age as her husband, and the granddaughter was about eighteen. Her gentle face and sweet smile at once charmed all the boys, who saw in her a very good representative of Evangeline.

Leaving the boys with his wife and granddaughter, the old man went out to give some directions about bringing up the luggage from the schooner. The boys would have been charmed to engage in conversation with the old lady and the young "Evangeline," but unhappily this was not possible. The old lady and "Evangeline" could not speak a word of English, and the boys could not speak a word of French, and the consequence was, that they could only express their mutual good feeling by amiable smiles.

Apart from the regret which this created in their minds, it was very pleasant for them thus to find themselves presented to an Acadian interior. It seemed as though they had been carried back

into the past, and suddenly plunged into the midst of that old Acadian life which all of them loved so much to think about, and talk about. Here were the old scenes of which they had read — the village — the house — the Acadian farmer — his family — and the crowning grace of all, the gentle Evangeline.

The room into which they had been shown was a large one. At one end was an enormous fireplace, over which was a marble piece containing a store of curiosities, such as shells and stones of peculiar shape. There was no carpet on the floor, but a number of home-made rugs covered the middle of it. The chairs were old-fashioned, high-backed, rush-seated constructions, singularly comfortable, however, and in every way adapted to carry out the intention of a chair to the utmost perfection. A large wooden settee stood opposite the fireplace. Overhead the rafters were bare, and nails were driven in them, from which hung a store of domestic goods, such as skeins of yarn and fitches of bacon. The partitions of the room were of boards, and upon these were pasted a great variety of pictures, which Mr. Grousset had probably obtained from some stray illustrated paper, that had penetrated to this place, and fallen into his hands. These pictures had a modern character, which was somewhat out of keeping with the rest of the interior; but after all, there was a simplicity in such a mode of decoration which took

away the sense of discord that might otherwise have been felt.

After a short absence the old man returned, and, seating himself, began to talk with the boys, occasionally translating to his wife and granddaughter what they said. He asked them all where they came from, and Bart narrated their recent adventures, while the old man listened with the greatest interest.

"We all belong to the same school," said Bart, at length, in answer to the old man's question; for he was puzzled to know how they had come together from such remote places. "We belong to the same school. Our school is in a place that you may have heard of. It is Grand Pré."

At this name the old man started and stared at them.

"What?" he asked.

"Grand Pré," repeated Bart.

"Grand Pré!" exclaimed the old man. "Grand Pré? What! On the Basin of Minas?"

"Yes."

"Grand Ciel!" exclaimed the other. "And you have been there! And you have lived there! How easy it must be to go there! And I was never there—never! Alas! why did I not go to see that place when I was a young man?"

His emotion was so strong that his wife asked him the cause.

He explained. And Bart noticed that the old

lady and the granddaughter both looked at them with deeper interest as they repeated the name — Grand Pré!

“None of my countrymen live there now, I suppose,” said the old man, looking at Bart interrogatively.

Bart shook his head.

“Ah, I thought so,” said the old man. “All gone. They had to go. They were banished. They dared not return to that place. They came back, but could not get their homes again. Their houses were burnt up, and their farms were given away to strangers. Ah, Grand Ciel! what injustice! And they so good, so pious, so innocent!”

“They were shamefully wronged,” exclaimed Bart, in a burst of indignation, — “most shamefully, most foully wronged!”

“True,” said the old man. “You are right. They were wronged. They were robbed. Ah, how I have heard my grandfather tell about that mournful day! How he loved that dear home in Grand Pré, which he never dared to revisit! He was a young man when he was driven away, and he lived to be an old man; but he never lost his love for his old home. He was always homesick; never content.”

“Your grandfather!” said Bart, with the deepest interest. “Did he live in Grand Pré?”

“He lived in Grand Pré,” said the old man. “He was one of those that the English drove away.”

"And he must have been one of those who managed to come back again," exclaimed Bart, eagerly. "I've heard that a great many found their way back from Massachusetts, from New York, from the Southern States, and even from the West India islands."


"Yes," said the old man, "but my grandfather was never carried away. He escaped, and ran for his life. He was pursued, and almost caught; but by God's help he was saved from his enemies, and came here, where he lived to grow old."

"Escaped?" said Bart. "O, how I wish you would tell us all about it!"

The old man smiled. The eager faces of all the boys showed how deeply they were interested; and with such listeners as these it could not be otherwise than pleasant to tell a story.

XXIII.

The Story of an Acadian Exile. — The Country in Flames. — A dread Discovery. — Pursuit. — Flight over the Water. — The Bloodhound Instinct. — Red Sea Waves.

HE story which the old man went on to tell the boys was long, and subject to frequent interruptions, partly owing to his own emotion, and partly from the eager questions of his listeners. A direct report of his own words need not therefore be given here, but rather the material of his narrative.

Grousset, then, the grandfather of their host, was a young man at the time of the expulsion of the Acadians. He was not married, but lived with his father and mother in a place which, by close questioning, Bart conjectured could not have been far away from the very spot where the school stood. As the old man had never been there himself, but had only to speak from hearsay, he could not, of course, give any very exact description of localities; and it was only from his general knowledge that Bart was able to draw this conclusion. At

any rate, the young Grousset lived here. There was one brother besides himself. They devoted themselves to farming, chiefly, but they also went out fishing, whenever any good opportunity presented itself.

Their house was on the side of a hill which sloped towards the Basin of Minas. In front were extensive marshes, beyond which was a river, that emptied into the bay. Into this river ran another smaller stream, a little below the house. The principal part of the settlement was two or three miles away. Their house was a very comfortable one, their farm extensive, and a thriving orchard contributed something towards the luxuries of life.

On that day Grousset was out in his boat. He had been out for two days fishing. The fleet of schooners which was to convey the settlers away had arrived before he left, but he had no idea whatever of their real intent. He supposed that they had come for the purpose of buying corn, or hay, or something of that sort; and he regarded them simply as a probable market where he could sell his fish. With this belief he spent much longer time than usual, hoping to fill his boat, and thereby effect a larger sale.

In the course of his fishing, he had gone well over towards the other side of the bay; and when at length he started on the return voyage, much time was taken up, and he could not go more than half way. He anchored for that night, and very

early on the following day resumed his homeward progress. As he drew nearer, he was astonished to find great clouds of smoke rolling over the whole country where the Grand Pré settlement stood. He could not understand it. At first he thought it was the woods; but as he drew nearer, he saw that the smoke came from the cultivated parts, and not from the woods. This puzzled him at first. He had intended to sail at once for the mouth of the Gaspereaux River, where the fleet was; but these strange and unaccountable appearances excited the deepest anxiety and alarm, and drove all thought of traffic and money-making out of his mind. He changed the boat's course, therefore, and steered straight for his own home; for there, as well as elsewhere, the smoke clouds arose, and the terrible conflagration seemed to have extended over his father's fields.

Heading thus towards his own home, full of fear and anxiety, he drew ever-nearer, but only to find his anxiety deepened as his progress increased. Nearer and nearer still he came, until at last he could see that every house and every barn had disappeared from the face of the country. The fire was not accidental—it had evidently been done on purpose; but this discovery was still more perplexing, for he could not imagine any possible cause that could give rise to such a deed.

The rising tide bore him onward rapidly, and soon his boat floated up that river that ran past his

father's farm. There rose the hill-slope where his father's house and out-houses had once stood; but now the house and out-houses had all vanished, and over the surface of the hill were spread the black traces of the devastating fires. Nor was the desolation confined to this place. It extended everywhere. Every building had disappeared. Every human habitation had vanished. The fire had spared nothing. All had gone.

Grousset stood in his boat, gazing with looks of horror upon the scene, altogether bewildered, overcome by this sudden blow, wondering in his bewilderment what might be the fate of his relatives, wondering where his father was, and his mother, and whether behind this conflagration there could possibly lurk some other calamity. With such feelings as these he floated on, and did not even seek to bring his boat to the shore.

Suddenly a loud cry came to his ears. Looking in the direction whence the cry came, he saw a figure crawl stealthily forth from a mud gully, and wave his hands towards him. Then the cry was repeated —

“ Pierre ! ”

Grousset recognized the voice. It was his brother Paul. At once he directed the boat towards the place, which he reached in a few minutes. His brother plunged into the water, seized the boat, clambered in, and then implored him to turn and fly.

His brother Paul was pale as death, and was covered with mud from head to foot. Pierre was so horrified by all that he had seen, and by his brother's appearance, that he could scarcely gasp out a question about it.

"Fly! fly!" cried Paul. "or we're lost! It's the English! They've burned all the settlement, and seized the people! They are carrying them away to another country as slaves! Father and mother are gone! I was a little late at the place, and managed to escape. But fly! fly! for they are scouring the country, and if they see us, we are lost!"

At this frightful intelligence Pierre's first impulse was to join his father and mother, and suffer with them; but the impulse passed away, and the thought of the horrors of slavery and exile deterred him. Flight was now his only thought — flight instant and immediate. The boat's head was turned, and Pierre now sought the bay as eagerly as a short time before he had sought the shore.

And now, as Pierre retraced his course, he soon perceived that he was discovered. Over the marshes a number of men came running. They were dressed in red coats, and by this, even when far away, they could easily be recognized as English soldiers. They gesticulated wildly towards him, and finally, on reaching the bank of the river, they discharged their muskets at the boat. But by that time the fugitives had passed beyond their

reach, and the shots, though fast and furious, did no damage, but only urged them on to swifter flight, if possible; and to accomplish this, the two brothers seized the oars, and sought by rowing to make greater speed:

The pursuers stood for a time as though baffled, and then hurried away back to the rising ground.

"They'll pursue us," said Paul, gloomily.

"O, no," said Pierre.

"They'll pursue us," said Paul once more, obstinately; "you don't know their malignity. They will not let one of us escape. They have gone for a boat."

Pierre said nothing. After what had occurred, how could he hope for any forbearance on the part of his enemies? There, as he sat rowing, appeared full before him the blackened fields of his father's farm, the gaunt chimney that rose above the ruins of the house where he was born.

For some time the two brothers pulled at the oars, with their eyes fixed upon the desolated shore, speaking not a word, for the hearts of both were too full. Pierre did not seek as yet to know the particulars of the dread tragedy whose results Paul had already stated, nor did Paul care to say anything more about an event upon which he scarcely dared to think; so both pulled on in silence, until at length a cry from Paul startled his brother.

"They have a boat! They are chasing us;" he cried. "They are coming out of the creek!"

While he was speaking Pierre saw it. He saw a boat shooting out from a creek which emptied into the river. They had already passed its mouth, and the boat was fully a mile behind them; but still it seemed too near for safety, and almost too near for hope. They understood all at once. The soldiers, intent on capturing them, had hurried back to the creek where the boats usually lay, and one of these they had seized. It was a boat like their own, and in it there were a half-dozen soldiers, armed, and full of the bloodhound instinct of pursuit. Their own boat was loaded down with fish, and even the aid of the oars did not seem sufficient to draw them away from their pursuers.

There was one thing which had to be done immediately, and this thing was suggested simultaneously to the minds of both of them. They must lighten their boat at all hazards. The fish were useless now; worse — they were an impediment.

“Over with them!” shouted Pierre, still rowing with one hand while he flung out the fish with the other. But Paul had already begun to do that very thing. Hearing Pierre’s words he passed his oar over to his brother, and then, gathering the fish up in both hands, he flung them out of the boat by armfuls. Meanwhile Pierre rowed with all his strength, and at the same time the wind never ceased to bear the boat along. But the same wind bore onward after them the boat of their pursuers, and the two brothers watched with anxious eyes

the progress of those who followed on their track.

At last all the fish were flung overboard except about half a dozen, which were reserved for food. They felt the benefit of this very soon. Gradually the distance between themselves and their pursuers increased. By this time also the tide had turned, and swept them on at an ever accelerated rate of progress; and, although the same tide swept their enemies along after them, still their own speed was the greater, and every minute served to increase their chance of escape. For the boats were about equal in speed, and while their boat only had two inside, the other carried six, and therefore was over weighted in this race.

Several hours passed away, and the united action of wind and tide had carried onward pursuers and pursued many miles into the bay. There rose before them the frowning cliffs of Blomidon, and past this the current was setting in a swift stream, by which they were borne along. Now, too, the wind died away, and the tide alone remained. This caused a change for the worse. Thus far the lightness of their boat had favored them, so that their pursuers had fallen behind as much as four or five miles; but now, when it came to drifting, this difference was no longer in their favor, and the enemy, either from having caught a stronger current, or from some other reason, seemed to be slowly gaining upon them.

The question now arose, what was to be done? They could easily have landed here, scaled the cliff, and escaped in the woods. But that was not to be thought of except as a last resort. At all hazards they wished to keep the boat. If they fled to the woods their boat would be captured, and their fate might be a miserable death. With the boat, however, they might hope not only to save their lives, but perhaps to follow their friends, perhaps to rescue them; or at least, if such a thing as that should be beyond their powers, they could choose some new home, and have the means of living from the water, till the land should be ready to yield them sustenance. For these reasons they resolved to cling to the boat, and fly as long, and as far, as possible.

But however eager they were in their determination to escape, the enemy showed a resolve to pursue which was as obstinate as theirs. As they floated along they saw the other boat still following. The tide bore them on, in its course, down through the Straits of Minas, beneath the frowning cliffs that rise gloomily on one side, where Blomidon overhangs the water, past the rocks all covered with sea-weed, past long, bare sand flats, past the giant cliffs, which, torn and riven by earthquake or by tempest, rise at the extremity of the straits, and onward into the wide Bay of Fundy.

They had hoped that in this place a breeze might arise, but their hopes were disappointed. The

water was smooth, and they were borne onward over an unruffled surface, by the strong tide, far down. Yet though there was no wind, they at length encountered something which to them, in that extremity, was no less welcome. Before them rose a wall of mist, shutting out all the scene beyond, hiding even the Haute, which lay so near. Into the entrance of this dense fog bank they were borne by the tide; and soon all surrounding scenes, all prospect of rock, and cliff, and distant shore, and overhanging sky, and all sight of their pursuers, were snatched from their eyes, and nothing remained but an all-surrounding blank, an opaque wall of unpenetrable fog.

At any other time such an occurrence would have plunged them into despair, but now it raised them out of despair into hope. At first they thought of rowing in some direction, but a little discussion served to dismiss this thought from their minds. In the first place, they could not tell in which direction to row; and in the second place, they thought that their pursuers would probably take to their oars, and if so, their best plan of escape would be to drift.

Hours had passed away since their flight commenced, and at length darkness came on. That darkness was most intense. There was not the slightest light to alleviate the gloom. Still even this darkness was a relief, for they felt more secure. In spite of the hope which they tried to entertain

that their enemies had given up the chase, they could not get rid of a dark fear that they were still pursued, and a foreboding that with the return of light they might see them. And as the darkness seemed to bring safety, they bore it with patience, and resignation, and hope.

All night long they drifted in this thick darkness. At last light came again. But the light was dull and obscure, for the fog still enveloped them. By this time they had lost all idea of locality, and could not conceive in what direction they were drifting. They knew, however, that while the falling tide would carry them down the bay, the reflux tide would bear them back, and therefore hoped, when the fog lifted, that they would find themselves somewhere near the land. The day that followed was a gloomy day indeed. The water was glassy. There was not a breath of wind. Having nothing by which to judge of their motion, they seemed to be without motion, and to be floating on a stagnant sea. There was no sight to meet their eyes through the dense surrounding fog, and no sound came to their ears through the wide, surrounding stillness.

At last the evening of that day came on, and the fog lessened. Land appeared on either side of them. Gradually the atmosphere cleared, and to their amazement they found themselves drifting up a long channel that seemed like a river. Up this river the tide seemed to run, carrying them

with it at a great rate of speed. As they went on the shores approached more closely, the stream grew narrower and more winding; but still the swift waters lost nothing of their speed. The shores on either side were a wilderness, covered with the primeval forest, with not a sign of any human habitation. The strangeness of the place and the suspense which they felt at finding themselves here prevented them from trying to land. They rather chose to drift onward, and allow themselves to be borne wherever the current might carry them.

At length darkness began to come on, and the fugitives thought that they had drifted far enough. They therefore flung out the rude anchor which they had in the boat. It caught, and their progress was stopped. They felt safe at last. Here, in this remote place, no pursuer would follow them, and they might rest. They had not slept during all the time of their flight, and were very greatly fatigued. It seemed to them that the boat was safer than this unknown shore, and to sleep there at anchor floating on the water would be better than in those unknown woods where wild beasts or prowling Indians might be lurking; and thus, as soon as the boat came to anchor, they flung themselves down in the bottom, and were soon in a sound sleep.

Their sleep was somewhat disturbed, and early on the following day they awaked. Pierre was up

first, and he looked about in surprise. It was about dawn, and in that morning twilight surrounding objects were as yet indistinct. The first thing that he noticed was, that the boat was aground. The channel up which they had drifted on the preceding evening was now bare of water — a wide expanse, like those red mud flats of Grand Pré with which he was so familiar. These flats extended here above and below for miles, and on either side they ran for a great distance before they touched the shore.

Suddenly, in the midst of this survey, Pierre caught sight of an object which made his blood run cold, and caused his heart for a few moments to stop its beating. It was a dark object that appeared, on the mud flats, about a mile away, down the channel.

It was a boat!

That boat, like his own, had grounded, and lay there on her side.

Could that be the boat of their pursuers? Had they been followed all this time, and all this distance, so remorselessly? It seemed like it. Perhaps his pursuers had become bewildered by the fog, or perhaps they had allowed themselves to drift, as the surest way of keeping near to the fugitives; but whatever the reason was, it seemed as though the same currents that had borne them away had carried the pursuers after them.

And there it lay! It grew lighter as he looked,

and then, as if to confirm his worst fears, there suddenly appeared something which put an end to all doubt.

A figure stood up in that boat. It was light enough to see the color of his dress.

It was red.

Scarcely had he seen this than other figures appeared — red-coated figures. They stood up. Pierre could no longer doubt. They were English soldiers. Even as he looked they began to leap out from the boat, and run towards him. As he looked his eyes caught sight of something beyond — something white — like a long, low, white wall; and from that far distance there arose a low, droning sound, which struck a strange terror into his soul.

In a moment he roused his brother. Paul stood up, and stared in the direction where Pierre was pointing. He saw the wide, flat river bed uncovered. He saw the red-coated English soldiers.

Pierre looked all around to find the best place for refuge.

On his right there projected a wooded cliff, its sides rising precipitously for fifty or sixty feet, and its summit covered with fir trees. This was the nearest land. If they ran towards this they might get out of sight of their pursuers in a few minutes, and plunge into the woods at a place where the cliff ended and the land sloped gradually down. To this place he directed Paul's attention; and

then calling upon him to follow, he leaped from the boat. Paul followed. The two brothers ran with their utmost speed over the treacherous mud flats towards the shore behind the point.

Up the channel, over the same treacherous mud flats, came their pursuers, who, at this unexpected sight of their prey, seemed to be filled with fresh fury. Seeing that prey about to escape, they fired after them. Report after report sounded through the air and echoed along the shore.

Six shots were thus fired, and then, as the last echo died out, there arose another sound. It was that low, droning sound which had come to Pierre's ears before he left the boat; but the sound was louder, and deeper, and nearer, and more dreadful. It was a sound of wrath. It was the voice of many waters! It was the sound of a pursuer more terrible than man — the sound of the pitiless march of innumerable waves.

The cliff rose overhead. They had reached it; but before they passed behind it they turned one glance at their pursuers. In that one glance a sight revealed itself which was never forgotten.

Far down arose a wall of white foam, formed by the advancing tidal wave of the Bay of Fundy — a dread mass of surging billows, rolling up the channel, extending all the way across. At the moment when they looked it had caught the boat and overwhelmed it, and then, in hungry fury, advanced towards the soldiers.

They had heard it! They had seen it — that terrible pursuer, the tremendous, the inevitable! They stood still in horror. Escape was impossible. On came the wave. Even the fugitives stood for a moment overwhelmed with the horror of that spectacle.

On came the wave!

The wall of white foam rose high. It rushed onward. It reared its curling crest. It fell in thunderous fury upon the wretched victims of its wrath. One wild, despairing yell burst forth, and then all sounds were drowned in the roar of the rolling waves.

The brothers fled. They reached the sloping bank, and clambered to a place of safety, from which they looked with pallid faces upon those waters, which, like the waves of the Red Sea, had saved the fugitives by overwhelming the pursuers.

After this they wandered through the woods for some days, and finally met with friendly Indians, with whom they went to the Miramichi.

Such is the substance of M. Grousset's narrative.

XXIV.

The American Indian in a new Light. — The false Guide. — Solomon prepares for Vengeance. — The Indian Chief. — Full Explanations.

THAT evening they had a bountiful repast, after which they slept well, and on the following morning an equally bountiful breakfast fortified them for the work of the day. Soon after this they started down to the schooner to talk over their plans for the future.

Close by the wharf stood the mills already mentioned, where now arose the tumult and bustle generally prevalent there. Into the precincts of this mill the boys strolled, and looked about upon the busy scene.

The scene was to Bart one of the most familiar possible, for all his early life had been passed in a city of saw-mills, and the present occasion offered nothing that was new. To the other boys it was also more or less familiar, and it was rather the animation of the spectacle before them than its novelty which attracted them. One thing, however, there certainly was which seemed to all of them most singular and unaccountable.

As they looked upon the men who were at work in the mill and in the mill yard, they noticed that one after another of them was an Indian. To see an Indian engaged in such work as this seemed astonishing, for it had been a fixed belief in their minds that no Indian will engage in continuous hard labor; yet here was a fact which contradicted all former opinions. What was more surprising was the gradual discovery that not one, or two, or a few, but the whole gang of men at work in and about the mill were of the same race.

They worked doggedly, ploddingly, industriously; some floating logs, some carrying deals, some attaching the ropes to those logs that had to be hauled up; all busy, none idling.

"I never knew that Indians would work," said Bart to Mr. Smith.

"These Indians work very well," said he.

"Yes; and that is what is so astonishing. Of course I knew that Indians will go through any amount of fatigue in the course of a hunting expedition, but I have always heard that they are incapable of hard work."

"Well, as to being incapable, I have my doubts about that," said Mr. Smith. "They cannot be incapable; they are only unwilling. Continuous drudgery like this does not suit them as a general thing. But these Indians don't object. They work hard, never complain, and I have never had any men who have given so little trouble."

"It seems very odd, though," said Bart. "I'm sure no other Indians in this country would be willing to work in this way. No amount of wages would tempt them."

"No. That's true. The fact is, these Indians belong to a different tribe."

"A different tribe?"

"Yes. The Indians that you are acquainted with, who live in Nova Scotia and the greater part of New Brunswick, are called the Micmacs. These are called the Milicetes. The language of the two tribes is altogether distinct; their traditions, manners, and customs also vary in many particulars. Between the two tribes there is no intercourse and no friendly feeling whatever. You see here with your own eyes how different they must be from the other tribe, with which you are acquainted."

Midday came, and as the steam whistles sounded, all hands left off work and prepared for dinner. Their dinners had been brought to them by the squaws of the tribe who had come to the mill bringing their papposes with them. Men, women, and children then sat in a circle, in the midst of the mill yard, and engaged in their midday repast, while the boys looked on curiously from a distance.

Among these Indians there was one who had come up with the women, and seemed to have some sort of authority. He did not work in the mill, but had the air and tone of one giving direc-

tions, to which the others yielded assent or obedience. There was something in this Indian which seemed familiar to Bart, though he could not account for it. He was the first who noticed him, and he mentioned it to the others; but they were equally unable to do so. At length, as several of the boys grouped themselves together, it seemed to Bart as though the Indian had some recognition of them. There were Bart, and Phil, and Pat, and the two Rawdons; and as the Indian looked up, he caught sight of them, with Bart in the foreground. He started, and then turned his head away, and appeared to busy himself with something else.

He was a very old man, somewhat bent, his face seamed with a million wrinkles; but his figure was still strong, sinewy, and apparently capable of undergoing fatigue or exertion to an indefinite extent. He turned away, as has been said, but every few moments he threw a furtive glance at the boys.

And now it happened that Solomon came up from the schooner to ask whether the boys were to get dinner on board or on shore. He came up to where the Indians were seated, and it was evident that they had never seen a negro before, for the advent of Solomon created an extraordinary sensation. The women drew back, the children screamed, the men stared, and all gave signs of unusual excitement. But among all, none showed such excitement as the old man already mentioned.

As Solomon drew near, he saw him first, and started to his feet, staring at him with a face upon which there was a variety of contending expressions; curiosity, wonder, uneasiness, alarm — all these were plainly visible at the same time on that old Indian's face.

But the emotion of the Indian found its counterpart in that which was manifested by Solomon, as the Indian caught sight of him and started to his feet. The attention of Solomon was arrested by that movement. He stopped short, and fixed his eyes upon the Indian. His hands clinched themselves together; his lips compressed themselves; his limbs grew rigid; while his eyes seemed to glow like fire. Again the old man was transformed; again that wonderful change took place from apparent feebleness, and even decrepitude, to something which seemed like the bounding vigor and vehement energy of barbaric manhood. His chest heaved; he seemed like some wild beast, as he stood there; gathering up all his energies for one tremendous spring.

On the other hand, the Indian saw it, and drew himself up to resist the assault. He fell back a step or two, and mechanically threw himself into an attitude of defence. His gesture was seen by his companions. They looked up to where his eyes were turned, and they marked the threatening attitude of Solomon. In an instant every one of them started up to his feet, and by one common

movement put themselves in front of their old companion, as though to guard him from the attack of this unexpected enemy.

Upon the boys these singular proceedings produced different effects. Bart and his companions in the woods at once recognized the truth. The old Indian was no other than their false guide, who had first turned upon them to attack them, and then fled, leaving them in the midst of the trackless forest. This was the man who now appeared before them in the midst of his own people, who certainly deserved some punishment for all that he had done, but who seemed to be out of the reach of any punishment, unless, indeed, Solomon should take the law into his own hands. But Bruce and the others, who had never seen the Indian before, stood simply amazed, not knowing what to make of such a singular scene. They had heard of the adventure in the woods with the Indian guide, but what they had heard did not suffice to afford them a clew to the affair before them.

For a few moments they stood thus, Solomon threatening, the Indians scowling, the boys looking on. But Solomon, though poised to spring, hesitated, as he saw all the enemies before him. Had it been only the old Indian, he would have leaped upon him at once; but with so many other Indians, it was a different matter. Very naturally, therefore, Solomon hesitated, and faltered, and sank down from his high pitch of fury, at thus being confronted with the impossible.

It was at this juncture that Mr. Smith approached. He surveyed the scene with surprise and anxiety, and walking forward, hastily he asked what it all meant. The advent of one thus clothed with authority produced an instantaneous effect. The Indians turned away, and talked in low tones with one another; Solomon subsided from his fighting attitude into one of vehement denunciation; and Bart proceeded to tell Mr. Smith the whole story.

Mr. Smith listened to it all with the deepest interest.

"It's abominable of Sam," said he, as Bart ended, "and if it had been any one else, I should like to have him punished. But with Sam it is different, and I can easily explain it. Sam is the chief of these Milicetes, and generally is all that a chief should be. The only trouble with him is, that, like all Indians, he is fond of liquor. When he gets any, it makes him simply insane. He stays about here most of the time, and in this place he can't get a single drop. Consequently he is a very sensible, dignified, and respectable Indian. He is looked up to with the utmost respect by his people, and he and I agree perfectly well. Unfortunately, when he goes away, he generally manages to get liquor. He can't resist temptation. He went off, about a fortnight ago, to Miramichi, where you found him. Before starting with you, he sup-

plied himself with that unfortunate bottle of liquor. Had it not been for that, you would have found him an admirable guide, and he would have brought you here without any difficulty. But his bottle drove him crazy, and caused that wild outbreak. I don't believe he remembers much about it himself. He must have come straight back to Shippegan after leaving you."

This explanation proved highly satisfactory to the boys, who readily forgave the Indian for an outbreak that had been produced by such an unfortunate cause; and even Solomon, on learning that it had not been out of any malicious intention, consented to forego his vengeance.

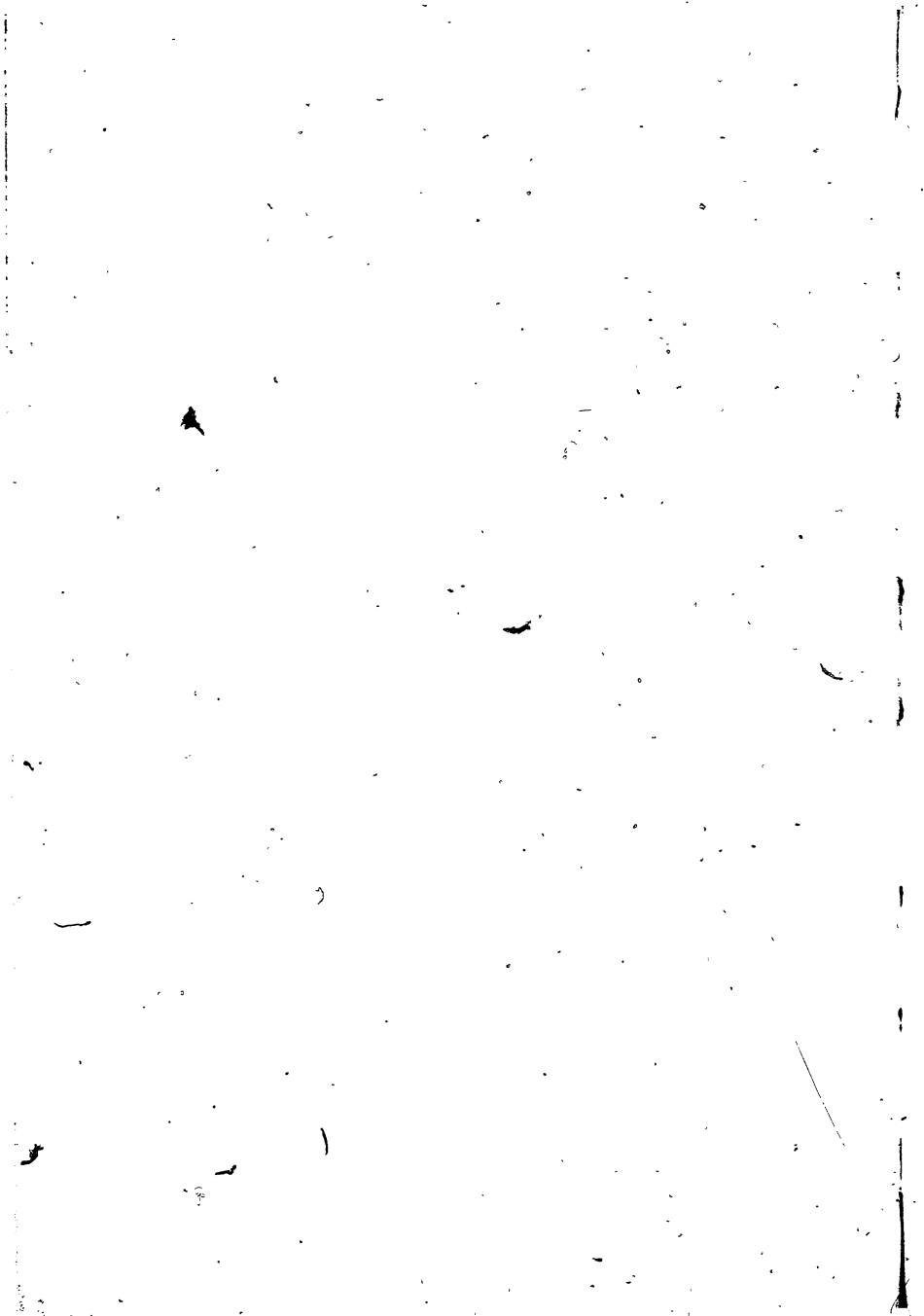
After this, Mr. Smith had some conversation with the Indian himself, who, as he suspected, remembered nothing about his outbreak in the woods.

He only remembered that he had engaged to go with the boys, and had got separated from them, he knew not how. He expressed great sorrow, and tried, in his broken English, to explain and to apologize.

Thus this affair was all happily settled.

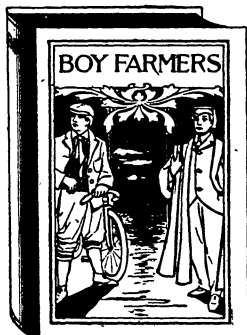
The boys spent one more day in Shippegan, and then prepared to depart. On the following morning they bade adieu to Mr. Grousset and his amiable family, who begged them, with great earnestness, to visit them again, which they all

promised to do. Mr. Smith accompanied them to the wharf, and shook hands with them all around. Up went the sails, the lines were cast off, and the Antelope passed down the long harbor and out into the bay.



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