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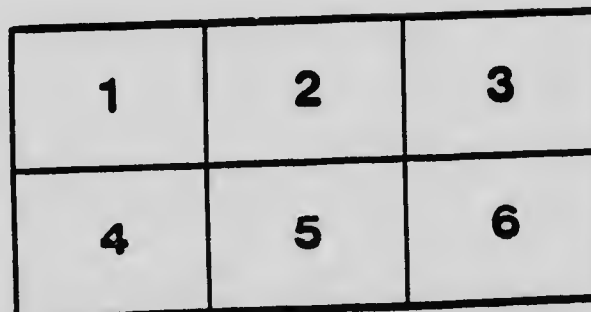
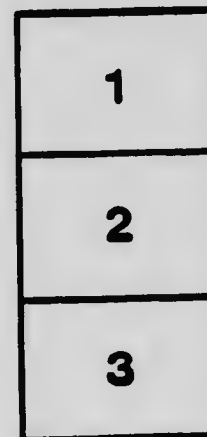
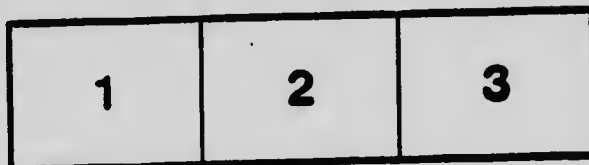
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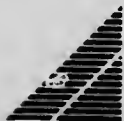
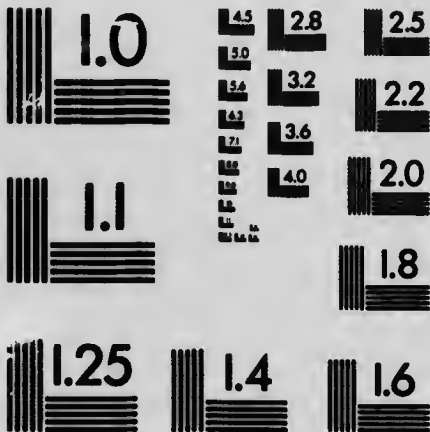
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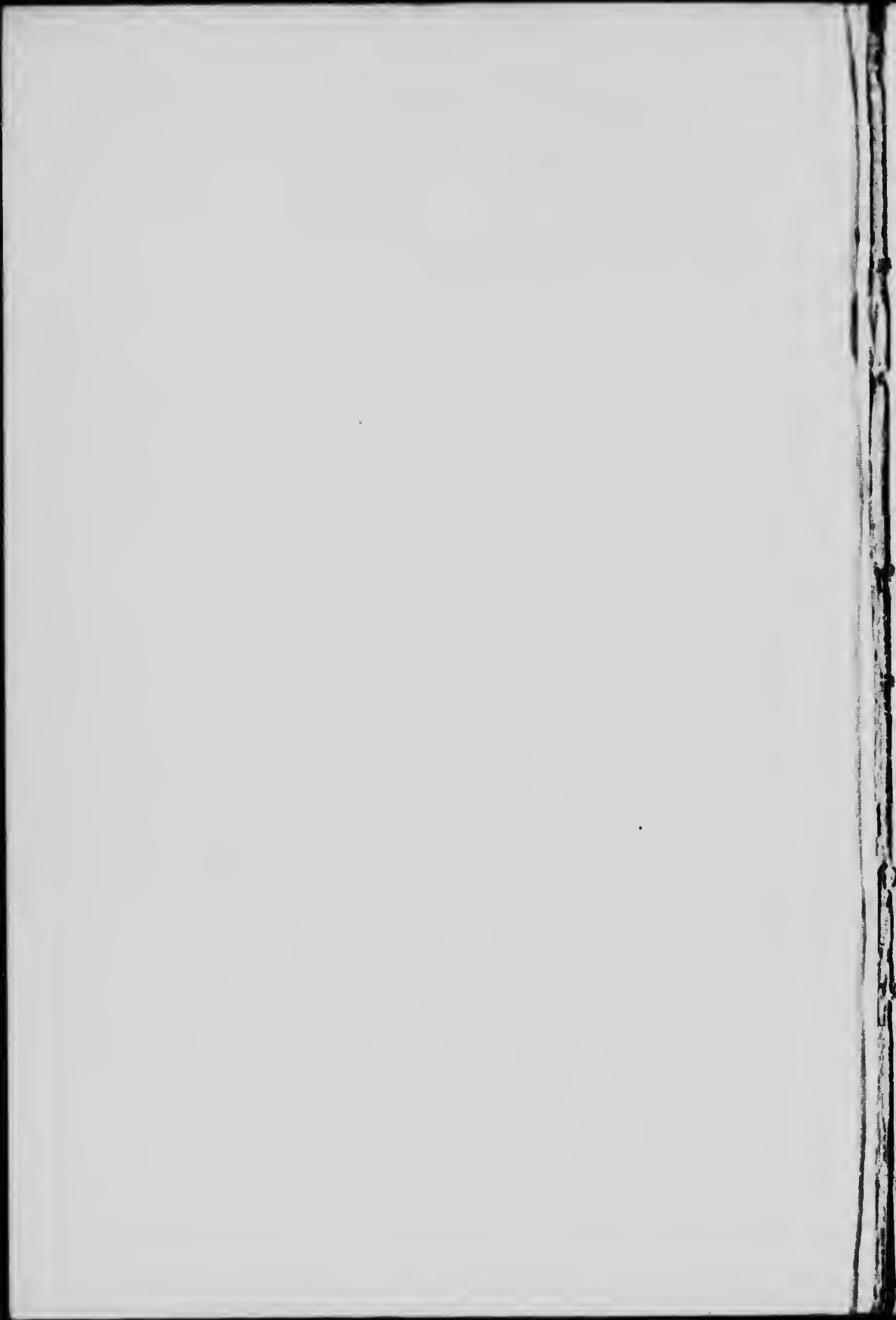
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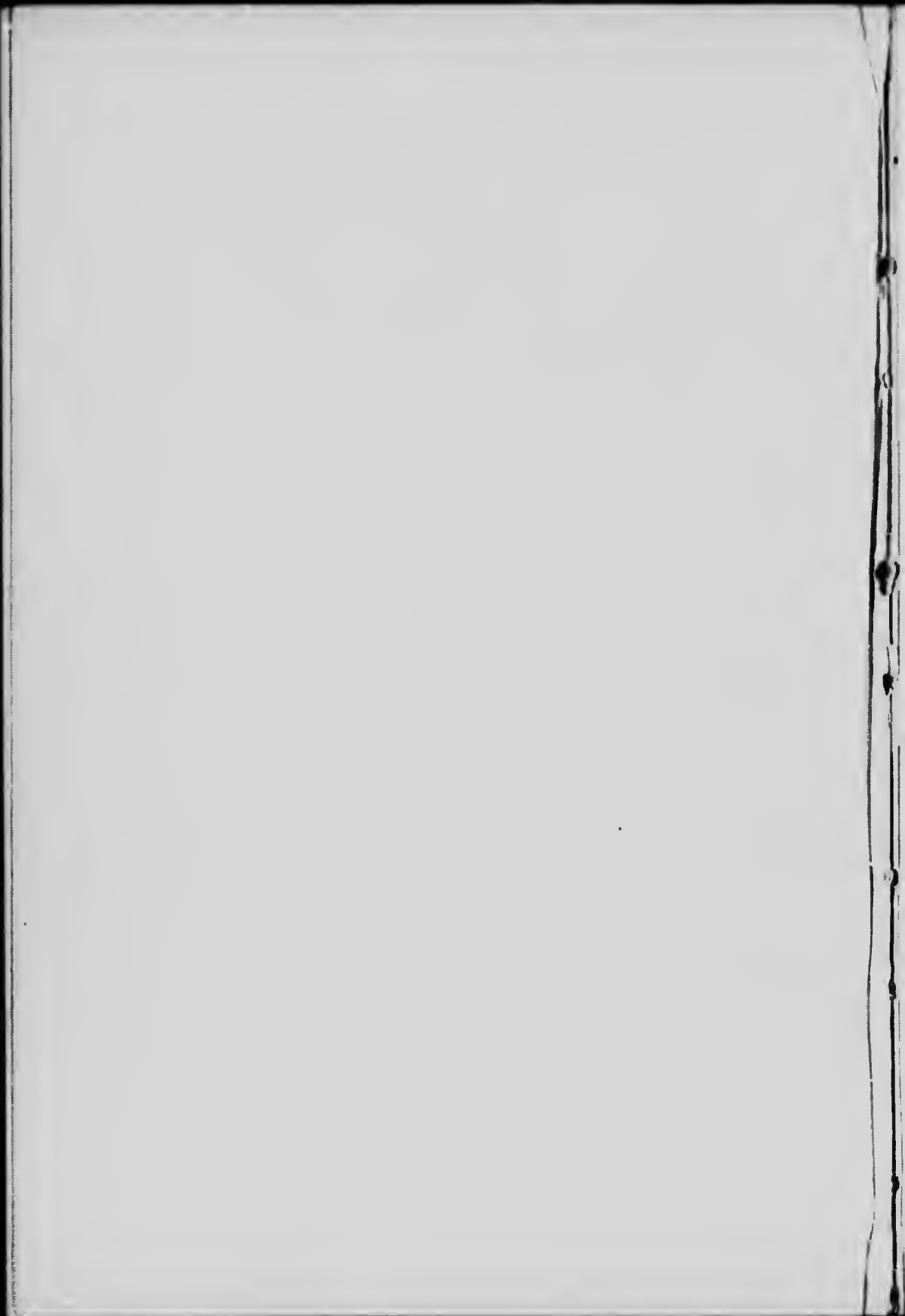


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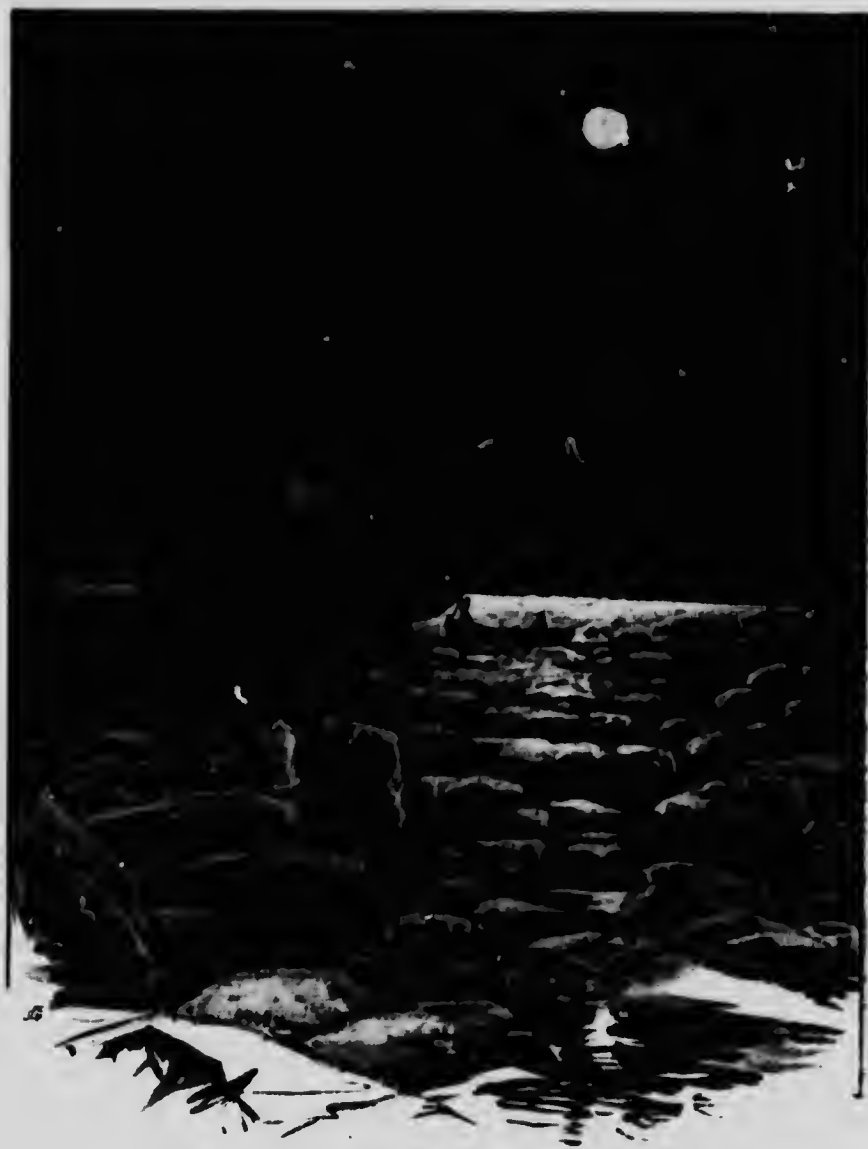
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ICE-BOUND
OR
THE ANTICOSTI CRUSOES







"DOWN THE PAINTER CAME ANOTHER FIGURE."

[Page 7.]

ICE-BOUND

OR

THE ANTICOSTI CRUSOES

BY
EDWARD ROPER, F.R.G.S.

AUTHOR OF
'BY TRACK AND TRAIL THROUGH CANADA,' 'A CLAIM ON KLONDYKE:
A ROMANCE OF THE ARCTIC EL DORADO,'
ETC.

WITH SIX ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR.

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ICE-BOUND

OR

THE ANTICOSTI CRUSOES

CHAPTER I

A LEADEN sky—a grey, calm sea—a streak of red in the west, where the sun has set. In the east, a newly-risen moon breaks through low-lying clouds, silvers their edges, and throws a path of light across the deep.

In the midst, far as the eye reaches, north, south, and west, rough ice, in floes a few yards across, covers the sea. This ice is grey and rotten, except where higher masses stand up, which are frosted white; on one side they are reddened by the light of the departed sun; on the other, they feebly glisten in the pale moonshine. The scene is very weird, and there is not one breath of wind.

Amongst this field of fast-decaying ice a barque is lying. Her light sails are clewed up, her topsails

and her courses are hanging from their yards useless. It is evident that this vessel has been pushed thus far into the ice by a breeze, which, having died away, has left her fast.

There is an air of neglect about this vessel; in the fading light one perceives that her painted ports are streaked with rust; streams of garbage have trickled down her sides, her standing rigging is slack, her running gear hangs in bights and ungraceful tangles, her sails are patched, torn, discoloured, she looks to be the tramp she really is.

A light glimmers through an after port, a thread of smoke ascends from her galley funnel; they are the only signs of life on board. Beneath her stern a boat floats in the open water, from which black lanes lead with many twists and branches amongst the dissolving floes.

This craft, in her solitariness, her uncared-for aspect, is well suited to her uncanny surroundings; she adds to their melancholy.

Such was the scene as daylight died. As evening wore on voices resounded on the ship; now it was merely high-voiced chatter, then the hoarse rumbling of songs; now shouts and exclamations denoting that all was not peaceful on board; and then, at midnight, dead silence prevailed, and it seemed that all on board were sleeping.

However, it was not so, for from one of the stern ports an arm stretched forth and cautiously grasped

the painter of the boat, and slowly drew it underneath; then down the rope a figure slid. Without delay some bundles and packages, a couple of large Gladstone bags, two guns, some rolls of blankets and rugs, with other articles, were lowered to him in the boat; and next, without a moment's loss of time, down the painter came another figure.

The brilliant moonlight water against which all these doings were silhouetted showed that it was two lads who had thus acted.

The moment the second one reached the boat, he cast off the painter and they were adrift. Without speaking, he signed to his companion, who, pushing with his hand against a block of ice, gave the boat slight way; and then from piece to piece, from floe to floe, they moved silently, until they were separated from the barque a hundred yards or so. There they stopped, somewhat exhausted, and crouching low one whispered—

“So far, so good—we're clear of the beastly ship, and no one has noticed our departure.”

“Yes,” replied the other, “yes—we're well out of her, but we must hurry,” at which they went on again, pushing from block to block of ice, making steady headway.

There was no light upon the vessel they had left; she was however easily discernible in the clear moonlight for an hour or more, during which they were moving from her. They kept on, indeed, until they

could but just make her out, then they hitched to a floe and halted.

"Now, Sid, we'll rest awhile," one of the boys said ; "we're safe—they haven't another boat that floats ; there's not a breath of wind ; they cannot possibly catch us. Thank goodness we're away !"

"Yes, yes, indeed, George," the one named Sid agreed, "it is splendid indeed ; we'll reach the land by daybreak, and then—but which way do we go now ?"

"Ah ! now you see we've got to be a bit careful," replied the other ; "we know that point of Gaspé lies right astern of the ship—Cape Rozier, old Miller called it. Can you make out the way the old tub lies ? No ? Well, then, hand out the glasses and let's see."

Sid passed the glasses, and through them George peered and soon announced the ship's position ; then he picked out a star in the south, declaring that they must steer to that shining speck of light.

It was cold—cakes of ice still floated round them, yet clear black water was plentiful. It was easy to go the way they would, and they could row ; by and by they did so with as little noise as might be, until in less than an hour they were entirely clear of ice, and the ship had long since disappeared. Now there was nothing to be seen but the black water, the spangled sky, the brilliant moon, and the bright star which burnt ahead of them and indicated their course.

It was a grand night for these boys' adventure.

It was certain then, they said, that caution was no longer necessary, and each plied his oar freely; they talked loudly, light-heartedly, keeping an eye though on their star, and if we listen to them we shall understand the reason of their strange proceedings.

"What time is it? Have you wound your watch?" asked Sid. They stopped rowing until George looked, and announced that it was 3 a.m., the 18th of May. Then as they resumed their rowing he continued, "My word, a few hours ago, what misery we were in! Not a thought of this escape, eh? Now, here we are, with everything safe, and, please God, in a few hours we shall be ashore in dear old Canada! What a bright thought it was of yours, Sid, to cut away! I wonder what those wretched fellows on board there will think when they turn out sober and miss us? Will not old Miller be staggered? The old rascal, he'll realize then that he has driven us to this. How Fraser will chaff and jeer at him! He's as bad as the skipper."

"Worse, I think," put in Sid; "that religious talk of his is so terrible. How he drinks! How he curses! He's a terror; I wonder Captain Andrew did not see through him."

"Yes, indeed," said George. "I've often wondered lately that the captain was so deceived, but I've noticed that good men like him *are* easily imposed on; they think every one as guileless as themselves; if they are plied with texts and pious words, they

imagine all is right. Yet I do wonder at the captain; he has so much experience of those characters, he ought to have seen through this awful Fraser. However, we'll write fully from Montreal."

Then they rowed on awhile silently. By and by George suddenly asked, "How much cash have we, Sid?"

"About six pounds," was the reply; "that'll be plenty till we reach Montreal; there we'll get our drafts cashed."

"Yes," replied the other, "that'll do, but there's no railroad within a hundred miles of Gaspé, Miller said, so we'll have to go in a wagon; we'll manage all right, you'll see."

"Well, you're a Canadian, George, you know the country," said Sid. "I'm sure we've done right and shall come out right."

"Right! Right! Of course we've done right," answered George emphatically; "that ship's a floating hell! We've read of such things, but I really did not suppose such existed now. Did you ever hear such talk or see such drunkards? The second mate, Balfé, is all right, a good fellow; what should we have done without him? Strange that he should be a Canadian, and from Toronto; said he thought this trip in a sailing-ship would be a sort of holiday! A queer holiday, eh? He won't try that again. Ah, well, we're well out of it. That skipper and that mate, and that wretched steward! How did we stand it all those

weeks? But thank God we did, though, and thank Him also we are clear of it, and no harm done to us."

"Stood it!" ejaculated Sid, after a few tugs at his oar, "how could we help standing it? There's no running away at sea."

"What do you call this performance, then?" his companion asked, with a laugh. After awhile he broke out again, "And the grub, did you ever eat such food? And how that Fraser used to brag to Captain Andrew about the way they fed at sea! I hated to leave that five-pound note, didn't you?"

"Yes; I did, indeed, but it was right; and the note explaining why we left it, you did that well, George. My eye, they will be angry, and afraid too, when they read that, eh?"

But now across the east a faint streak of saffron caught their notice. They watched it eagerly; it grew, it strengthened, turned to rose, then crimson, a burst of flame gleamed on the horizon, the purple sea reflecting the glory of it, then the sun wheeled up, and it was day.

The boys had ceased rowing whilst they watched this scene; they were silent, they were impressed with the sublimity of it. Their hearts lifted with thankfulness, with adoration.

"Look here," said George suddenly, "I vote we sing the 'Morning hymn'—we both know it—and let's read a bit of the Morning Service. What d'ye say? It will rest us, and we ought to give grateful thanks

to God for giving us such glorious weather for our trip."

So the boys sang the well-known hymn, and Sid fished the Prayer-book out of one of the bags, and between them they read awhile, reverently kneeling, after which they stood up and gazed around.

"Why, where's the land?" cried Sid.

There was no land in sight, nothing but the bright sky, and the oily, quiet sea!

"We're too low in the water to see far," George considered; "it's all right, over there," pointing to the south-west—or what he thought to be so—"we've just got to pull on in that direction; we're bound to come to it directly."

They pulled on cheerily for an hour; then they stopped, ate a few biscuits, drank some water from the demijohn, and then went on again. The sun was high, its heat great; reflected from the unruffled sea it scorched them, and they were getting fagged. They were a couple of brave boys, but quite unused to really hard work; moreover, the idle life they had led lately had unfitted them for such exertion. Their rowing became slower, feebler, as the sun rose higher, and at last Sid drew in his oar.

"Come, let us rest awhile!" he cried; "it's too hot for anything; towards evening it will be cooler, then we'll row to land."

George being quite agreeable they spread rugs in the bottom of the boat, tied a blanket up as an

awning, ate and drank a little, laid themselves full length, thinking nothing about danger or trouble, and soon fell asleep—"rocked in the cradle of the deep!"

This is a good opportunity to explain who these lads were, and what they were about.

George Young was the only son of his mother; she was born at Ingersoll, in Canada, and had married a young Englishman named David Young, who owned land near. He was said to be farming, but having some means, and considerable culture, he was unfitted to be brilliantly successful as a back-woods agriculturalist. First a daughter was born to them—they named her Elneth; two years after they had a son, whom they named George.

When these children were eight and ten years old, and better education was necessary for them than could be obtained there, they sold out their place and moved to Hamilton, where Mr. Young went into business; and as, after awhile, a branch of it was thought likely to do well in England, he and his family left Canada to take charge of it. They made a home at Richmond, on the Thames. Elneth was sent to school at Bexhill-on-Sea, and George to Sutton Valence, in Kent. So matters went on for several years. Mr. Young's business did not flourish properly, his health failed, and when his son was over fourteen years of age, he died.

Mrs. Young was left but poorly off, yet she kept

George at school for another six months ; until, as she planned, all three could return to Canada, where in Manitoba there seemed to be a chance for folk with small means, especially for those who knew something of Canadian life, as she did.

George was in his fifteenth year when he finally left school at Christmas. His previous holidays had often been passed at Hastings, where he had done much boating, of which he was very fond, and on the Thames too, near home, he enjoyed it ; so that he was an expert oar, on smooth water, at any rate. Several times also he had stayed with friends near Biggleswade, in Bedfordshire, and there he had learned to use a gun. He was good at cricket too, and at football, thanks to his Sutton Valence school-days, so he was really a very decent athlete. A handsome, manly, tall lad was George. His crisp brown hair, his charming smile, made him the sort of son all mothers glory in.

When this young fellow came home that Christmas he found that his mother and Elneth had made friends with a certain Captain Andrew, who had for years devoted himself to aiding an institution at the East-End of London, where a great work is carried on in evangelizing and helping the dwellers in those parts. Captain Andrew's hobby was emigration. He seemed to see in it—if not a panacea for all the troubles of the poor—a great help out of their difficulties. He had visited Canada, and always

spoke of it as little less than a paradise, and never tired of urging strugglers in Britain to go there and end their miseries.

Naturally, he took great interest in Mrs. Young's plans, which led to George often going with him to his meetings; where he heard much about emigration, and much more about that greater, far more important "trek" which we must all at some time take, for on this subject Captain Andrew was still more earnest, still more enthusiastic, than about that to Canada, and George was thus led to take a serious view, not only of this life, but of that which is to come.

A frequent attendant at these meetings was another young fellow, the same age as George. He also was a manly lad, fond of cricket and boating; he had no practical knowledge of country life, but he longed for it, and Captain Andrew's stories about his hobby had made him most anxious to go to Canada to settle.

His name was Sidney Croly; he too had been attracted by the words he had heard about the higher life, so he and George, having so many ideas and aims in common, soon became friends.

Sidney had saved about £50. His people were not able to add to it, and were dead against his throwing up the sure employment he had, to leave England on what they called a mad scheme. But nothing cooled his ardour, so when he met George Young his desire increased, and as they became devotedly attached to one another, which they quickly did, he

declared that nothing should alter his determination to go with him across the Atlantic.

April was fixed on for the departure of the Youngs; but as that time drew near Mrs. Young was seriously ill with influenza, which left her in so weak a state that the doctor asserted it would be months before she could travel; this upset everything.

George and Sidney, terribly disappointed, told their troubles to the captain, who was grieved at the break-up of their plans.

"But," said he, "there's One above who orders all things, let us recognize this and be patient;" then he walked about the room awhile, pondering. "But see here!" he exclaimed presently; "you are both old and strong enough. Why don't you go off, as planned, but alone? Get to Manitoba, choose your land, go to work on it, build your house, get your home together! Next year, please God, your mother's health, George, will be restored, and she and your sister can join you. How will that do?"

The boys looked at him amazed; the idea staggered them.

"Ah!" went on the captain, "you don't see it yet, but go home and talk about it, pray about it. It strikes me that it will do. You'll save money this way, for you two can go out steerage—you'll save five pounds each, thus; and I can tell you that sum, twenty-five dollars, is not to be disdained in the Canadian Nor'-West. Why, it will buy you each a

cow! Just think of that. Really t'is is a grand idea. Off you go home and talk about it!"

They did so. At first Mrs. Young and Elneth were much against it, but when they thought it all out, and after the captain had called and spoken so favourably about it, they came round, and this plan was agreed to.

Sidney had already thrown up his clerkship in the City, and he and George were learning all they could likely to be useful in their new life. In this they were greatly helped by Mrs. Young, who, having grown up in the back-woods, could direct them. Elneth also remembered something of her early life, whilst George himself had not entirely forgotten Canada.

At this time there was often present at the meetings which Captain Andrew held at Mile End a middle-aged, queer-looking Scotsman, who said he was mate of a ship lying in dock hard by. He was a red-faced, shaggy fellow, seemed to be good-natured, and very religious. He appeared to be earnest, and used much Scripture phraseology, thus winning the good captain's heart. But our boys did not take to him; they thought he ingratiated himself with their friend because of the good things going, for there were frequent little teas and lunches, which he always managed to come in for. His name, he said, was Peter Fraser.

Believing that Captain Andrew knew much better

than they about Fraser's worth, they did not mention their dislike of him.

One evening the boys, the captain, and Fraser were enjoying a bit of supper in a side-room, when the subject of the projected journey cropped up. Fraser must have heard of it, though he protested that he had not; however, he became quite interested.

"Why, bairns!" he exclaimed, "it's just most amazin' and interestin'. I've bin sailin' across and across to Canaday these many years—the ship that I belong to is in that trade; me and her skipper has bin shipmates for twenty year. But, eh! a bonnie place is you—ye're lucky chappies to be ganging there, ye ken; and what ship are ye goin' by? and when d'ye sail?"

They told him that they expected to be off in the middle of April, and hoped to go in the steerage of an Allan steamer.

Hearing this Fraser lifted his hands in horror. "Eh? eh? the steerage!" he cried; "d'ye ken what that is? It's just like hogs they treat 'em! Ye'll hae just to pig thegither wi' a' kin' o' queer cattle, Irish 'n Dutch, 'n I don't know what; 'n the grub you'll get! Ye'll no be able to thole it, bairns—decent gentlemen's sons like you!"

"Is it so very bad?" asked George, dismayed. "But it's only for ten days or so, and see the money we'll save. Have you travelled steerage?"

"Me? Oh, I'm a sailor man! I never sailed as

passenger," he answered. Then he praised *his* ship, which was to sail on April 10; he spoke of her comfortable cabins, good food, and of the jovial commander. By Fraser's account a voyage in the *Duke of Cornwall*, which the ship was named, was just a pleasure-trip, a yachting-cruise; and he added that she was a regular clipper!

All this was quite interesting, but as Sid remarked, "no use to them, for they were not going in her."

At which Peter Fraser said that he believed it might be arranged, as he thought he could get his chum, the captain of the ship, to take them first-class for the price they would have to pay for steerage in an Allan liner. The point was, would they like to do so? If so, he would tackle his great commander.

When Captain Andrew went to Quebec, it was in the saloon; he merely visited the steerage, and had to admit that the accommodation certainly was rough; yet for the two lads it would be bearable. But to go in the cabin of a good ship at the same price, to associate all the time with the captain and the mates, and *the* mate a good Christian, as he believed Fraser to be, appeared to him to be worth consideration.

"Aye! it's a' that," said Peter Fraser, "there's nae doot o' that. They'll just feed and sleep as we do, and as for conversation, they'll hear more releegious talk aboard the *Duke* in a day than they'll listen to in a week on an Allan boat, and av coorse it'll be a fine

thing for the bairns to be in charge o' twa steady, canny men like me and Captain Miller."

They visited the ship next day. Miller was absent; Fraser did the honours. She was dirty, in great disorder, as all ships are in port, so he explained. The little cabins, furnished as he said they would be at sea, the cooking and other arrangements which he expatiated on, made the lads believe it would be quite jolly. Then sly old Fraser pointed out in the same dock a fine passenger steamer; took them on board, showed them her steerage, which satisfied them that in the cabin of the *Duke of Cornwall* they would have such light and air and comfort as the steerage of a steamer could not give them.

In the end Fraser's plan was adopted. He brought word that Miller, who was said to be at his home in Kent, was agreeable, and their £10 passage money was paid to him, Fraser.

We must pass over the parting of George and Sidney with their people. Mrs. Young and Elneth, feeling that only a year would elapse before they were together again in the Great North-West, bore George's departure without great distress; and Sid's friends, believing that the life out there would never suit him, were happy in the notion that a very few months would bring him home again.

Our boys joined the ship at Gravesend. They were surprised to discover that nothing had been done to their cabins. Fraser had only time to say to them,

“Oh! bide a wee, my lads, let's get awa' to sea, then we'll soon mak' a' things richt,” which the innocent lads thought only reasonable.

As the anchor was being weighed they perceived in the cabin a strange old man asleep upon a settle. A dirty, unkempt, disgusting-looking fellow. The pilot came in, and going to the sleeper, shook him vigorously, exclaiming, “Hi, Captain Miller! Hi, rouse out! I'm getting your anchor!”

What?—this the jolly captain of the *Duke of Cornwall*! this brutish sleeper! It struck the boys aghast. This to be their associate across the ocean! Horror!

The pilot shook the fellow, and roared at him ineffectually; then turning to the boys he said, “The old man's drunk. I pity those who have to go to sea with such a thing as that!”

But as he spoke another rough and greasy fellow entered, and railed at the pilot, declaring that the skipper was not drunk, that he was ill, and had been overcome at parting from his family, that he would soon be all right, and that the pilot ought not to frighten passengers.

“Oh! passengers are they, steward?” said the pilot, “I beg pardon.” With that he went on deck, as our boys did.

The barque was towed down, and anchored at the Nore. The following morning sail was made. The boys had slept in a stern cabin, amongst a heap of

what looked like cargo ; Fraser telling them that before another night he'd have all things shipshape. Miller was in his berth, the steward reporting that he was still too "seedy" to appear, and Fraser informed them that so long as the pilot was in charge, the captain was not needed.

There was so much to see, it was such an entirely new life to our friends, that the discomfort they were experiencing did not trouble them much ; they supposed it was usual at the commencement of a voyage. Lumps of *boiled* fresh beef, chunks of stale bread, and dabs of dirty butter were on the cuddy-table ; no regular meal had yet been set. They helped themselves, and did not greatly mind.

They had a good wind to the Downs, where the pilot left them. Off the Isle of Wight, that afternoon, Fraser came into the cabin where our boys were, and ordered the steward to bring some rum. To their horror he poured out half a tumbler of it, tipped it off, and, smacking his lips, exclaimed, "At last ! Ah, that goes fine," and he winked at them.

"Why, I thought you were a teetotaler," said George, amazed ; "you always assured Captain Andrew that you were."

"So I am—ashore," he coolly replied, with a grin, "but at sea, you bet I just take my tot like another man !"

In a few minutes the effect showed. Fraser became noisy ; he boasted of his seamanship, his piety, and

generally made a fool of himself, much to the disgust of George and Sid.

Going to the door of the skipper's room he began pounding at it. "Hi! old man," he called, "turn out. We're off the Wight. Come awa' and tak' a drink."

Then they heard growling inside, and presently the door flew open and the skipper appeared—a shambling, blear-eyed creature. Reaching to a swing tray he grasped a bottle, filled a tumbler, swallowed the contents, then swore at the steward because it was rum, not gin. Gin, he shouted, was his peculiar tippie; and he threatened dire proceedings if a constant supply was not on hand for him in the future.

These orders were interlarded with such oaths and blasphemy that the lads were rushing from the cuddy in fright.

Then only Miller appeared to perceive them. Holding his glass of gin half-way to his mouth he glanced at them, and cried to Fraser, "'Ulloa, who's them? What'r they doin' here?"

The mate replied, "Oh! hold your row, mon—them's freends o' moins I'm takin' to Quebec."

At which Miller began to rave, demanding who was master of the ship, and whether his mates had any other stowaways. Then he ordered Fraser to turn the two boys forward, and to set them to work, for he "worn't agoin' to have any idle varmints in his ship!" with many such wild and wicked exclamations.

George and Sidney were no cowards, nor were they very simple boys, as we know, or shall soon find out; yet what they heard and saw at this time so unnerved them that they were speechless. Miller was in the act of rolling towards them, proposing, it would seem, to take active measures for their ejection, when Fraser interfered. "Oh, shut up!" he bellowed; "let the bairns alone! Can't you see, you lubber, that them's no stowaways? They're gentlemen's sons, ye ken, just freends o' moins. They're goin' to Quebec in this ship, and in this cabin, so shut up and hould yer jaw!"

Miller replied to him in words unmentionable, declaring that he would have no gentlemen's sons about him—that he would not be made a convenience for Fraser, or any other man, and again made as though to eject the lads. Then George spoke.

"See here, Captain Miller," he spoke as gently as he could, "I and my friend are passengers; we've paid our passage in this ship. I have the receipt in my pocket. What do you mean by insulting us thus?"

"You've—paid—your—passage?" and he glared at the boys; then he turned to Fraser, his eyes and mouth agitated with anger. At last he blurted out, "You got that money!—you scoundrel! you robber!" But why continue?—one cannot repeat his language. Suddenly he made a rush at his mate, and in an instant they were rolling on the deck, fighting like dogs!

Our boys rushed up on to the poop—what was to

be done?—what could they do? The land lay smiling along the starboard beam, the sea was dotted with red-sailed fishing-boats, the day was brilliant. The pleasant breeze was humming through the rigging, and the vessel with yards squared and billowing canvas was bowling down Channel gloriously. But the lads saw nothing but the land so near. “Oh, George,” exclaimed Sid, “how we’ve been taken in! We cannot stay here; before it is too late, let us make them land us!”

And George replied that he only wished that could be managed, but how could it be? They could hear the struggle going on below; they peeped down, and saw the two brutes rolling, scratching, kicking, and the steward gazing at them stolidly, looking himself to be half drunk.

The second mate, Balfe, was in charge of the ship; he sympathized with their troubles when they told him, but as to their being landed—“No, no,” said he, shaking his head, “I guess there’s no going ashore from this craft until we pull up at Quebec. Take my advice, boys, let the old man heave around as he pleases, it’s not your business; and as for Fraser, I know he’s a terror! Keep your tongues still, to him, and for the rest, let ’em rip! they won’t hurt you.”

“But how about the ship, isn’t it very dangerous? Who is to navigate?” they asked; “that’s what we are thinking about.”

“Oh! as to that,” Balfe explained, “I hold a

master's certificate, I can sail this hooker all right. It's my first voyage in her, and be sure it'll be my last, I've settled that already. I'm only making this trip in her to my home in Canada, cheaply. I thought it would be fun, a kind of holiday! I'm second—really—on a mail-steamer."

"Canada!" cried George. "Are you a Canadian?—I am—from Toronto, you say! That's splendid. I come from Ingersoll. D'ye know it? Yes? Then you'll look out and help us all you can, eh?"

Balfe promised; assuring them that they need not fear, that he and the crew, amongst whom he saw there were good men, would look out—that if things went too far he would iron the captain and the mate, and altogether he so cheered the boys up that they became better satisfied. "They were all in a hole," as Balfe said, and they must make the best of it, and this is about what they did.

The row continued below for some time; then it died away, and Sid, peeping down the skylight, saw the two sitting hobnobbing together, talking amicably, a bottle and glasses between them!

After awhile the steward came to Balfe, saying the captain and the mate were dead drunk in their bunks, and all was well, and that he was going to get food ready. Hearing which he gave that functionary to understand that as he could see already, before they had sunk the land, how things were going, he for his part should make nothing of taking charge of the

ship and making captain, chief mate, and steward "toe the mark." He said this in a way to cow the fellow, and it seemed he succeeded, for he spread a table decently, took some food on deck to Balfe, and set a meal before the boys much better than any they had yet sat down to.

He put their cabin a bit straight too. They had plenty of rugs and wraps of their own—there were two bunks in the room. All their luggage was there, and also some barrels, kegs and cases, containing provisions, seemingly.

Being too upset to go to bed early, the boys remained on the poop with Balfe until near midnight, when Fraser struggled up, growled a few words to them, and sent the second mate below, telling him he would stand watch till morning. Then they retired, Balfe assuring them that Fraser, when sober, was a first-rate sailor, that they need not fear, and that, anyway, he would come up occasionally and see that all went well.

And every day after that for thirty days either the captain or the mate got drunk. Often they both did together, when there was "war." Our boys never felt safe. Fraser, when sober, did his duty to the ship, in a way. When drunk, of course he acted shamefully. As for the conversation that went on, on deck and below, it was simply awful. Fraser once told Captain Andrew that they would hear much "releegious" talk! If the use of Scripture and holy words and names

uttered blasphemously can be so called, then they certainly did hear plenty ; but oh, the terror of it ! George and Sidney's hearts sank, they shivered with anguish at the awful language. It was, they said to each other and Balse, only by God's mercy that the ship and all on board were not hurled instantly to perdition. They went to their beds each night appalled, they arose from them in dread.

Mercifully they experienced the best of weather all the month ; they had few foul winds, few calms, and but for the miserable captain, mate, and steward, they would have done well. The less said about the food the better ; it was hardly fit for pigs, and only hunger induced them to partake of it.

They had sailed from London on the 14th day of April, they made Cape Race, Newfoundland, on the 13th of May. Balse really did the navigating.

It was evening ; the captain had become raving mad with drink, and had quarrelled with the mate ; they scuffled in sight of all hands.. Fraser thrashed Miller, then went below, and got dead drunk himself !

That night Balse shortened sail ; there was only wind enough to give the barque steerage way, and there were icebergs in sight. At daybreak Miller came on deck, rated Balse for cowardice, had every stitch set that the ship could carry, then went below. He was hardly out of sight when up came the mate and blew Balse up for risking the ship and all on board by "pilin' on the canvas—amongst the land

'n all!" and everything was clewed up or hauled down but the lower topsails and the jib, then *he* went below.

Balfe, disgusted, called some of the oldest sailors aft, and told them how matters stood, asking their opinion and advice.

The resolution arrived at was to stow all drink away, then to lock the steward in his room; and when Miller and his mate were sober enough to understand, they were to be warned by Balfe and three of the leading seamen that if they were seen to be intoxicated again, they would be ironed and shut up in their rooms; would be carried so to port and there be dealt with.

There being a decent breeze, Balfe pushed the ship on, and the following day they made Cape Rozier light, near Gaspé. Then it fell calm. The two reprobates slunk on deck and were instantly warned, as arranged, by Balfe and the men. They were meek enough now and promised to keep straight. The boys remained on deck most of the night. At sunrise they were close in to land, so near that they could see the houses ashore; and the grey land, just waking from its winter sleep, looked pleasant, and our lads longed to set foot on it, and said so. Miller and Fraser were looking very miserable; they wanted, as they admitted, "a hair of the dog that bit them," and made humble overtures of friendship to George and Sid, who, wondering if they really meant kindness, suggested

that they should be set ashore there. But Fraser jeered at the idea of their landing, called it a miserable spot (which it was), and declared that he, having promised Captain Andrew to deliver them safely in Quebec, intended to do so. This made them very angry, and they told the fellows what they thought of them, and promised to write fully from Quebec to Captain Andrew, which enraged Fraser, and caused him to utter much hideous discourse, at the end of which he said, "Why, then, d'ye no tak' a boat and pull yersels ashore? If you hate the ship, and us, as you say you do, I'd no be lang aboard her!"

Late that afternoon, the sky being overcast, Balse told the boys that he saw the "loom" of ice ahead, and by and by they saw that the sea right across their course was covered with it.

The breeze was very light then; the ship would hardly head her course, either. Balse was for "heaving to," but the captain and first officer thought differently. "No," said they, "keep pushing on. It's all brash, rotten stuff; she'll shove through it, then we can bring her to, if you like—there cannot be much of it at this season."

So the barque was kept on; she moved slower and slower into the mass of broken ice; the breeze dropped entirely when she had reached the thick of it, and she was fast!

They let go some halliards, clewed up topgallant-sails, lowered a boat and tried to push the floes aside

with boathooks, and to tow her through the obstruction, but all was useless, so at sunset they gave up the hope of moving her, and fastened the boat astern.

The ship and ice no doubt were drifting to the northward then, probably towards the western end of the Straits of Belle Isle.

Balfe was tired out ; the captain and the mate were sober, and it was believed could not get at drink, so as there appeared to be no chance of getting clear that night, he turned in to obtain the sleep he so much needed.

When evening had closed in, and the cook, who now acted as steward, came aft to set some food on the cabin-table, old Miller came in too. Fraser was there, and the two boys. Judge of their disgust when they saw the captain, with a wicked leer, lift from a pocket of his monkey-jacket a bottle, seemingly of gin!

The two old toppers immediately began at it, in spite of George and Sidney, who eagerly expostulated with them, and threatened to call Balfe. This so enraged the men that they actually attacked the lads, and after a long tussle they managed to force them into their room. Luckily the key was inside, and the boys were able to turn it on them. They opened their port and shouted awhile, without effect ; however, feeling safe in there, and knowing that when Balfe missed them they would be discovered, they were not very much alarmed.

And as they were leaning from their port, down-

hearted, miserable and longing for the end of this wretched voyage, and for the shore, Sid was attracted to the boat still floating beneath them. He put out his hand—he could touch the painter! “George,” he whispered excitedly, “we can reach that rope—we can pull the boat close in; what is to hinder our loading all our things in it, and clearing off with them? Say—what’s to hinder us?”

“My word!” ejaculated George—“my word, Sid! It’s a splendid night, the sea’s as smooth as glass, and we know exactly where the land lies—it can’t be far away. It’s a grand idea! Certainly we’ll do it. Let us wait until all is quiet. Hurrah!”

It was not very silent in the cuddy; they heard the drinkers talking loudly, then singing hoarsely, then quarrelling. By and by they heard Balfe’s voice, and scuffling, and the gruff accents of some foremast hands, and they understood that the two drunken rascals were fastened in their rooms. So, feeling they were safe, and remembering what they had planned, the lads kept silent. Balfe came to their door and tried it, and they heard him say, “Ah! poor lads, I guess they’re about used up; let them sleep.”

No side-lights, no look-out, no system of safeguarding was used on board that ship. That such carelessness is not unknown at sea, even now, is very certain. There was nothing of the kind on this night, on this ship, at any rate, and before midnight seemingly all hands were sleeping.

In the meantime the boys had packed their gear; they took a bag of biscuits and some tins of preserved meat and milk, and a few such articles; they filled a demijohn which happened to be in their room with fresh water, which also was fortunately there. They laid a five-pound note conspicuously, with a written message attached, and then at midnight, after breathing a short prayer for guidance, they successfully carried out the scheme, as we already know.

This was the message they fastened to the five-pound note—

“We have taken the mate’s advice, and gone ashore. We have borrowed your boat and gone to Gaspé. We have taken some biscuits and things; here is a five-pound note to pay for them. You can call for your boat at Gaspé when you are homeward bound.”

CHAPTER II

WE left George Young and Sidney Croly sleeping peacefully. It would be about noon when they closed their eyes.

The sun was low when Sid suddenly awoke and with a scared look gazed around him—at his sleeping chum, at the contents of the boat, at the still, placid sea. What had awakened him so suddenly? he wondered; and was afraid. George had not moved; nothing was disturbed—yet he had been aroused by some strange noise. He was quite certain it was not a dream.

Swish! and the noise was repeated behind him! Turning sharply he saw that something living had flashed past through the water. Then, “George! George!” he cried. “Here, wake up! wake! there’s a big fish or some creature at us! Look—is it a shark?”

George started up, rubbed his eyes and stared. As he did so, *swish!* and the rushing creature passed; then came another, and another! “Ah! ah! porpoises!” he exclaimed. “No harm in them, don’t be frightened, Sid. They’ll play around us. Let us watch. See that fellow jump?—hear them grunt?—like pigs, eh?”

It was an amusing spectacle ; the agile creatures rushed about the boat, leapt from the water, and fell back into it with a mighty splash. Now a dozen, one behind the other, madly raced ahead ; anon they rolled soberly along, abreast ; then suddenly they would leap and dive, and throw themselves about amazingly. It was a delight to watch how they evidently enjoyed their life.

"This will not do though," said George ; "we must get on, we have slept too long. If we mean to get ashore to-night we must lay into it." With that they doffed their jackets and began to row.

The instant an oar touched water the porpoises vanished.

"Which way ?" asked Sid. "How do we know how to steer ?"

"Why south, of course," answered George, and he went on cheerily and confidently. "It's easy to tell south too now, for there's the west, where the sun is going to set !"

As they pulled away merrily, till the sun had really gone and a greyness had crept across the sea. They stopped then, stood up and peered ahead. There were clouds in what they thought was the south, a bank of them, which to their untrained eyes looked to be land, and not so very distant. They rejoiced, and bent eagerly to their oars again.

It was becoming quite dusk when they halted for another inspection. The bank had grown considerably ;

it had extended to the east and west of them, as well as to the south; they thought that they were in a bay.

"That's grand!" exclaimed Sid; "are not we doing well? In another hour we should reach that shore. Eh? What d'ye think?"

As they were about proceeding George was attracted by a white speck just where the grey bank ended to their left. "Aha!" he shouted, "look there! What d'ye think of that? It's a lighthouse, Cape Rozier perhaps. Let us steer for it!" and they shoved the boat's head round and pulled vigorously.

They must have been heading then about due north. Sid said so.

"Oh! never mind, it's a lighthouse sure enough!" declared George, "and that means land," and, as they pulled, from time to time they glanced over their shoulders at the gleam of white on the horizon.

"Do you see it still, Sid?" George would inquire.

"Yes—oh! yes," would be the answer, and then, in a minute or two, George would take a look and Sid would ask, "See it, George?" "Yes! yes!" he would reply, so on they went energetically.

But as the darkness grew Sid remarked to George that it was strange they did not see the light, if that was a lighthouse.

George pondered, and admitted that it was queer, but supposed it was only from one particular position that the light could be seen, which seemed to satisfy them.

It had become quite dark by this time, and there was a trifling breeze coming from straight astern. It was hardly strong enough to break the surface of the water, but they could feel it. They were looking for a star to steer by; they were puzzled, for not one was visible. The sky was entirely overcast, the air seemed close, damp, oppressive. What did it mean? They were perplexed, but said, as the breeze blew exactly to where they wished to go, they only had to keep it behind them, and that would be all right. They were thankful for this. Moonlight was due directly, they knew; this would allow them to land in comfort; so they tugged on zealously.

It was too dark to see the time by their watch; yet they were sure it was quite time the moon showed up, and there was no sign of her; what could *that* mean?

They were becoming very weary again, and anxious. They had had about enough of it, and land, any land, anywhere, was what they yearned for—prayed for.

Then suddenly they saw the moon—and some height up! but how different from its previous night's appearance. Then it was brilliant, sharply defined, light-giving—now it was dim and blurred, a pale blue disc, ghostly in the sky. Across it mists were slowly moving, and they understood that they were enveloped in dense fog lying low on the surface of the deep.

This was awfully depressing; their hearts sank.

They were brave boys though ; they did not lose their heads.

“ Well, it don't matter very much so far as I can think,” observed Sid ; “ it's damp and choky, but if we keep going with the wind astern, we're bound to be right. Come, let us cover up that bag of biscuit and the guns, and then get on again. It can't be far now.”

This they did, and jogged on. •The wind was very light ; it did not appear to help them much, but, indeed, as they said, it was a great blessing to have it ; it was better than a star, for it showed them their way. Often during these weary hours they thanked their Heavenly Father for this mercy, and they prayed Him to continue with them, to aid them and direct them, and bring them speedily to their desired haven.

They must have gone on till nearly midnight, wearily, wearily working. The boat was heavy and her load was large : so were the oars—not handy, like those they had used on the dear old Thames, nor even like George had rowed with at Hastings. They rested frequently, peering and listening, and growing more and more tired and anxious as time went by.

During one of their intervals of rest the boys were attracted by a peculiar noise resounding across the water. They listened intently ; they could tell the exact direction whence it came ; it was on their port beam. For many minutes they sat motionless, wondering. Now they heard as it were the rush of

water, then a roar as if a sea were breaking. Could it be a whale? they asked each other. But they supposed that one of those creatures would not remain in one spot so long, and if it moved it would do so almost noiselessly. No, they decided that it was not a whale. A steamer then? Oh! no, they knew that, too, would be moving—slowly perhaps through the fog—and her syren would be roaring almost ceaselessly; they knew that much of nautical affairs. What could it be then?

The night was terribly cold, and yet they sat long—wondering.

Suddenly George exclaimed, "Why, what idiots we are! Ridiculous! Sid, don't you know what it is? No? Why, my boy, it's land, land, glorious land! That's the noise of the waves breaking on the beach! Hark, don't you hear the regularity of them? Can't you fancy you are on the front at Hastings? Hurrah, it's grand! it's good! Thank Heaven for this."

Sid was naturally enchanted, and fresh vigour came to them at once. They plunged their oars in deeply, and tugged at them right heartily, and every stroke they made, they felt, brought them nearer to the blessed land. They even got so near that they wondered they could not see it through that fog. They could feel the heaving of the swells; the broken water, even, reached back to them.

This turmoil they supposed meant rocks, and rocks meant danger. They knew they must be cautious;

they must hold off, till they could pick out a good, safe landing-place. However, being certain that they were close to shore, in spite of the horrible, fearful cold, they were so elated that they said that even if they had to wait till daylight it would not matter much. So they pulled on their coats, wrapped rugs round them and sat there shivering, having merely, with an oar astern, to keep the boat's head rightly pointing.

The moon gave but little light down on the surface of the sea. Overhead there was luminosity, and they could pick out the pale form of the orb, but in where the surf was breaking there was impenetrable gloom. They fixed their gaze there, hoping for a glimpse of the longed-for land. It was intensely disappointing to be, as they were supposing, within a few yards of it, and yet nothing to be visible.

Thus they waited, and longed for, prayed for, day.

And as they thus waited there was a break—a fissure, as one might term it—in that fog, and there before their staring eyes they saw something towering up, with seas breaking along its margin.

“A cliff!” they exclaimed together, and believed it was that. And they were right, but that it was not of rock, or chalk, or earth, they soon realized. George groaned with horror as he cried, “It's no cliff, Sid—no land at all! It's just a floating iceberg!”

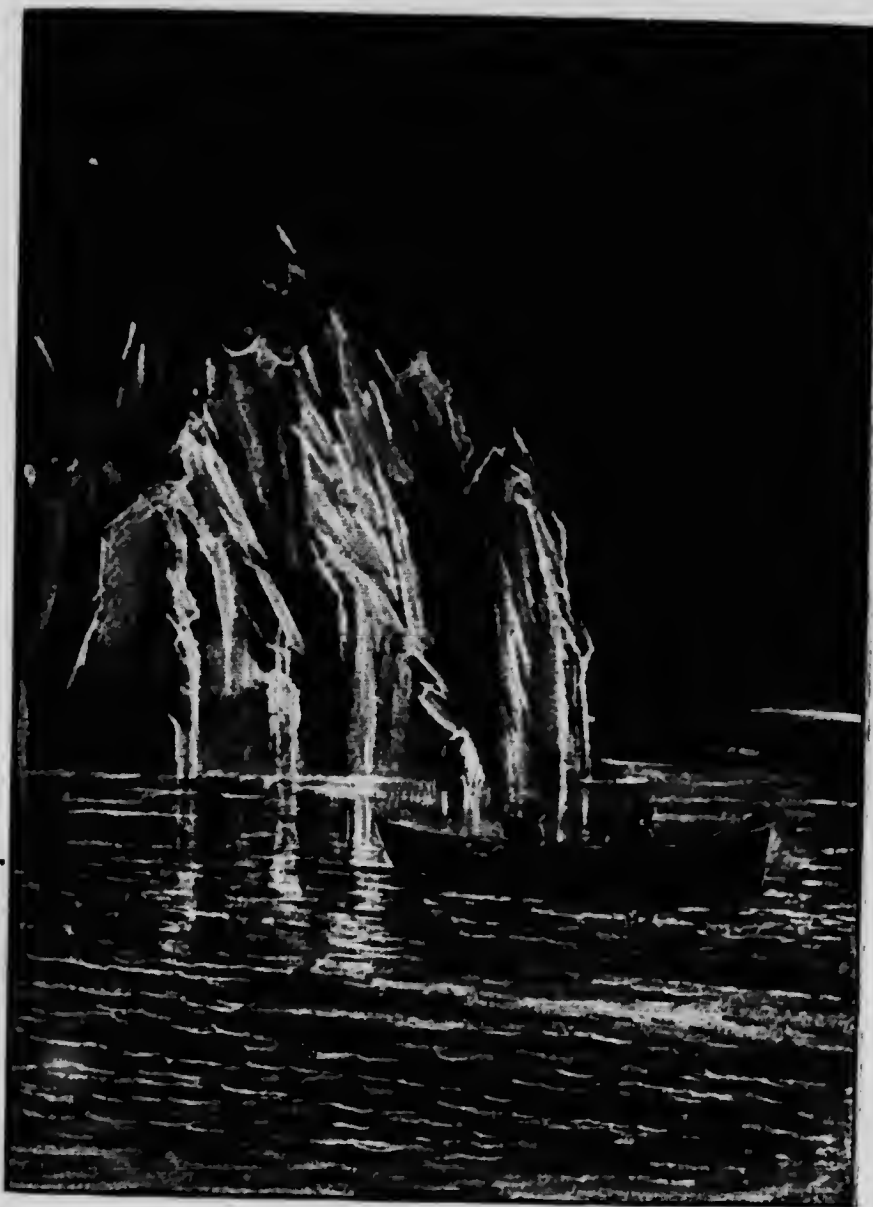
As he spoke the veil of mist was wafted clear away, and there before them, brilliant in the moonbeams, lay the mass of snow-white ice, domed and pinnacled!

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“IT'S NO CLIFF, SID—NO LAND AT ALL! IT'S JUST A
FLOATING ICEBERG.”

[Page 40.]



It was a beautiful, a supremely beautiful object—but not to the boys. It was with awe, with dread, they gazed at it. They were amazed, appalled, but for a few seconds only; then the thick fog enveloped it again, so quickly, that only the roaring of the surf around its base assured them that it was no myth, no bad dream which they had dreamt—that it was no mere wild and horrible illusion.

It is impossible to find words to describe the bewilderment, the despondency and despair of the two unfortunates at this disappointment. For some time they rested on their oars, speechless—daunted. The roaring of the surf was growing louder; they were drifting, probably broadside on, to the ice; that roused George.

“This will not do, Sid!” he cried. “Come, let us pull the boat out of danger, anyway!”

Sid did not answer, but mechanically dipped his oar and hove the boat's head round till she pointed from the berg. George lent a hand, and they rowed listlessly off until the sound of the breakers was far away; then they brought their oars in and waited.

“Oh, if it were only daylight!” sighed Sid.

“And if it were—what then?” groaned George; “which way are we to go? We can tell nothing at all about it in this fog—we have not got a compass. And suppose it comes on to blow, and the sea rises! If we use up our water, if we have to go on like this much longer, what can become of us?”

"Have you any idea of the geography of this part?" asked Sid. "I confess that I have not the slightest. I have not looked at a map since I left school, and there they taught us very little about them."

George replied mournfully—

"And I have but the vaguest notion. I know there is much land about here, that is, if we have not drifted out to the open sea—past that land we sighted the other day, you remember—Cape Race. If we are in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, there must be land both sides of us and ahead too; and behind us, I suppose, the ocean, and no land. I don't know. It is a most amazing fact that we British, who own more of this earth than any other nation, and do more business with other countries than all the world combined, yet appear to almost entirely neglect the study of geography. No, I have but the vaguest idea where we are, or where we can get to, and if we knew, how to lay a course," and the boys sat there utterly despondent.

After a little Sid spoke again—

"The breeze still blows," said he; "if it was right to run before it before we came across that iceberg, why is it not right to do so now? Why should we not go on as we were?"

"Sid, you are cleverer than I am," George replied to him. "What you urge is sensible; only remember we changed our course; we supposed that fog-bank we were steering for was land, and that white thing was a lighthouse. Oh, how we've been mistaken!"

"Well, and wasn't that a lighthouse?"

"No, no, it was just an iceberg, probably that same one we've just been in sight of!" Then they were silent again.

But soon Sid began—"George, listen to this. If we are, as you imagine, surrounded by land—yes—all right—I know," for George was endeavouring to get a word of objection in, but Sid persisted: "If we are surrounded by land, except only where there is an opening to the Atlantic Ocean, then it appears to me certain that if we keep moving on in *any one* course we are bound to come to it. If, please God, we retain our strength, and our provender holds out, we shall certainly come to land. And about that opening to the sea! I remember Balfe telling me when we had left Cape Race and were near Cape Ray that it was only sixty miles across to the other land, south of it—Cape Breton—and that there were several islands in the way. It seems to me that passage must be far off to the east of us; so, if we do but continue steering in one way, either north, or south, or west, we *must* find land; what do you think?"

George pondered awhile, then said he believed his friend was right; only as they had no certainty which was north or south or west, they were no better off. At which Sid said he hoped that when the sun rose they could mark the point, and would discover exactly which was the east, and so could set a course. He proposed that they should eat and drink, cover them-

selves up warmly and wait for day; that George should take a nap whilst he kept watch, after which he would take a turn at sleep. They both needed rest sadly. Sid just then was the better of the two. They ate a biscuit, routed out a packet of chocolate, and George, stretched in the bottom, was quickly in the land of dreams. Sid sat in the stern-sheets with an oar astern; he was determined to keep awake, but he made a line fast to his oar in case of accidents. Fortunately the boat did not leak. They had an iron bucket for a bailer, and only had to use it once or twice.

Sid was determined not to go to sleep, but he wrapped a heavy rug about himself, for it was still very cold, and sat there thinking deeply, sadly, and most despondently. He could have been positive that he had not slept, that he had merely closed his eyes for warmth's sake! Yet when he opened them next it was day!

Day, sure enough. The sun was high, and it was warm; and overhead the sky was blue, though misty. But on the face of the water it was still a dense fog, like smoke; he could not see the boat's length through it. George at length rousing, at once sprang up and shouted excitedly—

“It's day! You've let me sleep too long! Where did the sun rise?”

Sid had to own that he too had slept, and could not tell a bit about it! It was dreadfully annoying—

disastrous they considered--but neither blamed the other. They endeavoured by watching closely to make out the sun's course, and thereby find their own, but that failed; and they knew they must wait for evening, and carefully mark the point of sunset.

It is true that if they had made these discoveries they would have been almost useless to them. Experienced seamen, without chart or compass, would have found it a difficult task; but this idea served its purpose; it kept their minds occupied and their hearts up.

Most of that day they were lying on their backs, basking in the warmth, talking, planning, praying, and passing a slow and melancholy time waiting for sundown.

They ate nothing till late, and mercifully thirst did not trouble them. In the middle of that afternoon they were attracted by a strange, distant sound. Straining their ears, they soon made out that it was the screaming of a steamer's foghorn, a steam syren, and coming towards them, for the yell sounded every minute, and each yell was louder than the last.

Eagerly they listened. Would the vessel come close enough to hear them calling? Ought they to pull towards her? They were doubtful how to act. Soon a scream arose so near that they feared she would run them down, and they lifted up their voices and shouted.

Above the low-lying fog, and gliding swiftly through it, they perceived her three mast-heads. At the main a French ensign flew with a long red pennant over

it, and they remembered these were the house-flags of the Allan line! Safety, comfort, companionship, was passing within a few yards of them. They shouted, but they were not heard; the mast-heads vanished, the screams of the syren diminished in force, and that chance was lost.

There they sat, desponding, until the rollers raised by the passage of the huge liner nearly capsized them; but they swung the boat's bow to the billows and kept her so till their force had abated, and then they sat on grieving and much discouraged.

They could not tell, of course, whether the ship that had passed them was bound for Quebec and Montreal, or home to Liverpool, and they would not have cared, they said. To have got on board would have been all they wanted.

"Yes," they declared, "anything would have been better than their plight. They were lost! hopeless! helpless!" They would drift about on that grey, dismal ocean in that awful fog, until, food and water gone, they would starve to death, or in some dire storm be capsized and swamped. So they believed.

One who has not experienced the horror of a fog at sea, such as so frequently prevails about Newfoundland Banks and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, has but a vague idea of the terror of it. It is bad enough in a big ship with every appliance for safety and comfort; in an open boat, enveloped in one, to be

embedded, packed closely, as it were, in cotton wool, not being able to see a hand's-breadth from one's face, and to hear nothing, is ten times more terrible.

How our boys passed the rest of the afternoon they cannot remember. They have a vague recollection of conversing together, murmuring about their plight, regretting that they had so madly left their ship, and ruing the day that they were inveigled into taking passage in her by the dreadful Fraser; they bewailed the grief that this disaster would cause their parents, and altogether they had a very miserable day. They had calculated that the sun would set about 7.30, and as that hour drew near Sid arose, shook off his lethargy, and said, "Come, George, it's not a bit of use bemoaning thus. Let us be up and doing; let us try hard to mark the sunset; it will be all right to-morrow. Come, let us kneel and pray to God, and then acquit ourselves like men; for men we certainly are now, or should be after this experience."

At which George, rising, clasped his comrade's hand and wrung it. "Thank God! I do, Sid, most heartily, for your companionship and bravery. Yes, let us kneel and thank Him, who has so far preserved us, and let us pray to Him to rescue us. In His hands we are; 'tis He alone can save us."

The two lads knelt and prayed their heartfelt prayers, and peace came to them. They were wonderfully cheered. They ate some food, sipped a few

drops of the precious water, then waited patiently until the sun should touch the horizon, trusting that they would perceive the spot.

There they sat silently for a long, long time, until it was much past seven, and there was no more light above them than around them : they were shrouded, enfolded—one cannot find words to convey to the reader the horror of their position—in a mass of fog like wool ; they fancied they could feel the weight of it pressing them down. There was absolutely nothing visible, and although they were but six inches from the surface of the sea, it was necessary to put the hand into it to realize that there was water there!

Gradually the light faded, and in no one spot in the surrounding gloom did it last longer than in another. They had not even the satisfaction of saying, "Over there light lingers, *that* must be the west."

It was ten by George's watch—he wound it. "Another hope gone!" he groaned. "We must still wait. Oh! God, have mercy on us!"

All that day the fog had been dry, the sea motionless. Now it was damp, and there was what sailors call "a swell" upon the deep. It was very slight, merely a gentle heaving—as though old ocean breathed. The boys rolled themselves in rugs and lay back in the stern sheets miserable enough. The absolute silence, the entire absence of anything visible a few inches from their faces, was unspeakably oppressive. They did not speak to each other—what were

they to say? Each no doubt thought of home and dear ones, each realized that night, as he never did before, how absolutely they were dependent on Almighty God. They rested then, solemnly awaiting His action.

George has since declared that he was quite reconciled to death—he certainly believed that nothing but that was before them—and Sid has admitted that the same was much his case. They slept, they awoke, gazed fearfully around, then slept again—for how long they knew not. At length George, fully aroused, with a start perceived that it was light enough to see the face of his watch. It was two a.m. He rubbed his eyes, he shook himself—was he really not asleep?—for suddenly he noted that all trace of fog was gone, and the moon was shining clearly in a star-spangled sky.

“Sid, rouse up! rouse up!” he cried. “Look, it’s clear, clear as a bell, my boy! Thank God, there’s hope for us now.”

Sid, instantly alert, threw off the coverings, stood up, and gazed around bewildered. “Yes! yes! Thank God, I say!” he exclaimed, and they both sank on their knees in gratitude and praise.

“Is it not wonderful? is it not glorious? If we only knew which was the south we could get on grandly. Don’t you know anything about stars? Which is the North Star?” he asked George.

George replied: “It’s precious little that I know; but where’s the Great Bear—Ursa Major? There; well

that's in the north, I know, and two of those stars are called the Pointers, but which two is the question. I can't tell ; but, anyhow, the north is over there, and the opposite horizon, over there towards that bright star, is south. So, come, let us take to the oars and pull that way—we *know* the land is there."

This they did, rowing awhile, resting awhile—longing, longing for day. And before very long a streak of rosy light appeared on their left ; soon the heavens were aflame, and then the glorious sun rose and dazzled them, and they knew that they were heading south.

With the sun a breeze arose, and with the breeze there came strange creatures. At first they supposed that they were porpoises. Those they had seen were black above and silver-grey below, but these animals were white, just as if they were encased in pure white kid ! They gambolled round the boat so closely that their big blue eyes were plainly to be seen. Some were six, some ten feet long, the boys judged.

They leapt, rolled, played many antics, and were full of life and energy. The boys enjoyed the sight immensely, though they had some fear that during the seemingly reckless capers one might alight on board and swamp them !

"White porpoises, eh ?" said Sid. "I never knew there were such creatures—did you ever hear of them ?"

"No—but I think I know what these are," George

answered. "I had a friend at Sutton Valence, where I was at school, who had been through these seas many times. I remember his describing the white whales—belugas, he called them—in St. Lawrence Gulf, and that is what these things are, I'm sure. What is more, he told me they are only found in the Gulf and River, amongst the land you know, so our finding them here is, I think, proof positive that we are in the Gulf."

They had ceased rowing; when they began again the white whales sheered off, but for hours they kept in sight, seeming to like the companionship of the boat. Their presence had a salutary effect on our lads, and they rowed on cheerfully.

The afternoon arrived. It was four p.m.; they had halted to eat and drink a little. George, standing erect, gazing round the horizon, was attracted by something in the distance.

Was it a sail—a lighthouse—or merely a floating spar?

He hauled out the glasses, brought them to bear, and instantly the truth was revealed. "A tree!" he cried; "a pine tree, Sid! Look for yourself, my boy! We're saved! Oh, joy! Oh, gladness!"

Sid being satisfied that it was a growing tree, they then pulled on again with all the energy they possessed, and very soon more trees were visible, and next high land hove in sight, white, bold, precipitous, like the chalk cliffs of England.

There were stretches of lowland, they presently discovered, along the coast; it was covered with bushes and low trees, tall pines rearing their crests above them; and when still nearer they made out that the whole shore was rocky ledges, stretching out far into the sea. But oh, the glory of it!

Soon they found their way impeded by seaweed in immense patches; it appeared to extend for miles along the shore, at some distance from it. There were, however, openings amongst it, through one of which they passed; but on the reefs of rocks the surf was breaking with such force that they did not at once see a safe place to land.

There was a current along the coast; they allowed their boat to drift, merely keeping steerage-way on her. They knew, or thought, that it did not matter where they landed; whichever way they drifted mattered nothing, so they said.

A long tongue of land stood out, a mile ahead of them; they reached it quickly. A heavy swell broke on the outer point; they sheered clear of it, and beyond it they saw what looked like the entrance to a river. Joyfully they put their boat's head to the opening, rowed in enthusiastically, and finding a shelving, sandy beach a short distance up, they ran it ashore and without difficulty landed.

We can imagine the joy, the thankfulness, with which they both felt solid earth beneath their feet again.

CHAPTER III

YES, the boys were ashore, sure enough, and believed that their weary wanderings were over; with grateful hearts they gazed around, delighted. The sun was low; there was not time to linger. They tied the boat to a rock and clambered up the hill near the beach, expecting to find a house, accommodation for the night, and make arrangements for their journey to Quebec.

It did not cross their minds that they were in any but an inhabited land. They supposed they had landed on Gaspé. Sid remarked that it looked different from what they saw from the ship, and George agreed with him, but said it was not likely they had struck the same spot they saw then, but added that it did not matter. There were plenty of inhabitants, he knew—mostly French—who would help and direct them.

The hill was a bit difficult to mount; it was covered with very low, close-growing spruce, so twisted and matted together that in places they could have walked along the top of it without sinking in! There were a few small birches and poplars about, and tall pines, as already mentioned, here and there. It was

very difficult to push through this curious growth. However, they struggled to the highest point from which they could see some distance inland, but there were no habitations nor signs of inhabitants about.

It was odd, and most disappointing. The night was falling, and they concluded that it was foolish to be tramping about in the dark; so they got back to the beach and their boat, which they found high and dry. They had landed on the top of the tide, which was now falling.

Determined to sleep ashore, in a nook amongst the rocks, they spread their blankets. "Now," said George, "we'll have a fire; hand out the matches." Sid did so; wax vestas in a paper box; they were all damp. They tried a dozen—not one would light. This was provoking, and they had reckoned on a camp-fire.

However, as it was quite warm, and for only one night, they were cheerful about it, and ate some biscuits. There was plenty of good fresh water running down an adjacent hillside, so they drank their fill of it, had a glorious wash, brought their Gladstone bags ashore, and rummaged out a change of clothing, and soon were in considerable comfort, the perfume of the spruce, and even of the seaweed on the beach, being delightful.

Later, they noticed that as the tide receded, a bar of hard sand was left bare across the entrance to this inlet. They had the curiosity to examine it. Amongst

the *débris* there was a huge lobster sprawling. They were sorry that they had no fire—they could have roasted it, for it was some days since they had tasted meat, and they longed for it.

The night was brilliant; it was cold, however. Yet, rolled snugly in their blankets, they muttered that it was their last night of discomfort, and were quickly asleep. They did not awaken until the sun was up next morning.

They spread their damp matches in the sun to dry; the heat was too great for them, or from some cause they could not get one to burn; so could not have a fire. "Ah! well," said Sid, "we'll do; let's have a tin of milk." They did so, and with biscuits made a meal. Then they packed everything snugly in their boat, and shouldered their guns and started for the interior, feeling sure they would soon see a house.

They planned to ascend the inlet, which looked very beautiful. There was a shallow stream of fresh water running down it, between sandy banks; it was good walking for more than a mile beside it. Often they stopped to pick a flower or to admire the prospect. In the brook fish were numerous—trout, they thought. More than once they raised a flock of ducks; once George took a shot and bagged a brace; they left them on a rock till their return.

As they ascended, the trees increased in size; they recognized birch and poplar and some that looked like cedars; and always a few pines towered above

everything. They were continually remarking what a glorious land it was. For two boys who had yearned for an outdoor life amongst the woods and their inhabitants there could not have been a more fascinating scene. George, as we know, was born in Canada, and had some memory of his childhood in the woods; but, as he told Sid, he had no recollection of any place so picturesque and so full of interest as this, where there were such possibilities of enjoying what most boys hold so dear. And as for Sid—in his London life he had never even imagined anything so perfect. So they were both delighted with their first hour in the bush of Canada.

After a mile or so the stream became choked with rocks, and they had to make their way through the rough vegetation along its margin. This was an entanglement of twisted spruce and other bushes, amongst fallen logs, decaying branches—a maze of them. Often the water, dammed by huge boulders, fell musically into deep pools, or went rolling over a rock-strewn bed. Their way was continually rising, and as they occasionally emerged at open vistas, they could look back, down the way they had come, but very seldom could they see far ahead up stream. It was terribly tiring work; they had never imagined it would be such toil as they experienced, mounting that narrowing valley. There was no path, no evidence of any one ever having been that way, which much surprised them.

However, slowly but surely they were ascending. It was high noon when they came out upon more open land, where a placid lake, some acres in extent, was spread out before them. It was surrounded by rushes; there were clumps, islands of them, about the little lake; waterfowl were numerous—ducks, widgeon, teal, and others which they did not know. The boys considered by the behaviour of these birds that it was the breeding season with them, for they took no notice of the intruders. Near where they emerged from the tangle of the woods there was a beetling cliff of white rock, shining in the sun like marble. Through thick, coarse grass they forced their way to it, and found means to scale it. When they reached the highest part, which was bare of all vegetation but moss and lichen, they had a view for many a mile around.

Behind them was the open sea; they looked down on the beach where their boat was lying. Inland the view was most extensive; the country rose in undulations—nothing very high; it was mostly timbered with larger trees than any they had yet observed, and there were many stretches of what they took to be clearings. They were delighted, for clearings meant people, and people were what they longed to see.

East and west of them, along the coast, they perceived a series of rocky eminences, generally of no extreme height—two or three hundred feet at most, they thought; but here and there, in

the extreme distance, there were bold heads and promontories considerably higher. It was not an unbroken line of cliff, however; there were frequent breaks and valleys leading south to the interior—openings, they fancied, similar to the one they had come up. Taking but a few minutes to note all this, they began to examine particularly those patches which they took for clearings, desiring to discover which looked the most promising.

With their glasses, which were powerful, they scrutinized them minutely; but there was not one habitation visible! Nor were there fences, signs of roads, or any indications of human life! No sign of a fellow-creature's existence—not one!

This struck our boys as strange; more than that, it greatly disheartened them. They surveyed the scene again and again minutely, and they made it certain that they were looking over a perfectly wild, unsettled country.

Further west they imagined that they saw a change in the aspect, but to get there they considered was impossible, that is, by land. It would take a long, weary time to travel through that rocky, tangled wilderness, and to carry anything through it would be quite impossible.

For long they discussed what they should do, and in the end they decided that their only way was to return to their boat, and in her push along the coast. To the westward they decided was the most likely

direction in which to find settlers. Why they hit upon a western course they never could explain ; had they turned east this story would not have been written.

They examined the sea, which stretched indefinitely to the north of their position ; there was not a sail on it. They could see points jutting out, reefs of rocks, half submerged, stretching for miles, and several bare, sandy beaches on which gulls and sea-birds were congregated, but no sign of a boat or any works of man.

They were dismayed, awfully disappointed. " True," they said, " we have much to be thankful for, in that we have found land and are safe from the perils of the sea." But they wanted more ; how much more they did not then dare to think.

They retraced their steps wearily, reached the stream, and late in the afternoon came to their boat again ; nothing had been touched.

They brought back with them the ducks they had shot. But without fire what use were they ? They determined to have a thorough search for a match in every bag, bundle and pocket ; they searched, but were unsuccessful. As evening drew on they longed more and more for a fire, as it was very chilly, for the sky was overcast ; there seemed to be a change of weather brewing. They sat about, dolefully depressed. There appeared to be nothing for it but to repeat their usual meal of biscuits and cold water.

Suddenly Sid jumped up, exclaiming, " I know how

to get a fire! Pick some fine dry moss; for tinder, gather some dead sticks!" And as he spoke he was rummaging in a bag. He pulled out a bit of cotton-wool, drew the charge from one barrel of his gun, put a few grains of powder in, lightly rammed the wool on top, snapped a cap, blew out the novel charge, and on the ground there lay a pinch of fire. They leaped at it eagerly, sprinkled a little of the dry stuff on it, that caught on, then a few of the driest twigs, next some heavier pieces, and before five minutes flames were leaping up, and the boys were enchanted!

What a wonderful difference a fire made to them! It was like the arrival of a friend; it cheered them, warmed them, put life and energy and hope into them. "Aha!" they exclaimed, "this is a blessing indeed!"

They plucked their ducks, broiled them on the embers, and the first time for days enjoyed a hearty meal. They talked, as they ate, of the trout which they had seen, and the lobster, and they came to the conclusion that with fire and water, and plenty to cook and eat, they need not despair. They had a few cakes of chocolate but no kettle. So George took the iron bucket they used as a bailer; in that he boiled water, and in a milk tin they made a welcome drink, which caused them to feel that there were still some good things in the world.

The bar across the estuary was bare just as it was becoming dark—they had another look at the stuff left by the receding tide. They found several lobsters

crawling amongst it; they took a couple of the finest, and having filled their bucket with sea-water, boiled it and plunged the creatures in. These folks were as happy as children when they saw the lobsters turn red, and that they were as perfect specimens as though they were purchased at Towell's in the Strand. Talk about good fortune!—they felt that they had hit upon a sort of paradise.

That night they piled on firing. There were great quantities of drift timber on the beach, amongst it many good square logs and some huge tree trunks, which had been sawn into twelve or twenty-foot lengths. George called them saw-logs, and declared they were positive proofs that men came there, and that there were settlers at hand, who had deposited them on the shore ready for transportation; therefore, certainly, they would meet with some of them, even if they stayed where they were.

This and their good meal and, above all, their glorious fire, so cheered the lads that they turned in that night feeling so reconciled to their lot that they actually joked about it, and said they only wished that all their English friends were with them to enjoy the splendid picnic.

It was pitch dark when they fell asleep. The waves were moaning in the offing, and on the rocky ledges which ran far out into the sea great waves were thundering; yet in spite of it all the boys slept soundly. Sid awoke once and piled on more fuel, then rolling

in his blanket was off again. It rained that night a little; they found that their bedding was wet when they arose the following morning, but the sky had cicared again, the sun was bright and hot, and there was a pleasant breeze blowing from the east. They soon got everything dry, ate a famous breakfast, and were ready to start to carry out their programme.

They had some difficulty in pushing west. Often they became entangled in the long, strong, matted seaweed, and lost much time in freeing their boat. The reefs and sandy shoals were numerous; sometimes they had to go long distances to round them; they rarely found a hundred yards clear of all obstacles.

Once, when they were some distance from land crossing a bay to another outlying point, they were surrounded by shoals of fish. The surface of the sea was seething with them; their movements were so very rapid that it took some time to discern that they were mackerel.

George, having frequently seen them caught off Hastings, tried now, with one of the lines they fortunately had with them. He used a bit of white rag on the hook, trailed it astern, and soon had the satisfaction of hauling in all they wanted.

About midday they found a good landing-place, went ashore, lit a fire, broiled some fish, and rejoiced at their good fortune.

But their progress had been very slow, and they

had not seen a vestige of humanity, except the squared timber and the saw-logs, with which the beach was literally encumbered.

After a long rest they pushed on again, and, for a while, made better progress. They passed several openings leading inland; once they went ashore, believing they saw signs of men, but were disappointed.

During that afternoon, whilst they were resting on their oars awhile, some little way off the land, they saw what they took to be a man peering at them from a rock. He was leaning on his elbows, with his head stretched up watching them intently; they were close enough to see his black eyes, round and big. He was very brown.

"Is it an Indian?" Sid whispered, turning pale.

"I don't know," George murmured in reply; "it may be. I never thought of Indians—only of white men. But there are no wild Indians in this part of Canada, I know; so we need not be afraid. What can he be doing there? Fishing? Let's call to him, he may direct us."

"Hi!" shouted George. "Hi, man, can you speak English?"

The instant the first "Hi!" sounded across the water the creature slipped off the rock. Their hearts were in their mouths, as it is said. Was the Indian coming for them? What did it mean?

But pretty soon they descried the head bobbing

amongst the small waves, going out to sea, and they saw it joined by several similar black heads. "Pshaw!" cried George, "that was no man. We ought to have known it. How absurd we are! Yet it looked very human, didn't it? It was a seal, Sid!"

Disappointment again—but they went ahead, feeling annoyed, though, at their stupidity. "Well, that's another thing to put into the book," Sid remarked after a bit. "Ducks, lobsters, trout, mackerel, and now seals. We'll be finding a hippopotamus by and by, or an elephant. Something useful, I hope. It makes me think of that curious book, *The Swiss Family Robinson*. I remember those people were constantly getting hold of just the creature they required, exactly where they were located. It did not matter a bit whether the animal only existed in the tropics or the Polar regions; they found it close at hand. I don't think we shall be so lucky."

"Yes," went on George after a little, "if we keep going on like this much longer it seems to me our book will contain a good list." For these boys had kept a sort of diary ever since they left home, and they continued to make jottings in it. They had promised that it should go back to England by the first mail steamer after they reached Montreal. They looked at it now very sorrowfully when they made an entry. When would it go back? they wondered. Would it ever go back?

Towards evening they perceived an opening similar

to that which they had started from in the morning. They went into it. There was a bar across the entrance, too. They just managed to get their boat over before the tide went down and left it bare. They found a stream of fresh water here, as before, and the low hills near the beach were matted thickly with spruce. Half a mile back the white cliffs sheered up as they generally had done where they had yet been. But still there was no sign of humanity.

The sky being much overcast and rain threatening, they searched for a shelter, but could find nothing better than a deep crevice between two rocks. They laid some branches across the top, and with their knives cut rough grass and spruce boughs; which they laid over them to make a roof, under which on the dry, soft sand they spread their blankets. They brought into this shelter also those of their goods which wet would damage.

Nothing disturbed their rest that night, neither man nor beast.

The following morning a thick fog enveloped them, as dense as any they had yet seen; they had some fish on hand, so were all right as far as food went. They waited for the weather to clear, and as evening approached a breeze arose which partially dissipated the fog; but they decided not to run the risk of being enveloped in that at sea again, so stayed where they were another night, and in the morning it was clear and warm again.

That day they progressed fairly well, but still found no sign of men. They did see some living things though—several more seals; some were on the beach high and dry, basking in the hot sun. They noticed a couple of foxes, too, which sat on a log near the water's edge, regarding them with curiosity, but showing no fear.

They only fired one shot at ducks, and got a brace, which made their evening meal. They spent that night in fair comfort, as they found a species of cave close to shore; beside it was a tiny stream of water trickling down the cliff. The night was clear, calm and warm.

These boys were continually saying to each other what a delightful jaunt this would be if taken under different circumstances. They really suffered very little hardship—indeed, to strong, healthy boys there was none at all, that is, so far as bodily suffering went—but when they thought and spoke of being forced to go on thus, without knowing really where they were, or if they were going aright, it was dreadful. There was absolutely nothing to guide them; they only felt certain that if they persistently went west they were bound to arrive at settlements.

They were very impatient; they were most anxious, not really so much about themselves, but about those dear to them in England. For, as they said, when the barque *Duke of Cornwall* arrived at Quebec—if she ever did—Miller would have to report about them.

He would be called on to explain their absence, and would, perhaps, show the paper they left in the cabin ; then enquiries would be made in Gaspé, and as they had not arrived there, it would be concluded that they had been lost amongst the ice, or in some way come to grief, and the news would be cabled to England. Who was to do this, they did not pretend to know.

“And here we are, alive and well,” said Sid, “and very likely close to some place—a village or town perhaps, yet we cannot find it!” Certainly it was most provoking.

Then they got to reckoning how the time was going. It was the 18th of May when they left the ship—they had only been wandering for seven days. They had been thinking it was a month at least, and they knew that with the best of luck the old barque could not get up the St. Lawrence to Quebec from where they left her in less time than that. Indeed she might easily have been stuck in the ice all that time ; possibly, too, Miller and Fraser, alarmed at their departure from their fatherly care, had put back to Gaspé to search for them. So taking all these ideas into consideration, they, with much relief, concluded that it would be easy to reach some place whence they could communicate with home, before even the *Duke of Cornwall* arrived at her destination. This cheered them amazingly.

But what annoyed our young friends was the very

slow progress they were making. They could not keep close along shore. They had to encounter, and go round, rocks, reefs and sandbanks continually, to say nothing of the beds of weed. At times they seemed to be going through the water speedily, yet it grieved them to observe that on their proper course they only made a few miles daily.

However, they were up by day-dawn next morning, ate, packed, and were off quickly, and rowed steadily all that day. They were ceaselessly lifting up their hearts for help and guidance, and in humble thanks to the Almighty for the glorious weather that on the whole they enjoyed, which they well knew was His special gift.

That day was particularly fine; there was a gentle breeze from the east, but there were two long tongues of sand and rock which obliged them to make detours, so that when night arrived, and they noted the landmarks, they had made little more than five miles.

That day they caught more mackerel, and when far out from land they tried in deeper water and pulled up a fine cod. Many seals were basking on the rocks; they passed some so closely that they could easily have shot them, if they had had any use for them. Besides, in examining their stores the evening before they discovered that they had no large supply of gunpowder, and if they ran short of that, what would they do for fire—that is, if they were to be

much longer adrift? So they decided only to shoot when absolutely necessary.

They camped on the shore that night, went on again next day, and so they did for the three following days. They caught fish and lobsters all the time, but found no sign of human life or work, save the saw-logs and squared timber strewing the beach.

On the 30th of May they came in sight of a conspicuous sandstone cliff, several hundred feet in height. Just there the margin of the sea was unusually free from obstructions, and they went ahead with some rapidity. They had formed the idea that round that headland they would find what they were in search of. They had no grounds at all for this notion, but it served to keep their hearts up.

It was a ceaseless marvel to them that they never sighted a vessel of any kind, and they were always on the look-out.

On the 31st of May, in the afternoon, they rounded this headland. There had been some wind behind them; it had helped them, but was now so much stronger that they were glad to turn into the shelter which the high land gave. A bay was there, of some extent, and there appeared to be several inlets running into it. They coasted along the first of these they came to, and a short way up, finding a wide but shallow stream flowing into it from the interior, they beached the boat and landed.

It was a warm day; the sun shone brilliantly, though

often the sky was crowded with fast-flying clouds. Charming groups of trees were near the shore ; small ravines ran in amongst them ; grassy knolls were numerous. It seemed to George and Sid to be a very pleasant spot.

It being early, they took a gun and wandered about, and up one of these gullies or ravines. They were impressed with its home-like aspect, with its suitability for settlement, and could but believe that if they were in an inhabited land at all—and of course they supposed there was no doubt about that—hereabouts people would surely be living. There were so many cosy nooks, bright meadows, peaceful waters, it never entered their brains to imagine this could be a no-man's-land.

Walking and talking thus, only a hundred yards or so from the strand, George suddenly stopped short and pointed. "I thought so!" he cried gaily ; "look—that stump was cut with an axe! There are men about! Now we're O. K."

This stump was rather old ; the tree had been cut down some years ; yet the axe-marks were plain enough ; even Sid could see them. Eagerly they looked around, found other stumps, logs chopped, some split cord-wood, and what they fancied was a beaten path ; they followed it only a few yards, and behold, there was a house !

The keenness with which the lads ran up to it may easily be imagined. What did they care about its

being little better than a ruin? It was a house, and they stood before it speechless with pleasure and content.

It was really only an old log shanty, almost hidden by bushes and weeds that had grown around it; much of the roof, which was of coarse, roughly-split shingles, had fallen in. The old door gave way with a slight push. The floor was beaten clay; weeds grew in it; plenty of rubbish lay about, an empty packing-case or two, some old tins and an empty flour-barrel. One end of the shanty was a huge fire-place of rocks and clay. It was a wretched, a dismal affair indeed, not worth one glance in a settled country, but to our lads it meant so much.

How excitedly they examined it! How they rummaged for some token of its proprietor!

There was a bit of an outhouse behind, in which were some pieces of board and shingles, cut into tapering forms. "I know what those are for!" exclaimed George. "I remember my father used such pieces to stretch the skins upon of the beasts he caught—depend upon it, this is a hunter's cabin."

Then they searched for another path, or trail, leading inland, for they had no doubt other habitations were near, but they found nothing but that one leading to and from the beach.

Now they noticed that the sky had darkened and the wind was rising. Occasionally gleams of fierce sunlight pierced the rolling clouds. One moment all

was gloom and greyness ; the next, it was all dazzling light. There was every portent of a storm, and no doubt a heavy rainfall.

They gazed seaward ; white seas were raging. It was a wild outlook, and something must be arranged speedily.

“ What a blessed thing it is that we have found this shanty ! ” remarked George ; “ we must carry everything up into it. I call it providential—don’t you, Sid ? ”

Sid replied that he did, most emphatically ; then they carried or dragged all their gear and stuff into the old building ; this took many trips. By much exertion they got the empty boat high up, and, they hoped, out of danger, and turned her bottom up.

The next thing was to have a fire ; they felt that with one, and walls around them and some sort of a roof over them, they would be well off, comparatively, during the bad time they knew was at hand.

Sid was preparing the usual fire-raising performance, when George excitedly stopped him. “ Hold on, Sid ! ” he shouted. “ I’ve got a better plan ! ” He slapped his thigh as he spoke, angrily ; there was also a happy smile on his face. “ What imbeciles, what idiots we are ! ” he went on. “ Babes in the wood, indeed—there’s no mistake about that ! ”

“ Why, what in the world’s the matter now ? ” asked Sid, amazed, and half afraid at his chum’s vehemence. “ What’s wrong ? Why are we such gabies, then ? ”

All the while George was unscrewing an object-glass from their binoculars—that done, he held it up and cried, “Here, my boy, is a burning-glass! Better than any matches, eh?”

“Why, of course—no doubt of it; we have been duffers not to have thought of this before!” said Sid. “Come, let us do it; there’s sun enough yet, sometimes.”

They scraped some dry stuff together, on which they fortunately got a sun-ray focussed—it smoked, it smouldered, it burnt! In five minutes they had a bunch of blazing sticks, and in five more they had a blazing fire under the huge chimney inside. They piled on heaps of wood, of which abundance was lying round the shanty; then roaring flames lit up the sombre room, making all the difference in the world to the appearance of their temporary dwelling; for that is what they thought it would be.

With their pocket-knives they cut down the weeds inside, and by the aid of a piece of board they shovelled the rubbish about into the glowing fire. It was dry at both ends of the room; at that near the fire they cleared a place, brought in spruce and pine-twigs and strewed them, spread rugs and blankets over them for beds; and by the time the sun had set they were, as they said, quite comfortably housed.

As the night fell, the gale increased and the rain came down in torrents. The sea roared in the distance and broke heavily on the shingle close at

hand. The thunder seemed to roll continuously and the lightning was incessant. Having brought in a quantity of fuel, they kept up a rousing fire ; they ate their supper in considerable comfort, and were grateful for their snug quarters.

The boys sat by the fire on upturned boxes and talked and thought, conjectured, hoped, planned and feared. Before they laid down to try to get some sleep, in spite of the turmoil which was going on outside, they read something from their Bibles, and on their knees they thanked their Heavenly Father for His mercy to them. They went to their beds with the strong faith that He, who had brought them safely through all their perilous adventures, would yet conduct them safely to where they would be.

CHAPTER IV

THE storm still raged next morning. Heavy rain was falling, and huge seas were breaking in thunder on the shore.

During the night seaweed was heaped upon the beach; lobsters in dozens were entangled in it. Large numbers of small fish, like sprats, had been cast up; without hesitation the boys broiled some in the lid of a biscuit-tin they had found in the shanty. They were most grateful for all this food.

That day they could not possibly move, nor for several days. The gale continued, and the rain. When at last the wind died down dense fog settled over them, and when that lifted another gale came on, and so heavy a sea arose that they dare not put off.

During this interval of weary inactivity they examined their stores. They found they had considerably reduced their stock of biscuits, and these were their mainstay of eatables; they determined to be very sparing in the future, in case they were delayed longer. Of gunpowder, besides what was in their flasks, they had but one 1-lb. canister, but they had plenty of shot and caps, lead, and a bullet-mould. Their guns were muzzle-loaders.

They had abundance of clothing, each having a huge Gladstone bag full, and more in their bundles of rugs and blankets. They had a few books, besides their Bibles, writing materials and many odds and ends.

During slight breaks in the bad weather they examined their neighbourhood minutely, but failed to find any vestige of human habitation. They rarely visited the strand without bringing in something edible—lobsters or fish. They noticed very few land-birds, only a robin (*i. e.* the Canadian thrush) and a blue jay; but on the sea, gulls were numerous, and a few wild duck.

One day, strolling on the shore amongst the rocks, they found seals sleeping; they crept close to them; they could easily have killed one with a club, but they had no use for it. Sid spoke of the fur, but really it looked anything but beautiful; so they concluded these could not be the valuable fur seals.

At this time these youths had no idea that they were in an uninhabited land. Knowing they were in Canada, and also that this part of the Dominion is but sparsely inhabited, they supposed they were merely in an unsettled part, and felt sure that they could not possibly travel much farther without reaching people.

They knew that it was out of their power to walk along that coast; cliffs, precipices, deep gullies, matted vegetation, prevented that. They must wait till the weather mended and the sea was calm, and

then push on. They were terribly disappointed at the delay; they talked and conjectured ceaselessly.

It was most mysterious to them that they saw no sail at sea, and as far as they had been, no sign of man, but just this old shanty. They had no real bodily suffering. Fish diet was somewhat monotonous, and they longed for tea or coffee, but their health was splendid; their one anxiety was to be able to go on west.

For five days they were thus comparatively idle. The sixth was beautiful. The sun was hot. The deciduous trees, the birches and the poplars, were in full leaf, and the grass and flowers, with the unknown shrubs and vegetation generally, were growing vigorously.

Up the valley from the cabin the mist soon disappeared under the bright sun, whose rays sparkled in the rain-drops still clinging to each leaf and spray. The odour of the wet earth, the perfume of the pines, even the smell of the seaweed on the beach, were entirely delightful, and the boys cried out, "Oh that the folk at home were here to experience all these delights, or that they knew where we are! How grand, how glorious it would be!"

The breeze had fallen; the sea was smooth again, and there was nothing to prevent their advancing. They began packing. George was very silent; by and by he remarked, "I wonder how long it will be ere we have another roof over us!"

"Oh! not long, surely—but what are you thinking of?" Sid asked.

"Well, I'm thinking, as you say, that it cannot be long—it cannot be far. Then why should we lug about all this cargo? Why not leave everything here but a couple of rugs, a gun, the glasses, and a few biscuits, and get on with might and main? When we have found the place we are in search of we can come, or send back, for what we leave here. What do you think of that?"

Sid pondered. "It might do," said he. "There's only one objection; some persons might come down the valley, or along the coast, and we should miss them, which would be a thousand pities, and they might steal our things."

George saw this last difficulty. However, they stopped their preparations for departure and discussed the idea. Finally it was arranged that they should erect a beacon on the shore and put a notice on it. But as Sid suggested that it would most likely be French people who would be about there, he supposed, they laid their heads together, rubbed up the French they had learnt at school, and concocted the following:

"Avis.

"Nous avons pris possession de cet endroit. Nous avons quitté la barque 'Duke of Cornwall' à quelque distance de Gaspé, le 18 Mai, dans l'intention d'aborder

là, mais un brouillard nous à empêché d'y arriver. Nous sommes venus de l'est, vingt ou trente miles d'ici. Ce qui nous appartient est dans cette maison ; nous sommes partis le long de la côte vers l'ouest, dans l'espoir de trouver des gens qui puissent nous renseigner. Si quelqu'un vient ici pendant notre absence, on est prié, si possible, d'attendre à notre retour, dans deux, ou tout au plus, trois jours. — Ou, si, l'on n'a pas le temps, on est requis d'écrire ici, quel est le chemin à suivre pour attendre Gaspé, ou tout autre lieu habité.

“GEORGE YOUNG,

“SIDNEY CROLY.”

“Juin 6th, 189-.”

In a conspicuous spot, above high-water mark, they reared a tall pole, and braced it with others ; to its summit they fastened a red cotton handkerchief, and at the base they affixed their “notice.” On the door of the shanty, which they fastened securely, they put a copy of this “avis” in French and English ; then they took what they had decided upon, launched their boat and were off.

George, who could sketch, made an outline of the conspicuous headland at the entrance to their inlet as a guide for the future, but there was a particularly huge lone-pine close to their shanty, which was an excellent landmark.

With their light load they advanced much quicker than heretofore ; they reckoned they made ten miles

to the westward the first day. That evening, whilst strolling on the beach, they noticed many footmarks on the sand. They were joyful, for they believed they were made by men's bare feet, and every moment they trusted to meet those who made them.

Further along they came across a seal which had been killed recently ; a portion had been taken away, and as there were many foot-tracks round it, they stayed near till almost dark, believing some one would return for the remainder.

Shortly before they turned in for the night Sid went for a last look, and soon came tearing back crying out that some person was there. George went with him, carrying the gun, and certainly there was a dark figure reared against the light upon the water. They shouted eagerly—the being vanished ; they followed as far as they dared, calling in English and French—they had no reply.

They went to their fire at last and laid down with much content, for they believed that the following day they would be out of their difficulty.

They searched all that neighbourhood next morning without seeing a living thing but seals and a few foxes, and yet the prints of bare feet were plentiful.

It was noon before they got under way again—puzzled more than ever. They went on slowly, minutely examining every foot of shore. Once they saw a black beast apparently grazing amongst some bushes, a cow or an ox they fancied ; they landed to

make sure. They lost sight of it. They examined that locality well, found nothing like a path, a sign of cultivation, or of human habitation.

They were intensely bewildered ; they almost concluded that they were in an enchanted land—that some of the stories which they had been taught were myths were really true, for where were the inhabitants? Why did they so persistently hide? They saw traces of their feet everywhere, some old, some quite freshly made, yet no other signs of the beings who made them. Were they red or white, French or English?

This day closed without success ; they had not come far. They slept but little that night, being determined to keep a sharp outlook ; they made a big fire, fired several shots, but the night passed without a sign.

The weather had then changed again. There was a strong breeze from the west, but they started, soon to find they could make no headway ; so they landed, hauled up their boat, and stopped all day. Fortunately they found shelter under an overhanging rock, as it rained heavily. It was lucky, too, that they found several lobsters on the beach ; and during a burst of sunshine were able to raise a fire.

When the rain ceased that afternoon they tramped about, scrutinizing every nook and corner. They ascended the highest point about, and with their glass examined the adjacent country, but nothing

like a man or a man's work existed! They saw many foxes—red, grey, and black, and what they took to be a deer.

When the sun went down the wind arose. They passed a miserable night. At daybreak the following morning the gale lessened and they started again. They progressed fairly well, but were sadly cast down, mentally, till noon; then they landed to raise a fire and broil some fish. Meantime the breeze increased again stronger than ever, right in their teeth too, which frightfully depressed them, for they knew they could make no advance against it. What should they do?

"Turn back," cried George at last despairingly, "get back to our shanty; it will be quite home-like after this—perhaps in a few days the weather will be really settled, then we can try again. Come, we are not twenty miles from home—for home it seems like!" This after much discussion seemed really to be their best course, so the poor fellows shoved off.

A reef standing out a long distance had to be rounded. Huge seas were breaking on it; they had to give this dangerous point a very wide berth, so pulled out to sea, and only when well clear of it did they dare to run before the wind. They had no sail, but the breeze helped them. An hour passed, then the wind shifted; it was driving them dead on shore! If they kept on thus they would be carried bodily on to the rocky coast. During a slight lull they did

manage to head off, and by great exertion got an offing.

The sky was now dark and leaden, the land was all but out of sight, amidst the spray and gloom. They could distinguish no difference between the colour of the sky and sea. The horizon was at times seemingly close around them; it expanded as they rose, but always the edge of it was jagged with huge, angry waves.

The boys were dreadfully alarmed. The spray flew into their frail boat; they feared they would be swamped.

First one, then both, had to rise suddenly to escape the drenching waves, which came frothing over the stern with an angry hiss, or, heaving up ahead, threatened to destroy them.

They were bewildered; they asked themselves what they were doing there? They were beside themselves.

"Bail her a bit, Sid," George cried; "give me your oar. I can, I think, keep her head to wind."

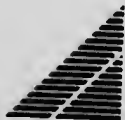
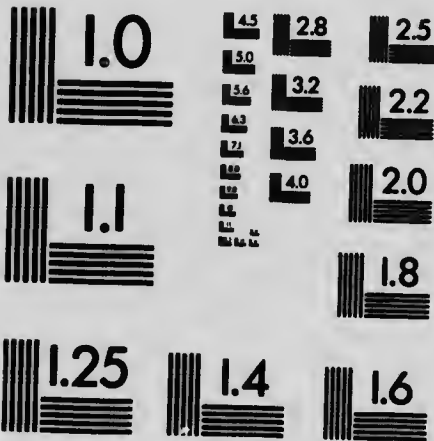
"All right," Sid answered, and set to work heaving out the water; but with apparently little effect on what she took on board.

As they rose on a high wave they thought they had a glimpse of land. "I'd keep her in a little," Sid shouted, and George agreed and pulled his port oar, and so edged in closer; then he cried out, "But the boat will be smashed to pieces if we try to



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land here. Come, we must pull hard to keep her off again!"

All the time they were as if they were on the back of a wild, unmanageable horse, which reared and pranced, bucked, plunged, and did all it could to throw them off. Now the boat rose on a mighty wave, as if it were attempting to cross a high wall, then hurling itself through its crest, it slid down a long incline, and before it reached the lowest point it plunged into the smother, as it made its way to face another vast ridge of dark grey water.

Each sea, as it ran towards them, blotted out all others; it was that particular wave on which they fixed their attention; it was that, that only for the moment, they had to battle with; they did not dare to remember that when it was mastered, there was another, and another, an endless procession of them, immediately behind it. As they rose upon its crest they had a momentary glimpse around, and could view the turmoil, the tumultuous expanse, wind-driven, horrible. They could only utter disjointed sentences: "No, no, we cannot—land here! Let—us bear off again;" or, "Mind,—that's a rock—where—that white water's—breaking—keep clear—Oh! pull, Sid—pull!" "We must run—before it!"

But they could not run; they had still to keep working with their oars; and their arms and legs and backs were numb with pain already, and the night was coming on swiftly!

The last glimpse they had of the land that evening showed them they were being driven from it ; the wind was most unsteady, but the waves were following them closely. Often one threw its crest on board, stinging their hands and faces as if it were shot—a heavy weight of shot, too. Every moment they expected that one of the great grey seas would throw itself bodily on board and sink them.

“ Edge her round ;—let us—by degrees—get her head—to it ;—we must—or we are—lost ! ” cried George slowly, a word at a time, as the tugs at his oar permitted.

They attempted this manœuvre. When they were broadside on, a sea did come on board, half filling the boat ; but, mercifully, the same sea hove her head into the wind, and Sid threw his oar into the notch in the stern and cried out : “ Bail her ! bail her ! or we’re done ; I’ve got the power now to keep her head right ! ”

After George had bailed awhile, she rode easier to the waves, split them as they reared up in front of her and threw the spray far to leeward.

By this time they had got thoroughly accustomed to the motion, which was, however, still like that of a wild horse, prancing. The wind was icy, and they knew they were being drifted from the land. They were numb with cold, with dread ; they began to regard themselves as mere machines, working without feeling ; they had all but lost the power of thinking. Only once one of them spoke of food.

They were now taking it in turn to scull. One kept his oar going out astern, the other rested in the bottom of the boat, washed over by the water that was in her; of this he took no heed. It seemed to them that they changed places very frequently. No sooner had one of the boys curled himself up and forgotten his misery than it appeared that the other called him to take the oar. It was not so really, but they were dazed, stupefied from want of sleep, of food, and from their incessant toil.

George was sculling, Sid was resting. There was a sudden sharp sweep astern, different from all the other clamour, which attracted his attention. A gleam of blue light, almost flame, flashed by. It was a monstrous fish, whose fin, like a broad knife, hurled luminous spray as it sheared its path through the water. It was no porpoise, no beluga—the boy knew that. Here was added another horror. This creature hung around for some time, dashing here and there, now diving, now showing its huge fin above the surface; its track of phosphorescence always fearful. When Sid aroused to take his turn George asked, "Did you see that shark?"

"Oh! aye, I did," he answered, but in such a listless, such a careless way. They were all but devoid of feeling now, alike of hope or fear.

Thus they passed the night, which happily was short in that latitude in June. They knew when the sun was up, because the sea changed colour—it turned

from slate to green—but they perceived no sunrise, and they were still sculling and fighting those raging billows.

Gulls now hovered around them, and some were sitting calmly near patches of seaweed; the turmoil was nothing to them. Often one flew so closely that the boys saw its piercing black eyes staring at them. They thought them uncanny beasts, and regarded them almost angrily; why should they be so unruffled, so much at home, whilst these two could barely keep a hold on life?

Where was the land? Ardently they tried to pierce the gloom ahead, and from the summit of each towering wave they gazed eagerly for it. Where was the land?

Then came a burst of sunlight; it gilded the foam, and shining through the tops of the upheaved seas, turned them to sapphires and emeralds. This woke the boys up, aroused them from their stupor.

"Come, we must find the land," cried George; "here, take your oar; let us force our way in towards it."

They started; their backs now pained and tormented them more than they hitherto believed was possible, but they bravely persevered, and shortly they were able to pull vigorously.

"Will you—ever—wish to pull an oar—again?" asked one.

"Never—no—never again," was the reply.

They were of course wet through, their hands were blistered, their clothes were chafing them. Icy water was washing about their legs. They took no notice of these troubles.

Suddenly George cried out that he saw the land. "Yes, and I believe our headland, too!" And he called on Sid to look when they next mounted a heavy sea.

When they did, he asked, "See it, Sid?"

"No," Sid slowly, sorrowfully answered. "No, I don't see a thing."

"Now, look again, look now!" George exclaimed; and this time his companion said that he certainly had seen it.

Gulls were still slanting round them. Squalls were frequent. Sombre red clouds like smoke hurried close overhead. They did not at once observe that these were driving towards the land, that the wind had once more shifted, and the sea was broken into a jumble of immense waves, rolling and heaving in all directions. The turmoil was amazingly increased, the billows grew still more formidable; no one, even though used to the sea, would believe that this boat could ascend the sheer heights of some of them, or would escape being shattered in the awful chasms.

George cried out that they could not live three minutes. But the minutes passed, and still the frail fabric rode the fearful seas. Then by and by the clouds divided, the sun shone forth again, and the boys' spirits rose. They had lifted up their hearts un-

ceasingly to that Power above in whose almighty hands they knew they were. Their weak natures feared, despaired, at times all but utterly, and yet, from time to time, the thought occurred to them that He who had till then so mightily preserved them could not have allowed them to go through their awful work and suffering to drown them in the end. No! they felt that to be impossible. And yet, and yet, they had no power to dwell on this mystery. They merely felt it could not be, and as that thought flashed through their brains they were prevented from utter collapse.

Every time now that they rose on a higher wave than usual they gazed where the land should be, and there it was—high cliffs, the forest, the green hills—shining in the clear sunlight; and they realized that the wind was behind them, that they were being driven towards it.

“Take it easier now,” George advised; “we must not utterly exhaust ourselves, we shall need every atom of strength that is left in us to get ashore.”

Slowly, beautifully, the land rose from the sea, the boys only rowing to keep the boat's head pointing to it. At times it was partly veiled in drift and mist, at others the sunlight gilded it, but it was always now in sight.

Soon they were in the turmoil of the breakers. Sharp rocks were close under their lee, huge seas were breaking on them in avalanches of snow-white foam, which

was hurled back on them, and they could see no opening in the surf into which they dared pass. Apprehending the danger of instant destruction, they, by sheer muscular exertion, brought the boat's head round and out to the open sea again. Rowing for very life, they pulled her clear of that danger, only to face others.

In the midst of the furious uproar, their own headland, as they called it, became visible to them, in a gleam of golden light. It was some miles down the coast though, and they knew they could not reach it; they realized their physical impotence. The distant dunes and crags were sparkling in the sun-rays. If the entrance to their haven had been dead to leeward they might have managed it, they thought. Oh, how they gazed at it, yearned for it! There only they longed to be at that moment. They had no thought of home, or friends, scarcely of themselves in any definite way; they had the one desire to be safe once more in the old shanty on the shore, and they bewailed their inability to reach it! It was a natural wish, but they were in wiser hands than they just then realized.

How long they continued—now going in towards shore, which was to some extent an ease to them, now turning from it, exerting all their powers—they could not say; time appeared to have ceased for them. But in the end they came in sight of what looked to be a practicable landing-place or gap in the raging surf, breaking along the shore.

"Come, let us try that spot!" George called out. "Let us keep cool; no doubt the boat will swamp; we must just jump when she does, and make the best of it, and God's will be done!"

Monstrous rollers were heaving the boat now, and broadside on to land. They were tossed so high that they could look down on the cruel foam, as they came in closer, closer. They were alert now to their fingertips; they were filled with thoughts of the past, and hot with thoughts of the future. They glanced with strange expression at the shore, with hope, with awe. Were they to find there rest for their wearied limbs and life and hope? or were they on that rocky strand to meet their death? But for minutes they spoke no word.

The long, white combers rushed past them; some broke over them. Their boat was full, only a part of her being visible; the boys were clinging to the thwarts! They had dropped their oars, and paid no heed to sea or boat: they fixed their eyes upon the land so close, and so long waited for the end their hearts were lifted in supplication.

The oars had been washed away; their clothes were in rags; their frail bark sank lower and lower in the water. A towering surge came roaring on to them.

"This is the end!" George shouted as he gripped his friend. "Sid, there's no hope for us; here we shall drown together."

And that surge enveloped them, the boat was over-

whelmed, they felt it crash upon the jagged rocks beneath the tortured water, and themselves lifted from it as by almighty power, and still they clung together!

That heavy water passed; their heads emerged; for a few seconds they could look upon the land with eyes bewildered, and then another furious sea submerged them. When it too subsided they felt the solid earth beneath their feet, and, stooping, gripped the rock they stood on, staring at the land, and dismayed at their utter inability to advance one step towards it.

It was at that moment that Sid, in accents wild and vehement, shouted, "Oh! George!—see, George!—there's a man wading out to save us!"

It was so. Again a surge smothered them, lifted them, and flung them into shallow water; a strange, strong hand clasped each of theirs, and dragged them to the soft sand of the beach, where they both fell exhausted.

CHAPTER V

THE boys were too dazed to realize their position at once, but having received no physical hurt they shortly recovered enough to gaze at the man who had helped them. He was a wild-looking fellow of about twenty-two; his hair, ragged and unkempt, hung to his shoulders, his face was grimed with grease and smoke, yet it had a kindly look. He was bare-footed, and wore a queer dress of mangy fur, now sodden with sea-water.

"How good of you to save us!" murmured Sid at last; "we should have drowned but for your help."

"Goodness!" the man exclaimed; "you talk English, then! Are you English? Where d'ye come from?"

"Oh, we're English," Sid answered; "we come from England; but, thank God, you speak English; we feared that all people here were French."

"French people here! What d'ye mean? D'ye know where we are? Are there folks here?" asked their preserver.

Sid stared at George amazed, and they both stared at this man.

"Don't *you* know where we are?" they asked together.

He was slow of speech. "No ; I don't *know*. I think this is Anticosti," he replied. "Where do you come from?"

"Just now we have been driven from the west by this gale," George explained. "We have been trying to reach Gaspé—is it near?"

"Sakes alive ! I don't know. How did you get to these parts, anyway? Shipwrecked, or what?"

"We left our ship in that boat off Gaspé, and we've been trying to reach there ever since. But see here, mister, we're done up! We have had no food for a long time, we've been nearly drowned, we can't talk or do anything yet. Take us to your house and give us food, then you can set us on our way ; we can pay for it," said George.

"House ! food ! direct you ! pay !" the man jerked out. "D'ye know what you are talking about? I have got no house, nor food, nor anything but a fire. I don't know where I am or where to go. What d'ye mean? But of course, come to my fire ; it's a mile from here, though."

They were bewildered, staggered. What did it mean? However, the man gave them each a hand, and they stumbled on a few yards ; but on to the first soft, grassy bank they came to they threw themselves, exclaiming that they could do no more—they were faint for want of food.

He looked at them with grief. "Boys !" he moaned, "I have nothing but some fish and a bit of seal-meat

—not a scrap beside. If I go and broil you a bit will you eat?"

They declared they would gladly eat anything; perhaps after that they could talk. Said Sid, "What you say is very terrible, but what are you doing here?"

"Doing!" and he glared at them. "I don't do anything. I was wrecked here, cast ashore with nothing but my knife. I'm just waiting, hoping to be rescued. But stay, I'll fetch you the best grub I possess," and he was off like a shot.

"Worse and worse," George groaned; "there are three of us now; we had better have drowned!"

"It is awful," agreed Sid—"it is terrible! But I don't despair, neither must you; this man may help us. He's a good sort. What d'ye think?"

George shook his head; then they lay in silence for half-an-hour. It was warm, their clothes soon dried, and when their new friend returned with some cooked meat on a stick they eagerly devoured it, and at once felt better. He said nothing till they had finished, but evidently he was impatient to hear their story, and to tell his own.

"Tell us," said George, "about this place—how long you have been here, why you cannot get away, what makes you say there are no inhabitants, and what you propose to do."

The man looked amazed. "How long have I been here, you ask—why, ten years!—at least, that's how it

feels. Really, I was cast away here last fall. I've been here all the winter alone, and now it's—what month is it?—d'ye know?"

"It is June," they told him. "June 10th," they believed.

"June, eh? Well, it was late last September when I was pitched out here, and ever since I've been looking for help. When I saw your boat, I said to myself, here it is at last. I saw you were in a fix, and I ran along waving to you. You didn't see me. I tried to direct you. There's a place a quarter of a mile or so east, where the beach is safer, but you drove in here and were smashed on this reef, and there's all hope gone, for, so far as I know, there's no getting away from here except by boat. Say, boys, what were you doing about here, anyway?"

"Why, looking for some one. We thought if we once found settlers we should do! We have come from the east, hoping to reach Gaspé; you are the first being we've seen, and you cannot help us. What are we to do?" And Sid gave a despairing cry.

"God help us!" ejaculated George. "We thought when we found a man we should be out of trouble. I never thought of meeting one in the same plight as ourselves. God help us!"

"Ah! yes; that's just what I've been saying, and praying, all these months—all these dreadful, lonesome months. Yes, we must just trust in God. There's three of us now—company anyway; and there's grub



“ THAT'S ALL I OWN IN THIS WORLD. IT'S THE ONLY FRIEND
I'VE HAD.”

[Page 101.]

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enough—of a kind. We shan't starve. But you're better now; come up to where I've hung out, where all of us 'll have to roost, so far as I can see."

They tramped off up the cliffs, which here, as everywhere that they had yet been, stood back from the beach a few hundred yards. They passed through bushes and tangled vegetation till they came to the low entrance to a cavern. Following their friend they found themselves in a circular chamber, a few yards across. It was almost dark, the only light coming from a crevice overhead. "This is my drawing-room," said the man, with a weird laugh; "this is my chimney-piece," pointing to a ledge, over where a fire smouldered. "Take that arm-chair," said he, pointing to a rock, "and you take that sofa," pointing to a heap of dry grass. Then more seriously he continued as he threw some wood on the fire, "That's all I own in this world, and it has not been out since I lit it months ago. I have no way of making fire if *that* goes out; if I was to lose it, I'd be done; it's the only friend I've had. Many a time I've thanked the Lord for giving me this fire. What should we be without fire, boys?"

"Well, that's true," George agreed, "but there will not be any more trouble about that, for I've the means here of making it whenever the sun shines," and he tapped the glass by his side.

"Matches?" said the man; "but they're wet, spoilt, I guess; we'll have to keep this old friend going." He

did not understand what George meant by what he had said.

It was a dismal dwelling-place, indeed, in which George and Sid found themselves, nothing but a hole in the bare, rough rock, with but a few slabs of wood about, and a few old tins for cooking in—just meat-tins picked up on the beach. On one slab were some chunks of meat, and a fish was hanging in the smoke above the fire. The boys were horrified—must this then be their home?

They squatted amongst the wood ashes by the fire. "Come," said George, "tell us how you got here, how you've tried to get away, what chance there is for us. Tell us your story."

"Well, my lads," he began, "first my name is Walter Clifton; so now call me Walter. I come from Bracebridge on Lake Muskoka, Ontario."

"You do?" cried George; "why, I was born in Canada! Ingersoll—d'ye knowit? I am glad you're a Canadian."

"So am I, that you are," said Walter. "There's no place like dear old Canada, is there? Let us shake hands on that. But I'll go on, for I want to hear about you. Well, then, my father has land at Bracebridge—I've worked on it most of my life, and I have done some lumbering, and a good deal of canoeing. The fall before last I took the notion to go out west. I got work at Brandon, in Manitoba, amongst cattle and I invested the bit of money I had in some. In

August I went with a lot, some of my own amongst them, to Montreal by train, where I helped to ship them on a steamer for the old country. There the contractor made me a good cash offer to go across with him as overseer of the cattle-men.

"I had never been to sea before—I'd never seen it—but I thought of the girl who was to be my wife, and how good it would be to return home in a few weeks and tell that I had seen the old land where my parents came from, and where Nell—that's my girl—was born; besides, to carry home a good few dollars would be fine, for we had made it up, Nell and I, to settle in the north-west, and were saving up every cent for that purpose. So I agreed to go to Liverpool.

"We reached Quebec and got down the river all right; then it came on foggy, and the fog increased. I guess you know what fog can be around here, eh? We anchored awhile, went on slowly, then stopped, and so on. Having cattle, this delay was serious, and the contractor and I had it out with the captain of the *Prairie Queen*, as the ship was named. He said it was mighty risky to push on through fog. But Mr. Seton, the contractor, said that the captains of the Allan and Cunard ships pushed on through fogs; they didn't loiter as he was doing. 'The fact is,' he ended by saying, 'you're either afraid, or don't know your business.'

"The captain was wrathful at these words. 'All right then,' said he in a rage, 'here goes. Afraid! not

much!' And he set the bells ringing and off we went slam-bang, and you could hardly see your hand before your face.

"We had not been going like this for more than four hours when they sang out forward, 'Breakers ahead!' The ship was slowed and steered from the noise, and the next thing she was stuck on a sand-bank, they said. At which there was a dreadful lot of swearing and blasphemy, and backing the engines, and going ahead again; but it was no good, they could not get her off. Finally, the captain ordered an anchor to be carried out astern; they would heave on the warp, and so help the engines. They lowered a boat, got a spare anchor into it, and a lot of rope hawser, which they let out from the ship, and they rowed away with it into the fog.

"They had not been gone two minutes when the captain said to me, 'You're a good hand in a boat I hear; so take this buoy and line and grapnel in the little dinghy, and go after the fellows and drop it where they drop the anchor; for I shall cast off the hawser on board here directly the ship's afloat, and I'd like to pick up that anchor next trip. I know just where we are, off the south-west point of Anticosti. 'Where's that?' I asked. 'Oh, never you mind,' says he; 'you do as I tell you; but if it's any satisfaction to you to know it, it's in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and it's about the meanest island in this created sphere, and I don't want to leave the *Queen's* bones on its

starvation shores, so clear out. The dinghy's lowered ; take a hand with you and vamoose.'

"Well, he had no right to order me thus ; I was not one of his ship's company, but as I didn't wish to leave my bones there, nor those of any of the cattle, I said to a sailor standing near, 'Come on!' and we nipped over into the boat and set off. It was easy to find the people with the anchor, by the hawser stretching from the ship. They were sounding for a good spot to drop it, and I and my comrade—I never knew his name—kept close till they did so, then we threw out our grapnel, and leaving the buoy floating, we turned to go back to the ship. This took us five minutes perhaps. 'Which way?' asks the man with me, *and I could not tell!* There was nothing but thick, impenetrable fog.

"We listened—shouted—heard them sing out in answer, and we rowed towards them as we believed. We kept on shouting, so did they, yet we could not get nearer ! We were puzzled, I tell you. By and by we heard the steam-whistle, but we could not make out the direction it was in ; it appeared to come from all points ! Being so confused, we rowed like mad, now this way, now that, and soon we came full butt against a rock, and the little boat just crumpled up under us !

"Up till then the sea appeared to be quite smooth ; yet it broke furiously on this rock. The chap with me was jerked out of the dinghy when she struck.

He disappeared for a second, then I saw his head bob up, and he sang out for help. I stared at him aghast. I couldn't help him. I cannot swim; besides, in a moment or two he had vanished in the fog!

"I was myself clinging to a bit of the boat which was jammed in the rocks. I clung to it, up to my waist in water, which often washed clean over me, for an hour or more. I was calling, calling, continually calling, and I heard the ship's whistle become ever fainter until it became inaudible; and there I was, so far as I knew, in the middle of the ocean, on a bit of rock no bigger than a pine-stump. You may perhaps imagine how I felt. I guess you have been through some terrors lately; but then you have had each other's company, whilst I was alone, terribly alone! Of course, I expected every sea that broke over me would drown me. I had no idea of anything but death. I remember it was mortal cold, and all the time there was nothing to be seen a foot away from the knobs of rock between which the remains of the dinghy were fixed.

"I suppose it was afternoon, when I perceived that the tide was falling. I saw other pieces of rock standing out. One became visible that I thought I could safely sit on, for my frail wreck was very unstable. I tried, and landing, sat there for some time. The tide continued to go down; other rocks were bared; I crept on to them, and shortly could move with some speed along the ridge, or reef of them. I wore nothing but a

flannel shirt and pants; my cap had gone long before; in my belt I had still my sheath-knife, and in my pockets only a plug of tobacco, a pipe, and a tin box of matches.

"I suppose I must have crawled along these rocks for half a mile, slipping in often, and plunging through masses of seaweed, until at last I came to unmistakable beach. It looked like mainland; I could not see many yards, but there were veritable grass and trees, and about the first thing I noticed, thrown upon the strand, was a huge lobster. It just flashed across my mind, 'If this is Anticosti, that does not look like starvation, as the captain said.'

"It was warmer ashore; lying down in the long grass I soon dried, and then towards sundown the sky cleared enough to let me see the kind of country I was in. I need not describe it, because here we are, more's the pity! The first thing which struck me was this high cliff along the coast, and I've thought since that it was the sound of the steam-whistle and the shouting of the people reverberating against it which deceived us so, causing us to row towards it instead of to our ship.

"Ah, boys, even you cannot know what I felt that evening. What to do I had no idea. I could not think. I sat there in the grass just wondering at myself. I remember how I longed for a fire. I tried my matches. They were wet and useless, but, thank God, I did not throw them away. I hardly know how I

passed that night—in misery, you may be sure. In the morning the sun was out, it was clear weather, bright and hot, and I began to look about for something eatable. Searching on the shore I found several dead fish and lobsters, but I was not famished enough yet to eat them raw. Soon I was perfectly dry and warm, and it occurred to me to dry my matches. I spread them out carefully on a rock, tried not to be impatient; only when I was confident that they were free from the slightest moisture did I strike one; it ignited, and I soon had a fire. Perhaps you know what a comfort that was to me. I broiled some fish and ate them, then started to find some one, never imagining that I was in an unpeopled country.

“Well, I walked, climbed hills, pushed through matted jungle all that day and the next—I don’t know how many days, indeed. I lit a fire each night, cooked things and slept by it. I found a few berries, and finally I hit this cave. I had only two matches left then! I used one to light this fire, and it has never been out since. The other match is stowed carefully away in a dry crack yonder. I have not dared to go far away, but there’s plenty of fuel handy. I’ve always had food in plenty; seals a many I’ve killed; I made these clothes of their skins, sewed them with strips of skin, made holes with a sharpened bone—oh, I’ve had a gay time with them! Here I’ve been, though just hunting for grub and looking for a passing vessel, ever since. That’s the end of my

story. There are no people living here but we three."

"How did you do in winter?" George asked. "Did you not suffer greatly from the cold?"

Walter admitted that he did at times; but only when he had to go out for fuel or for food; inside it was always warm, and he found seals whenever he wanted to, and they were easily killed with a club. His great distress had been loneliness; that had been horrible. He told the boys that his only reason for believing they might be on Anticosti was what the captain of the *Prairie Queen* had said, and he had talked of it as a starvation place, which it certainly was not. He also implied it was a well-known place, and Walter thought therefore it was likely that the captain was wrong. "Indeed," said he, "if the ship got ashore on the south-west point of Anticosti, how did I get here, on a coast facing due north, and many miles of land east and west of me, whilst I know perfectly well that in that dinghy we did not travel one mile? Sometimes I feel sure this is not Anticosti, but an unknown island, and I've seen no sign of a human being till you two this day!"

Our boys listened intently to this narrative, frequently glancing at each other with dismal looks. They questioned Walter—but alas! not one reply gave hope of rescue or escape. They asked him about the footmarks on the beach. They assured

him they were made by bare human feet. He was amazed for a moment only.

"Men's feet!" he laughed. "Not they—they're the tracks of bears! They *do* look like human foot-marks, I know—but that's what they are; there are crowds of bears here."

This was more bad news. They were alarmed, until Walter rallied them; he said that if they only had a gun he'd show them what a bear was worth. But alas! the gun had gone down in their boat, and they had nothing but what they stood in, all rags; and a pocket-knife apiece—with the binocular glasses.

"If we were only at our shanty!" exclaimed George; "we cannot even get back there without a boat!"

"A shanty, boys! What d'ye mean?" cried Walter excitedly. "Is there a shanty near here?—tell me, tell me quick!"

At which they told their new friend of all their doings, and when they said what they had with them, and where these things were, his excitement was unbounded. "We must get there somehow—something must be done," said he resolutely. "Why, if we were there, we should be in clover—we could live on here for years. Oh, boys, we must get there!"

But how? They talked till dark; then, wearied with the terrible day they had passed, they slept profoundly till morning, and when they awoke they ate greedily

the fish and seal meat Walter had grilled. They were used to strange food, remember.

"If I only had an axe!" exclaimed Walter, as they ate; "with just an axe I could manage anything. I could make a canoe out of a big saw-log easily—quite good enough to cross this bay in—but we have nothing but our knives."

"I've heard of savages," said one of the boys, "making canoes and things with fire—how is it done?"

"That's so," agreed Walter, "so have I." He pondered awhile. "It might be done," he went on; "it would take a lot of time, but we have plenty of that, and not a thing else to do. But come, let us have a look at my estate—it's a vast one. But, lor', I'd give all my interest in it for a foothold on the mainland of Canada—wouldn't you, eh?"

They wandered about; they showed Walter how to make a fire with a burning-glass, much to his delight; they examined saw-logs on the beach, talked over the way to fashion a boat from one of them with fire; then went out to the end of a long point of sand and rock stretching a mile out in the sea.

"That's our cliff," said George; "the shanty is close under it."

"And that's our lone-pine!" exclaimed Sid; he brought the glass to bear and was sure of it.

There, in sight almost, was home. Once there, they said, they could wait contentedly till God sent

them succour. How to get there, though, that was the question; it was not more than four miles, they were certain.

The bay they were beside extended inland many miles; there were many wide inlets entering it also, and where there were not stupendous cliffs, impossible to be surmounted, there were dense forests and thick, impenetrable jungle; they knew that they could not possibly get round that way. No, they must cross the water some way, there was no doubt of that.

"Let us begin at once, let us hollow out a log—do something—this very day!" exclaimed Walter.

"If we had a rope, surely we could fasten a lot of these logs together and make a raft and float across," said Sid.

"Rope!" cried Walter, jumping to the idea. "Why certainly; of course we can make a raft with that, and I can make rope easily. Here! come on, this tough grass will do. One of you cut some with my knife, and hand it to the two of us; we'll soon have rope enough!"

So Walter and George twisted, and Sid cut grass, and that afternoon they made some fathoms of really strong rope—strong enough to hold a whale, Walter declared.

At low water next day they rolled some squared stuff together, lashed it securely, and in a couple of days had made a contrivance which they believed would hold together.

Walter was delighted. "Boys! boys! we're saved!" he cried when they saw the thing floating safely. "Hurrah for the Anticosti Hotel!—that's what we'll call that shanty!"

The boys were not so enthusiastic. They wished to get back to their shelter and their goods certainly, but their new friend thought only of that apparently; they wanted to get on, to get to civilized parts. However, just then his enthusiasm did very well, for, at any rate, all their endeavour must be to reach that shanty, and to think of nothing else then.

They knocked over a seal that evening—it was easily done. They crept on one basking by a rock; when Walter awoke it, it reared up on its flippers, growled and blew at him; he dexterously hit the beast across its nose with a club and the deed was done. The meat was very much like pork in appearance and taste.

They were quite cheerful that night, looking forward with eagerness to their expedition. None of them forgot to thank their Heavenly Father for all His mercies ere they fell asleep. George and Sid were especially grateful for having been thrown into contact with Walter Clifton, for they were sure he was a real good fellow, resourceful, used to bush life, and sure to be a very great help to them.

The tide served the following forenoon. The raft was afloat; they mounted it and pushed off. Having contrived a couple of light spars to do for oars, and a

long one at what they called the stern to steer by, they anxiously set-to to make their contrivance travel through the water. It did move, certainly, but so slowly that it took them till quite dark to cross, and when they touched land the other side they simply thanked God that they were there, then rolled in the long, warm grass and slept till daylight returned.

It did not take them long to seek their beacon and their lone-pine. Those found, they were soon at the shanty, which they found untouched. No advice had been inscribed on their notices—evidently no one had been there since they left. There were tracks about it, though, which Walter declared were made by bears, at which the boys, in spite of what they had been told, looked without satisfaction.

It was really comical to see the delight with which Walter regarded the rough old hut. "Boys!" he shouted, "three days ago I was hopeless. I believed I should never see a man or a man's dwelling-place again; and here's a house, and here is company. We must never despair. It's not half a bad crib, either," he went on. "If I only had an axe, I'd mighty soon make it a first-class one. But, I say, don't this show that there must be people somewhere about? We must explore; maybe we'll have the owner of this mansion here directly. Well, the sooner the better, I say."

All this was about the outside—he was as pleased as if it had been a mansion in Park Lane.

But when they entered, and he saw what they had

there, he was almost beside himself. "We're in luxury, lads!" he cried. "Why, it's just A1, first chop, hunky. We can live here for years; there's everything but an axe!" he continued as he gazed round.

"Ah!" sighed George, "there are many things needed besides an axe. We want flour, tea, sugar—oh! many, many things, but, more than all, we want the means of getting away from here. Ours is a hard fate, indeed. How can you be so happy when everything is wrong?"

"No, no—not everything," Walter objected. "We've many blessings, much to thank the Almighty for. Of course I want to get away home as much as you do. I want to see my people, and Nell—of course I do. It is a bad fix we are in, no doubt; and yet I say again we have many blessings. So, my lads, let us be grateful and trust that God in His good providence will show us some way out of this, and home."

They made a fire, cut Walter's hair, rigged him out with decent clothes, and by evening they were in what he, at any rate, thought great comfort. They ate a biscuit each. Walter declared it was the most delicious morsel he had ever eaten. He had not tasted bread for nine months.

CHAPTER VI

IT was June 13, they thought (but they had lost count), when they reached the shanty again. Their new friend rose with the sun next morning; he was too excited, too happy, he said, to lie longer. All that day he passed examining and admiring. The things they had fascinated him.

The boys, much more serious than he was, felt the horror of their predicament, which Walter did not seem to; indeed, they thought him rather childish, and feared that he would not be as anxious to get away as they were.

His great attraction was the gun. He said he used to be a first-rate shot; so when some ducks passed over that evening, and he let fly and knocked one over, he was proud that he had not lost his skill. Walter pointed out a quantity of wild spinach, which they found remarkably good when boiled, and with the duck they had a fine supper.

Ceaselessly they chatted about the main trouble—how they were to get away; this was the absorbing question.

At first Walter did not appear very enthusiastic.

"Boys!" he cried, "this is such an improvement on my recent life that I'd like to make it last awhile. Don't let us be in such an awful hurry to clear away from it."

However, as the novelty wore off, he too became anxious. They did what they could to be comfortable, naturally; and with the exception of bread, tea and sugar, they had all really necessary food. The flesh of seals and birds, of fish and lobsters was plentiful, and they found abundance of green peas! Immense patches of them were all along the beach; they were nearly as good as garden peas. There were quantities of wild strawberries also, and the promise of many gooseberries, raspberries, and black currants, all wild. Indeed, there was no real lack, and at times they were so well off that they almost forgot where they were. But never for long. Suddenly they would all break down, and for hours would do nothing but talk of how to get away.

They had started prayers, morning and evening. When Walter's turn came to officiate he prayed very earnestly. These were the happiest moments of their lives.

Their only real physical suffering now was caused by mosquitoes. They were bad during daylight, but at night they were a real misery. Half the roof was open to the sky, and most of the crevices between the logs of the walls were open, so they suffered intensely from the pests. They had fogs frequently, and several

strong gales ; as a rule the weather was intensely hot. They called themselves lazy, but what were they to do ?

This, being clearly a land of plenty was in Walter Clifton's opinion a proof that they were not on Anticosti. All they had to go by, certainly, were the half-dozen words which the captain of the *Prairie Queen* had said. Neither of the three remembered ever to have heard even the name before, and having no map they could not decide. Indeed, their opinion was that they were somewhere on the mainland, and only needed to push on in almost any direction to get to men's haunts.

This was, however, just the difficulty. They tried again and again to force a way into the interior, but were always met with some impenetrable barrier—thickets of matted spruce, inlets from the sea, wide, deep rivers or lakes, swamps, or impassable bogs ; they were impotent.

With much difficulty, having nothing but jack-knives, they had cut a trail, or path, to the summit of a high cliff near. They carried poles up and built a beacon, which would be conspicuous from the sea ; for they could not divest themselves of the idea that there must be some traffic upon it, there must be something come along to pick them up. Indeed, it was this firm belief, this hope, which kept them from despair. No day passed without one, at any rate, but generally all three, spending hours up there

with the glass watching for a sail. They called this spot "Look-out Mountain."

Usually there was a mistiness, a thickness, over the distant horizon, but one day it was very clear, and they perceived that land existed across there. It was too distant for them to make out details, even with the glass; they could, however, see what looked like cliffs similar to where they were, and there were high mountains beyond them. They concluded it was the same country. "Probably we are in a great bay," they said; "and oh, if we could only get across to the other side!" It was there they believed all the drift-timber came from, and they were sure people dwelt there.

To travel along the coast to it was impossible; besides, they must carry food and gear with them. A boat was the only means by which they could hope to reach it, and they had neither boat nor the means to make one. A raft naturally occurred to them, but they knew well that they could not navigate it across that sea, which was so seldom quiet, and more often boisterous.

During their excursions in the neighbourhood they saw many animals which Walter knew. Foxes were numerous, principally red ones, but there were silver-grey and some really black. He was greatly interested; he had an idea of the value of the skins of these creatures. There were minks too, martens, and otters; and in the streams and ponds no end of musk-rats.

All these animals were so very tame, which they thought proved that human beings were almost unknown to them. Yet, here was a dwelling, built by a man, the very best evidence surely that this land was known by some one, somewhere. "Oh, if that mysterious personage would arrive to release them from their wretched plight!" This was their constant moan.

They often saw bears. Once they unexpectedly came on a couple who were gorging themselves with the remains of a seal; another time they saw a party feeding on green peas. They always carried a gun with them—for protection they averred, and doubtless if anything had attacked them, they would have used it. But their real reason was that they should have the means of calling the attention of any passing boat, for deep down perhaps, but always, they had the idea that from the sea would come their deliverance.

The quantity of timber lying on the beach, much of it dressed, was a ceaseless wonder to them. Many of the logs were stamped with initials on their ends, some had the names of towns and districts which Walter knew. It was most mysterious. How did they come there?

At their look-out once they saw something on the sea; their glass showed them that it was a bunch of saw-logs, kept together by a "boom." Walter had often helped to make up such a "drive," as he called it, up Muskoka way, and on the back lakes behind Peterborough.

Another time there drifted past a huge, uprooted tree. This in the distance looked so much like a vessel that for an hour or two they were greatly excited.

Thus the weary days and weeks dragged by. They had good weather on the whole ; fogs dispirited them more than anything, for they feared that help might pass without their beacon being noticed.

Their shanty was but a poor affair. It was in great need of "chinking" between the logs ; they did it with moss and clay. The roof being so shattered, when it rained there was only one spot where they could obtain shelter ; fortunately that was near the fire end. They patched the roof a bit with broken boards and slabs from the shore.

All July passed, August arrived. Fruit was plentiful. Food was abundant. In one creek trout were to be taken freely. Lobsters were always to be had at low water, and frequently a shoal of capelin (small, but delicious fish) were driven into the shallows, where they were easily captured. They had become quite expert at snaring ducks and geese ; seals were always to be had, and besides the fruit, there were green things, like spinach, kale and leeks, enough for their needs. They had a few biscuits still left ; they had one each on Sundays, or on what they thought were Sundays.

It was the end of August. They were sitting round their fire one evening, enjoying its warmth—it was becoming chilly ; indeed there had been frosts already

—when Walter, who had been scrutinizing their abode, suddenly asked this question: "Boys, if we have to winter here, what sort of a shanty is this for us?"

This was like a bombshell falling.

"Winter here!" exclaimed Sid. "Winter here! Oh! God forbid. Surely we shall get away from here long before winter! Why, this is only August; we have months before us."

George was greatly agitated. "Winter," he groaned. "Why, we don't know where we are! What makes you talk of winter? How do you know what there will be here? It is awful to hear you speak of it. If we are not rescued before that, certainly we shall all perish."

Said Walter in reply, "Surely I know about the winter here, and I know that it will be hard. You forget that I have wintered here once! But we need not talk of perishing."

The boys had forgotten their friend's experience for the moment; of course he knew what he was talking about, and what he had said was most disheartening. He went on shortly. "There is a hard winter here, and it comes early. There will be a deep snowfall; I have looked about; I know the signs. Certainly we don't know where we are, only this, that we are a long way north of Quebec; we came nearly north in the *Prairie Queen*—I know that—and it is very much colder, and the winter lasts very much longer in Quebec than it does in that part of Ontario which I come from. So, my lads, if we have to winter

here, depend upon it we've got to have a severe one." And he ended by, "If I only had an axe I would not care, I could beat the winter with an axe!"

This was terrible; the boys were in despair; they were appalled at the prospect, and for long were silent.

George spoke first. "We cannot exist during severe cold in this shanty, can we?" he asked.

Walter explained that the cave he had wintered in was really weather-proof. It was so far underground that the frost did not enter. It was far warmer than this shanty could be, though he reiterated that if he had an axe he could make it right, but as he had no axe, they must think of some other plan.

This remark, so often repeated, bothered George and Sid. They had no axe; what was the use of continually "harping on that string"?

However, a discussion followed, which had the effect of occupying their minds for awhile, and they knew that there was nothing worse for them than keeping silently brooding over their condition.

It was late when Walter exclaimed, "Come, this will not do. At present I reckon we are not badly fixed for castaways. Let us thank God for His mercies, and trust Him for the future. As for me, I will have another try to-morrow to get inland. At least I may discover some better place than this to winter in if we have to do it. So come, George, read prayers and we'll turn in. Before many nights go by I hope we'll have something brighter to talk about."

It was a source of great content to George and Sid that Walter was a religious man. As they said to each other, "Suppose he had been a fellow like Fraser or Miller, what would they have suffered?" But he was a bright, well-read, and intelligent companion. He had, too, a deep sense of the value of spiritual matters. Oh! how deeply grateful the boys were for this.

But Walter did not go off next day as he said. When they began to discuss his idea by daylight, it did not greatly please his companions. Neither of them thought it right for him to go without a companion, and George was not then very well, not well enough to be left alone. Walter himself had no fear; he said that he had made many a journey alone in the bush in Ontario, through practically unknown regions too, and would take fine care not to lose himself. However, the end of it was that his scheme was carried out the morning after. He took a pack of food—enough to last him several days—a blanket, the gun and the binoculars, and left determined, he said, to ascertain positively whether they were on an island, on the mainland, in an utterly wild region, or not far from habitations. He had declared that he, at any rate, could not begin to arrange for wintering until this was settled one way or the other. So, putting his trust in God, he started.

How George and Sid counted the hours we may imagine. Would he be successful? Would they get

out of this wretched position directly? They spoke of what they would do when they reached some place settled, where they could cable to England. They passed their time planning, and picturing rosy pictures of the near future, for Walter had departed so full of hope, so confident of success.

They slept more contentedly those nights than they had for weeks.

And about noon the third day the wanderer crept out of the woods, and appeared before the boys, foot-sore, weary, discouraged.

Neither spoke until he had staggered across the place to where he slept; then almost in tears he muttered, "Boys, it's no go, there's nothing for it in there. Here we must stick; our only hope is from the sea!"

George and Sid, horribly disappointed, could for some time only obtain monosyllables in reply to their questions, but they warmed some soup, got him to eat, and by and by he pulled himself together and they learned his story.

He said that after starting he made fair headway for some time. He marched up the stream where they had often been, and struggled up to the high land at its head, where he found the usual impenetrable forest of dwarf spruce, through which, after searching for hours, he discovered a passage, made by bears, he thought, though he met none.

After passing through this scrub a mile or more, he came to a melancholy pine-forest, with many big

trees, then he came to more open woodland of poplar, with many fine mountain ashes laden with brilliant fruit. He passed his first night there. Next morning he traversed a big tamarac (*larch*) swamp, where amongst the deep moss cranberries were plentiful. Near this was a high cliff, a pinnacle ; with difficulty he ascended it, and from thence he had a most extensive view over the interior. From his description it was much the same as that which the boys had seen near where they first landed—stretches of bare, open, level country with many clumps, or groves, of forest. A dozen miles in from where he was, low hills arose covered with trees. In one direction there was a break in this range, and through it he could perceive the same kind of country continuing to the dim distance. Here and there were lakes and stretches of water. It looked to be an easy land to travel. There was an expanse of what appeared exactly like prairie, grass-covered, between him and those hills. Surely, he thought, he could cross it easily, surmount those hills, and beyond them he would see what he longed for—the homes of men.

With the glasses he scrutinized and minutely examined every yard of the country between him and those hills, but saw no sign of human life or work.

As he sat he gazed behind him ; he could not see the sea, but he could perceive their beacon on Look-out Mountain.

Those hills in front of him, to what he thought was

the south of him, fascinated him strangely. He determined to endeavour to reach their summit, at any rate. The boys would not be scared if he stayed away even for a week; surely, surely, he said to himself, he could examine all the district, and be back to them in less time than that!

It was still early in the day. His course led him down-hill; it was easy going. By the middle of the afternoon he had reached the margin of what he had taken to be prairie, and behold! it was a vast bog, a peat-bog he thought, but impossible to traverse—that is, when he first struck it.

Firmly believing that if he could gain the other side of it, which he now perceived was at least three miles away, he could manage the rest, he spent hours in tramping along the margin, endeavouring to find a practicable way across, but the further he went, the further it seemed to stretch beyond his vision. He kept on till nightfall, and found no change. He slept on a knoll beside this dismal bog.

At day-break he was up a hill a mile ahead, which gave him an extensive view; yet neither to right nor left was there any break in the swamp before him. So with sad heart he turned homewards, feeling convinced now, that from the sea alone could they expect any good.

The failure of Walter's expedition was a very great disappointment to them. For several days they were most melancholy and cast down. There was little conversation amongst them. They ate, and

slept, and generally moped about, seeming to have entirely lost hope. Many times Walter expressed his sorrow that he could not visit the distant hills he had described; it seemed as if he would not rest till he had seen beyond them. They discussed ways and means for him to do so, but nothing resulted. He often declared that he was sure there were people living the other side of them, but could give no reason from any thing that he had seen; he said that he felt "in his bones" that it was so!

In the beginning of September the weather was bad. They had experienced fog, rain, wind, separately; now they had to bear them all combined. They had almost a hurricane lasting an entire week. Then one morning the sun rose gloriously; the wind had dropped, the fog was gone, and it was as Walter said, "as clear as a bell"; he added, "It will freeze to-night."

It did—and the aspect of the land was changed, that is, so far as vegetation went. All grasses were wilted, poplars and birches were bright yellow, ice covered all pools, the air felt nipping like winter, and they were dismayed; but all went up to "Look-out," and gazed across the brilliant sea with melancholy eyes.

It was bare; only the gulls were hovering about the seaweed beds—no sail! no hope! They were silent, each with his knees drawn up to his chin, gazing seaward ceaselessly.

Below them, on the beach, many seals were basking.

Sometimes they noticed one hoisting his clumsy form from the water ; at others one would roll from a rock into the tide with a mighty splash. A couple of black bears shambled along, dodging behind rocks and logs, endeavouring to get one of the seals. A fox crept up quite near where they were sitting, a silver fox, his skin worth many a pound in Britain. All this most interesting spectacle was not heeded. What did they care for such things then ? For ages before they had been cast on that awful coast, they thought, these creatures had been enjoying their lives there ; summer and winter, day and night, had kept their allotted seasons ; nothing new, nothing changed : and for ages yet to come, when they "poor humans" had succumbed to the horrid climate, when they had died there, unknown, and their fate a mystery, these scenes, these creatures, would go on as ever. It was sad beyond description. This was the way they spent hours that day, in brooding over their woes.

It was the middle of the afternoon. Walter suddenly arose.

"See here, boys !" he cried excitedly—"this will never, never do ! Think what we have both come through—look back at your sufferings and mine. We have been far worse off than we are now ! What did I feel like think you, when I was on that bit of rock off yonder, blinded by fog, when the dinghy went down under me, and I was alone, with the screams of the *Prairie Queen* gradually dying

away as she went from me? How did I feel then? And how did you two feel that day when you were battling with that heavy sea in your boat, and when it was knocked to splinters beneath you on those jagged rocks—eh? My word! you felt bad then if you felt at all! You did not believe there was any hope for you, did you? Yet I was there—sent there by Almighty God, I do believe—to give you a helping hand ashore! So, surely, surely we need not now despair. See how very much we have to thank Him for. There is much to hope for, too. We may have to winter here—it looks like it; if so, we must prepare for it. Come, let us arouse ourselves, let us act like men, let us stir about and get ready to live during the winter that is close upon us!”

George looked up. “Yes, indeed,” said he, “oh! yes, we’ve much, oh! very much to be thankful for—but I’ve lost hope, seemingly. We must drag on a miserable existence here as long as we can, I suppose, but I’m not good for much. What can I do? Tell me.”

Sid murmured—“Yes, we had better turn to and try still, I suppose, but it’s not much use. Like George I’m beginning to be hopeless.”

“Well, now, to tell you the straight truth,” said Walter, “I think we are acting very meanly—very like cowards, or what you old country people call duffers—or muffs. The idea of three strong, healthy—well, you’re not quite up to the mark, George, I

admit—but the idea of three fellows as well off as we are, giving up hope!—it *is* mean, unmanly, wicked! That's what I think, and I say, come, let's do differently; let's set to, hustle, get ready for winter, and put our trust in God to bring us through it safely, to bring us home to those we love."

He spoke enthusiastically and the boys jumped up, looking brighter than they had for days. "We are muffs!—we are duffers! We will do far better. What shall we go at first?" they cried.

"First of all, let us get down and have some grub—that's what I think," responded Walter, and went on, "We must have four things to enable us to get through the winter; they are, Shelter, Food, Firing, and Clothes. I can see the way to all. Food and fuel only need collecting; thanks be, there is abundance of both handy. Clothes—well, I haven't a stitch, that's a fact, but thanks to you two I guess I'll not suffer for the want of them more than you do yourselves. So really what is principally our trouble is our dwelling-place— isn't all that I've said so, boys?"

They agreed that he was right; then they descended to their shanty and their supper. During the evening they had much lively talk of what to do. As for the shanty first, Sid suggested this and George that. Some of their ideas were practicable, some were not. "If I only had an axe!" began Walter, then looked annoyed at himself and exclaimed—"Oh! bother, I'm always at that; but you see one would be such a bless-

ing that I cannot help gassing about it ; forgive me. But what I suggest is that we thatch the old contraction. We can cut quantities of rushes with my knife, and they will do. It would take time, of course, but thus we can make a warm and a tight roof. What d'ye think ? ”

They agreed to that too ; so for the next few days they all three went at it cheerily, and made a good job of it. They laid pieces of timber and boulders on the thatch to keep it in place, twisted grass ropes to help, and within a week had so successfully completed their job that they felt quite proud. Then they dammed in a pond of sea-water, and at every low tide they searched the stuff thrown on shore for lobsters ; they went great distances and captured many, and at the week's end they reckoned they had a hundred boomers safely in it. They shot a bear, too. It was no great feat. Walter simply hid behind a saw-log near some offal from a seal, and waited till the black gentleman slouched along. He put a bullet through his heart and the deed was done. This bear was very fat and his skin was beautiful. They stretched it on the shanty wall, scraped all the fat off they could, and rubbed wood ashes on to absorb the rest. It dried well and made a fine rug. They spent days picking peas !—any quantity were to be had, ripe now. Patches, many acres in extent, were for miles along the coast. They had several bushels piled in a corner of the shanty.

So, what with one thing and another, they kept busy, and it was good for them. Their melancholy was dissipated, their woeful aspect was brightened, they could actually laugh and joke, and were altogether different beings thus employed than when they were idly bemoaning their adversities.

"Work's a great blessing," said Walter one day.

The boys replied "'M—'m,"—they quite agreed with him.

The cold increased daily. It froze every night and on many days. All meat killed would keep during winter, so they went in vigorously for bear and seal meat. They hung it on racks, made of poles, placed near their dwelling.

At one time, naturally, our boys would have been horrified to know that bears were so numerous around them, but they soon became quite unmindful of them; and as to the butchering business—well, of course, at home in England they would have considered it a dreadful undertaking, but here they quickly got over the unpleasantness, and would skin and cut up a bear or a seal with as little objection as peeling an apple or paring a potato.

Towards the end of September they had many bad days, and were often kept in by them; but no day passed without a visit to the summit of Mount Look-out, and a long gaze around for the sail they hoped for. At times it blew hard, and a heavy sea broke on the reefs, but generally it was calm. At midday it

was fairly warm, towards evening heavy coats were needed, and at night a roaring fire and rugs.

So, then, by the first week in October they were supplied with everything that was absolutely necessary, and their labours slackened. With the duller weather, the longer nights and less labour, with the necessity of stirring about being over, melancholy seemed to be about to settle on them again, and hopelessness appeared to be about to dominate that shanty. They said they had done all they could, and simply had to exist till spring—till the following May, eight or nine months ahead! This, they knew, was as early as any help could possibly come to them from the sea, and they had long ago settled it that only from there it *could* come. Already the shores were ice-bound; when a sea arose all was broken up and carried away by the tide; yet, during a few days' calm, it *froze* again, and they noticed daily the fringe of ice grew thicker and thicker, till by and by ordinary rough waves could not break it up, and they knew the awful truth—to them—that in a very few weeks the sea itself would be ice-covered, and then good-bye indeed to all possibility of help till spring.

But in the early days of October something happened which made so vast a difference to these three friends whose fortunes we are following, that to tell the *story* a new chapter is needed.

CHAPTER VII

THERE was a slight snowfall one night early in October, and when they went outside they found it was already covered with the tracks of animals, which Walter from his experience in Ontario recognised.

"Boys! boys!" he cried, greatly excited, "there are mink and marten as well as no end of foxes here, I see. How I wish we had some traps and strychnine!"

"Strychnine!" they exclaimed, astonished, "what on earth for? What's the good of that? What d'ye want with poison?"

"Why, to poison the foxes! Don't you know that's how most fox-skins are obtained? No—I suppose you don't; but I just wish I had some; I'd soon show you—we could get a lot, I can see."

"But what's the use?" queried Sid; "what do we want with fox-skins? They're useless in this miserable place."

George, who was quite as well and strong as the others again, said that he thought as Sid did—"What's the good?"

Walter wisely argued that it would be employment, which was a great consideration; idleness, he maintained, would be their bane during the long winter;

they must contrive some occupation, a useful one if possible. "When we get away, won't it be good to take a heap of fine fur with us?" said he. "We may actually get some black foxes—think of that; we have seen some, you know. They'll bring a big price in Montreal, I know."

The two boys smiled, a sort of pitying smile, a smile which implied, "Oh! well, have your way—if trifling will please you, go ahead; it will not hurt us."

However, Walter's excitement and energy were contagious. In a day or two they were all building deadfalls, tracking the creatures to their homes, and after several minks were taken, and they had all but caught a silver fox, they became, all of them, quite eager, especially George, who had some recollection of his father trapping and making money of fur out in the back-woods around Ingersoll.

When it came on to storm, as it did shortly after, and they were forced to remain indoors, they were quite distressed.

It did blow hard, too, for some days. Heavy seas broke up the ice and piled it along the shore; huge breakers hurled themselves on the rocky ledges. There were heavy squalls—rain, sleet and snow—which kept our party under cover generally, yet during lulls one of them always rushed out to make a survey.

On one of these occasions, early one forenoon, George was thus abroad, and from habit was gazing out to sea. The horizon was obscured, the flying

clouds were low, the mist caused by the turmoil of the furious sea prevented him from seeing far. It appeared to him to be the same lonely expanse that he had seen for weeks—at first hopefully—latterly in despair. Nothing had ever been seen on it yet but floating logs, a few whales, or the black heads of seals ; no vessel, nor anything to help them.

He was about to run in from a rain-squall, when in the gloom across the ocean an opening attracted him. It was caused by a fiercer blast out there than ordinary, he thought, but he saw something in the brightest part of this light patch, something which instantly riveted his attention, something they had longed and hoped and prayed for, and despaired about for weeks and months. It was a sail ! There was no doubt of it this time ; a sail, a sail at last !

So excited was he that he could neither move nor shout ; his eyes, dilated, were glued upon the object ; indeed, he could hardly think ! There was a sail at last, and so far as he could make out it was heading for him. Rescue had come !

Then a thick, black bank of storm-cloud blotted all out.

George sank unnerved, almost unconscious, and so remained until a sharper blast of sleet aroused him ; then he hurried in and yelled excitedly, " A sail ! a sail ! At last there is a sail ! Come, hurry, we are saved ! "

His aspect was so strange that the others thought

he must have gone crazy—he seemed to have such difficulty in finding words. However, he seized the glasses, shouted “Come!” and rushed away.

They of course followed, and found him on a big rock, which commanded a view far across the raging ocean, peering at a black pall of impenetrable mist. They joined him. He pointed, exclaiming wildly that there was a vessel there, that he had seen it, that it was no imagination, no hallucination; he knew it was heading towards them, and he was sure they would all see it soon.

The others only half believed him; they still thought he had imagined it, supposed that he had been deceived by an uprooted tree or by the spout of a whale. But George stuck to it. It was a sailing vessel he had seen. “Pray, oh, pray!” he cried, “that this awful mist may clear away, so that we may attract their attention.”

“Yes, indeed!” shouted Walter. They had to shout; the raging wind, the roaring sea, the cutting blasts of hail, made it necessary for them to shout their loudest to make one another hear. “Yes, indeed! If there is any vessel out there, I pity those on board her. Do they know the kind of coast that they are on, or their way into this bay—their only chance? But even if they fetch it they’ll go to pieces on the bar. If there *is* a vessel there, God help them!”

“If there *is*!—if there *is*!”—screamed George, “why, there it is!—see! see!” and he pointed to a

fresh opening in the ink-black bank of cloud, and there, sure enough, was a vessel.

It seemed to be a large boat, perhaps a fishing smack. She had one close-reefed sail set, and was driving before the gale, dead on shore.

Whilst Walter examined her with the glasses, one of them hurried to the shanty and brought out a white cloth fastened to a pole, which he frantically waved.

"They've lost control, I believe," Walter announced. "I can see some person on her. If they do not alter their course they'll perish, surely! Run, Sid, with the flag towards the only possible passage through the reef! Wave it there! They may notice it, and then may perhaps get through—but oh! I doubt it sadly."

Sid obeyed. Then with eager eyes they watched the reeling boat, now lost to sight behind the swelling hills of water, now heaved to the summit of a mountain of foam, but always heading directly to where the reefs and rocks were the most dangerous. It was so close by this time that they could, with the naked eye, see that there was some one on her.

No notice was taken of the signal Sid waved. On, on, the doomed craft came, every bound, every desperate heave bringing her nearer to the rocks and ruin. It was high water; they watched her as she staggered in, saw her pass safely over sunken rocks they knew. They shouted, gesticulated, but it was too late—too late. Inevitably she must be dashed to pieces on the awful shore.

And so it was—she came on wildly leaping—suddenly she leapt no more! Her bows were thrown up high and a cloud of white surge enveloped her.

For some seconds nothing could be seen but this great gush of whiteness; then, when it subsided for a brief moment, the outline of the vessel could be perceived and her mast and sail were gone already!

Then another blinding cloud of spray and spume hid the doomed craft, another and another mountain of white sea and foam crashed over her, and so it went on, until it seemed as if all the wild billows of that raging ocean were hastening to precipitate themselves on the poor, crumbling fabric, which was held by those cruel rocks.

Our friends were frantic with excitement. They ran out on the slippery ledges, far out as they could go, eager to render aid, to save life; they heeded not the awful rain and hail and wind, but they found they could do nothing more than stand gazing with horror at what went on. Nor were they entirely without pity for themselves. They were horrified when it occurred to them that probably this vessel had come to rescue them; and there she was, breaking up before their very eyes, her occupants drowning, and they impotent to help!

It was high water when the boat struck. The wind, still strong, being dead on shore, the heavy surges came on fiercely for some time after the tide had turned; but at length the watchers perceived a

difference—the seas that struck the reef on which the remains of the vessel were visible were not so huge ; spaces of the beach were bare. They crept on to them, and by degrees approached nearer ; then they saw parts of the boat strewn the shore—broken spars, torn sails, and cordage, barrels and cases, some rent to splinters, some apparently unharmed.

At any other time what notice they would have taken if they had found only one of these on their rambles ! But now they took no heed of them ; their anxiety was for those on the wreck.

They had to wait long before the water had receded sufficiently for them to draw near with safety, but when they ventured to wade through the shallows, and could dodge the still breaking waves and bend before the frequent squalls of wind, they perceived that quite half of the fabric had been broken up, and washed away. What still remained of the poor boat was likely to last till the next high tide, when it, too, would be shattered.

They shouted now, halloed their loudest ; the response they had was from a huge black dog which, leaping on to the bulwarks, lifted his head and howled. They called, but it took no notice, and remained there crying dismally.

They drew still nearer ; clasping hands, they waded in to their waists, and as they thus progressed a floating object attracted their notice. It was the body of a man !

They made their way to it, drew it on to a dry patch, and tried to bring life back to it. They did their best, but they felt from the first it was a corpse they handled.

This was the first time George or Sid had seen a dead person, which was an added pain to them.

As they were attempting to restore vitality, the dog jumped from the wreck and bounded amongst them, and with every sign of grief began licking the face and hands of the dead man.

At last, having satisfied themselves that the poor fellow was beyond their help, they turned their attention to the shattered boat, keeping alert, however, in case there might be others drowning.

The water was yet too deep for them to get on board, but they sheltered under the lee. It was quieter there. They could hear each other's voices, and they could not avoid noticing the numbers of articles, other than mere wreckage and splinters, with which the beach was strewn; and very naturally it occurred to them how useful many of these things would be. There were boxes, baskets, tins, and some barrels; some appeared to be full.

"Boys," said Walter after a while, "this is an awful business! And this poor chap that is drowned—it is bad, and we feel it so, eh? Still I guess there'd be nothing wrong in rolling these barrels out of danger. D'ye know what they contain? No? Well, those two are flour, and I believe those smaller ones are either dried fruit or sugar, and the tins are perhaps tea, or

butter. I don't know, but I reckon they're provisions of some kind. What d'ye think? Shall we put them safe on dry land? There can't be anything wrong in that?"

The boys agreeing with him, they quickly had all they thought valuable safe above high-water mark.

All this time they observed that the dog stayed close to the body on the rocks, alternately licking the face and lifting up his head in melancholy howls.

Half-an-hour after, the tide had receded sufficiently to permit them to hoist themselves up on to what remained of the vessel. Most of the deck they found to be ripped off, and everything left was covered with sand and sea-weed. A strong wind howled through the gaps in what remained of the hull of what appeared to have been but a few hours before a seaworthy craft. She had been a large-decked boat of perhaps twenty tons. There did not appear to have been any regular cargo in her, but there seemed to have been a large store of provisions, and this appealed very strongly to our party, who believed that she had come to rescue them, and in case she would be too late to bring them away that season, she had been well supplied with food to last till spring. They imagined indeed that she had been sent by Government to search for them.

As they clambered about this ruined fabric they came across trunks and chests, rolls of canvas, bags and clothing. Much of this was torn or battered, and all sodden with salt water.

They crept into what appeared to have been the cabin ; there was a broken table, seats and lockers ; printed placards, in French, were stuck on the bulkheads, and some pictures from an *Illustrated London News*. There was a large coloured print of the Virgin with glass and frame broken ; scarcely anything was unharmed.

“French Canadians!” exclaimed Walter. “Countrymen of yours and mine, George. Isn’t it awful to think that an hour ago that poor fellow lying out there could have told us all we want to know, and now—what good is he?”

There was a corner partitioned off. In it they saw a bunk ; the door was torn away, and so jammed that the little crib could not easily be entered ; there appeared to be a heap of rugs and a buffalo robe in there—they left these till the last. They searched all over for a chart, a compass, a book, anything that might solve the mystery of their whereabouts, but although they found many most useful articles they could not discover one of these. They packed the smaller things in a basket ; the larger they simply flung out on to the beach.

They lost no time, for they knew well that at next tide every vestige would be swept away. Amongst other valuables they came across several tins, unopened, of gunpowder, and some shot and caps ; this made them search for a gun, but they did not find one.

Walter was routing about in the extreme fore-part

of the boat in what appeared to have been a store-place for tools, and he brought to light a spade, several dozens of steel traps of various sizes, and an auger and a saw; but when he pulled forth an axe—nay, two axes—his face was all delight.

“Boys! boys!” he shouted—this was the usual way he addressed them—“boys! look here, an axe! Thank goodness. Now we need nothing.” Then suddenly realizing the position they were in, and how these articles had come into their possession, he blushed with confusion. “Oh, I forgot,” said he. “God forgive me! But I was so overjoyed to find these axes, which all this time I have been longing for, I forgot that poor man outside, who, I suppose, owned all.”

This wreck had provided them with a quantity of most useful things, which would be a great blessing to them, though they were sorry in their hearts that they had come in this awful way.

They had rummaged everywhere, and were about to drag the blankets and things out of the sleeping berth, then leave the wreck, and get all they had found into safety, when the dog came back, paid no heed to them, but, leaping over the broken door and into the bunk, nestled in amongst the blankets there.

The wind, now howling again vehemently, the breakers roaring quite near, made it as difficult as ever to hear. Sid pointed to the dog, now settled down, as we have said. They were regarding the

scene with interest, when, judge of their amazement, they saw a little brown human hand reached forth and laid caressingly upon the animal, who licked it fondly!

For a moment they were so bewildered that they did not stir. Soon Walter beckoned to them; they wrenched away the obstructions at the entrance and looked in. George was the foremost, but over his shoulders the others peered, and they saw a sight which amazed them indeed. A young thing—they could not say at first if boy or girl—was gazing at them, with hair dishevelled, eager eyes, and fear personified!

The dog raised his head and growled; the figure grasped its collar and said something to it—the noise was so great they could not tell what, but the creature was quieted. Then the figure rose up, and they realized that it was a girl, who cried out something unintelligible.

One of them shouted that they were friends, that the boat was wrecked, that she must come away or she would drown. Clearly she did not understand, but said some words in reply which George knew were French.

At which, collecting his scattered wits and approaching nearer to the girl, he asked—"Vous êtes Française, n'est ce pas?"

She nodded, "Yes."

Then George proceeded—"Eh! bien—le bateau avait fait naufrage. Ne savez vous pas?"

She looked, if possible, still more alarmed and bewildered, but she said nothing.

George asked if she were "blessé? malade?" but she shook her head.

"But she must come out of this; tel' her so," said Walter.

George did so in the best way he could, telling her she would be "noyé"—drowned—if she remained there longer, at which she sat up, looked eagerly at him, then shrieked—"Mais, mon père! Ou est mon père?"

They said to each other that no doubt the poor man, whose body lay ashore there, must be her father. They consulted, and knowing they had a sad task to perform, were much distressed, but they also knew that it was useless to hesitate; so George addressed her again, telling her—'Il est dehors là—sur le rivage—venez avec nous.'

But she shook her head. "Non! non!" she screamed, "vous êtes étrangers! Que faites vous ici?" Then, after a moment, she went on—"Are you Anglaish? Yes? Den I de Anglaish spak'. What mak' you 'ere? My fader he tole me, stop on my bed till he com'. De batcau he jomp, de vind he blow so 'ard, la mer, de zee, hit com' hin, de boat he brak dat tam upon de rock. But me! I don't go away till my fader com'."

This was perplexing. Walter tried to make her understand that her father could not come. He told

her he was hurt—blessé—and they had come to take her to him. She seemed to comprehend. “Den I com’!” she cried, and leapt from the bunk. They rolled a blanket around her, and would have carried her, but she sprang into the open air and gazed around her with horror and dread, as one can easily fancy she would when she realized how things were—the raging sea, the wreck-strewn shore. The girl was as agile as a fawn. She leapt across the shattered deck from beam to beam, lowered herself to the rock on which the remnant of the vessel was jammed, then lifted up her voice and shrieked with anguish—“Oh ! père ! mon père ! ou êtes vous ?”

They were close behind her ; she turned to them.

“Where is my fader ?” she asked. “I see heem not. Oh ! strangers, oh ! mes amis, dites-moi, tol me, do not me sheet ; my fader, oh ! my fader, tak me to heem !”

One of them whispered, “We’d better show her at once. We can do nothing else.” So they pointed to the body.

A few steps on, and she saw what it was ; with a moan of distress she hurried to it.

They expected some show of terrible grief, that the child would break down in some way. They kept behind, merely watching her with sympathy and sorrow.

She drew near the corpse, with hands clasped tightly, with sad eyes. When she had reached it, they saw a great change come over her : she drew back, pointed to the body as she exclaimed, “But dis



"THEY KEPT BACK, MERELY WATCHING HER WITH SYMPATHY AND SORROW."

is not my fader! No—dis is Gilbert, le pauvre Gilbert. He is died. Oh! yes, I know it—'ow cam' he so? Where is my fader?" And the dog looked pitifully at her as he crouched beside her.

Here was more mystery.

They made her understand that they did not know anything about him, and asked if he had been in the boat when it struck. She did not comprehend; all they could glean from her half French, half English, was that some hours before, when they were anchored "somewhere," her father and brother Félix had gone away in their little boat to find where to take the big boat; that her father ordered her to lie down in her bed, and on no account to leave it till he came for her; that he had left the dog Néron—Nero—with her, and the man Gilbert in charge of the vessel.

They asked her where it was that they were anchored, but she could not tell, only that it was amongst the rocks and sea, that there were huge "falaises. Oh! oui, des grands falaises—si haut, si haut—comme les montagnes" (huge cliffs, great cliffs like mountains) all around them, and that was all she knew.

"Had she ever been there before?"

"Ah, non!" she answered, but her father had.

Did she know what this place was where they were?

"Non—but her father had spoken of it as Cap de l'Ours."

"But why?"

Oh, she could not tell, only "dat his de nam' hof de place where he would com'!"

They were mystified more and more.

They explained to her how they had seen her boat approaching, how they had found the body of Gilbert.

She had not shed a tear so far. Her big black eyes stared at them, dazed, bewildered; and every few minutes she cried aloud, "Mon père—mon frère—oh! where is my fader and my broder?"

All they could do was to take her up to the shanty. She was desperately cold, and was shivering with wet and terror. So they heaped logs on the fire, and tried to make her understand that she must wait there patiently until her father came, for it occurred to them that he might have landed safely somewhere near, and would see their beacon—so, if living, would find his way to them.

George was deputed to stay with her, to induce her to eat, to endeavour to console her, whilst the other two went off to secure the valuables that had come ashore.

They had settled that they could not leave Gilbert's remains where foxes and other prowling beasts would meddle with them; therefore they brought them up close to the shanty rolled in a sail, and covered them with logs and rocks, and hoped they would be safe till morning.

The dog Nero had kept close to the girl all the time, and now he lay down beside her by the fire. He often lifted his head and listened, gazing wistfully at his mistress.

It was sufficiently quiet here to admit of conversation. The girl stared at George, and he at her. She had been crouching before the fire—it was some time before either of them spoke. She was thoroughly warmed, apparently, when suddenly she sprang up, and with a gesture of impatience exclaimed, "But dis, dis is not good—why mus' I be here when my fader will be lookin' for me? I mus' go out, go 'le chercher.'"

George urged her to listen; he took hold of her, forced her to sit down again whilst he explained. He regarded her as a child, and spoke to her as one.

She was about ten or twelve years of age, a tall thin creature, with a tangled mass of very black hair; her complexion was brown, very brown, like an Indian's. Her face was haggard and drawn, and her eyes, black as coals, were large and piercing; they were deeply sunken under heavy brows. Her mouth was small and well-shapen, and when she spoke her white teeth gleamed. Her hands were small, but very brown, and worn by weather and work.

She was dressed in a loose frock of homespun grey, which was torn and soiled. There was no attempt at ornament, except that she wore a brooch of curious make—it was a cross of gold on a blue enamel ground. On her feet were strong moccasins.

She was a striking child, but could not be called either a pretty or engaging one. She looked like what George thought she most likely was, a half-bred Indian, half civilized.

When he had persuaded her to listen to him, and had explained how they thought it likely that her father would find her, and she had promised to be good, and to wait patiently for him, he began to question her. "Tell me your name," said he.

She said it was Gabrielle.

"Gabrielle what?" he asked; "what is your other name?"

She declared that she had no other. "Your father's name, then?" She said it was Pierre, and that was all it appeared she knew about it.

Had she a mother?—No, she assured him she never had one. There was an old woman where she lived, called Mère Odille—but she was not her mother. Other girls, most girls, had mothers, she knew, but she had not.

Where did they live, then?—She could only tell that it was at a place close to the sea; there were a few other houses there and a church and a priest. Not very far away there was a big store, a "Hudson-baiestore"; that was where her father usually worked, the manager of which taught her English.

Had the place a name?—Oh, yes; it was called "La Crique."

Was it far away?—No, oh no; they were only one day, two days, maybe, coming. From a hill near where her home was they could sometimes see across the sea to the land her father had come to—oh, yes. He had pointed out to her and her brother once the Cap de l'Ours, where he had been many years ago

and wished to go to again, to pass the winter, and get fur.

Was that what they had come for then? he asked her next; and she made him understand that it was just that. They had brought guns and traps, and were intending to stay all the winter. Her father and Félix and "le pauvre Gilbert" were to shoot and catch animals, and she was to cook for them. In spring they were to go home and would sell their furs at the store.

Asked if she could name the country they lived in, she replied, "Why, certainly, m'sieu—in Canaya, Canaya Bas."

Did she know in what country she was now? "Oh, in Canaya, sans doute," was her reply. "What other country mus' there be?" she asked.

"Have you ever heard of Anticosti?" was his next query. She said she had often heard the people speak of it.

"Is this it?" he asked. She could not tell; she thought not, because her father had described a wonderful lighthouse, or Phare, as she called it, in Anticosti; and not seeing one here, she judged this could not be it.

It took some time to get through this conversation, as her smattering of peculiar English and his of French was perplexing.

When Sid and Walter returned, they brought in some of the lighter articles they had saved, with several barrels and cases; also one little trunk, which

Gabrielle pounced upon, claiming it as hers. She shed tears when she saw the state to which its contents had been damaged ; it was full of her clothing and a few scraps of finery. To hang them about the place to dry, and to mourn over them, employed her for an hour ; then she settled by the fire, ate a couple of biscuits from their store, and fell asleep, Nero beside her.

Then the trio talked over affairs. George narrated what he had gathered from the girl, and they concluded that there was small chance of the father and brother having escaped during the heavy squalls in which the large boat came to grief, and that there was no doubt but that this poor child would have to share their lot during winter. They felt, though, that they had every reason to be thankful that such an ample supply of food had arrived with her, and thus by God's good providence, sad as the affair was to her and hers, her advent was a blessing to them.

They covered the girl up with warm blankets, offered their customary little service of prayer and praise, and, wearied with their exciting day, went to rest.

During the night the wind went down, the moaning of the sea grew less, and when at daybreak one of them looked out, he reported that it was dead calm, that the gale had passed, and that a fine clear day was dawning.

Gabrielle was sleeping profoundly still, with the dog beside her.

CHAPTER VIII

DURING the night heavy seas had continued, although the wind had fallen; they had broken up and washed away all that remained of the wreck; yet there were still a few articles scattered about the strand, a sack of potatoes amongst them; and there were portions of rigging, sails, and even clothing embedded in sand and weed.

Sid caught sight of a gunstock; they disinterred it. It was a small-bored rifle, a "pea" rifle, Walter called it. They were examining it, when Gabrielle bounded down from the shanty, crying as she came, "Mon père! mon frère! sont ils arrivé?"

She looked at them distressfully as they shook their heads.

She saw the gun. "But dat is the carabin of my fader!" she cried; "hif de gun his here, den halso his my fader here. Oh, yes, I know; he nevair leaf dat gun. He so loaf dat fusil."

"Did he take it when he went with your brother in the boat?" one of them asked.

She was perplexed, but made them understand that she did not see him leave, but knew his fondness for the rifle, and did not believe he could ever be far

away from it. She took it, hugged it, showed it to Nero, who seemed to know it too.

Then Gabrielle looked around her, and out to sea. "*La Mouette* (the sea-gull), de boat!" she cried. "Where is de boat?"

They told her it was gone, destroyed, washed away by the big sea, and she looked from one to the other in amazement.

"But," she asked breathlessly, "'ow vill ve go away again? My fader and Félix will come hin de petite boat directly, hoh!—yes, vary soon dis day—n'est ce pas? but 'ow vill ve go chez nous widout de big boat, heh?"

They were silent, and she continued excitedly, "But you—you, messieurs—how com' you 'ere? How mak' you go chez vous, heh? tell me dat."

They endeavoured to explain. George tried to, unsuccessfully. She was but a child, she could not be expected to understand, they said. They tried to pacify her with hopeful remarks, said it might take her father long to find her, and so forth. Then they took her up to the shanty with them to eat.

They were to fare on seal-meat that day; she watched their cookery with amusement. Their utensils attracted her, for all they had were some old meat tins; proper plates and cups were entirely wanting. At one moment she laughed merrily, at another she wept. Turning to George, she asked why they had neither tea, coffee, nor bread. They made her

understand that they had none, nor sugar. She looked from one to the other puzzled—then the truth seemed to dawn upon her.

“ I did not onderstan’,” she said. “ Vous avez fait naufrage aussi?—we are hall wrecked, heh? My fader, his he also wrecked?”

What could they say, but that they hoped not, and that she must keep expecting him to come to her? and she was somewhat appeased.

But suddenly it occurred to her that there was no need of their poverty of proper food or gear. She ran to the things which had been saved, and pointing at one case begged them to open it. It was full of plates and spoons, knives and forks, and such things. She showed them another which held tins of coffee, tea, sugar, and many other groceries. They looked at these things with wonder and delight. The child seemed to them to be a good fairy indeed.

She cried gleefully, “ See! voilà! here his hall tings, enough for me, mon père, mon frère, Gilbert, and for you—oh! till summer com’. So, allons, com’,” she went on, “ mak’ de la café—du thé, what you will—but oh! le pauvre Gilbert!” And she fell a-weeping.

She soon recovered, and began heaping good things upon the slabs they had rigged up for a table, and they were bewildered at the abundance.

“ But, Gabrielle,” said George, “ these are not ours; we cannot use them—you take what you like—we will touch nothing until your father arrives.”

When she took in his meaning she exclaimed, "But I know! Hit his hall right. I know well my fader; he loaf his leetle gal—hoh, yes, you safe her from de zee, you tak' care of her, you safe hall dese tings—so, hall is to you, hoh yes. When he com' he zay, 'Très bien, hit is hall right.'"

But they would not take advantage; they used the crockery and such things—that could do no harm; and they made one pot of tea—they really could not resist that temptation; and they whispered to each other, "We'll wait on the chance of his turning up, but the poor child will never, never see her father any more."

During their meal Gabrielle was talkative. She told them that they had brought the rifle to shoot, and the traps to catch fur, and poison for the foxes—this particularly attracted Walter's notice—that they would go home in the spring, when the ice was gone, and at the "Hudsonbaiestore" they would get "plenty money for their catch."

"Where is it you will go home to?" they asked. But she did not know; her father knew, and Gilbert, but she did not. "Hoh! soon!" she declared, "à la bonne heure" her father would come and make all plain; but what puzzled her was how they could return without the big boat.

After they had eaten she went out with George to the look-out on the cliff-top. It was bright and clear then, and they encouraged her to go, because she could

see far, and might see her father coming ; but it was a ruse to get her away whilst Sid and Walter buried the poor drowned Gilbert in a grave near the shanty.

They constructed a rough cross for the grave. "See, Sid," said Walter, "how wonderful are God's ways—how mysterious. How little I imagined when I obtained my desire, an axe, that the first use I should make of it would be for this sad purpose! But let us praise Him and bless Him for ever, I say." And Sid heartily agreed with him.

That day Walter fell to with axe, saw, and auger, and made many improvements in their rough home ; he rigged up a table and sleeping-places, and fitted up with poles and blankets a little cubicle for Gabrielle, in one corner near the fire.

At dusk, which came early then, she and George came down. He noticed at once what wonders had been effected by means of the long-wished-for axe ; she took no interest in anything. She was very silent all the evening.

George reported later that she had been so all the day. When they reached their look-out and she gazed round, she appeared dazed by the immensity, the extent of what she saw. She had hardly spoken, except to say occasionally, "He comes not."

He also said that it was so clear that day that he had again seen the land across to the north. The child saw it, and had said it was the land to which her father wished to go—to which they had sailed in

La Mouette. This was the only occasion on which she had made a remark. He said, too, that he had done his best to cheer her; he had also hinted to her that her father might not come soon, that she might even have to be with them all the winter; and went so far indeed as to tell her that perhaps she might never be found by her father. He could not say for certain if she had understood; at any rate, she remained silent.

The child would eat but little, and they offered her the best of her own stores, but nothing tempted her—she was overcome with drowsiness—so they persuaded her to go to the bed which they had arranged in the corner.

Amongst her stores there was some tobacco. Walter could not refrain from helping himself to a pipeful of that, and as he enjoyed what he had been so long debarred from, they talked over the strange events which had occurred. They had no hope that Gabrielle's father or brother would turn up. If they were at sea during that squall they had inevitably perished, and if they had got ashore anywhere near they would have reached them long since. Again, if they had lost their boat on landing, as they had, they would probably be unable to move, and would be suffering as Walter did. It was just possible that they would come, and that was all. Then they talked of the things that had come with the girl. They believed they were quite justified in using them; at any rate, Walter did, but the others were for delay. Finally, they

settled to wait one week before they touched anything but tools and such-like. Subsequently they got upon the subject of the land to the north, and they concluded that it was there the child's home was, and they believed that the appearance of this spot they were then occupying would, from that northern shore, look much the same as that coast did from this, which would explain what she had said.

The more they pondered on this the more they were convinced that the drift timber came from there too. They knew now, or thought they did from what Gabrielle had told them, that it was an inhabited land over there, and certainly if there was a church and a Hudson's Bay store, it must be a known locality. How were they to get there? That was the absorbing question. Earnestly they discussed this problem. Walter was sure that with the axes and other tools they then had they could construct some sort of a boat fit to cross that narrow sea—in fine weather; but they knew they would have none for many a month.

From this day they were led to talk about the interior, and Walter again declared that he never would be satisfied until he had explored beyond the range of hills he had so often mentioned. They discussed various plans for his doing this, but hit on no promising scheme.

Then the subject of trapping and shooting cropped up. They had a rifle now most suitable for their

purpose; the ball it carried was so small it would damage fur but little. Besides, Walter claimed that he could shoot so well that he could put a bullet just where he pleased, through the brain of any creature he could see. They had found the bullet mould, and could cast bullets, and they settled that it could do no harm to use the traps that had come ashore. Again Walter said, how he wished they had some strychnine!

They were now certain that they must winter there, and they calmly, sensibly, laid their plans. They never lost sight of two points, though. One was that, if the child's father and brother should turn up, every one of their projects and arrangements would in all probability be upset; the other was to ceaselessly put their trust in their Heavenly Father for their well-being.

There was another consideration also, which had as much to do with their contentment and trust for their future. It was this. Gabrielle's party had certainly left a settlement no very great distance off. They had intended to come to this place—or somewhere near it—perhaps to this very shanty, which might easily have been built by her father on his former visit, which was, as they supposed, many years ago. They intended to stay here all the winter, to catch fur, and in the spring they were to return. Now, if they did *not* return, in all probability a search would be made for them. This would result in their own rescue.

So, on the strength of this belief they determined to make the best of things.

It began to blow again that night, and continued all next day, and it froze hard. Then it snowed, and from that time on it was hard winter. It was usually calm, and before long the sea itself was frozen, as far out as they could see. Often they walked out on it and caught fish through holes in the ice. Seals were frequently about these holes too.

It was too cold now to keep the shanty door open; their only light came down the chimney; they were wishing they had a window. Gabrielle heard, and understood. She said they should do as many did at her home, cut a hole through the log wall and cover it with a piece of the inside of a seal.

"Why, why!" cried George, "the very thing. What are we good for? Haven't we read about Esquimaux and Laplanders doing so? Come, Walter, get your axe to work, we'll soon have daylight here."

Walter, nothing loth, quickly had a square opening; the boys obtained portions of the intestines of a seal, which they stretched across and pegged down firmly—and behold! they had a window. At night their lamp was a wick floating in seal-oil.

As may be imagined, they were all greasy and dirty enough, with their butchering, skinning beasts, cooking, and so forth. One day Gabrielle was looking at her hands. She had been trying to get them clean

with plain water. She shook her head. "We haf no savon got," said she.

"Savon—what's savon? Oh, I know—soap," cried George. "No, there's no soap, Gabrielle—we must go dirty, I'm afraid."

"Well then," said she, "we mak' soap. Ah! yes, I can soap mak', you see! You have de hashes plenty an' de fat; we will hit mak' toute suite. Oh! yes."

"To be sure," agreed Walter, "certainly we can make soap—soft soap I mean. I remember now." And with that he set to work. Having bored some holes in the bottom of a keg, he set it on two logs and filled it with ashes, then he set a vessel under and poured boiling water on them. This percolated through the ashes and dripped into the receiver. In a few hours they had a gallon or two of lye.

The girl watched, helped when she could, and exclaimed often, "Oui, comme ça. Dat is 'ow la mère Odille, she mak' de soap."

The lye was put on to boil, pieces of fat were dropped in, and soon a fairly good sample of soft soap resulted. They all used it and were made therewith a much better-looking party.

It did not take Gabrielle very long to be quite at home with her new friends; she quickly picked up the names of things and was very talkative, and what she said showed that she was an intelligent and practical young person. She helped much, suggested ways of doing things, and made life brighter and

cheerier for them. Sometimes she grieved, shed a few tears, and was silent. This was about her father and Félix, but these fits never lasted long, nor did she appear to think the life they were leading was at all irksome.

As she could not read or write, they undertook to teach her, much to her delight. She seemed to have no religious knowledge. She crossed herself before and after eating, but she had no notion why. She said she had not heard about it, that the *prêtre* at the church always said, "*Restez tranquille, ma fille, à la bonne heure.*" But when at evening and morning they had their time of prayer, she was impressed, and knelt with them.

It was George's turn to read on the first morning after she came. She at once put him down to be a priest, but when that evening Walter did duty, she was greatly surprised; and then when Sid took his turn, she was dumfounded. "*Mais c'est merveilleuse!*" she exclaimed; "*vous êtes tous prêtres, eh? hall tree of you messieurs fathers, eh?*" and she was inclined for awhile to address them so.

But they made her comprehend in time what this meant, and took delight in teaching her; it was not very long before they could perceive that God's blessing followed their doings, and the young thing showed that she understood at least what religion and true piety meant.

With the very first snow they had set to trapping

systematically, and whether it was that the creatures they were surrounded by had no previous experience of man's ways, or our friends had special skill, certain it is they were very successful, for in a few days they had caught a dozen fine minks and martens. They shot several huge bears too, for these creatures did not appear to go for their winter's sleep with the first cold weather. These skins were stretched, dried, and stowed away carefully.

Nero was a valuable assistant; he kept marauding foxes and other beasts from coming near the shanty. They saved all the seals' skins, though they did not know if they were the valuable kind.

For some time they caught no foxes; evidently they were too cunning to venture near traps or deadfalls. Special care was taken with the baits and disguisings, but nothing resulted. It was annoying to see fox-tracks innumerable all around them, yet never to catch one.

They were frequently talking about this. "How did your father intend to get fox-skins?" they asked Gabrielle.

"Oh! wid de poison," she replied confidently; "he bring de poison, an' halso some stuff he tie to his foot, an' he say Monsieur Renard—de fox, you know—would follow de track he mak'. Oh! yes—I know quite well—one day I go wid my fader, an' I see heem do it."

"I know. That's what I've been telling you, boys;

that's how to get foxes!" said Walter enthusiastically. "I remember we used to use a mixture of assafoetida and oil of aniseed to attract them. I did it one winter in Gravenhurst, and killed a number of red foxes, and some we called Samsons—little fellows they are. I never saw any silver-greys or blacks up there; but," turning to Gabrielle, "did your father bring poison here? But of course he did. I suppose it was lost in the wreck."

The child said she supposed so, and that her father was very careful with it; he had kept it, and the bottle holding the scent, in a small box which she had not seen there.

"Ah! if we could find that box!" Walter exclaimed. "Have you looked through everything that came ashore?"

She said she believed so. Said George, "Go on wishing, Walter; keep pegging away at longing for it, as you did for an axe. If you keep on long enough I should not wonder if it turns up as the axes did; not in so sad a way though, let us hope."

Strangely it was so. Shortly after this, when they returned from a foray, Gabrielle met Walter joyfully. "I haf one grand success," she announced. "I haf been lookin', yes everywhere, an' voilà! behold! I find de leetle box, an' hin hit is de poison, yes an' de parfum halso! Ah! mais elle à de la mauvaise odeur! Oh! but hit smell bad!"

"Never mind that," said Walter gladly. "My!

but we *are* lucky. Now we'll get foxes, boys, you'll see." He put the bottle to his nose. "'M—'m," said he, "it certainly is nothing but a beastly smell—I admit that—but just now I declare I enjoy it!"

The boys took a sniff; they agreed that it was at least what Gabrielle called "une mauvaise odeur."

Baits were prepared immediately. In the centre of small balls of fat were hidden doses of strychnine; then they were frozen, and a piece of meat was put to steep in the scent-bottle.

In the morning Walter tied this to one of his feet in such a way that it would trail behind—he made a drag in fact. Then he went off alone to a part where there were few fox-tracks. He walked fifty yards, then made a foot-mark in the snow at right angles to his track, and dropped a poisoned bait with his *mittened* hand; he went on another fifty paces and dropped another, and so on, until he had laid a dozen baits, after which he took off the drag and went home.

There was a bit of excitement the following morning, as they were all anxious to know the result; so they hurried over breakfast. Then they started on Walter's course. Fox-tracks were now numerous about it; it was clear that numbers of them had been attracted by his scent. The first bait had not been taken; however, the second had been carried off. Now, had the poison done its work?

The difficulty was to distinguish from the others

the foot-marks of the fox that had picked up the bait. They made a circuit, and Walter's wood-craft enabled him to pick out a line of steps which he believed indicated that the creature making them had gone off with leaps and bounds, which showed, he thought, that it had some reason for haste, that it had taken the bait and was off quickly to enjoy it.

They followed on, and soon came to such marks in the snow that made them sure the fox had swallowed it; then on, on they went, and soon had evidence that Walter's judgment was correct. For in a quarter of a mile further it was plain the creature was in trouble; they could distinguish that the poor beast was staggering as it walked, found difficulty in keeping its footing.

Soon, signs of trouble became more and more numerous, until at length they found stretched out on the snow, frozen stiff, a lovely silver-grey fox. The position of the animal, the attitude in which it had died, was remarkable. Its back was arched, its head was drawn back until it nearly touched it, its limbs were stretched out to their fullest extent, and the tail was drawn up curiously.

"That's what strychnine does," Walter explained. "All we kill thus we shall find stretched out in this way," said he.

It took most of that day to visit all the baits that had been laid. Five foxes were killed—four red ones and the silver-grey—and all were in the same position,

as Walter had said, and they went home much satisfied with their good fortune.

That evening when they were skinning the silver fox, Walter remarked that he knew they could obtain fifty dollars for it at Toronto, but that he should like to keep it for his dear Nell at Bracebridge.

"Fifty dollars! Ten pounds!" exclaimed George; "why, I'm sure one can buy a fine lot of fur for that in London—boas and muffs and things. There must be some place where furs are much cheaper than in Canada, then. I admit that it is a beautiful soft skin, and would make my mother a nice muff, or my sister Elneth a capital collar, but ten pounds—oh! you must be wrong."

But Walter declared he was not, he was sure it would sell for that at least. Little they knew about the value of furs, as we shall see.

All this time they were using Gabrielle's stores, as they called them; she had often urged them to do so before the week they had set was expired. She appeared quite reconciled to the thought that her father was not coming; she did not believe, as her companions did, that he was dead; on the contrary, she stated more than once that she knew he would come for her when the ice was gone, and was wonderfully cheerful about it, only puzzled to imagine how they would get home without a big boat.

"Ah! ah! maybe he bring a boat wid him," she settled it.



BRINGING HOME THEIR CAPTURES.

Before long it became evident that she was well-pleased with their way of living; she helped them greatly, and with her bright ways added much to our friends' comfort. The long evenings were passed preparing the skins of the day's capture, making the coarser ones into caps and useful clothing. One of the party usually read aloud, and always the little girl had her lesson in English. She paid considerable attention to her appearance; she repaired and made presentable her sorely-damaged dresses, and put on the bits of bright-coloured finery she had with great content. She was most careful with her hair, and always wore her brooch; she said her father bade her do so. They thought she regarded it as an amulet, a charm to ward off danger.

Altogether Gabrielle was so pleasant in every way that her three companions were quite fond of her and petted her, and often congratulated themselves upon her coming to them. She could not be considered a pretty girl, yet they thought she might grow into a very striking woman, and they were sure she would be a capable and sensible one.

Amongst many other most useful things which were saved were a number of heavy moccasins. They were very welcome, for not only are they the most suitable for winter wear in the wilds of Canada, but their boots were dilapidated. They were constantly remarking how mercifully their every want had been supplied.

George was Gabrielle's principal teacher and her particular favourite; she always applied to him first for help or information.

Nero had been trained to drag a sled. Walter made a light one for him, and his mistress often made him haul a load of firewood from the beach.

The cold was not unbearable when it was calm. It was usually quite clear and dry; the sun therefore was generally shining brightly. Northern lights were frequent, and often there were very magnificent displays.

Thus these castaways lived, often quite cheerfully now, and hopefully too. Naturally they were impatient at the slowness with which the winter passed, but rarely being idle, and having ample supplies of food and fuel, and a right warm dwelling, they often agreed that if they only had their dear ones with them, or could hear from them, or could even let them know how well off they were, they should be content—that is, for awhile.

CHAPTER IX

LET us return to the *Duke of Cornwall*, which we left in the ice off Gaspé, at the entrance of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

When George and Sid departed, all on board were sleeping. The captain and the mate, being drunk and very disorderly, had been locked in their rooms by Balfe.

No one stirred on board till early next morning, then Balfe aroused the crew. There was no change in the environment of the ship. It was dead calm, and she was still jammed by ice.

Balfe glanced over the stern—no boat was there, nor at the davits; it had not been hoisted in, so he concluded it had drifted away. This annoyed him, and he muttered some strong words about the shameful way in which matters were conducted on board.

Remembering that he had now taken command, he desired to mend matters. As regards navigating, nothing could be done until a breeze scattered the ice. He went below to call the boys; he tried their door, it was fast; he called, there was no response. "They're sleeping hard, those boys," he muttered. Then he shouted to them and hammered at the bulkhead.

He was alarmed ; had Fraser or Miller broken out, forced their way into the stern-cabin and harmed them ? That could hardly be, for he had the keys of the old rascals' berths in his pocket.

To make sure, he went to them and found them aroused, and grumbling at the noise he had made. He looked into their rooms. They were humble now, a miserable pair. He ordered them out into the cuddy. Then he called for three leading seamen. When they arrived, he said to the two reprobates, " I suppose you understand that you have no further authority on this ship."

They began to protest. " It's not one atom of use objecting," Balfe went on. " I'm master here now, make no mistake about it. I've plenty of witnesses—here are three of them"—indicating the sailors—" that you are unfit to command, so I have taken it. But I've ordered you out now to tell you there is something wrong with the two lads, the passengers. I am going to have their cabin entered—you are sober enough to understand. I wish you to be present."

With that, he sent for a hand-spike and ordered a man to batter in the door. As we know, the stern-cabin was empty.

All present were amazed ; blear-eyed Fraser was especially scared.

Soon some one perceived the notice the boys had left with the bank-note. Balfe read the message aloud. Its importance was evident to all. He was

silent for a while, as all present were ; but having his wits about him, he saw that if this affair came to the knowledge of the authorities ashore, comments and scandal would arise, in which he did not wish to be mixed.

Turning to the quondam mate, Balse said, "They've followed your advice, Mr. Fraser ; they've taken a boat and gone ashore at Gaspé ; they've had enough of this hooker. I don't blame them. They're a pair of brave lads, I wish them luck. We shall hear of them in Quebec ; they'll be there long ere we are if this ice hangs on." Then turning to the seamen he continued, "That's all, my lads, you can go for'ard." Whilst to the old fellows, who were staring at each other, stupefied, he exclaimed, "You two get off to your bunks—that's all I want with you!"

They grumbled and behaved as if they had a mind to disobey, at which Balse called to the sailors to return, when they shrank away. He had taken command and meant to be master.

When he had thus placed affairs, and took time to think, he was somewhat alarmed. Had the boys reached shore with that heavy boat-load ? Did they know their course ? Happily the weather had been calm and clear, he remembered ; and there was a good moon. He knew they were manly youths and had been used to boats ; he knew, also, that they had no knowledge of the distance to Gaspé, for although the ship seemed to be a fixture, yet she and



the ice were drifting northwards, and he believed that at midnight, when he supposed they had left, they were some sixty miles north of Cape Rozier light. Well, he could only hope that they were safely landed.

All on board, understanding that the passengers had gone ashore, were not surprised. They thought it natural that decent fellows would take the chance to leave that ship and two such wretches as Miller and his mate.

It was absolutely calm all that day, but as night drew on fog came, a dense, white fog; and so it remained for two days and nights. No observations could be taken, no means of finding the ship's position—only that she was drifting north-east, Balfe knew.

On the third day a breeze arose, the fog lifted, the ice scattered, sail was made and the barque pushed slowly onwards. That evening they made the south coast of Anticosti, and West Cape light that night.

With a fair wind they ran up the river, took a pilot at Father Point on the third day, and on the sixth were anchored at Quebec.

Whilst they were ice-bound in the Gulf, Balfe had matured his plans. He made a careful search for all liquor, and stowed in his own room all he found; then he called Miller and Fraser on deck and told them his intentions. They were to keep below until Father Point was reached and the pilot took charge.

If they did as he ordered, he should say nothing, but if they breathed one word to the pilot, or any one from shore until he—Balfé—was clear of the ship, he would lock them up until they arrived at Quebec, when he would hand them to the police there and appear in court against them.

He explained that as he objected to make public what had occurred, and did not intend to be mixed up in any enquiry that might ensue, if he could possibly avoid it, he should go ashore directly the anchor was dropped, take the first train west, and so end his connection with the entire concern.

The two drunkards were quite sober when Balfé stated his intentions. Being terribly frightened at what had taken place, and able to comprehend what a serious business it would be if the boys had not safely landed, they gladly accepted Balfé's arrangement.

As for the seamen, they knew two passengers had gone ashore at Gaspé, and that was enough for them.

The two old toppers were able to refrain from drink when they pleased. This is not often possible with drinkers; however, it was so with them. Ashore, in Canada or England, they were strict abstainers; the ship's agents in Quebec liked them; they thought them to be reliable and respectable seafarers!

The *Duke of Cornwall* discharged her cargo, loaded with timber, and in due course sailed again. She had a new second mate, and crew!

Miller, rascal that he was, gave Balfe a terrible character to the agents, and Fraser corroborated all his old captain said.

Said Fraser to Miller just before they left Quebec, "D'ye no think it's a bit queer we have na heard o' them two boys?"

Said Miller to Fraser in reply, "Oh, hold your tongue! D'ye think they'd come near us, or make a sign? And we don't want them to. Just hold your whisht—all's ended well!"

The ship made her slow way homewards and arrived in London in the beginning of the following August.

Now we change the scene to England.

In the public gardens on Richmond Hill, in a corner sheltered from the afternoon sun of early August, Mrs. Young, George's mother, sat waiting in a position in which she could see the gate nearest to London. She held a book in her hand, but she had not opened it. She had been there some hours; it was then five o'clock.

This lady was only about five-and-forty, but she looked sixty. She was a tall and handsome woman, really; but was now so bowed down with bad health and anxiety that her son would not easily have recognized her. Just now she was especially agitated, for her daughter Elbeth had gone to meet Captain Andrew, who sent word that morning that he had some information about George.

Since he and his friend Sidney had sailed, nothing had yet been heard of them, as we know; consequently George's mother and sister were in despair, whilst Sid's people were sadly mystified.

The owners of the ship had heard by cable of her safe arrival; asked about her passengers, they replied that she carried none; but when Captain Andrew explained to them how the boys were taken, they cabled to Miller asking after them. He replied, "All well, gone west." The bank in Montreal upon which the boys had drafts reported that the money was still lying unclaimed by them. In fact, all had been done that experienced people thought of, and no word had been heard from, or of, the two young fellows.

For many weeks George's sorrowing mother and sister had hoped for a letter, but nothing had reached them. In these days of rapid communication by post and telegraph it seemed impossible that two persons could drop out of existence and leave no sign. That something dreadful had occurred appeared to be certain. Every one really thought so, although Elneth declared that until she had certain proof that her brother was dead, she should keep on hoping for the best. With Mrs. Young it was different—she had quite lost hope; she was satisfied that some catastrophe had overtaken them, and felt sure that George was dead. How? when? where? The mystery of it, and the horror, was killing her!

Captain Andrew took deep interest in the sad

affair, and had done his best to obtain information—until the present without one atom of success. So it was in an excited state indeed that Elneth had obeyed his summons that morning, and that George's mother sat that afternoon on Richmond Hill waiting for her report.

It was past six when her watch was rewarded. She saw Elneth coming and hastened to meet her. In her excitement, and until she was very close, she had not noticed her daughter's face—which was sad, so sad. Her eyes were filled with tears and she was trembling with agitation.

"George is dead. I can see from your face that he is dead," groaned the poor woman. She would have fallen if Elneth had not held her, and helped her to the seat she had used all the afternoon; where she again cried mournfully, "He is dead! I see he is dead!"

Elneth shook her head. "No, no," she whispered, "we do not know that either of them is dead. Nothing is known. There is some mystery. Give me time, mother, and I'll tell you all! I've heard; but bear up, I implore you. I cannot explain why, but I am now more convinced than ever that we need not give up hope. Come, let us go home."

Thus slightly cheered by Elneth's ambiguous declaration, they went home, which was not far away. Nothing was said on the walk except by Elneth, who ejaculated, "It is not true—I know it is not."

As Elneth sipped a cup of tea she told her mother

that when she arrived at Captain Andrew's place, he was, as ever, kindness itself. He said that for some time he had been looking out sharply for the arrival of the ship the boys sailed in, and that she came into dock the day before. He went on board immediately and found Fraser, in whom he seemed still to have full belief, and heard his story, which so surprised him that instead of coming, or writing to tell them, he sent for her to meet Fraser, to hear from his own lips what he had to tell. "And so," went on Elneith, "I saw this man. I cannot like him; whatever the captain may say about his piety and all that, I am sure he is not honest. Some day when George is found he will perceive I am right. But this is what he said—that their voyage was very tedious; they had such light winds and calms that George and Sid were tired of it, and complained of its monotony. So far, this is probably true. But now, mother dear, comes what I do not believe, and never shall. Fraser said that the boys made great friends with the second mate, a man named Balfe, who, he declared, was a very bad character, a regular reprobate; that he encouraged the two lads in all evil, and that before they reached land they were both as bad as he was! They drank, played cards, and were—as Fraser assured me with doleful leers and insinuations, interlarded with texts of Scripture, which is sheer blasphemy, I think—altogether dreadfully bad boys.

"He assured me that he and the captain of the ship—both being, as he kept telling me, God-fearing men—did all they could to check them, and at last he had to restrain them, which caused both George and Sid to hate them. They had many quarrels, and finally when they were stopped by ice near land, somewhere in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, they stole a boat, packed all their things in it, with some belonging to the ship, and rowed themselves ashore! Fraser said it was fine weather, that they had not far to go, had a good boat, and he has no doubt that they landed safely. He, at first, expressed surprise that we had not heard from them, but implied with a nasty, wicked look that they had become so depraved so full of evil, that he could easily understand that they would not trouble about us!

"More than this, Fraser told me that this man Balfe also ran away from the ship at Quebec, taking things with him not his own, and, he believed, joined our boys to carry out some scheme which they had concocted on board.

"Now, do you believe that, mother? Most certainly I do not," said Elsie emphatically.

Mrs. Young, heart-broken, all but incapable of speech, stared at her daughter, dazed. "Do—I—believe that George has become bad? No! no! a thousand times no!" she exclaimed. "But where is he?" she went on; "if he is alive, why has he not written? If he is anywhere in Canada or the States

he could write. Dearest, I am sure he is not bad, but he may be greatly changed. He must be, to neglect us thus." Then she broke down completely.

Elneth did her best to cheer her, begging her to bear up. She was positive this Fraser was a fraud, that he had some reason for mystifying them, and what this reason was must be their ceaseless endeavour to discover. She ended by exclaiming angrily, "To speak of George as a bad fellow, a reprobate, is so shameful, such an awful *lie*, that I will never rest till this mystery is unravelled. But how to do so is the question."

Who was this Balfe who Fraser declared had led them astray and went off with them ?

Captain Andrew, the owners of the ship, her captain and mate, were questioned ; nothing availed until Fraser happened to remark that Balfe held a master's certificate.

On the strength of this information enquiry was made in the proper quarter, and it was found that there were half-a-dozen Balfes, so qualified, sailing in as many seas. It was suggested that each should be written to at his registered address.

This Elneth did, asking each of them to solve the mystery of her brother's and his friend's disappearance if he could. Then nothing further could be done but wait, and hope, and pray.

Now the question arose, what course was Mrs. Young and Elneth to pursue ? Funds were low with

them, for all available cash, except just enough to serve them till George had a home ready for them in Manitoba, had been sent to Canada, and was lying unclaimed in Montreal, as they knew.

Mrs. Young was for going to Canada at once, saying she must be near where her son was, an' that there they would the sooner find him. But every one competent to give an opinion thought this would be a mistake, even if her health would permit her to take such a journey, or to undergo the excitement of settling in a new home.

As for Elneth, she maintained that they ought to stay where they were, for when George reappeared he certainly would make his first sign there.

But how were they to live? asked Mrs. Young. Elneth replied that they must continue as they were, so long as their money lasted, and that she would add to it. "Have I not my art," she asked, "and my literary work?" They must try and trust. This was always Captain Andrew's advice, "Try and trust."

Elneth Young was an exceedingly capable and energetic young woman. She was, at this time, about twenty—a tall, handsome girl, very much like her brother. Her hobby had always been drawing and writing. In the former she had received good instruction, and did decorative work which was considered beautiful, and by many, valuable. Hitherto she had regarded herself only as an amateur, but

having frequently received commissions from friends, she believed that by working professionally she would obtain numerous orders.

She had also written several stories, which had been published by a certain religious society. This girl being of a very serious turn of mind, and anxious to do good, was gratified that her work was used. She received no pay for it, only a few copies of the magazines in which her effusions appeared. She had much praise, however, many thanks, and a desire expressed for more.

She did not suppose that those who managed these publications were deceiving her when they praised her work highly ; so now that she really needed to earn money, she expected, with reason, she could do so. Therefore she did not greatly trouble about their straitened means.

Her mother, having more experience of the world, was not so sanguine ; still, being a sensible woman, she was thankful that Elneth had these gifts. Work, she knew, was almost a panacea for many of life's trials. She often regretted that she herself was not blessed with a "hobby."

So, since it appeared right to remain in England, they were thankful for this possibility of increasing their income. They could, at present, do nothing more to find their beloved George ; they had simply to await patiently for tidings.

So, full of hope, Elneth began to paint some bits of

beautiful d'oylies, and some fans. For this she used the daylight; the evenings she reserved for writing. Her mother, and all who read her productions, pronounced them excellent.

Her stories were finished before her paintings, and one dark November day she went out intent on calling on the manager of the publisher who had in his letters so greatly praised her stories.

She had some difficulty in obtaining an audience with this gentleman, but when she was ushered into his presence, she found that he was tall and well-favoured; he had a most placid countenance, with hands white and soft, as Elneth felt, when he arose and in a very stately manner shook her gently by the hand.

He welcomed her in a full, impressive voice, and understanding that she had some manuscripts to show him, sat, with a smile on his face, whilst she undid her parcel; then glancing at the titles of the stories she handed him, he read a few lines of each, then pondered a moment, and placed them beside his desk.

"I see, Miss Young," he murmured—he never spoke loudly—"that you have brought me two tales on the same lines as those we have already used of yours. They are exactly what we need, and what we find so difficult to obtain. Yours are so true to real life, and, I am thankful to say, of much benefit to the world. We thank you for your valuable

contributions." Then speaking very solemnly, he proceeded, "Young lady, it must be a matter of intense satisfaction to you that you have this faculty of writing."

Elneth's heart did indeed rise with thankfulness; the praise of this man was very sweet, and as she supposed he was—as he claimed to be—a high authority on literary matters, she felt that the words he had uttered were of inestimable value to her.

There was, however, something rather awe-inspiring about this gentleman; she was not able to speak freely to him. She thanked him for what he had said, told him how pleased she was that he found her work of value, and how she hoped often in the future to supply them with more and better things; then added, "For it is very important now that I should make some money by my work."

At the word "money" a change came over the man's face; he looked at her strangely. "Oh, you desire to be paid for these tales, then?" said he stiffly.

She admitted that she did—diffidently, and told a few particulars about her mother's affairs.

"My dear Miss Young," said he, "at another time I might be glad to hear all you can tell me, but my time is valuable. Let us keep to business; if you wish to be paid for your work you must submit it in the ordinary way."

Poor Elneth felt like sinking through the floor; he

had spoken in such a different tone, so harshly, almost angrily. "But," she asked diffidently, timidly, "will not you take them now? You know the value and the suitability of my work; a word from you would be sufficient."

He regarded her as if with wonder at her audacity. "Entirely outside our rules," said he, and added some plausible objections. Then he bowed her out with stiff formality!

"He has assured me again and again that what I do is valuable; why should not I be paid for it then?" moaned Elneth to herself as she quickly left the place, distressed, mortified. She hurried into the street; she wished to breathe fresh air, and the fog and slush of Ludgate Hill was all she could obtain just then.

Elneth managed to curb her feelings of indignation and disappointment on her journey home to appear before her mother with some cheerfulness. She told how greatly her stories had been praised, how valuable they were said to be; she spoke brightly, as though well-pleased with her visit to the City, and her mother was very contented; but in her heart the poor girl could not repress a feeling of deep dejection.

Wisely concluding that this manager *must* be an exception to the ordinary run of publishers, she despatched her two last stories to the address given her, and determined to dismiss them from her mind for awhile.

She had no great opinion of her productions, yet from all she heard she hoped there was some money value in them.

She would continue "trying and trusting," she said to herself ere she went to sleep that night, and she would work hard at her painting and see what that would do for her.

CHAPTER X

"IF I had bought something, how carefully you would have packed it for me!" said Elneth Young, as she, having gloves on, found difficulty in doing up a parcel at a famous West-end shop.

The youth behind the counter coloured up and, taking the hint, folded the parcel for her, with which she walked away with an air, but with a deep, though hidden mortification.

This was her first attempt to dispose of some of her painted work. When she entered the shop a superbly-dressed individual asked which department she desired to visit? She said "D'oylies." Then from one stylish shop-walker to another she was bowed until she arrived at the proper counter. The attendant politely asked what she required.

"Oh!" said she innocently, "I do not wish to buy anything; I have brought some things to show you. I have done and sold large numbers privately, at good prices—I want to know if you will take some to sell again."

She was untying her parcel as she spoke. The young fellow, who was all smiles when he thought she was a buyer, at her words changed his style, looked

beyond her, and with a supercilious sneer, said abruptly, "There is no sale for such things ; we cannot order any !"

"But you don't know what they are—you have not seen them ; how can you tell ? Pray look at them," she murmured diffidently.

He put his hands into his pockets, leant against the shelves behind him, glanced away from her parcel, and stared at her rudely.

"Then you shall not see them !" quoth Elneth angrily, and began to do them up again, as already stated.

Not daunted by this treatment she called at several other shops. Sometimes she was served rudely, sometimes politely, but as she met with no encouragement, she began to despair.

At length some one told her that it was useless applying to shopmen ; she should see the principals. So at her next call she enquired for the principal and was asked "if she had an appointment." "No ;" then with apologies and evasions she was assured that it was impossible to see him.

This was better ; she was not treated offensively, so she persevered and at last did get speech with the head of an establishment, who was most civil. He looked at her work, praised it, and asked her prices ; then told her that he had "buyers," one of whom she must see, and made an appointment for her to do so the following day. He gave her the idea that business

would be done, so she went home hopeful, forgetting her earlier adventures.

At the appointed hour she saw the buyer, who was a brisk, business man, knew what she came for, looked at her work, made a few remarks, asked her prices, thought a minute, then said that they could do nothing with them; but neither rudely nor unkindly.

She was terribly disappointed, and he saw she was; he said he supposed this was a new experience for her, that she quite expected to dispose of her work easily, which he assured her was very good, but that she would find, he feared, that she could not do so. He said, "There are thousands of persons endeavouring to sell similar work, though very little is up to the mark, as yours is."

Almost in tears Elneth begged him to tell her what he would do to sell them if he were in her place.

There was something kindly about this person; he put on no airs; he was a business man *there* though, and nothing more. He replied that he would gladly advise her, but was quite unable to do so. As he did up her parcel, he said again how many there were, especially ladies, who did pretty things and struggled to make a living by them. They were underselling one another, doing anything to make a little money.

Elneth was leaving greatly depressed, when he remarked, "There is just one place where it occurs to me you might do something. Take my card and call on

Mr. Thompson, in Vigo Street. Show him your work, and see what he will say." She thanked him and trudged off.

Mr. Thompson, a gentlemanly person, was interested immediately; he examined what she had with her carefully, critically, asked her price to what he called "the trade," and at once took all she had with her and paid her for it. She hardly realized her good fortune, though she held six sovereigns fast in her hand.

Mr. Thompson then showed her some delicate linen articles, and asked if she could decorate them. "If so," said he, "I'll give you orders for a number—take them home and see what you can do."

This was encouraging indeed; she felt repaid for all the disappointments and impertinences she had suffered. She left that place of business with a very thankful heart.

Now she felt brave enough to face everything. She had two fan leaves with her, a private commission. Fan leaves are unmounted paintings on silk or gauze, or what not—she took these to a famous place to be finished properly. She saw the principal, who admired them, and took trouble to choose suitable sticks.

She spoke to him of buying some leaves from her to sell again. He pretended to be indignant at the suggestion, declaring that all *his* fans were imported, principally from France; he would neither buy nor sell anything done in England.

"Surely that is very unpatriotic, and you an Englishman!" said she.

"That may be," was his reply, "but I have business to do; my customers will buy nothing that is not foreign," and continued some little time praising all work but what was done at home.

Elneth shook her head, said she knew he and his clients were altogether wrong, but she was really so pleased with her morning's success that she did not greatly care.

On her way down Regent Street she was attracted by some painted articles just in her style. She was courageous enough to enter and ask the price. It was very low. She addressed the master, it seemed. She told him she did such things, and what she could do them for. He was quite pleasant, and disposed to chat with this very pretty girl. He told her such work was well worth what she charged. "Eat do you know," he went on, "that *these* are done by a titled lady, a very wealthy one, and she charges me just half your price. She tells me that she does them for a charity."

"More shame for her!" cried Elneth indignantly. "I wonder if she—or any one in her position—knows the harm she does, to such as me, for instance—I who am trying to make a living in this way? They have no right to take the bread from our mouths, we who have to work for our living. But why do you deal with them?"

"I heartily agree with you, madam," he replied, "but what can we do? These ladies are our customers, they buy our expensive goods; they would be offended, would cease to deal with us, if we did not please them by buying these things they make. I mention no names, but I could tell of ladies rolling in gold, as the saying is, who come here and offer to do things for any price; they think they are wonders if they earn a few shillings weekly—for charity. Certainly I think they are very wrong; it is almost criminal."

"At least they should charge a fair price for what they do—a price at which I could live, for instance," said she.

"True, quite true," he agreed. "I know of rich ladies now who are actually giving lessons in art—painting and music, and so on—at half the price professionals must charge, and they obtain many pupils—it is grand, you know, to say one receives lessons from the Honourable Miss So and So, or Lady Blank."

"It is very sad," said Elneth, "and I dare say many of these people are really good-hearted, good-intentioned. Some poet says something like this, you know—More harm is wrought by want of thought than want of heart." With that she left this kindly shopkeeper and hurried home.

Time passed. Mrs. Young's health was most unsatisfactory; she mourned unceasingly for her son. If something did not soon arise to give her hope,

Elneth feared for her mother's life. Nothing, as we know, had been, or could be, heard of him that winter. Elneth of course was grieving too, but she was always busy. Her work was a great blessing to her: some weeks had elapsed since she sent her two stories to the editors. She had written about them, but had had no reply. She wrote to the grand manager, and had a post-card in reply, seemingly written by an errand boy, to the effect that her MS. was in the hands of the editors—which she knew well enough.

She was very successful with what she did for Mr. Thompson, and received a large order from him, all to be done by Christmas; this kept her busy almost night and day. If it would always be so they could live comfortably, free from money worry, she knew.

Christmas arrived. Her work was done and paid for, but nothing had been heard of her literary ventures.

They became acquainted with a certain writer living near them, who, learning that Elneth did something in his line, was kind and interested. He was a successful writer; his work *had* to be used by publishers—the public demanded it. He told her how he had been served before he obtained celebrity—how he was sat upon, badly paid, and so forth.

This disheartened the poor girl. He strove, though, to encourage her. He read some of her "stuff," as he called it, thought well of it, said he saw great promise

in it, that she must persevere, and keep "pegging away." If her heart was truly in it, some day she would produce something really valuable, an honourable publisher—and he assured her there are many such—would take her up, and she would be famous.

"But," said he seriously, "unless your heart is really in it, unless you feel you must write, you will do very little good. If you are bent merely on making a living, you are not likely to be successful. And," he ended, "any way, do not take your wares to such a market as you tell me of; no credit will ever come to you from those places—they'll take fine care of that."

This was not encouraging for poor Elneth. It was mainly to earn a living, of course, that she wrote; her heart was not in it. She could not regard it as a career, and she was fast losing hope and interest in it.

In her art work, however, there did seem then to be a prospect of success—she would stick to that.

Christmas was a sad, sad time for them. Friends were kind and sympathetic; but George was lost! No hour of their lives was really happy; no happiness, no brightness could be theirs until this mystery was solved.

* * * * *

A few days after Christmas a telegram came to Elneth from Captain Andrew—"Come at once."

Poor Mrs. Young was dangerously excited. One moment she declared that George's death had been ascertained; the next, that he had been found and had returned.

Procuring a neighbour to sit with her mother, Elneth hurried off, and was soon with their sympathetic friend. His news was startling.

The previous evening, after one of his meetings, he explained, a young man had asked him if he were the Captain Andrew of whom he had heard two friends of his speak, by name George Young and Sidney Croly? Having assured the stranger that he was that person, he asked what he knew of them; and the reply was, that not having heard of them for some time, and having received a mysterious letter from a Miss Young, he had called on him, as this letter asked him to.

Captain Andrew had naturally been much interested, but as there was an immense crowd there, it was impossible to enter into particulars, so he desired this person to wait till they could converse, but he could not. However, he promised to call on him at twelve that day. His name he said was John Balfe.

"So," said the captain, "I sent for you, as it will be best for you to hear direct what he has to say."

This was decidedly exciting. Balfe, though, was the man, they had been told, who had led the boys astray; and was a bad fellow.

"What was he like?" asked Elneth.

"Well, by the little I saw of him I should say he is a superior, gentlemanlike fellow," replied Captain Andrew slowly. "I confess he did not give me the idea of being what Fraser said he was; but it is hard to judge—men are deceitful. We must take all he says with a grain of salt, that's certain. We must be cautious. But there's some one coming up the stairs now. This is his hour, I dare say this is he."

The door opened as he spoke, and there entered a tall, well-favoured young man, who wore gold braid and brass buttons on his coat and a badge on his cap. There were certainly no signs of dissipation or fast living about him. Indeed, he struck them both as being the very ideal of a ship's superior officer. His countenance was peculiarly open and honest, and when the captain shook hands with him, and introduced Elneth as George Young's sister, the surprise, the pleasure, on his face was quite remarkable. He blushed to the eyes as only a sailor—who is, as a rule, the most bashful of men—can blush. And Elneth blushed too, and all three were speechless for a minute.

Elneth broke the silence by asking what Balfe knew about her brother—where he saw him last; was he living? where he was.

The young man's astonishment was evident. "I came here last night for information," said he. "I received a letter—which was posted some time since, but I was at sea and only had it three days ago—

asking me to come here. I know nothing about them, I hoped to have news here.'

"But where did you part with them?" asked the captain.

"You can hardly call it parting with them. They left the ship off Gaspé, in the St. Lawrence Gulf—they went ashore there. Have they not been heard of?" Balfe spoke anxiously, for it flashed across his brain that they had not got ashore at all, that they had come to grief that night. He had little fear at the time, yet now it seemed to him to be what had happened.

"But you met afterwards?—somewhere inland, so Fraser told us," said Elneth.

"Fraser! Oh, you've seen him, then?"

"Yes; he said the boys had gone to the bad," explained Captain Andrew, "that you had led them wrong, that they stole a boat and other things, and then ran away at the place you name, and that you joined them afterwards, up country, to carry out some scheme you had planned on board."

"And you believed this yarn?" asked Balfe of Elneth.

"To some extent," she replied. "How could we help it? But as to my brother George, or even Sid, having become such dreadful boys as Fraser described, well, I don't believe it, nor does my mother, nor I think does Captain Andrew."

"And you are right!" exclaimed Balfe. "They

were, they are, the very best kind of fellows; I've never met two finer youths, and as to my character—I don't wish to boast, but I think I may flatter myself that I bear an unblemished character—my present position is, I suppose, a proof that I am not unreliable."

"What is your position, then?" asked the captain.

"Oh! I'm chief officer of the *Brightman*, one of the Trecothick line—the Canadian line of mail steamers, you know."

"Certainly, I know the line well enough. Yours is an honourable position undoubtedly. It is strange. Fraser told me that you were a dissolute drunkard when you were second mate of the *Duke of Cornwall*."

"Was Fraser sober when he told you that?"

"Sober! Why, he's a teetotaller, and so is Captain Miller!"

Balfe laughed; then turning grave, he looked hard at Captain Andrew, and speaking seriously, said, "Sir, you are grossly deceived in those men. I don't know how you got your opinion about Fraser and his chum, but I can assure you that it would be difficult to find two more despicable and worthless men—men! they're not men, they're just drunken sots, that's what they are! They behaved most shamefully to those lads, and to me, too. Why, I had to lock them in their rooms, and take charge of the ship. Oh, it's a long story and not a nice one. The two young fellows were able to escape, and they did

so ; but I had to stick to the awful ship, and look after those two swabs till we let go anchor at Quebec—then I cleared out speedily.”

Captain Andrew was horrified. Could it be true? Was his pet Fraser a fraud? He was silent, but Elneith could not help exclaiming, “ Oh, I knew that George could not be bad, I knew that Fraser was a bad man. But, oh, sir! oh, Mr. Balfe, tell me, where is my brother now? Did they reach shore safely? Why have they not written? Tell me, I beseech you, tell me the worst !”

She spoke so pitifully that Balfe was quite disconcerted. It was very painful to him ; not only this girl's distress, but because he feared indeed that George and Sid had met with disaster. But he must say something to Miss Young. What should he say? Alas ! he could but repeat that they left the ship with a good boat, on a very fine night, and until the last few hours he had not doubted that they had landed safely and all was well with them. So, what with his sorrow for the boys, and the grief of this sweet girl, whose every tear and sigh cut him to the heart, and Captain Andrew's deep sympathy, surprise, and mortification, they were a melancholy trio.

By and by, when they were a little calmer, Balfe was prevailed on to tell them the whole story of the voyage of the *Duke of Cornwall*, and when he had finished he was asked again what opinion he had formed about the boys. He replied that he had been

so taken aback that he had not yet formed any theory but one. Turning to Elneth, he said sadly, "I dare not put into words what I naturally fear—but you know what I mean."

Said Elneth, "That they were wrecked in the boat and are lost?"

Balfe bowed. Then he said, "But you must not despair, Miss Young. So many strange things happen—we sailors are continually hearing of marvellous sea incidents. It may be that your brother landed somewhere. I don't think they had a compass, nor am I sure that they knew the bearings of the land. They may have struck some island, landed in some unsettled part. Oh! there are many, many things that may have occurred to them besides their being entirely lost. Please God, they are somewhere safe and well, and shortly they will turn up. For my part, I shall never give up hope of meeting them again, until there is proof positive that they are no more."

"Bless you! God bless you for those words!" exclaimed Elneth. "They are what I have been saying for months, and I intend, as you say, if it pleases God, to go on hoping until we know all."

Balfe now declared that he must leave. He must get back to his ship; he had been too long absent already. He gave his address to Captain Andrew, begged him to let him know the moment any news was heard, and always to count on him to lend a hand, should anything transpire in which he could be useful.

He told them he sailed in two weeks, that he would be absent at least four, but would be in port towards the end of February, and would come again to hear the latest, and to inform them of anything that may have occurred to throw light on the mystery.

As he shook hands with Elneth, he spoke low to her, so low that the captain did not catch the words. She looked at Balfe, surprised and pleased, then he hurried away.

"I like that fellow," said Captain Andrew; "he's a manly chap; certainly he is a vast improvement upon Fraser. Do you believe all he said about Fraser?"

Elneth told him that she did, that she had never liked or trusted that man much, and now, after what they had heard, not at all. "But Mr. Balfe I do trust—I do like!" said she.

"By the by, what was that he said to you at parting? I did not hear. Was it anything private?" asked the captain.

"No, hardly to be termed private. He merely said, 'Your brother is a Christian, so is Sid, and I believe you are. Well, then, you know where to look for help in this horrible perplexity. My opinion is that God will make all clear before long. In the meantime we must all look up and hope. So, good-bye, Miss Young, God be with you.'"

"Did he say that now? Well, well, then, I believe in him too," exclaimed the captain; "and I'm afraid that Fraser is, as Balfe said, a fraud. So then, my

dear Elneth, I must say, as Balfe did, look up, and God be with you, for I must be off too."

Elneth hurried home, distressed certainly, yet there was such a ray of hope as she had not lately felt. Balfe's encouraging words, his heartiness, his personality, had greatly pleased her; she felt that she would like to know more of him, and was grateful to believe that he appeared to be almost as much concerned about their loss as they were. He was moving about the world, was in Canada often, and she felt satisfaction that so good a fellow would be on the look-out.

The report she gave her mother did not help the poor lady much. Her grief was not assuaged, nor her anxiety lessened. She was glad to hear what Balfe had said about her son, and thought it quite nice that he was so interested, but she wanted more, much more.

A day or two after, she said to her daughter, "D'ye think that Mr. Balfe would come to see me? I should like to talk to him. I suppose he is the last person who saw and spoke to poor George."

Elneth hardly knew what to reply. She certainly would be pleased for her mother to see him, to say nothing of her own feelings. She hesitated for an answer.

"How would it do to write to Captain Andrew and ascertain if he thinks it would do to ask him?" suggested Mrs. Young. "You might write."

So Elneth wrote, and very quickly had an answer. The captain said he should certainly invite Balfe to call, and that he had satisfied himself that he was all right and likely to prove an estimable acquaintance. He had seen Mr. Barlow Trecothick, the owner of the *Brightman*, who spoke very highly indeed of her first officer. He went so far as to hint that before Balfe had made many more voyages in her he would be her commander.

Mrs. Young therefore sent a note to him, begging him to come to talk to her about her lost son, and by return of post she heard that he would do so the following afternoon.

As the time drew near for his arrival both these ladies were much agitated ; yet when he entered their abode they were quickly at ease ; he was so genial, so sympathetic, and altogether so nice, that Mrs. Young took to him, and her daughter was delighted.

Their conversation was for long entirely on the one engrossing topic. Balfe said he had been studying the chart of that part since he had seen Elneth, and having memoranda of the weather, the ship's position, and the flow of the currents at the time she was in the ice, he had formed the opinion that probably they had been carried north or north-west that night and the day following, and had landed on the west coast of Newfoundland, which is almost uninhabited ; or they might have gone ashore on the coast of Belle Isle Straits, where no people reside. He had

thought of Anticosti, but all along the south coast of that island fishermen stay during summer ; there are several lighthouses there, too. If the lads had landed there they would have been heard from months ago. The north shore of Anticosti is really uninhabited, and there they would be practically out of the world, but he did not think it possible for them to have reached there. But after all it was mere guess-work ; only as there was land, near or distant all round where they left the ship, they could feel great hope that they were somewhere safe ashore.

Mrs. Young was not able to comprehend clearly what Balfe said, but Elneth, having again and again studied the maps of that region, knew what he meant and could discuss it intelligently with him.

In conclusion, Balfe declared that he thought that early in the spring something would be heard, and he should certainly, when next across, cause search to be made, if practicable.

They had some tea, during which Balfe remarked how pleasant this was to him, adding that he had not enjoyed such a home-like meal since he was at his father's house, six months previously.

"Where is your home, then?" asked Mrs. Young.

"Oh, in Toronto," he replied. "In Canada, you know."

"Really? truly? Well, that is wonderful! I know Toronto. I was born in Ingersoll; so was Elneth!"

"What! are we all Canadians, then? Come, this is good!" cried Balfé, evidently delighted. "I remember now, George said he was a Canadian. This pays for all the misery on board that ship, that is, it would if we only knew about George and Sid—eh?"

The ladies agreed with him, quite. "You are first officer of the great steamship *Brightman*—how was it you were only second mate on that small sailing barque?" asked Elneth.

"A piece of folly—downright absurdity," said he. "I had three months' leave, to go home to Toronto; I believed I could go pleasantly, and save some money, by taking the berth that was offered me in that ship—her owners are most respectable people, and are just as much deceived by Miller as others—so I really thought it would be a kind of holiday to cross the Atlantic thus. But my experience was strange and far from pleasant. I'll never be so foolish again. The sea is bad enough for a sailor, at best; but on board such a craft as the *Duke of Cornwall* it is unspeakably dreadful. However, I don't regret it now," said he with marked meaning.

Before he left they made Balfé promise to spend the following Sunday with them, as they found he was free that day.

He was to sail this next time to Portland in Maine, which was the *Brightman's* winter port—in summer it was Montreal.

They became exceedingly friendly before he sailed. He came as often as he could, cheering Mrs. Young immensely. And as for Elneth, she said little but thought much; she actually admitted to herself that John Balfe was her ideal man!

So he sailed, returned at the end of February, sailed again and was due at the end of March, and always when in London he took every opportunity to visit Richmond.

The winter passed with Elneth and her mother very slowly. They had many anxieties, apart from their greatest trouble. Their money was running very short, their future loomed most gloomily. Elneth's stories had not been heard of. Her letters about them were unanswered, and she was denied interviews when she called on the manager; by March she had given up hoping that one penny would be paid for them. But then she received proofs of one to correct from a strange printer. She wrote to him asking for particulars, and had a polite reply, but to the effect that information could only be given at the office of the publications.

Her literary friend at Richmond, to whom she propounded questions, said that this was the way of certain publishers, their object no doubt being to make writers think they are inferior beings and of small consequence.

Literature was a failure, then, as a money-maker. Art was little better; she obtained very few orders

after Christmas. Mrs. Young's health did not improve. She had tried and failed; now they could do nothing but trust, and they did trust.

As how things were in England with those in whom we are interested, up to the March of the year after the *Duke of Cornwall* sailed from London with George Young and Sidney Croly.

CHAPTER XI

AT Anticosti Hotel (as Walter had christened the shanty) October and November passed without any change and, considering all things, quite comfortably. They knew they were settled for the winter, and were making the best of it.

It was cold, very cold; George and Sid had never experienced such cold, but Walter said that even in Ontario he had felt it more. It was usually calm; when there was wind they did not go forth.

They were always out and about at other times; it agreed with them; they were all, including George, in splendid health. No great depth of snow fell, and what did was dry, and the sun was generally so brilliant that they had to contrive snow-spectacles.

They kept to trapping, and by the end of November they had many skins. They were particularly successful with foxes; they took many red and more than a dozen silver-greys, and some which they called black foxes. As for minks and martens and fishers (pekans or Canada sables) they had dozens. If they went on thus until spring they would have a little fortune to go home with, for they were confident now of getting home some day; and as regards fur, W. ar,

who thought he knew, repeated that the silver-greys would bring fifty dollars each in Montreal, he was confident, and the blacks a hundred, at the very least.

He was enthusiastic, and his fine spirits heartened the others, whilst Gabrielle, having evidently had some experience of a trapper's life, seemed to think they were doing remarkably well, and saw no discomfort, but rather the reverse, in the way they lived.

About the silver foxes she told how delighted her father was when he took one, and what a fuss was made at her home when one was brought in. "And here," said she, "we catch many, oh! so many good ones, oh! beautiful. My fader he know dis place. Yes, I tink dis is where he would come; he haf been here before; he know, oh! yes—he know, de dear fader!"

After such remarks she would shed some tears, tell them how much she wondered that he had not come for her, but usually ended by exclaiming, "But it ees hall right; he will come when de hicc hab go, and den, den he will be glad to see his leetle girl—oh! yes, I know heem an' de poor Félix—ah! he mus' dance, he mus' sing, when he see me—he is good boy, dat Félix! Den we shall go chez nous—what you call 'ome' togeder, eh? For he mus' com' in de big boat; you, George, and Sid and Walter mus' go where you b'long—oh! yes, I know, but" (looking very sad) "den I mus' you no more see. Hélas!"

Apparently she could not give up the idea that her

father had landed not far away, and with her brother was doing as they were, catching fur. At times she would express wonder as to how they were managing without her and the gun and traps; but she said that her father was a clever man, a man of resources, that he knew all about life in the wilderness, and seemed to have no very great anxiety about him. Whenever they were on the beach, or on a hill, she always gazed around wistfully. "He comes not," she would sigh, "but oh! I don't mind; it is hall right; in de spring when de hice mus' go he will come, you shall see!"

Often they endeavoured to make her think he might not come at ali, that perhaps he had been drowned, as Gilbert was; they thought it best to make her look at the dark side a little. But she would have none of it; she persisted that in spring he would come for her.

Gabrielle had by this time greatly benefited by her association with these young fellows. She was picking up English rapidly. It was only occasionally now that she used French words, though she still spoke ungrammatically and with the dialect of the habitants. She was learning to read too, and her delight in these accomplishments was very amusing to her friends.

She was never happier than when, sitting round the huge fire at night, they talked to her about big Canadian cities and England, and described how people lived, earned money and amused themselves there. She had never, till now, been away from her birthplace; she had never seen a steamboat, and had

no conception of a railroad or a town, nor of any other country but Canada ; she did not appear to be able to realize that there was any other ; she had heard of the States, for some one she knew had gone there, but France and England had no more meaning or interest to her than Mars or Mercury have to many. Sometimes they thought that she considered what they told her were mere fables, stories made up to amuse her, and she was amused.

Some illustrated books they had were marvels to her, and when she was able, as she quickly was, to read a little in them her pleasure was intense.

Walter, nay, all of them regarded her as a kind of pet, and they delighted to puzzle and astonish her ; it pleased them to note the questioning, unbelieving look on her face, and how she always turned to George, and trusted exactly what *he* told her. She was indeed such a ceaseless amusement to them, always so cheerful and full of fun, that she did much to keep them from losing heart and being melancholy.

She had heard of Christmas—Noël, she called it ; that is, she knew that there was always a *fête* at the church at La Crique, and that it was a time of feasting, and music, and dancing, but of the reason for this she had no idea. So they told her “the old, old story,” which she wept over. She believed it too, for George had assured her that most certainly *that* was true. She appeared to enter into what may perhaps be termed the “inwardness” of the history of our Lord.

Of His life and sufferings she was never tired of hearing. So thoroughly impressed was she with the Divine Story, that frequently she brought common occurrences of their daily life to the test of it, and often would not be satisfied till one of them had thrown light on it from the Bible, her favourite book.

How often they said that if their people in England and the Canadian West only knew about them, and if they could know how they were faring, how really happy they could be! And this during the winter that they had looked forward to with such dread!

Christmas Day arrived. It was not really Christmas Day—they had lost reckoning—but it served as well. They made it as bright and merry as they could for Gabrielle's sake—so they said. They bade her put on her finest clothes, and they all got into theirs. George and Sid had fine black suits and white starched shirts in their Gladstone bags, and they rigged Walter up too. Certainly the trousers were a bit short, and the coat a bit tight; nevertheless they all three made a fine appearance, and Gabrielle was enraptured. She said she had never seen men so beautifully dressed before—not even Father Placide at the church, or the head man at the store who, hitherto, had been her ideal "swell."

They had a fine dinner—fish and game, potatoes and bread, with a splendid pudding. Having neither raisins nor currants, they used dried fruits, peaches and apples. They had dessert too—sweets and cakes.

Oh! yes indeed, they had a first-rate dinner, and after it Walter smoked his pipe, and they sat up quite late talking and telling stories.

We must remember that they were all young, all in the best of health, and having long ago discovered that they *had* to stay where they were till spring, had given up repining, or did as little of it as they could, and tried to be happy. They were so that day at any rate, and did not forget to thank God for all He had done for them.

Gabrielle was enchanted with that Christmas Day. If her father had only been there, and Félix and "le pauvre Gilbert" and Mère Odille, and one or two others she mentioned, it would have been perfect. "Oh! magnifique!" she exclaimed, and she was sure that she should forget nothing; when she returned to La Crique, what a story she would have to tell! And she admitted that La Crique had not half such a nice place as the Anticosti Hotel, nor were there such fine gentlemen as these her new friends in or near it. "Indeed," said she, "I don't care so very much if I mus' never get back dere—only but my fader, he lif dere, you know."

During this season their staple meat was seal's flesh. It was easily obtained, and they had got to like it, boiled or roasted. They had some bear-meat, too; they could spear trout through a hole in the ice up a neighbouring stream; and there were open places away out on the sea-ice where they often

caught cod, and occasionally halibut. Grouse (or, as Walter called them, partridges) were numerous ; they could shoot a brace or two almost always when they felt like a change of meat. They were careful with Gabrielle's stores, as they called them, but every day they had something made from flour or oatmeal.

The weather had not been really bad for weeks, not very different from northern English weather, except that it was very much colder.

They went long distances sometimes, about their traps, especially up a narrow ravine a couple of miles to the east. They had been very successful there. A stream (now, of course, frozen) came down it from the interior. One morning, early in the New Year, George and Walter were bound there. Usually they marched along close under the cliffs a little way from shore, but this time they went along the beach itself, and sometimes went out on the frozen sea, to examine a blow-hole, or some strange-shaped rock or piece of wreck.

This morning they noticed what looked like the remains of a boat embedded in the ice, snow-covered. They had the curiosity to remove some, and found it really was a little boat, such as fishermen employ to attend their nets. It was shattered and useless, but it gave them something to think about and wonder at. There were some pieces of rope in it, a tin pot, part of an oar, and sticking under a rib was an old briar pipe.

They were clearing off the snow and ice, examining it to see if it could possibly be repaired, and perhaps be a means for their escape, when, on clearing off the stern, they were amazed to discover painted there—*“La Mouette.”*

This was a “staggerer,” for that was the name of Gabrielle’s father’s boat!

Here it was, then, that he and his boy were driven ashore, and here, they had no doubt, they had perished.

Naturally, they thoroughly examined all around. They found a portion of an oar some distance from the boat; it corresponded with the piece they had already discovered. How did it get so far away? Had the wind carried it there, or a heavy sea? They could not tell. There was no sign visible, whether the two, or either of them, had landed from the boat, or whether they had been washed out and drowned in the offing.

This discovery engrossed them, but finding nothing to guide them they hurriedly looked to their traps and returned to the shanty, taking the tin and the old pipe with them. They hid them from the girl.

All three were now more than ever satisfied that her father and brother were dead; they believed they now had proof of it, and they must break the sad news to her. However, there was no need to be in haste to grieve her, so they put it off.

Sid' went with Walter next day to make a further search; there seemed to be a fascination about the spot. However, they found nothing then, but afterwards they went up the ravine, some way beyond their traps. It was very steep and rough. Why they did this they could never tell; only they did, and a mile or two up, behold, there was a gash cut in a tree-trunk with an axe, quite recently!

Instantly they were excited. Eagerly they pushed on, up and up. The gorge, as it had now become, wound through cliffs, and finally, on the height of land, they came to a large, flat, vacant space, which they knew was a frozen lake, with a thick grove of pines round it.

They strolled amongst the trees; there was very little snow under them, and here, to their amazement, was the remains of a camp! It was a mere shelter of bark and brush, but there had been a fire in front, and some half-burnt logs had been *cut with an axe!* Under the shelter spruce branches were spread, and there were plain indications that two persons had been lying on them.

Now, who had been here? There was nothing to tell. They examined every inch around, and found only what they took to be foot-marks on the carpet of pine-needles with which the ground was covered.

By and by they made a circuit outside these dense pines, and they came across some marks in the snow which showed that human beings had passed over it.

They were nearly obliterated, certainly, but Walter's wood-craft enabled him to be certain they were men's tracks.

They followed them for half-a-mile towards the interior, and, what was most important, Walter declared these tracks were those of a man and a boy, sometimes walking side by side, at others one behind the other; and often, as these tracks passed a tree, they noticed a piece had been slashed off by an axe. What bushmen called "blazes" had been made.

What all this meant was very plain to Walter, and even Sid could understand it. Gabrielle's father and brother had not been drowned. At any rate, they had landed safely, and had made their way to the settlements; their direct course implied that—there was no hesitation about it; so, if they had not died on the way, they had reached safety long ago!

Why they had not searched for Gabrielle and Gilbert, or even for their big boat, was a problem insolvable.

To follow the tracks as long as possible, then return and confer with George and Gabrielle, was the determination of our two friends, and for a couple of hours they kept on these foot-marks; in the end they led them into another thick pine-wood, and there they entirely lost them. They searched long for a blaze, for any indication, vainly. The only certainty was, that so long as they saw the tracks they were making a bee-line, a straight course, inland—indicating that

those who made them knew well where they were bound.

It was dark when they reached home. They settled on the way to tell all to Gabrielle, so, after supper, the briar pipe was produced. The child knew it. "Oh, yes, it belong hon de fader!" she cried. She knew the tin, too; it was the bailer of the boat.

They took her next day to see the remains of the boat. She knew it well, called it *La petite Mouette*. Then they questioned her—"Did your father carry an axe when he left you?"

"He always carry de tomahawk" (small axe), said she; "he nevare go away widout it."

Had they any food? a gun? Could she think of anything they had with them that day?

She thought Félix had his gun, and her father always carried matches with him, corked in a bottle. She believed they had blankets, as her father came below just before he left her, and took some from her bunk.

Putting these items together, then, with an axe, probably a gun, dry matches and blankets, they knew that men, used to the woods, could exist and travel.

Gabrielle, for a while, was very much excited when she heard all that had been discovered. She was for starting off at once on her father's tracks; and really, for a time, her companions were inclined to think they ought to do so; but on consideration they gave up the idea, for after all they did not know with certainty

that a settlement existed in the direction those tracks indicated, and, if one was there, how far off it was. They were not sure, either, that the two, presumably the girl's father and brother, had reached it. They might easily have perished on the way. Often, very often, the plans were discussed, but when they remembered the rough comfort they possessed, the valuable furs they were getting, and the hardships they must surely undergo in travelling with all they possessed on their backs, sleeping out at night, and so forth, they became convinced they were doing wisely by holding on where they were till spring; at any rate until all hope of rescue by Gabrielle's people across the bay, as they called it, had failed; then, as a last resource, a forlorn hope, they must attempt to find the settled part which they were now sure existed somewhere inland.

Walter was the most dissatisfied with this decision, although he agreed with the wisdom of it. He, more often than the others, brought the subject up for discussion, and so matters remained till January ended.

All the winter they had been going up the wide inlet before described, which divided them from the cliffs in which was the cave where Walter had lived so long. The water, now ice and snow-covered, was easy to travel on, and they believed it extended right into the interior.

Early in February, Walter, who had been up there several miles that day, astonished them by proposing

that two of them should attempt to go to the head of this inlet ; he said he believed it would extend to the great marsh which had previously barred his way. " Now," said he, " that bog is frozen solid ; it can be crossed easily ; we can then ascend those hills, and now that we know the settlements are over there, where Gabrielle's folks have gone, I am more anxious than ever to see the other side of them. Now is our chance. What do you say, boys ? Shall two of us go ? "

" Oh, all or none ! " cried George. " Could we do it ? How long would it take ? "

" A week—not longer than a week. But need we all go ? " asked Walter.

" Could we carry food for a week, and blankets, and a cooking-pot and things ? " asked one of the boys. " I'm thinking it would not do," he went on. " We'd better stick together here until spring. Don't let us split up. We might never get together again—think of that. "

" Oh ! there's no fear," cried Walter, who persisted in his idea. He declared he could make a toboggan, now that he had an axe, on which they could easily haul what two of them would require ; that they could fashion a little tent ; that all could be done without risk. " Come, boys," said he, eagerly, " let us do it ! Let Sid and me do it. I feel in my bones that we ought to ! "

That night they would not agree with him, but he persevered for several days, ceaselessly talked about it and made suggestions, prophecies, and fascinating

prognostications. Once he said he would go alone. This none of them would agree to ; so it went on till by and by George and Sid came round, and the expedition was agreed to.

Half-an-hour after Walter was cutting down a tree. He had his eye on one which had the suitable curve, and a few hours after that he had, with axe and auger, constructed a very serviceable sled, or toboggan. That evening all hands were stitching canvas and blankets into a tent, and furs for a sleeping bag. Next day bread was baked and meat cooked, and by the third day all was ready. Walter and Sid were going, George and Gabrielle were to keep house and see to the traps.

It was a fine, clear morning when the two started. The other two, with Nero, accompanied them for a few miles. The sled answered grandly ; its base being wide it did not sink into the snow. It required very little exertion to pull it.

They parted cheerfully, full of hope and promise to be together again in a week ; but the travellers said if they were delayed the others were not to be anxious, were rather to consider it a good sign. They were to make blazes on their outward journey, so that they would not miss their way.

George felt a bit melancholy, but this wore off as he and Gabrielle trudged home. She was quite cheerful, full of chatter, making quaint remarks, asking odd questions. It was plain she was happy enough. The

ground was covered with snow, on which a crust had formed strong enough to bear them. They wore moccasins, so did not slip on it.

The sun was set in the south-west, red and fiery, the snow-clad hills were blushing rose, their icy crests were flashing, their shadowed sides were purple and brilliant blue, and the belts of sombre pines were velvet-black against this splendour, as the pair reached the old shanty, where they heaped on firing and were soon enjoying a cosy supper. Having visited their traps on their way, they brought in a couple of foxes—one was a silver-grey—a brace of minks and a prime pine-marten. They had full employment that evening.

The inside walls of their abode were entirely covered with skins drying on their stretchers. It was a strange interior, truly, not in appearance only; it was most wonderfully odoriferous, which no dweller in civilization could pronounce anything but exceedingly disgusting; for what with boiling and frying fish, flesh, and fowl in raw seal-oil, and burning the same in their lamp, the perfume of at least a hundred skins of beasts drying, it may be imagined that no unaccustomed person entering it could bear the stench, which is really the only name for it. The skins were especially potent; this will be understood when it is stated that the fox-pelts were by no means the strongest scented. But our friends had become so inured to it that they were not in the least troubled—indeed, they rather liked it!

Often they would inhale it on their return from a weary, cold tramp with contentment, for it was, to them, undoubtedly a home-like smell!

Two days passed in the usual way with Gabrielle and George; on the third a gale arose and they did not go out. They had no need to, except to see to their traps, which they thought of little importance; for it did not occur to them—it rarely does to trappers, nor does it, perhaps, to many of us in Britain—what fearful suffering is caused to God's creatures in procuring the furs we use.

We read with horror of the way in which seals are driven and then clubbed to death in Behring Sea. We know how birds are slaughtered ruthlessly to provide us with ornamental plumes; but terrible as this is, greatly as it grieves those of us who think about it, it is nothing, a mere nothing, to the awful torture with which the largest portion of the furs are obtained which we use so commonly. A few are obtained by shooting, a few by dead-falls, which, set properly, cause, almost invariably, sudden death; and with poison, the agony, though sharp, is short. But most creatures are caught with traps—steel traps with jaws—and held in mortal agony for hours, often for days, by foot or leg, until the hunter comes along leisurely and terminates their suffering. Aye, it is unspeakably dreadful! Frequently these wretched animals are held fast till they starve to death, or till the bitter cold mercifully ends their existence.

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Think what this means when next you handle a sable boa, or a marten muff. Think how cruel we human beings are, how few of us ever contemplate the awful suffering so many of our pleasures and our comforts cost.

If George, or Sid, or Walter had thought of these things, surely it would have pained them; but they did not, and so at this time we can but hope that none were caught, or if there were any, that a blast of intensest cold mercifully froze them and terminated their sufferings in death.

The bad weather lasted two days and nights. This caused George anxiety about the absent ones, but Gabrielle, having seen and heard so much of such expeditions during worse storms than this, made light of his anxieties. Yet he, having had no such experience, on land at any rate, was not at ease; he could, however, only hope for the best, and pray their Heavenly Father to protect the wanderers, and they knew right well that many a fervent prayer would arise from those they prayed for, to the same benignant Being they all trusted.

Fortunately very little fresh snow had fallen, so that they believed their outward tracks would be easily followed on their homeward journey.

Gabrielle's cheerfulness cheered George; they read, and talked, and cooked, and ate, and slept, and by and by, when the wind dropped, they were out in the bright sun, seeing to their traps and dead-falls. And

thus the week went by, and they were looking anxiously for the return of their comrades.

The day they were due they cooked some of their best food and started up the inlet to meet them. When they reached where they parted from them a week before, they built a fire and waited until dusk.

They did the same for three days. On the fourth day they were rewarded.

It was late in the afternoon. They had made a sort of shelter round their fire of spruce boughs, by which they were both coiled up half asleep, and thinking the time was drawing near when they must return to the shanty, disappointed again; when Nero, usually a very silent dog, began to prick his ears and growl. He raced, barking, along the trail the travellers made when they went away, which was still visible; then he returned, wagged his tail, listened, and eagerly went off again.

Surely it was Walter and Sid returning at last, and they were very joyful. They listened, could hear nothing, nor for some time could they see anything. There was a small grove of pines half a mile off, towards which the trail ran. They thought to go along this trail to meet the comers. But it was not yet certain it was them; it might be wolves, or Indians, or something bad; so they concluded to wait where they were till they knew.

Shortly, however, to their amazement, a large, dark animal came from the grove of pines. Certainly it

was an animal, a quadruped of some kind, but still too distant to enable them to make out what it really was. It came steadily along towards them, and for a while George was greatly puzzled.

"It is an ours! It mus' be a baar!" cried Gabrielle. "Dere is no beast here bigger as a baar!"

But George now knew better than that; he was indeed bewildered, for he saw it was a big red ox! And more, it was drawing a vehicle of some description on which two persons were sitting!

By the time they had made this out, it seemed that the new-comers had seen the smoke of their fire, for, jumping from the sled and running beside the ox, they waved their arms and caps and shouted joyously. It was Walter and Sid, safe back again!

Safe indeed, and coming along in style, behind a harnessed ox! Here was a miracle. Here, indeed, was something good, undoubtedly!

All were speechless with excitement and joy; they simply gazed at each other and laughed. But Gabrielle was pale with fright. She was actually alarmed; she had never seen a living ox before. "Is it a moose?" she whispered to George. "It mus' be a moose. I am afraid!"

CHAPTER XII

WHAT a walk that was back to the shanty! Gabrielle soon lost her fear of the ox; she mounted the toboggan, and was charmed and hilarious at this wonderful new experience.

What questions were asked on the way! What only half-satisfactory replies were given! It was, "What have you found? People, of course?"

"No; not a soul—not a living soul!"

"Then where did you get this lovely ox?"

"Ah, ah! he is a love, isn't he?" replied Sid; "we'll tell you by and by. It has been difficult to find food for him—that is what has kept us."

"Well, but where shall *we* get food for him?"

"All right—you'll see," said Walter gaily; "let's get home first."

"But where have you been? Have you been successful? If you have not found people what good have you done? You seem to be happy enough—you laugh enough!" exclaimed George, for Sid and Walter were so full of what they had to tell, and of the plans they had concocted on their way, that they seemed to be unable to talk seriously, and they were so delighted to get back to Gabrielle and George.

"Have you found houses? Do you know where we are? Can we get away?" and so on—these were the natural questions.

Well, they reached home in due course, and whilst George and Sid unpacked the sled—upon which George to his delight found, rolled in the tent, two hind-quarters of beef—Walter went off to search for some pea-vine, now covered with snow. He fortunately soon hit on a patch; then he brought in a bundle, tied Buck in a sheltered nook, found that he gladly ate the stuff, and would do well. Then he joined the others indoors.

Whilst they ate, questions and vague answers flew unceasingly, until Walter, having finished, undertook to tell their story; and this is the account which he gave.

"We got on well, the day we left, said he; "we found it pretty hard work, though, pulling the sled up at the head of the inlet; it is very steep there. We camped all right that night; it was not half bad. The rough weather began as we reached that bog. As I knew we should, we found that we could cross it without difficulty. But it blew so hard that we really were afraid to venture out into that shelterless tract, so we camped this side and were detained two days.

"We crossed on the fourth day, and mounted those hills, which, you know, I have so long desired to mount, and, my word! we had a stiff pull up! From the summit, which is open, we could see a long way

south. There are miles of wooded country, which terminate in the extreme distance in a flat expanse, without a tree or bush to break its monotony. So far as we could make out with the glass, it looked like prairie, which we thought it was. We were very simple, as you will say when you hear; but actually neither of us thought of it being anything else; moreover, we concluded that if the settlements were not in this wooded country, we should not be able to cross that prairie in search of them. It extended as far as we could see, and farther, no doubt, we made sure—it was a very clear day too.

“ We minutely examined with the glass the nearer country, but there were no signs of man, no roads, no houses that we could perceive. Well, we determined to persevere, at any rate to the southern edge of the wooded country, which was perhaps ten miles off; so away we went. It was down-hill most of the time. We passed through very little good timber, beyond a few tall pines towering above the other trees, which were scrubby and useless for anything but fuel. There were many rocks and ridges, and what we took to be swamp and some streams. There is nothing difficult to travel over during winter, whatever it may be in summer. On one of the streams, going our course, we found a capital flat road, so we went ahead in style. By and by we came to a thick pine-wood, and here we had our first adventure. As we drew near it we found any number of fresh tracks—

tracks we had not seen for many a day. Sid thought they were made by deer, or moose, or elk, but I knew better—they were just cattle-tracks.

“Naturally, then, we made certain we were drawing near a settlement, especially as, when we went into this wood, we actually saw cattle—a whole herd of oxen! They were pretty wild, and cleared out directly they caught sight of us. We did not stop to bother with them, but hurried on, expecting every moment to come in sight of a clearance and a house. This wood was, I guess, a mile through; there were cattle-tracks all over it, and when we got to the snow again outside, there were the tracks still, but we could not find any which seemed to go in any regular trail or direction. They were just all over the place—what were we to do?”

“We devoted half a day here to trying to discover what this meant. We camped in a clump of spruces. During the night we concluded to push on to the south in the morning and investigate this cattle mystery on our return, if necessary; but, of course, we fully believed that we should learn all about it long before we got so far on our way home, for we certainly had no doubt at all then that we were close to what would solve all our difficulties.

“The end of the wooded district to the south we reckoned was about five miles from this camp, and away we went, and about sundown we were there, and on the edge of the prairie as we kept calling it.

"Prairie! We were idiots! What do you think it was? Why, it was the sea! the frozen sea again, just as on this side!—There was a regular beach; oh, no mistake about it. When we came down to it, there were low banks, with trees and stuff growing right out to the edge of them, and then an unmistakable beach, and the sea-ice!

"Well, well, you may be sure, George, that Sid and I were disgusted and disheartened. It was towards evening when we reached there, you know, with only light enough left to allow us to cut about a bit to look closely for human foot-marks, or even more cattle-trails. But not a sign of anything could we discover but fox-tracks and such-like. We put up the tent, and turned in pretty despondent. We had made so certain of finding people—the cattle had heartened us up so, and excited us; and yet, from the time we left that pine-wood, we had not seen a track or a trail of any use to us.

"What should we do? What a night we had! We could not sleep for hours worrying about it.

"However, we determined, since we had got across this tongue of land, or island, or isthmus, or whatever it is, on which we are cast away, as you may say—for we don't even know that yet, boys—as we had got across there, as I say, we determined to explore to right and left along this beach. It was easy going, we could see—not high cliffs and inlets, such as it is here; so we settled that we would go as far as we could

comfortably in a day's journey in each direction along the margin of the sea, and then if nothing came of it we would return home and wait till spring, when we know we shall be all right.

"We carried this plan out. We went along to the left the following morning, on and on, but not a stick or stone did we find that bore the least vestige of man's presence. I suppose we went about five miles, then halted for food, and returned to where we had started from.

"We went off to the right the next day. It was just the same monotonous scene, a low bank almost free from snow, low bushes with a few tall pines on top, a wide beach below, along which we marched. We were not moving very rapidly, we were too despondent, too down-hearted to go ahead with much vigour.

"About noon, say four miles from camp, we came to a wooded point standing out from the land; it shut out our view ahead. We slowly trudged round this point—we were quite tired of this useless game, as we called it. We had reached the extreme end, and were turning into what looked like a little nook or bay, when we stopped suddenly. We brought up with a jerk, with our hearts in our mouths, as they say, for there in front of us, not a quarter of a mile off, was a group of houses! real houses! looking to be neatly built of logs!

"Their roofs were snow-covered, of course, but they

had proper chimneys, built of brick seemingly, and windows—glass windows—and in the midst was a tall flagstaff.

“Oh, joyful sight! Oh, how thankful we were! All our despondency had vanished, all our hard pulling and hauling were forgotten, for we had found what we were searching for.

“Well, boys, I think the following ten minutes were about the most delightful I have ever passed; and I think the ten minutes after them were the most puzzling, the most tantalizing I have ever experienced; for when we had hauled up close to these buildings where we expected to find the tracks plentiful of man and beast, and signs of people being about, behold there was not a mark on the snow, except those made by foxes, and such things!

“I don't think two fellows were ever more astonished than Sid and I were. Certainly we have had strange enough experiences, all of us, since we came ashore in this mysterious land, so that we ought not to be surprised at anything fresh; yet we two were then, and no mistake.

“Nicely-built log-houses; four of them there were, with a few rough sheds, but the snow was piled up high against their doors, and their windows were half-hidden with it. What did it mean? We were simply aghast again, struck with bewilderment. I don't know how to find words to tell you how really exasperated we were.

"I must admit that I, for one, for a short time, was really afraid! It seemed to me that we must be in some enchanted land, some region where witchcraft and devilry of some sort were rampant; any way, it was most miserably dispiriting. We sat on our sled awhile perfectly bewildered. However, we knew we must take some action.

"'There's something wrong here, Sid,' said I; 'something must have happened to the people; perhaps they ran out of grub, and are all starved to death inside. They must be indoors; no one has stepped outside for months, and such houses as these are built to live in—come, let's try to see in through the windows.'

"We did so. There appeared to be a little furniture, a rough table, some chairs, some cooking pots and so on, but we could not see very well. Then we tried the doors; all were locked—but one only with a padlock; we easily drew the staple and entered.

"It was a house about fifteen feet square, with a large window on either side the door, table, chairs, pots and pans—all these empty; shelves with nothing on them, and along the opposite wall were four bunks, two below, two above, ship-fashion; but they were nicely fitted up—nicely for such a habitation. We approached there rather timidly, for we really expected to find frozen corpses in them; but there was nothing—merely rough ticks filled with hay, and pillows of the same, which had evidently been used.

"Where had the inhabitants fled to? They had left the country to escape starvation. That is what we naturally thought, when having diligently searched we could find no vestige of food, although there was a good camp-oven by the fire-place, and several drinking-mugs and plates. There were a few pieces of paper lying about, and newspapers amongst them; some came from Havre in France, and some from Montreal in Canada, and there was an old C.P.R. time-table! We could make out nothing.

"'Let's break into another house,' suggested Sid.

"We did so. Here we had much the same experience. There were a few cast-off clothes—a woman's dress hanging on a peg, some broken boots, and an old straw hat. There was a double-width bunk with some tawdry curtains to it, and another curtain at a window. There were a number of pots and pans carefully packed away in a sort of cupboard. Over the fire-place was a gaudy picture of the Madonna, and at the opposite end was a Royal Insurance Co.'s almanac of last year, but nothing to tell us who lived there, or what they did there.

"We broke into another house. Here we found a number of papers in French—Sid says they are mostly bills of things, bought and paid for by a man named Paul Dubois at a store in Quebec—principally for food—flour and meal and groceries. There was one bill, though, which gave us a clue—it was for fishing-gear, hooks, lines, and such-like. We have

brought away some of these papers; one of them has a bit of a map on it. It's of this part too we think—we'll examine it directly, but now I'll get on with our story.

"In this house also, across the overhead beams, were oars, coils of rope, and many things that are used for fishing. Then it dawned on us what this all meant. These were fishermen's houses—those who came here in summer for cod or halibut, which no doubt are as plentiful on that coast as they are on this.

"It seems to us that these people come, some from France, some from Canada, and perhaps from the States. We have all heard, I suppose, that people go regularly from these countries to the Newfoundland coast to fish; so putting two and two together, and referring to the little map, Sid and I believe we know where we are. It is on the coast of Newfoundland. We *here* are on the west coast, up in the Straits of Belle Isle, we think; and where Sid and I have been is the east coast, and that sea there is the Atlantic Ocean!

"Well, so far then our journey has, we believe, shown us our position. We felt a bit easier when we came to this conclusion, Sid and I did. It was nearly dark when we hauled our sled up to this house, lit a fire, and settled down for the night.

"Our food was running low, and we had seen very little to kill on our journey. We had about enough to

last us back here if we started immediately without any further exploration; so we settled on that plan, and tried to go to sleep, but for long we could not, so we talked and talked, pretty much all night. My curiosity had been satisfied. We had settled the question. There were no permanent inhabitants in this region! Of course, there is a town—St. John's—somewhere here in Newfoundland we know, but in what direction, and how far away, we have no real knowledge—we can only guess. The map we have does not enlighten us, and we know we cannot wander about this dreadful country with all our stuff with us. No, we said, we must just return here and wait, as we had already settled to do.

“That is how we looked at things that night. We did consider, though, that where we were promised an earlier rescue than from here. Those houses, doubtless regularly used, proved that. Once Sid said he wished we were all there with our furs and gear, and I quite agreed with him, but our experience had taught us that we could not drag such a load as we should have across there, so we dropped the idea. But all that is altered now. I'll go on again with my story.

“We got a bit of sleep towards morning, and when we turned out, and whilst the pot was boiling, we looked about us again. There was a shanty on the beach we had not looked into; we cleared away some snow and found the door was unfastened. Inside was

a small boat, like Gabrielle's *Petite Mouette*, but in perfect order, and well protected. All its gear was with it, and on the stern was painted 'Pierre Gérard : Grosse Isle.' This was something like a find—but where is Grosse Isle? Is this it? Hardly. It is not on our bit of a map. We were mystified again. It's just another to add to the many mysteries we have experienced in this mysterious region. However, we had found this good little boat, which more and more assured us that we were in a well-known spot, visited regularly. Now, how were we to make use of our discovery?

"One thing was certain. We must head for home here right away, or starve; therefore after satisfying ourselves we could find no food, and nothing more likely to be of present use to us, we packed the toboggan and started.

"But before doing so, we wrote full particulars about ourselves, our position, how we had come there and so forth, on the back of an advertising sheet, which we stuck up in a conspicuous place in the house we had slept in. We also told all we could about Gabrielle, because we thought it possible that her father and Félix might come along and strike this place, as we did.

"Then we left. Our load was light now; we moved on rapidly, and that night we camped in the wood where the cattle were; we did not see any of them though, but numerous fresh tracks.

"More and more it became impressive how

much we wished we were all safely established in one of those houses we had left that morning, instead of here still. We discussed various plans for carrying it out, but could not see how to manage it.

“Just before we fell asleep, Sid remarked that it would be a good idea to shoot one of these cattle, if we could, in the morning. ‘For,’ said he, ‘we could easily haul home a quarter of beef.’ I thought so too, and I didn’t think that a good beef-steak would be amiss for our own breakfast, mind you.

“Well, when we turned out at daybreak, the first thing we saw was about fifty head of oxen surrounding our tent, only about forty yards off, just gazing at it in the curious way half-wild cattle will. The moment we showed ourselves they were off like deer, all but one, who stood his ground.

“I got out the rifle, and was really on the point of shooting at him, when he began to walk towards us, not a bit afraid! I had the gun to my shoulder, and was ready to pull, when some way it struck me that the fellow looked pretty tame; he advanced so gently, with a look on his face so innocent and kindly, so much like one of our old yoke does at home in Bracebridge, that I couldn’t for the life of me let fly! Indeed, I lowered the gun and held out my hand, and cried, ‘Co-boss! Co-boss!’ as we do at home, you know, and if that ox didn’t step up and lick the palm of my hand!

“Think of it. I call it providential, eh? For

that is the old fellow we have tethered outside here.

"It was quite plain to us that he was a trained ox, some one's pet, we believe. I put my arm round his neck, stroked him about and handled him, and he appeared to be as pleased as we were. Sid, who has had no experience of cattle before, stood there full of wonder, whilst I, delighted with this occurrence, was puzzling my brain how we could benefit by it.

"I soon hit on an idea. We would not kill him, not much—we would make him work for us—make him haul us and our toboggan home here, at any rate!

"We had a rope with us, you know. I made a sort of collar of it and traces, hitched him to the sled, and he marched off at once, in a most kindly manner. We called him Buck, after an old ox of mine at home. I tried him with the words of command we use in the West—'Gee,' to go to the right, 'Haw,' to come to the left, 'Woa,' to stop, and he obeyed splendidly.

"How were we to feed him? That bothered us a bit, but we considered that as he and his friends managed to get a living somehow, we must discover what they ate. We soon did that. 'Browse,' as we call it at home, struck me as the most likely article of sustenance, and I soon noticed that every soft twig had been eaten off as high up as an ox could reach—that is browse. Also we found that they had pawed away the snow in many places, and had eaten everything

green, or that had been green, that lay under it ; so we knew that if we could get Buck home, and could find some of the pea-patches we know of, he would do. Therefore on we went.

“For awhile after we started we saw no more oxen, but by and by we came on a few. They allowed us to get pretty close to them, and did not appear to be much afraid, now that we had Buck with us.

“I must tell you we were ravenously hungry. Sid said something about it—also that now we could easily pull even half an ox home if we were to kill one.

“This was a fine idea, so we halted and discussed it. I wondered how Buck would stand a shot, but after a little hesitation we decided to try it. I held on to him whilst Sid drew a bead on a nice beast which stood broadside on gazing at us, not thirty yards off ; I told him just where to drive in the ball, and he did it splendidly ; he shot the creature clean through the heart, and he dropped like a stone. Buck gave only a very slight start, and we could tell it was not the first time he had heard a gun go off close to him.

“There was a small birch-tree near. I cut that down, drew him to it, and found he liked it, and browsed away all right ; so I tethered him there, whilst Sid and I attended to the dead ox. I need not tell you all the others were gone—every mother’s son of them was off like a shot the moment they heard ours.

"We skinned the hind-quarters. It was not very fat, but we had a steak broiling in double-quick time, and much we enjoyed it, as you can easily believe; then we packed all we could on the sled and started again.

"We got on finely, though slowly, because whenever we came to a likely-looking bush or tree, we let Buck eat all the twigs of it he could, and this delayed us; but we got along by degrees, and here we are all together again, thank God; and that's the story of our expedition. Now, George, tell us what you think of it, and you too, Gabrielle; did you understand all I have been telling?"

The child said she did, that it had been a fine "voyage," a "magnifique promenade," and that she thought that the houses they had found would be where her father would come. But the others believed that this was a mistake; if her people had not reached them long before, or had not found some other refuge, they had perished, but nothing of this was said to her then.

The first thing George wanted was the map. It was a very small affair, an advertisement on a bill-head. They studied it minutely, and it did seem that the conclusion which the travellers had come to must be right. They were then, it appeared, on the west coast of Newfoundland, and as they reckoned near the southern point of it. St. John's was to their north-east, and, so far as they could make out, two

hundred miles away. Of course it was impossible to go there, but it certainly was practicable, now that they had this ox, to cross to the eastern side, where undoubtedly, when navigation opened, there would be many vessels pass.

After much talk and discussion, they agreed that, to make their rescue doubly sure, they must get over there. "If possible," George said, to which Walter and Sid replied together, that it was not only possible but quite easy; they had thought out everything on their journey back.

Gabrielle's father and Félix, they felt confident, were, if living, on that coast somewhere; they hoped they would turn up before spring arrived, for much as it would grieve them to part with her (they had become so attached to her), yet they knew that it was not for them to take further responsibility if it could be avoided.

The child was all excitement that evening. Her father, her dear father, and her dear brother, were where they were going. She declared she knew it. "Oh yes!" she cried; "like you, Walter, I feel it in my bones. My heart, it tell me he is there, waiting still for his leetle girl; then we all mus' go away together—to my place, La Crique first, then to the country you talk of—oh! yes—to Ontario!—my fader and Félix, and you three, eh?"

They had some trouble to get her to go to bed, she was so happy, so joyful at this prospect!

When she was out of hearing they talked it over. They must leave her with the fishermen who would come in spring—that would be the surest way of getting her back to her people, they thought; and probably the fishermen, knowing all about these parts, would know where she belonged. That is how they planned, and they laughed at the idea of the general Ontario movement which she proposed so joyfully.

The three sat up for hours making plans; there was no time to lose, for, as Walter said, "We do not know enough of this mysterious land to be sure when the winter will break. It may not last in the interior as it does here. On the coast I've heard spring comes early. We know it is all right now. We can cross the great bog now. In a week or two we may not be able to go, boys; if we are going, we must be off at once." To this they all agreed.

It took several days to make their preparations. Walter and Sid set to work making a really good-sized sleigh—though it was to be toboggan fashion—so as not to break through the snow-crust more than could be helped. They knew that for most of the journey Buck could pull an immense load, but in bad spots and on upward grades they must all turn to and help; indeed in some parts they would have to unload some portion. So they planned to overcome all difficulties.

George and Gabrielle were busily tent-making,

baking bread, packing up their belongings—at night Walter and Sid helped them.

It was impossible to carry everything with them; they had to abandon some stores, and all their cooking gear, except what was actually needed on their journey; they knew that where they were going they would find all of this they needed. They wrote a very full account of themselves, their doings, and their intentions, which they fastened up conspicuously; then having packed their sleigh, on the morning of what they called February 25th, they departed.

It was a brilliantly bright winter's day; the vast snow-fields were so dazzling that they were glad of their spectacles. It was quite calm; yet the air seemed to be full of needle-points, it was freezing so intensely. There was such exhilaration in the atmosphere, such a brightness, lightness, that they left the poor dwelling, which at one time they almost regarded as a palace—Walter did, at any rate—with very cheery feelings, without an atom of regret—only with hearts full of thankfulness to their Heavenly Protector, who had led them to this refuge, and had kept them so safely and so well through their long sojourn in it.

They were all quite joyful at starting—Walter, George, and Sid believing that it was the beginning of a journey to where they would be; Gabrielle because she was convinced that she was going to her father and her brother.

They had two days and nights of this weather,

then they had a couple of very miserable days. The snow fell heavily, the wind was very strong, the frost was intense, and travelling became almost impossible. This was on the margin of the vast bog. They camped there, waiting for the storm to pass.

Very fortunately, during a break in the dismal outlook ahead, and before the snow had completely obliterated the tracks that Walter and Sid had made in crossing, they had noted a conspicuous hill, which was the point they had to make for.

On the third day the weather changed. It was clear, and it was thawing, and soon it began to rain. The track across was no longer visible. The rain came down steadily all day; pools of water already lay in depressions of the snow, which was becoming sodden and most difficult to tramp through. Being fairly comfortable in their little tent, and the ox having a good supply of food, they waited patiently another day. But as it was getting on towards March, Walter fancied this might be the break-up of the winter; spring might be at hand. This was serious, for this dreadful bog was only to be passed over when frozen; if they did not get over now, they would have to return to the shanty. When they turned in that night there was a dense fog, and the rain fell steadily. They lifted up their hearts to God that night, praying for His guidance and protection.

When they awoke the following morning, it was clear, and the rain had all but ceased; blue sky was

visible in patches, and across the swamp their landmark was well in sight.

"Boys! boys!" cried Walter—he was the first to peep out—"rouse up! hurry! It's now or never, I believe; we must cross to-day!"

Gabrielle heard his cry; she was out like a shot. They had rigged up a corner in the sleigh for her sleeping-place, where she was very snug and warm. "Fire I will make!" she exclaimed, and in a twinkling she had a bundle of kindling wood, which had been kept dry in the tent, and with a match from the bottle it was as quickly blazing, and the kettle on. So by the time the others had the tent and blankets rolled up, and the ox harnessed, they snatched a hurried meal and were off.

They had a hard day of it. Buck and all hands often had as much as they could do to drag the load through the heavy snowdrifts, now sodden and waterlogged. Frequently the spade, their hands, anything, had to be used to remove the snow which packed up before the sled; the good ox was often up to his body in the soft sludge; but they had to move on now, for dear life, and they did move on, and push and pull and haul, as they said, like Trojans; and by sundown they were across on to firm, dry land, and camped beneath a clump of spruces.

Then, they were all dead-beat, wet and miserable; yet when the snug tent was up, the ox feeding, the camp-fire blazing, and the kettle singing on the logs,

with some beef sizzling in the frying-pan, they lifted up their hearts with thankfulness, and were well content, for they knew that the great difficulty had been mastered, and that none of them were one whit the worse for all they had gone through.

The following day they rested ; at night the sky cleared, and it froze intensely again ; there was a heavy crust formed on the snow, hard as macadam and as slippery as glass.

Buck could not get on ; here was a difficulty. He could barely keep his footing—pulling was impossible. "We are all right," said George, "we have moccasins. I wish he had some."

"Eh!—what!" cried Walter ; "here goes then!" And with that he hauled out a piece of sail-canvas, and in a jiffy had pads of it tied to the ox's feet, and though clumsy enough, the old fellow appeared to understand the good of his foot-gear, for he marched on grandly. That night they camped in the pine-woods where the cattle lived.

There were crowds of Buck's friends about when they arose next morning ; they could have shot any number. Two days after this they reached the beach. It was mid-day when they had chosen the house they would inhabit ; by night they were settled down in comfort, and had gazed wistfully across the North Atlantic Ocean—as they supposed.

How wistfully they gazed, how longingly, we can fancy—George and Sid thinking of England, away

off thousands of miles to the east; Walter looking to the south-west, and yearning to know how it fared with those he dearly loved in that direction. As for Gabrielle she had been rushing about in great excitement into all the houses and sheds, down by the sea-ice, up on the bank-top, frequently exclaiming, "My father and my brother, I do not see signs of them, they mus' not hav' com' here yet!" After a while she said again that it was all right, they would come for her in spring, and again expressed her grief that their coming would end their companionship; more than once she made them understand that what to them would be great joy, the going home to their friends and loved ones, would to her be anything but happiness. More and more she seemed to regret the idea of parting with these, her three dear friends.

On their way, and all around their new quarters, they saw innumerable traces of foxes and minks; evidently there was plenty of fur to be caught. "We'll go on shooting and trapping again, boys," said Walter gleefully. "My word, we shall have a fine bunch of fur to sell in Montreal, eh?"

So, whilst this little company is *somewhere* in Canada, settled in the midst of warmth and plenty, waiting for spring and their hearts' desire, let us return to England and discover how things go on with those in whom we are interested there.

CHAPTER XIII

IT was on a bright afternoon at the end of March that John Balfe, having reached London two days before, went to Richmond to see the Youngs.

Mrs. Young was eagerly expecting him—she had the idea that he would bring news of George. But he could tell but little, he could only repeat that until May nothing could be expected. He had, however, heard that the Canadian authorities had had provisions deposited in places along the desolate shores of the lower St. Lawrence Gulf, and boards fastened to conspicuous trees and rocks, inscribed with directions for those wrecked to find them; so he thought that most likely George and his friend had struck one of these depôts, and were safe.

This was some comfort to George's mother, but what she yearned for was something from her boy himself. This weary waiting was very hard, as she told her visitor, who could do nothing but sympathize with her.

Elneth and Balfe were by now great friends; they had taken many walks together about the lovely neighbourhood. On one memorable Sunday afternoon, when he was last in port, they had had a stroll in

Richmond Park, and on this warm day in spring Balfe was induced to beg for a repetition of the pleasure, and Elneth was more than willing. She was eager for the opportunity of consulting him. She knew he was to be relied on; indeed, she felt that amongst all her friends there was no one she could call on more willingly for advice or aid than this good fellow, who had been so maligned by that wretched Fraser.

They had hardly left the house before she began telling him her troubles. He listened attentively, assuring her how much he wished he could assist her.

“But you can!” Elneth exclaimed; “you can advise me. You have been so good to our dear George—be good to me, too, and tell me what you think we ought to do.”

Now Balfe knew perfectly well that he had done very little for her brother; he had not shown him any particular friendship; at the most he had been kind to him during the miserable voyage. Now, of course, he regretted sincerely that he had done so little, and he knew he had no real claim to the gratitude this girl and her mother felt for him. Had he known that George possessed so sweet a sister, how much he would have done for him! he said often to himself.

He recognized all this, yet he “blessed his stars” that the trifling civilities he had shown George were repaid a thousandfold by this friendship, this precious friendship, with his sister Elneth.

It being quite settled that nothing more could be

done for the present about her brother, she told him what immediately troubled her. The money they had retained to live on until George was ready for them in the West was nearly exhausted. Her earnings had helped them through the winter, but she had discovered that they were too uncertain to rely on. They could not have the money back from Montreal, so she ended by exclaiming, "How can we stay on here?"

"Have you any plans?" asked Balse, after awhile.

She said that their relatives in Canada, who knew their plight, had been urging them to return to Ingersoll, where they said they could live at less cost than in England, and where her talents would insure them a respectable livelihood, and where, at any rate, they would be with their own folk.

"Now," Elneith continued, "mother is for going at once. Captain Andrew agrees with her, and I—well, I also am beginning to think it will be wise to go. Now tell me what you think. You know Canada as it is now; your opinion will be most valuable to me."

At first Balse was inclined to avoid the responsibility of advising; then he felt that for this girl's sake he would gladly take *all* responsibility. Quickly the whole situation passed through his mind. His own family in Canada were well-to-do; probably they could aid these friends of his. He pictured Elneith with them—how his mother would like her, his father admire her; his brothers and his sisters too; and how, some day, not in the very distant future, he

trusted, when she had outlived present troubles, when George was found and her mother's health restored, he would ask her to be his wife. For from the moment he met her he knew that she was the one girl in the wide world for him, the only being to whom his heart's best love could, from that time forth, be given. These thoughts flashed through his mind, whilst she, gazing eagerly at him, awaited his reply.

"Evidently," said he slowly, "you cannot continue here in England, if your profession will not provide you the necessary income. Well then, I think—yes, I think decidedly that the move to Canada will be a wise one."

"Then we'll settle it so!" cried Elneth cheerfully. "I have been waiting anxiously for your return to hear what you would say. You don't know what a relief it is to have this serious question settled; but there's one important point: how about George? How will our leaving here affect him?"

Balfe thought awhile, then said that as they were confident that her brother was somewhere in Canada, when he was discovered it would be known there first, so that even on that account they should be there to receive him. In fact, the more these two talked it over the more satisfied they became that it would be a wise move for Elneth and Mrs. Young to go to Canada and make it their home, and the sooner the better.

"Could you be ready early in May?" asked Balfe, suddenly.

Elneth thought they could. "But why?" she asked.

"Well," said he, "the *Brightman* will be the first ship for Montreal this season, and she sails then, and I should like you to go in her; for I'll tell you a little bit of news now about myself, Miss Young. On that voyage I am to command her."

"What? you are made captain—you are Captain Balfe!" exclaimed Elneth, joyfully. "Oh, I am glad! It is delightful; how pleased my mother will be, and George, when he hears the good news!" She ended by declaring that decidedly they must be ready to sail then.

For half-an-hour more they walked and talked and, as they fancied, settled everything satisfactorily.

How sweet this girl was! With what charming phrases she complimented him! How clever, how beautiful, how sensible! Yes, she was the embodiment of all his dreams. All his imaginings of what his future wife should be were personified in her. Balfe's mind was filled with these thoughts as they rambled that day.

And what were Elneth's ideas? What did she really think of John Balfe, now that she had seen so much of him? We know that some time before she had thought him her ideal man. Had her opinion changed? No, not one atom. Did she like him the more, the more she knew him? She did indeed; her heart had gone out to him; her one wish, one hope,

was that some day, and not a very distant one, he would ask her to be his wife.

That afternoon neither could go further than this; how things would in the future shape themselves they did not stay to think; they each, unknown to the other, had one hope, one aim, one trust, and they lifted up their hearts and were happy.

Mrs. Young was delighted when she heard of their friend's advancement, and still more pleased when she knew that he thought well of their plan, and that Elneth was now satisfied about its wisdom.

The preparation for their voyage, the excitement and anticipation, had a wonderfully good effect on her; her health so greatly improved that by the middle of April she was another being in body and mind.

Balfe sailed early in April, his last voyage as first officer. Until he started, he spent most evenings at Richmond, helping with their preparations, and every visit increased his love for and admiration of Elneth. It was with difficulty he refrained from telling her his heart's desire. He had to put strong pressure on himself to keep silent, for—whether intentionally or not, who can tell, who can fathom the innocent wiles of a woman?—she showed him plainly by her words and her actions that she was devoted to him.

It was a mystery to them both, not so very long after, why he did not speak out then. His own explanation was that he was afraid to run the risk of

a refusal, at which she blushed and smiled and made him understand how foolish he had been.

During April, when most of their preparations were complete, Elneth received copies of the magazines in which her stories appeared. Then came letters from the editors, asking for more of her work. She informed them of her intention to leave England, but promised to send contributions from Canada if the pay she received was satisfactory.

A few days after came a cheque, a very welcome cheque, but when she and her literary friend figured it out, they reckoned that it was very meagre payment.

When the *Brightman* returned, all their preparations were completed. They were then staying with Sid Croly's people at Eltham. Here they stopped their last few days in England, and here Balfe came to visit them.

Now the Crolys were in distress about their son, and the two mothers were pouring their woes into each other's ears without restraint. Until quite lately Mrs. Croly had little anxiety about Sid—she had felt certain he would turn up some day; but now she and her husband, having heard in detail what had happened, and talked all over with Balfe, became suddenly more distressed, if that could be, than the Youngs were about George. They looked at the affair in such a very dismal light that Elneth longed for the time of departure, so that her mother should be freed from their depressing influence.

The 10th of May saw them on board the *Brightman*; the Crolys and many friends saw them off. Their passage down river and Channel was excellent. They had the best of weather until Wolf Rock, on the Cornish coast, was far astern. Then they had a blow, but it lasted only two days, and the rest of the passage was over quiet seas, through the best of weather. The ship was full of passengers; all classes, fore and aft, were crowded. Balfe occupied the chart-room on the bridge; it was very comfortable, had large windows on three sides, and was a famous position from which to see all that went on on deck, and on the surrounding ocean. Here favoured passengers, usually ladies, were invited by the captain, and here Mrs. Young and Elneith passed most of their time.

Balfe's attentions to George's sister were much noticed, and her mother often overheard remarks showing that the general opinion was that they were an engaged couple.

It need not be supposed that Mrs. Young was blind. She had seen from the beginning that these two were taken with each other, and from the first she had formed so high an opinion of Balfe that she was prepared to receive him as a son-in-law. She had also sounded her daughter, and knew there would be no obstacle raised there. She considered that Balfe would make a very eligible husband, so far as position and means went. They themselves were in no flourishing condition, and they had no prospect of

ever being well off in this world's goods. If George came back, they might prosper, but even then, what better husband could she expect for her daughter than this man, and what higher position could she reasonably hope for than that she should be the wife of the commander of a fine mail steamer ?

They were five days out, in two more they hoped to make the land. It was a grand evening; the ship was rolling gently as she pushed her way over the slightly heaving billows. Mrs. Young and Elneth were in the chart-house. They had a fine view ahead, to the westward, where the sun was going down in golden splendour. The decks were crowded with passengers, gazing at that glorious spectacle—a sunset at sea.

Balfe had been for some time gaily marching ladies up and down the main-deck. Elneth had been watching him, quite contented, for he had whispered to her that he must be attentive to some who were important personages, which was his duty. But by and by he should come for her, which would be pleasure.

And as night drew on the captain came to the bridge, eyed the compasses, gave an order or two, then led her and her mother down, and taking one on either arm, he escorted them to and fro. Mrs. Young was now greatly improved both in health and spirits; the sea air, and relief from worry, added to the firm belief that her son would be restored to her immediately, had done wonders for her. Elneth too had cast aside all

present distresses and sorrows. All eyes were turned to her as with elastic step she paced the deck with graceful motion, adapting herself to the slight heaving of the vessel; and many a young fellow—aye, and an old one too—felt how glad he would be to have as nice a girl on his arm as the captain had.

This particular evening Elneth was in wonderfully good spirits. She was delighted that her mother's health had improved so much, and Balfe had been particularly pleasant that day.

He walked her and her mother thus for some time, until indeed Mrs. Young, saying she was tired, went below to the sa'loon.

The deck was clearer now. Balfe and his companion paced it in silence awhile, and then began to speak of the beauty of the night, of the fine passage they were making, and, naturally, about making the land—that they might perhaps be passing quite near where her brother had been cast; and then they spoke of their arrival in Montreal, and of parting.

When it came to that sad word Elneth was silent, whilst Balfe showed by the tone in which he spoke that it was a sorrowful theme to him. He said so; he told her that for his part he looked forward to saying "good-bye" with keenest grief; but she said no word.

In passing an open port, whence the light streamed, Balfe glanced at her, and tears were in her eyes. He said nothing until they reached the rail around the

stern ; there they leant, and for a time regarded, without consciously seeing, the brilliant phosphorescence of the water streaming behind the ship.

“ Will the close of this voyage end this delightful time which we have had together, Miss Young ? Need it end it ? ” murmured Balfe in Elneth’s ear.

The noise of the screw beneath their feet, the rush of the wind through the rigging, rendered speech difficult ; no one two yards away could have heard these words, but Elneth heard and knew that the crisis of her life had come ; yet she did not reply—she could not.

Balfe did not speak again for awhile, but he put his hand on hers, and gazed at her beseechingly.

She turned soon and looked at him for a moment, and he saw by the light reflected from the broken water that her eyes were still suffused with tears. He pressed her hand fondly, meaningly, then she looked at him again, and in a broken voice answered, “ Why should it end ? Why ? ” and she hid her face in her hands upon the rail, and he knew she was still weeping.

What could he do ? What could he say ? It would be most embarrassing, it suddenly occurred to him, if he, the captain of the ship, should be discovered with a tearful girl beside him. In his perplexity he lost perfect control of himself ; he placed his hand on her shoulder and speaking vehemently, asked, “ Does the near prospect of our parting grieve you so, dear friend ? Is that it ? It is terribly sad to me. But look up,

and speak to me, and tell me if you can why you are so agitated!"

At this she looked at him with a strangely intense expression, and exclaimed eagerly, "I cannot tell you—I need not tell you—for certainly you know."

With that he clasped her hand, placed it on his arm, and marched her forward along the now vacant deck. His emotion was intense, so was hers; he uttered no sound, he pressed her hand to his side, and walked her rapidly up and down for half-a-dozen turns.

By that time he had conquered himself sufficiently to speak calmly. "Miss Young—Elneth," he murmured when they were forward in a part less noisy, "~~Elneth~~, I love you, I have loved you from the first. We must part soon, I know, but oh! let it be only for a time. Can you love me? I am but a plain sailor, I have little to offer you, but I know enough of you to assure me that if you love me and will be my wife all else will count as nothing to you."

She was regarding him gravely as he spoke. She kept silent for a few seconds only, and then a smile of perfect happiness suffused her face as she replied, "Why, my dear friend, don't you know I love you? Don't you see that you are all the world to me? If you love me as I love you, then thank God as I do for this happiness! Now, let me go below to my mother."

And that is how John Balfe and Elneth Young plighted their troth.

And Mrs. Young was pleased, there was no doubt of it. The next day she and Balfe had many long conversations, and the more they talked the more satisfied she was about the affair. Of course it was too soon yet to make plans—all that could be settled was that Elneth and her mother should remain a few days in Montreal, till Balfe could leave his ship, and then that all should go to Toronto for a short stay with his people, before they proceeded to Ingersoll.

To her fellow-passengers Elneth appeared unchanged, but inwardly she was rejoicing. She looked at the world in quite a new light; everything was bright. She pictured her future home in Montreal, Toronto, or perhaps in London; she thought how she should count the hours as her husband's ship was due, and how glorious his home-coming would be. She felt and looked so happy that the young fellows around her fell deeper and deeper in love with her, and looked at Balfe with indignation, almost with anger, when they recognized that he had taken full possession of this charming girl and left them no chance.

Of course, it was soon known to all on board that Elneth and Balfe were pledged to each other; for that very first day Mrs. Young was asked about it by a gossip-loving lady (there always is one on a mail steamer) and admitted its truth, and Elneth herself, when rallied on the subject, owned it was the case. So these were happy, glorious days indeed for John

Balfe and Elneth Young on board the *Brightman*. There was just one sorrow, and it was a great one—that about poor George.

This good ship made fine runs in the smooth sea; the fog was most polite, too, as they crossed the Banks; they went half-speed for one half-day only, and on the eighth evening out they sighted Cape Race, in Newfoundland; the following forenoon they passed Cape Ray, closely, and had entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Mrs. Young and her daughter rarely left the deck now, for somewhere here they thought poor George had disappeared. It was agonizing to his loving mother to gaze across that wide and vacant sea, and to think that here, somewhere in this awful spot, their dear one lingered still, or had long since vanished from the earth. Balfe did all he could to cheer them; he assured them that it was not just here where he had last seen the boys, but for all that they knew it was the Gulf, and that was enough.

Then, as the tenth day broke, they were off Gaspé. They had passed a few bergs during the night, and as the sun arose they saw some loose ice drifting. Balfe could now point nearly to the exact spot where the *Duke of Cornwall* had been jammed, and this naturally was full of fearful interest to Elneth and her mother.

The land itself was too far off to enable them to see more than that it was still snow-covered and hard

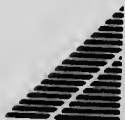
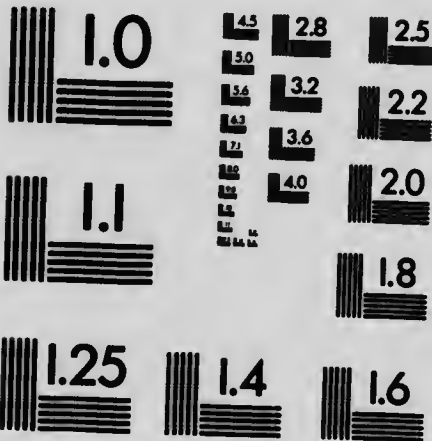
winter there ; but it was where George and Sid had intended to land, and they eyed it gravely and with deep sorrow, for Balfé explained that if they had landed there they would have gone on to Quebec quite certainly. They had missed it though, and had drifted away, in which direction all was pure conjecture. The sea was so vast, the land so cold and so inhospitable-looking, that the two poor ladies were, if anything, more distressed than ever when they viewed what they knew to be the actual scene of the disaster.

The good ship hastened on her way, and Gaspé was soon sunk astern ; then a few hours after there was land on her starboard beam, which she soon came up with and passed along at no great distance. With their telescopes they made it out to be a rather flat country, generally tree-covered, with tall pines towering high above them. It looked to be a doleful, most uninteresting region. They were told by the captain it was Anticosti, which was deeply interesting, for here it was thought to be just possible that the boys had landed. But they passed a lighthouse ; and here and there, at long intervals, they espied little log shanties, and this assured them that Anticosti was an inhabited land, so if the wanderers had gone ashore there they would surely have been heard of. They did not seem to be aware that no one remains there during the winter—even the lighthouse people are taken off ; and these habitations they saw were



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merely the summer homes of those who come from France and Canada to fish ; so they gazed at this land with interest certainly, but with assurance that George and Sid could not possibly be there.

About noon they were so near to the south coast of Anticosti that they could, with their glasses, see ashore distinctly, and they picked out a group of little houses. Elneth had the glass, and exclaimed suddenly that she could distinguish people waving a white flag! Balfe looked intently through his glass, and with a laugh said that they were fishermen no doubt, and that they were greeting them. "For you know," said he, "we are the first ship going up this season." Then he ordered the *Brightman's* ensign to be hoisted. It flew awhile, was lowered, then raised again thrice. "That's the way we make a sea bow," said he. The people ashore still waved their white cloths frantically, and from a flag-staff amongst the houses a red flag flew, and was pulled up and down rapidly.

And the *Brightman* hurried on. Elneth and her mother were greatly interested and excited, and all the passengers were amused at this incident.

If they had known! If Mrs. Young and Elneth and John Balfe had only known!

Soon after this they entered the St. Lawrence River. Houses were numerous along the shores, and long strips of cultivated land extended back from the river. As they pushed on these became still

more plentiful, until at last there was an almost unbroken line of pretty white houses amongst the trees on either bank, and every few miles there stood up the tin steeple of a church.

On the eleventh morning of their passage they arrived off Father Point and took a pilot, and then, till they reached Quebec the following day, it was all excitement and exhilaration. The ship was taken alongside a wharf at Point Levis, opposite grand Quebec, and the passengers were landed with no end of turmoil and confusion, some to go west by the G.T.R., and some to be taken across the river in a queer tug-boat, to the depôt of the C.P.R. to go west by that route.

Elneth and her mother kept on board and went on in the *Brightman* that evening, arriving in Montreal next day. Balfe took them to St. Lawrence Hall, told their story to genial Mr. Hogan, and there they remained in comfort, whilst Balfe finished what he had to do on board, so that he could go west to Toronto with them.

CHAPTER XIV

THE house the four castaways had chosen to inhabit was soon in order, and the very next day they set their traps and laid their poison, taking guns with them, hoping to kill some meat, as they were running rather short; but they saw nothing worth a shot, not even any grouse. Along the shore there were no seals, nor signs of them; there were blow-holes out on the ice, where they tried for fish, but caught none. Several days passed thus, whilst they examined their new neighbourhood. They caught many good minks and martens, but only a few foxes; one was a white one, the only one they saw all the time they were in that land.

For a while they had bad weather, terribly cold winds, and drifting snow, then sudden thaws and rain-storms; after that days of brilliant sunshine, then a recurrence of bad weather. Yet there was the feeling that spring was coming; the longer days, the growing power of the sun, all tended to make them feel that a good time was at hand.

But it was April 1st before they could perceive that undoubtedly the snow and ice were disappearing. They were delighted one morning, after a boisterous

night, to see that the ice was all broken up near shore, whilst off to the south they could perceive the sea itself, with the sun sparkling on its waves.

They were becoming more and more anxious about food; their flour and meal and most groceries were nearly finished, so that meat was becoming a necessity. They still caught fur-bearing creatures, but so far had not eaten any; there had been no need, although they knew well enough that if the worst arrived they would have to use them; they knew they need not starve. However, they reckoned that they could, with fresh meat, do very comfortably for a couple of months, even till June.

But they had long since eaten what beef they brought with them; they could catch no fish—what should they do? Then Sid remarked that he wished they had one of those oxen that roamed in that pine-wood, and the words caught on. "Nothing easier!" cried Walter; "we'll go in with Buck and the toboggan and shoot one."

The next day they—Walter and Sid—were off, taking blankets with them, and on the third day they returned with so much beef—which they packed in ice—that they could last out all the summer, if needs be!

Those half-wild cattle were a great puzzle to them. How came they there? To whom did they belong? They knew they were not really wild, for they were all oxen, not cows or bulls. Some one, somewhere, at

some time had owned them! A few were very aged, judging by their horns; others were quite young, that is, four or five years old. The one they had killed last was, they judged, a four-year-old steer. They found no solution of this mystery then.

A dense fog and a heavy gale were experienced during the first weeks of April! Then rain came. They continued to visit their traps, from which they still took animals, but their skins were becoming worn and shabby. It was plain that the fur season was past; so they gave it up, and now had nothing to do but to wait patiently for the people who owned these houses to return.

The bad weather vanished as suddenly as it came, and now that they could see about they noticed that most of the snow had gone; the sea was quite free of ice, and breaking gently on the beach with a delightful murmur. Snow still existed in hollows here and there, and ice was piled up in places on the shore, but spring had come—there was no doubt of it—and navigation was open! In the woods leeks were springing up as if by magic, grass was sprouting, and a few trilliums were already in flower.

Buck was not tethered now; they had no more use for him; if he would have wandered back to his brethren it would have pleased them, but he hung around the buildings, and picked up a good living amongst the green-stuff which was growing luxuriantly everywhere.

Undoubtedly the navigation was open then, as far as their vision extended, anyway; but beyond that, up in the Straits of Belle Isle, out by Capes Race and Ray, and around Gaspié, they believed—and they were right—that ice still barred the way. For all this they knew it could not be long now before their relief came.

It was, however, weary waiting. They passed most of their time on the bank above the houses, on the look-out. One thing they did was to turn a scarlet blanket they possessed into a flag, and hoist it to the flag-staff; they thought it likely that fishermen might pass along, other than those who owned these houses, and they were impatient to hold converse with some one from the outside world. And they kept a big beacon-fire going day and night to attract attention.

Another thing they did at this time was to count and pack their furs. They found they had six black bear-skins and about forty seals, six dozen red foxes, two dozen silver-greys and ten black ones. They had fifty minks, thirty stone-martens, and twenty-five pine-martens. They had only taken six otters, but they had twenty of what Walter called fishers, which are really pekans, or Canada sables. Walter figured out that at the prices they could get for furs in Ontario they had eighteen hundred dollars' worth. "Think of it, boys!" he cried. "What a fine winter's work! My word, if one could get furs like this up our way!"

Gabrielle said she had seen quantities at the Hudson Bay store, and had heard their qualities and values discussed; she declared she was certain they had done splendidly, and had obtained a magnificent lot of skins.

During this comparatively idle time they made a discovery about this girl. It did not strike them as being important then; but afterwards it proved to be so. They were talking of her home, and she had been describing how they spent the time, and how the man up at the store spent his, and she casually remarked that when "le gouverneur," as she called him, came in his big schooner, once or twice in the summer, to take away the furs that had been collected and to bring things to the store to be sold to them, they always had a good time—for one thing there was plenty of fine things for the youngsters, candies and toys, which she described.

"What was the governor's name?" George asked.

"Oh! it was just le gouverneur. Some called him Boss, but my fader, he always call him Monsieur Fraise."

"Fraise, Fraise," repeated George, "why, that's the French for strawberry! What a queer name for a man! Don't you think that it was Fraser, Gabrielle?"

She thought it might be, and so they believed, as most of the Hudson Bay people were Scotsmen, that would likely be it, and the matter was dropped.

Gabrielle had become by this time a most efficient

member of the party. Her winter's companionship with them had done wonders for her. She was so quick and clever, and was perfectly able to carry on conversation, in fairly good English too; she had almost entirely dropped her French accent and peculiarities. She could read and write quite nicely, and was so tidy in her dress, so careful and so clean, and had, they all thought, so much improved in her looks since she had been with them that they were quite proud of her, and often wondered how they could bear to part with her, which they felt sure they must, and that shortly.

They had talked plainly to her of what they had planned about leaving her with the people who would be coming, so that she might be taken to her home; and while she expressed herself well pleased at the prospect of seeing her father and Félix again, she declared she was not at all anxious to get back to La Crique. She often said it was very bad there, that the people were so poor, so dirty; and she assured them that now that she had seen the proper way to live, and had learnt so much, she should never be happy there again. This made her friends pretty sure that if the style—the miserable style as they considered it—in which they had dragged through the winter was so superior to the way of life at Gabrielle's place, it must indeed be bad there, so they did not wonder very much at her aversion to returning to it.

Time passed; they had nothing to do but to note

the rapidly increasing vegetation and to mark the arrival of the birds—the robins, jays, bluebirds, and red-winged starlings—and to gaze across the sea, longing for the appearance of that sail which would bring them intelligence from the outside world, inform them where they were, and, in a word, rescue them.

It was, they supposed, May 21st; the day was brilliant, the blue sea was sparkling in the sunlight; the warm air wafted the perfume of the pines over them as they idled on the bank-top as usual. The sky was cloudless; and here and there, away off on the distant horizon, a few icebergs were shining white against the deep blue.

Early that afternoon one of them noticed a peculiar streak across the distance. It looked to be merely a cloud, and yet it was something different from other clouds in colour and form. Besides, it increased in volume. They examined it with their glasses; it grew and became darker towards the south. They were puzzled.

“ I'll tell you what ! ” cried Sid, jumping up. “ that's a steamer's smoke—why, of course it is ! ”

They were alert now, all excitement and expectation. How closely they watched that cloud ! And soon beneath it a dark spot appeared, something that was not either smoke or cloud. It was a ship, a steam-ship, speeding rapidly towards them ! How eagerly, how anxiously they watched it, we can easily understand.

The ship would pass some distance to the south and east of them, if she kept her course. They must attract her notice; so the red blanket was hoisted, and they took white cloths and waved them vigorously as the ship drew nearer. Through the glasses they could see people on board; Sid declared that there were ladies amongst them.

Nearer still, and yet no notice was taken of their signals. Were they blind on board that vessel? Were they going by without heeding them? After their weary, weary waiting were they to be abandoned thus? It seemed so, for the steamer kept on her course, and the blood-red flag of Britain was flown from her mizzen-peak, was lowered and hoisted again three times, and that was all!

Walter threw down the white towel he had been waving. "That's a sea-salute, I suppose!" he cried. "I've read of this in Clark Russell's stories. That's the way they say adieu, good-bye; so that's the last of her! What does it mean, boys? Who could believe that a British ship would pass a lot of shipwrecked people, and not try to help them?" They were angry, indignant, and they stared in silent wonder at the receding steamer till she vanished in the west.

But after a little, after their terrible excitement had calmed somewhat, they were able to discuss the matter coolly. That ship, they saw, was full of passengers; she was going west. They studied their little map—she was evidently entering the Gulf of St. Lawrence,

bound for Quebec and Montreal. Then this, no doubt, was the regular way mail steamers took. Perhaps this was the first one of the season, so there would be many others pass them, and one of them would surely stop and take them off. Now what other signals could they make? What could they do to show they were in distress? That was the problem for them to solve.

They made a huge signal fire that evening, and turned out and piled on fuel during the night, and were up betimes next morning and at their look-out. During the morning they saw one steamer pass away off to the south, far beyond signalling distance; and that evening just at sundown a large passenger boat hove in sight, speeded past them, and in reply to their frantic wavings, flag-hoisting, and gun-firing, merely saluted them as the first one did, then passed on to the west. During that night another huge vessel passed them. It was an amazement to them all, especially to Gabrielle, to see her lights, her blazing ports, the sparks flying from her smoke-stacks, and to hear the noise she made as she passed quickly on her way to the east. "She's going home to England," said George, with a sad expression on his face.

It was quite certain, they now knew, that they had done well to come to their present position; evidently they were right in the track of ships, yet it was terribly disappointing, awfully aggravating that not one would stop to help them. They were all in a

most excited state by this time; they could neither eat nor sleep properly, and stopped by their beacon-fire most of the night, where Gabrielle would stay with them.

All manner of theories and many plans were mooted that night; and the conclusion they came to at last was that these vessels did not understand that they were in trouble, but knowing that during the open season the houses along that coast were inhabited, they supposed that the signalling that they did was merely greetings, which was, as we are aware, the correct solution. So they knew that they must do something different from what they had yet done to make their need known.

What should they do? That was the question.

"If that boat were but large enough," Sid said, "we could pack everything in her, go out and get in front of a steamer, and *make* them pick us up."

But the boat could only carry two; besides, they could not go and leave Gabrielle—that was impossible. So they talked and argued, and at last came to the decision that they must give up the idea of being taken off by a passing steamer; they must just wait as patiently as they could until the owners of these houses arrived, until they could insure Gabrielle being properly cared for.

Naturally she heard, and quite understood all these discussions, and clearly comprehended that she was the difficulty. "Tell me," she whispered to George

—they were sitting close together, a bit away from the others at the time—“tell me, you would all go to your home in one of these big ships, eh? but for me, eh?”

George admitted that was so, but she was not to trouble. “For of course we are not going to abandon you,” said he, with emphasis. “Not likely,” he went on; “we must wait to see you are safe before we go away and leave you—that’s all settled.”

Gabrielle was much troubled. She listened intently to the others’ conversation. She was little more than a child, they thought, and yet surely she had a woman’s sense and comprehension. Evidently she was trying to restrain herself; she kept silent as long as she could, but at last her feelings overcame her, and she leapt up and excitedly, forcibly, eloquently, spoke to them. “No! no!” she cried, “I must not derange your plans; you must not stay here for me! No! I will go with you, oh! yes. Do you think I will not go, eh? Do you not suppose I will rather go with you as go back to La Crique—to all those peoples? You hav’ safe me from the sea—yes—you hav’ cared for me, and taught me, oh! so much; you hav’ become already my dear friends. No! I will not leave you. I want to see my fader and my broder, I want to know that they are safe, oh! yes, but I want not to go back to where they lif. So take me with you, take me to where you would be. ‘Your people must be my people, and your God my God.

I read that in the book, you know, and that I would say now. Well, then—let me come with you ; by and by we will find out about the Hudson Bay store, then we will find my father and Félix, and we will send word to them, eh? And they will come to me, and we will all live in a good country, the country you hav' told me about, away, away to the West, there. How will this do, eh? Come, George and Sid and Walter, let us make plans ; let us go on one of these big ships—oh! these grand magnifique ships—away from here, eh? Shall it so be?"

The three appealed to regarded each other with something like amazement. This was indeed a fresh aspect of the case. To take Gabrielle with them was so new, so startling an idea.

"If my mother and sister were in Canada, and we had a home there," said George slowly, at last, "it would do splendidly ; but that is all upset by what has happened to us."

"I can't do anything—I wish I could," says Sid. "I've no home either, nor any prospect of one."

"But I'm all right!" exclaimed Walter. "I can fix things! We'll all go up together as far as Toronto, then I'll take Gabrielle home with me. My mother will have her gladly, I know ; and when I'm married she shall have a home with me!"

"But I would like to live with George!" exclaimed Gabrielle ; "he tells me of his mother and of Elneth, his sister, yes—I should like to go to them. But, tell

me, you will all together go to the West, eh? Is it so big a place, the West, where we can all live, and my father and Félix, if they come? But ah! it is all right, I to Toronto go with you and then we will see!"

"Fraser, the Hudson Bay man, can easily be heard of in Montreal," remarked Walter musingly; "he will of course know about Gabrielle's people, so that would do. And when we come to think of it, I guess this would be the best way out of our tangle for her as well as us," and George and Sid agreed with him.

During the rest of that short night they discussed plans, and the result was that when the sun arose they turned to, got the little boat out, and made her ready for launching; then they breakfasted and adjourned to the bank-top, where they sat in the sun all day, ready to act, at a moment's notice, on the plan they had settled.

They waited and watched all that day, and nothing passed, nothing happened. But when next morning broke a steamer's smoke was plain in the north-east. She was coming their way speedily; clearly it was a fast mail-boat, for within an hour she was quite close, and seemed to be heading as if she would come nearer than any vessel that had gone up yet. Sid and Walter had pushed off in the little boat long before this; they pulled out a couple of miles from land and then rested on their oars, right in front

of the on-coming ship; whilst from the look-out George and Gabrielle watched with profoundest interest what went on.

On, on, the good ship speeded; she was nearly up to the two in the small boat, who were gesticulating and shouting wildly; and then the two ashore saw that the big ship slowed up and then stopped dead! Turning to his companion, George in his turn shouted and danced for joy. "We're saved! we're rescued! Gabrielle, our troubles are ended!" he cried, and took her by the arms and made her dance with him; and she, though half frightened, was so glad to see him so happy, that she joined heartily in his half-wild vagaries.

Then how eagerly they watched every movement out there on the sea. The ship was near enough by that time for them to see the crowd of people on board. Soon they saw a boat being lowered, and in less time than it takes to tell it this boat was manned, and with Sid and Walter on board, and the little boat towing astern, was pulling vigorously ashore.

Then ensued a never-to-be-forgotten hour, full of indescribable sensations to our castaways. Gabrielle was not by any means the calmest of them.

They had already their bales of fur, their Gladstone bags, and all they desired to take away with them, piled on a rocky point with deep water up to it. George and Gabrielle were by this time standing ready.

As soon as his voice could be heard, Sid shouted, "It's all right, George! All well, Gabrielle!—that's the *Parmesian*, the famous Allan liner, you know. We are saved! We are saved at last!"

The officer at the tiller gave orders, and the boat came alongside; then almost in a wink, it seemed, everything was on board, George and the girl were sitting aft with the others, Nero with them, the big boat was pushed off, and the sailors were pulling her back to the waiting mail steamer.

They left the little boat, bottom up, high and dry on the beach; and they had written, and left behind them, a full account of themselves, so that the proprietors of the houses should know by whom, and why, their premises had been thus raided.

They were all so excited and bewildered that they hardly had the thought to take a last look at the spot they had so long occupied. They hardly had time to think, indeed, before they were away and hastening across the smiling waters to the steamer.

Buck stood disconsolately on the bank-top, gazing at them with a puzzled look at their departure. "Good old man!" shouted Walter to him. "I only wish I could take you with me!" At which the poor ox lifted up his voice and gave one long-drawn bellow. It was just as if he understood, and it was the first and last time any of them heard his voice!

Hardly a word was spoken in the boat. How huge the *Parmesian* looked as they approached her!

What an immense crowd of people were hanging over her side, and up in the rigging peering at them. Gabrielle's eyes were bigger and rounder than ever. She glanced up at the great wall of the ship, and then from one to the other of her friends, and was clearly beside herself with wonder. She was sitting next to George, whose arm she was clasping nervously. "It's all right, my child," said he soothingly—"it's all right, don't fear; thank God that all our anxiety is over."

In a few more entrancing minutes they were alongside. A ladder had been lowered, and by the time they had climbed on board and their property had been bundled in through a lower port and dumped on the quarter-deck, the boat was being hoisted in and the *Parmesian* was steaming ahead again full speed to the West.

CHAPTER XV

A CROWD of passengers, eager to hear what our four friends had to tell, surrounded them as they were welcomed by the captain on the after-deck of the *Parmesian*. He asked them many questions—how they were wrecked? how long they had been there? where they had come from? and a dozen others.

They were dazed, slow of speech; they hesitated in their replies, and were quite incapable then of giving a consecutive account of themselves or their adventures. The last two hours had upset their nerves, and they were bewildered. The so-long-yearned-for succour had come; they were released, saved at last; and their feelings quite overcame them. Besides, the stir and animation, the crowd of well-dressed people confused them; they could hardly reply clearly and immediately to questions put to them. It was plain that it would take time for their story to be really known.

The ship was now speeding rapidly past the land. Our friends were looking at it as if it were a dream that there, on that forest-clad shore, in that desolate

wilderness, they had spent a year—one of them two years—cut off from the world, without any communication with fellow-beings. How eagerly, ceaselessly, they had longed for this hour when they should be carried away from it to all they held dear! Well, the hour had come, and it seemed impossible; it must be a happy dream, they thought.

Pointing to the shore, George suddenly asked of the captain, "What is that land? Has it a name?"

"A name!" he answered, with an amused smile, "why, certainly it has a name; that is Anticosti."

"Anticosti!" cried George and Sid and Walter together; "that's where we have been, then!" And Gabrielle added—"Oh! yes, it is so. My father say it was so, for see, there is the great Phare, the lighthouse," and as she spoke she pointed to one just coming plainly into sight upon the starboard beam. (Probably South-West Point light.)

"But we thought we were in some part of Newfoundland," said Sid.

"What made you think that? Where were you cast away?" asked some one. "You surely know where your ship was wrecked."

"But we don't know. We were not all wrecked, either. Only this girl can be said to have been really wrecked, I suppose," said Walter. "I was thrown ashore from the *Prairie Queen*; these two," pointing to George and Sid, "left their ship off Gaspé, and Gabrielle came in a vessel which was knocked to

pieces on the beach, due north, many miles from where you found us."

"Well, well," said the captain, "we must get all this out of you in some sort of straightforward way by and by, when you are rested and calmer; but that's Anticosti, anyway, and you must tell us all about that, too, for many people want to know what kind of place it is."

"We thought it could not be Anticosti," Walter explained, "because we heard that was such a starvation place, and it is not so where we have been. We've got on wonderfully well; we have never wanted food, or fuel, or shelter," and the others of the party assented. Walter added—"But it's a strange place, at least we found it so, and full of mystery."

An elderly clergyman, standing near, said to them—"Why, you are 'Anticosti Crusoes,' that's what you are; let us hope your story, when you tell it properly, will go down the ages like your prototype's!"

The boys smiled. "It'll hardly do that," one of them said; "but we think we've had a strange adventure."

They were taken below into the saloon, and were a good deal disconcerted on entering it; as for Gabrielle, she clung to George's arm and gasped with fear; she was awe-struck. Such grandeur, such a gorgeous apartment, such numbers of fine people, such a wonderland, the young thing had never imagined existed, no, not in her wildest dreams. The stewards in

their uniforms, the officers with their gold lace and buttons, the ladies in their gay costumes, the gentlemen, all wearing coats, all in real gala dress, to her notion; the mirrors, cut glass, silver! Oh! it was an enchanting *fête*—it almost appalled her. It was rather a dazzler to all of them, in fact, after their long isolation in that wilderness.

George and Sid were quite respectably attired; as we know, Walter was not very presentable, but by the thoughtfulness of some passengers he was soon rigged out with clothes and necessaries. Gabrielle was taken in hand by one kind lady, and soon returned quite nicely dressed, and with her hair in proper order; her old companions were quite surprised to perceive what a fine girl she was. Of course she was the heroine of the ship at once, and soon made friends with all. There were some girl passengers about her own age who took to her, and by nightfall all our party were settling down and becoming used to the great change.

Dinner was a most enthralling affair to Gabrielle; she had never imagined so tremendous a function; but, sitting next to George, she copied him exactly. She kept her eyes, too, on some young girls near, and imitated them; so it was clear that she would quickly and easily adapt herself to the usages and ways of society, and would soon forget her rough old life. She did nothing either rudely or clumsily during that first amazing meal.

For the rest of that great day each had a circle of interested passengers around him, and each had to be telling, again and again, what they had suffered, seen, and done.

The stewardess took care of Gabrielle that night, and the others, with their goods, were given an unoccupied room. But their furs, being somewhat odorous, were stowed safely somewhere on deck.

One of the passengers, a man of some importance, apparently, was very inquisitive that first evening about the fur-bearing creatures of Anticosti, and wanted to know if they had taken many; he questioned Walter chiefly. About foxes he seemed to be much interested. Walter told him, and spoke of the silver-greys and blacks that they had captured.

"There are no such creatures as black foxes," this gentleman stated positively.

"Oh, we know better than that!" exclaimed Walter with a laugh, "for we have ten fine ones. Would you like to see them?"

The gentleman said he certainly should, but all the same he declared he knew that black foxes were myths. So they arranged that in the morning there should be an exhibition of their furs.

There was some fog during that night, and the ship was retarded; she was only off Pont des Monts lighthouse in the morning.

After breakfast, on the main-deck the furs were opened; the passengers gathered around, and the

ladies, especially, were in raptures, and wished and wished again that they owned some of them. The so-called black fox-skins were particularly admired, whilst he who seemed to understand most about them and appeared to be an expert, examined them very closely, and explained that these fox-skins, commonly called black were merely very dark silver-greys. Still, the general idea was that what Walter called them was right enough. There were some beautiful silver-greys, too.

Having satisfied the curiosity of the passengers, Walter and George began packing them up again. All had retired, except the one man who was so interested in them, and now he asked Walter what they intended to do with them. "Oh! sell them, of course," Walter replied. "No doubt we can dispose of them in Montreal, and they should fetch a good sum, don't you think?"

"Do you know their value? Have you settled on a price for them?" asked this gentleman.

"We do not know their *real* value," answered Walter. "Do you? I have had some experience in Ontario, and I know what I could get there, and we should get more in Montreal; but we are open to an offer."

"Well," said his interlocutor, "I happen to know a very great deal about furs—few know more than I do; I'm in business in London, and I deal principally in furs; my name is —, and I'm visiting Canada to

try to find a very special lot for some great people, clients of mine. Now, some of those you have are exactly what I want; will you sell to me, or would you prefer to wait till you get to Montreal?"

"Perhaps you will give us a better price than they will there," said Walter.

"There's but little doubt about that," answered the fur-merchant with a smile. "But come, let us go to my room and discuss the matter there." So the three Anticostis went with him.

First they were asked for a list of what they had, which they, having fortunately made out, handed to him.

He looked it over, pondered it carefully, then pencilled a price against each lot. He took some time at this. Then he handed it to Walter, who looked at the figures, then at the writer, then at the figures again; he flushed up, but did not speak. He, too, was some time examining the paper. Then he handed it to George, who in his turn raised his eyebrows, turned red and white, and handed it to Sid, who went through much the same performance, whilst the fur-buyer, as we must call him, sat there smiling.

Sid opened his mouth to speak, but shut it again without uttering a syllable, and George did as Sid did!

Then—"Is this a joke?" asked Walter; "do you really mean that you will give us this sum for our furs?"

"Certain y—most certainly I will," he answered without hesitation. "I'll give you my cheque for it now. The captain of this ship knows me, he'll tell you it's all right. You can get it cashed at the Bank of Toronto in Montreal on our arrival there. I certainly do not think any one in Canada will pay you so good a price. But I know what such furs as yours are worth—to me, at any rate—and I desire to act honourably with you."

The boys and Walter regarded one another for some moments in amazement, for this is the list, with the figures their new acquaintance had placed against the items. No wonder they were staggered!

6 Bear skins at \$10	\$60	50 Mink skins at \$3	\$150
40 Seal . " 1	40	30 Stone Marten,, 2	60
72 Red fox " 1	72	25 Pine Marten ,, 3	75
24 Silver fox ,, 500	12,000	6 Otter . " 12	72
10 Black fox ,, 600	6,000	20 Fisher (Pekans) 20	400
			<u>\$18,929</u>

or say, £3,785.*

"Well—what do you say? Is it a bargain?" asked the fur-merchant seriously.

"Oh! we are agreed—are we not, boys?" asked Walter, with a strange expression and tone of voice, and both George and Sid stammered as they replied, "Oh! certainly—of course."

* These prices may surprise the reader, but much larger are often paid in England, and larger still, we believe, in other countries, for the best furs. In 1899 a silver fox skin sold at a London sale for £340.

Then the purchaser took them to the captain's room, and drew the cheque in his presence, asking him to assure them that it was all right, and this the captain did, declaring with a hearty laugh that he only wished he had a couple like it, then he would go to sea no more.

So the furs were sold!

Then our three retired to a quiet corner to talk it over, and their wonder grew greater as they conversed, for it was hard to believe in their good fortune. Earning a thousand pounds each in one winter was splendid. They really felt well repaid for all their hardships, and they said once more that if they were but sure that their people had not suffered and were well, they should consider all had happened most fortunately, and that it was just providential that they had been Anticosti Crusoes. Moreover they were very thankful that God had arranged for this fur-buyer to be upon the *Parmesian*. They recognized this as one more evidence of their Heavenly Father's care for them, and so felt confidence that He in His great goodness would cause all to end well.

They arranged without delay, and without discussion, that the odd £700 should be Gabrielle's. The interest on it would educate her, and the capital would be a nice little dowry for her.

What greatly surprised them was the high price they had received for these skins; they had no idea that furs were anything like so valuable—few

people have, especially in the Canadian back-woods. What profits the dealers must make, they considered, and those who buy direct from Indians and trappers! Also what deception there must be somewhere, for they knew a mink or marten muff, for instance, or even a so-called black fox one, can be bought in London or Montreal for a small sum. They were sure now that such could only be imitation, or else he who had bought their furs was mad. But perhaps, they concluded—and they were right—those they had taken were exceptionally fine specimens.

All that day our three and Gabrielle were surrounded by interested groups, who ceaselessly questioned them. The *Parmesian* was going ahead full speed, and that evening she made Father Point, the pilot station.

Here she was delayed an hour whilst the mails and a few passengers were taken ashore by a tug to go on by rail. Here too the purser sent off a short account of the people they had taken off Anticosti, and this was telegraphed to Quebec and Montreal and published in "extras" throughout Canada. Curiously no names were mentioned.

At noon next day Quebec was reached, and the ship lay at the Allan Wharf at Point Levis to discharge her passengers. Crossing to Quebec our friends supplied themselves with what clothing they required; one of the ladies saw to Gabrielle's needs. They were kindly supplied with the cash they wanted by the captain.

It was the first time Gabrielle had seen a town ; so the city of Quebec, in its glorious position and its most picturesque surroundings, was such a revelation to her that one can hardly imagine her feelings. When they first came in sight of it, and when she crossed the river, and walked about its streets, the young thing was fairly appalled and terrified.

In Quebec they were naturally interviewed and questioned by newspaper people ; and full, and more than full accounts, of what they had done and suffered, were telegraphed to Montreal and to the world at large, and this time their names were given. George hoped, as did Sid, that in an hour or two all those they loved, everywhere, would know that they were safe.

George remembered that his mother seldom took an evening paper, but he hoped that some kind friend would read about him, and would convey the good news to them.

Naturally these Anticosti Crusoes now laid their plans. On arrival at Montreal, George and Sid proposed to cable instantly to England, whilst Walter would telegraph to Bracebridge. They would have their large cheque cashed, and the boys would draw the money lying at the bank for them ; then they would all go off to Walter's home, Gabrielle with them, of course, where he assured them of the warmest welcome. There they decided to wait till they heard from England in reply to the letters they would write. Their

idea was, that George's mother and Elneth would now come out to Canada and join them without delay, when they would all go out west to Manitoba, as had been designed ; where now, with the money which had so providentially come to them, they could make a very promising beginning indeed.

This was their programme when they left Quebec and travelled up the beautiful St. Lawrence in the *Parmesian* to Montreal.

It was noon on a bright, clear, exhilarating day when they came in sight of the fine city of Montreal. The rapidly-flowing river was alive with craft of all sorts and sizes, many of a kind quite new to our boys, to whom the sights and sounds were full of interest ; to Gabrielle it was simply a bewilderment.

Now, slowly the huge steam-ship drew to her wharf, which was crowded with people. The story of the rescue of the Anticosti Crusoes had got about. It was known they were on board, and numbers came to have a look at them, whilst many were there to welcome friends, or to witness the interesting incidents always to be seen on the arrival of a mail steamer.

As the *Parmesian* drew to her berth, so near that people could be recognized and heard, there was a continual outcry of greetings and rejoicings, of questions and answers, of jokes and badinage between those arriving and those upon the wharf. On board was a wife who had been visiting her parents in the old country ; her husband on shore was shouting

endearments to her, and she was asking him about her children and telling her doings. Here was a lass who had come out to be married. Her *fiancé* on the wharf was making loving signs to her. There were brothers calling to sisters, mothers to sons—ah! it was a lively scene, and to most an entirely joyful one. Anxieties, troubles, doubts, fears, forebodings of evil, were all forgotten for awhile, as the long-divided were united, the long-absent had returned; and only those new-comers, strangers to Canada, were regarding the scene with perplexity and seriousness.

Our party stood apart; they watched all that went on, looked at the enthusiasm displayed around them, listened to the outcries of joy and recognition, and were envious.

George, having no personal interest in what was going on (as he supposed), stood behind those gathered along the ship's side. When she was very close in, and preparations were being made to pass a gangway, he stepped entirely clear of the crowd, and as he did so he noticed three persons also standing apart from the press on shore. There was an elderly lady, supported by a young one, and a gentleman in a uniform similar to that of the commander of the *Parmesian*.

George noticed them only slightly, merely because the man and the young lady were waving frantically with their disengaged hands, whilst the lady they were supporting seemed to be in some distress.

To whom could they be waving so wildly? he wondered. He looked at those about him, but no one seemed to recognize them; then as he stepped back to give some chance for others to see and be seen, he suddenly realized that his name was being shouted. "George Young! George Young!"

This caused him to look again at those three upon the wharf, at whom he had so carelessly glanced before. He looked, and this time what he saw so amazed, so astounded him, that he thought he must be mad. He called to Sid breathlessly.

"Sid," he whispered, "who—who is that? Who calls me? Am I in my senses? am I mad? What does it mean?"

Sid looked eagerly. He at once recognized the three ashore. "Why, it's Balfe!" he exclaimed, "Balfe of the *Duke of Cornwall*, you know, and—why, that's your mother, and your sister! Say, man, don't you know it is?"

Oh! yes; George saw it, knew it, right enough; he had realized it the moment he heard his name called, but he could hardly believe his eyes. He could neither shout a reply nor move; he just held on to the rail, pale, almost fainting with surprise and emotion.

It is impossible to relate what occurred during the following few minutes—how Balfe leapt on board the *Parmesian* the moment it was possible to do so, and rushing up to George greeted him warmly, with such surprising vehemence, that he was perplexed

and puzzled; how Sid was the first ashore, and, running eagerly up to Mrs. Young and Elneth, was received by them with open arms, and every token of joy and gladness; and then when Balfe had helped George on land, for the lad was so much overcome that he could but just stand, how quickly he was enfolded in his mother's arms and Elneth's.

What is the use of trying to describe all this, to tell the questions which were asked, the answers given—to recount how George's mother and sister embraced him again and again, and how they thanked God ceaselessly for His great goodness to them? It was indeed an affecting, a never-to-be-forgotten event with all of them.

And Gabrielle was brought to Mrs. Young, and a few words of her history were told; the good lady took to her, and Elneth kissed her so affectionately that the poor child was at once in an ecstasy of joy, for she had her wish—she was with George's mother.

With Balfe's influence their baggage was speedily got from the hold and cabins, and as quickly passed through the Customs; then in a hack they were soon at St. Lawrence Hall, and welcomed by Mr. Hogan, who knew their story. We can imagine the joy and thankfulness with which that afternoon and evening were passed by every one of them.

One of the first questions George whispered to his mother was about Balfe. What was he doing there?

How was it that he was on such very familiar terms with them? What did it mean?

The explanation was given, and George was satisfied from what his mother told him that all was well. Then he had to hear why they had come to Canada. In fact, from the time they began to talk until well on in the night there was no cessation of questions, answers, explanations, and narratives.

Gabrielle was in such an excited state during all this time that it was curious to observe her. She had a large share of the attention of Mrs. Young and her daughter, who had already declared that with them she must remain, at least till her father was found; she had taken to Elbeth at once, sat close to her, watched her every word and action, and it was evident that she was not the least happy of this joyful party.

Now fresh plans had to be laid. Walter must go to his home in Muskoka at once; the others, it was soon decided, should go to Toronto to stay awhile with Balfe's parents, and then after a short visit to Ingersoll, they too were to go to Muskoka, where a grand council would be held, and their future movements definitely settled.

In the meantime the Anticosti Crusoes, as every one called them, were made quite famous. Out of what they narrated during the very few and short interviews they gave pressmen, stories were constructed which were told through the length and

breadth of Canada, of the United States, and probably of Europe. Wild stories many were, based on truth certainly; much, oh! very much, simply imagination, but the papers sold, to be heard, like "hot cakes"! They were a nine-days' wonder, these friends of ours.

The day following their arrival in Montreal the banks were visited, and all business of that kind settled. Then they called at the Hudson's Bay offices to inquire about an agent of the company north of Anticosti whose name was Fraser.

But no one of that name was there then, nor ever had been! They told their story; Gabrielle, being with them, described, as best she could, where she had lived, but the officials could make nothing of it; they took much trouble, but there was no result.

The poor girl was greatly disappointed, but she talked sensibly about it, declaring that she would not give up hope. Some day she was sure she should find her father and Félix, that the good God who had done so much for her and her dear friends would not now forget to be gracious to her.

That evening Walter left for Bracebridge, and the rest of them went off the following evening by the C.P.R. for Toronto. Balfe's parents warmly welcomed their son's choice. To say that they were pleased with her is unnecessary. The rest of the party they received as honoured guests. There they all spent a week of great enjoyment; not one of them will ever

forget that visit to Toronto. Mrs. Young and her dear son were never apart, whilst Gabrielle and Sid were the best of companions.

At the week's end Balfe had to return to his ship, but not before he and Elneth had settled their future.

Then George, with his mother and sister and Gabrielle, went west to Ingersoll, and Sid went to stay with Walter until the grand council—the pow-wow, as he called it—in August should be held near where he lived, on Balfe's father's island on Lake Muskoka, to settle finally the future plans of all concerned.

CHAPTER XVI

MUSKOKA is a picturesque wilderness of ever-changing loveliness, pre-eminent in Canada for beauty. It lies along the east coast of Georgian Bay, Lake Huron, in Ontario. It contains numerous lakes, amongst which Muskoka, Rosseau and Joseph are the most important; they are connected, and have a continuous water-route of over fifty miles. There are very many smaller lakes, and few are without water communication with those named. This whole district is a natural game preserve, while the waters abound with black bass, maskinonge, lake and brook trout. The shores are generally thickly wooded with pine, cedar, balsam, fir, oak, birch and maple: and these lovely sheets of water are dotted with islands—some but bare rocks, and others grass-covered or forest-clad, but all beautiful. It being 500 feet above the level of Lake Ontario at Toronto, and 1000 feet above the sea, there is not that intense heat which prevails elsewhere in Eastern Canada in summer. The soft breezes carry the scents of pines, balsams, and wild flowers across the placid waters in which the plumed and tufted islands are mirrored, so that Muskoka is indeed an ideal resort.

Close to this lovely region was Walter Clifton's home, and near it on Lake Muskoka Balfe's father owned an island, on which he had built a beautiful summer home, large enough to accommodate all those in whom we are interested, who were gathered there in August.

Added to those we know already were Walter's parents—old English people, yet proud, now, to call themselves Canadians. Helen Hamilton was there also, the "Nell" of whom Walter had so often spoken; she was a bright and pretty girl. The hosts, Major and Mrs. Balfe, were English too, but had been long settled in fair Canada, whilst John, his two younger brothers, and his sister Bertha, were all born there.

Gabrielle was an immense favourite with them all; she and Bertha were the greatest friends. All these had been there a week, the young ones fishing, canoeing and having a glorious time.

This gathering was timed to suit John Balfe, whose ship was in Montreal, and could be left for three days whilst he ran up to give his views on matters pending, and to see his parents and his love.

He was to arrive by the Grand Trunk train, at Muskoka Wharf, at noon, from Montreal; so Elneth had gone down the lake earlier by the steam-boat to meet him there, and they would return together by the same vessel to Beaumaris, a charming spot four miles from Belle Isle, the Balfes' island. Here they were met by all the others in canoes and skiffs, to be

carrier' home in procession. So with flags flying, ho' blowing, with songs and shouts, the captain and his sweetheart were conveyed to Belle Isle, and the party was complete.

That evening out on the lake the youngsters, with coloured lights, fireworks, guns, crackers, part-songs and jolly choruses, beating time with paddles, made the woods resound; and other parties, camped on islands near, joined in the fun, for all knew it was a joyous festival, a celebration of the return of wanderers and of their safety after perils of no common-order.

The following day was devoted to business. First it was decided that Muskoka offered many more inducements to George, his mother and Sid to settle in than did Manitoba. True, they themselves had not seen that part of Canada, but Walter and Major Balfe had, and their description of the scenery there (or want of it), the climate, and the way of life, assured them that now that they were able—thanks to the furs—to choose where they would live, they would not go there. Here in Muskoka they had friends—Walter and Nell had found a place near Bracebridge; Toronto was not very far away; and Montreal could be reached in little more than half a day. So the Manitoba idea was given up; besides, as all thought that farming in Muskoka was not the most lucrative occupation, or the most suitable for George and Sid, and the Major and the Cliftons and others who knew that

district well believed that there was a fine opening for a first-rate store there, that was determined upon to be our boys' business.

It is true that neither of these lads had the least experience in that line, but being clever, active, self-reliant fellows, which counts for very much in Canada, it was thought neither unwise nor unusual for them to enter into that occupation.

It was settled too, that day, that Elneth and Captain Balfé should be married in the fall. Their home was to be in Montreal.

And then the future of Gabrielle had to be arranged. She had been taken fully into Mrs. Young's warm heart ; her story, certainly, had some weight, but her personality had greater ; for she was a most lovable young thing, bidding fair to grow up, as the boys had sometimes thought she would, when they were on Anticosti, into a remarkably fine woman. She was now, as far as could be made out, twelve years old, the same age as Bertha Balfé ; she was learning every day, every hour of each day, and was quickly becoming as refined in her conversation and behaviour as most girls of her age. She rarely showed her origin, except in a far from unpleasant way ; she was expert with paddle, fishing-rod and gun, a fine swimmer, and in all out-door sports and pastimes she was an ideal Canadian girl. But she knew, young as she was, that there was a higher, a more cultured life that she must, if possible, attain to ; so when it was proposed that

she should join Bertha Balfe at the good school she attended in Toronto, she was indeed delighted.

Gabrielle had not forgotten her father and Félix. She often spoke very sorrowfully about them to those who knew her best, yet she had not given up hope of being found by them, or of discovering them. The Hudson Bay officials knew her story, and still continued to try to discover some clue to the mystery of it; and indeed by this time it was all that remained unsolved about the adventures of the Anticosti Crusoes. For now that they could examine maps George and Sid easily discovered how they went wrong off Gaspé that moonlight night. Currents and winds combined had caused them to drift at first into the Straits of Belle Isle, where another breeze from the north caught them, and carried them along the north coast of Anticosti, where they landed.

What they had seen to the north from their look-out was really the mainland of Canada, somewhere about Natashqua Point, they thought. The drift timber with which their shore was strewn came down the St. Lawrence; whilst the remains of the vessels they found are easily accounted for, it being a most dangerous coast, "which has been rich in wrecks and human suffering; and that hideous wilderness," says Eliot Warburton, "has been the grave of hundreds; by the slowest, ghastliest death they died, starvation!"

This, and many other descriptions of Anticosti

which our boys now had the chance to read, did not agree with their experiences, as we know. It is probable that where most of these disasters occurred was on the north-west coast of the island; there more desolation prevails, and there is little or none of the animal or vegetable life which our party found; and this caused them to feel intense gratitude to God for having cast their lot on so fertile and so well-supplied a part of that island.

The *Prairie Queen*, from which Walter Clifton came ashore, was carried by currents, during the fog, into her dangerous position; it was wonderful how she escaped destruction. Many cattle-ships have been wrecked during recent years on the coast of Anticosti; large numbers of beasts have managed to swim ashore, and this solves the mystery about the cattle our castaways came across.

Lighthouses exist at intervals along the southern coast. If our friends had been able to cross the island during summer they would doubtless have seen one, and been rescued. There are also a few shanties and houses along that shore used only as summer homes by fishermen.

Anticosti is about one hundred and forty miles long, and from thirty to thirty-five miles wide. That it will ever be settled or become the home of an agricultural community is hardly likely, whilst there is so much good land and far more promising places near, and much more easy of access all the year round than

this island can ever be. The climate alone is sufficient to deter any one from settling there permanently. Only fishermen in summer, and a few trappers in winter, will ever be found there.

But to return to the case of Gabrielle; she, being a sensible young person, made the best use of the opportunities for education and culture which had been providentially offered her. To Mrs. Young she was devoted; her holidays were to be spent with her, and when her school-time was over her permanent home was to be with her. As for George, we can only say that at this time he was, as he had been from the first, Gabrielle's special friend; she thought of him and behaved to him as if he were her brother in truth.

Near Port Carling, on the bank of Indian River, George and Sid had bought a piece of land for their store. It was in a most picturesque situation, on the highway, by water and road, between lakes Joseph and Rosseau. Late that autumn they had their house built, and the winter was passed in fitting up, getting in goods, and arranging for a large trade the following season.

Mrs. Young passed that winter at Ingersoll; Gabrielle was at school; Walter and Nell, married then, were at their own farm; but all, including Elneth and John, married two months before, met to pass Christmas at Major Balfe's in Toronto. Depend upon it, to the four who had passed that strange time on Anticosti, their former Christmas Day there was often

thought of and talked of, and Gabrielle's ideas about the glory of that festival the year before were greatly modified.

In spring, Messrs. Young and Croly commenced business at their new home. They called it "The Anticosti Store." Mrs. Young kept house for them.

* * * * *

A party of French Canadian habitants passed through Port Carling a year or two after George and Sid had settled there. They had been lumbering up in Lake Nipissing region. George was talking to them about their homes and such matters, and understanding that some of them knew Anticosti and the mainland to the north, he questioned them about Gabrielle's father, but not knowing his name was the great difficulty. There appeared to be any number of girls with her name; every member of this party—there were a dozen of them—knew a Gabrielle! George was about to give the matter up when it struck him to ask if they knew the schooner which belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company, in which an official travelled named Fraser. No one knew that person, but all knew the vessel well.

These men were talking it over amongst themselves, when George heard one mention Monsieur Fraise. He tackled him at once. "What did you say? Do you know Monsieur Fraise?" he eagerly asked, and the fellow said he did—every one in those parts knew him, as well as they did his schooner.

Here then was a clue at last! "You say his name is Fraise—not Fraser, then?" quoth George.

"Nay, nay. Dat was not his name," the habitant explained; "dat is jus' de nam' we mak' for 'im. He was askin' all de tam when he com' for de fraises, de strawberries—les fraises sauvages—you onderstand; so we call him Monsieur Fraise. His true name—oh, it was trop difficile, too longue, we could not hallways mind hit; no."

"Don't any of you remember it, then?" asked George. "What was it like?"

The habitants consulted together, then one of them said it sounded like "Dackarée," and that is all he could get from these men, who soon after went on their way.

George pondered deeply on this incident. "Dackarée, Dackarée," he muttered again and again for a day or two. Then an idea struck him and he wrote to Montreal, telling what he had heard, and suggested that "Dackarée" might be Thackeray.

Very soon he heard. There was such an official, and his sphere of work had been for some years between the Seven Islands and Esquimaux River, on the coast north of Anticosti, but now he was transferred to Winnipeg.

At once George wrote there to him, telling their story and Gabrielle's. Without delay he heard from Mr. Thackeray, who said that Pierre Lamont was the man to whom the incidents had happened which

George had related; that he well remembered his girl Gabrielle, whose mother was a squaw. She was supposed to have been lost with a man named Gilbert in her father's boat *La Mouette*, on the north coast of Anticosti somewhere. Lamont and his son Félix had escaped—he did not quite remember by what means, but they were safe and well. He spoke highly of Lamont, and said that he had been promoted, and was working for his company at Chapleau, on the C.P.R., where they had a store, and his son was with him, a very promising lad.

So Gabrielle was a half-bred Indian; they had always surmised this to be the case.

Now, what should be done? Major Balfe was conferred with, and all their friends were consulted as to what was wise to do.

Gabrielle was growing into an accomplished, refined young lady; she was very happy. Was it well to bring her father and brother into her life? They might be very good fellows, for their station; but was it well to bring them to her knowledge until she was old enough to judge wisely about her duty to them? Her ideas had been so much enlarged since she parted from them; her habits, her thoughts, must be now so different from theirs; would it not be a pity to upset all this, for the present, anyway?

Major Balfe's opinion was that their first duty was to ascertain positively the sort of man Pierre Lamont was really. Some one ought to see him. There was

no hurry, but he suggested that during the coming winter, when trade was slack, George should go to Chapleau, which is not a great way from Toronto, and see for himself. This is how they settled it then.

In the meantime, Gabrielle La Mouette, as she had been named, with her full consent, was progressing with her studies, and proving herself to be well worthy of the love that all had acquired for her. George was still her dearest friend, and he, as time went by, was more and more devoted to her.

Early the next year George journeyed to Chapleau. Making the excuse of a purchase at the store there he discovered that Félix Lamont was employed in the office. He saw him, talked to him, and found him to be a respectable youth, seemingly fairly educated. He impressed George favourably; he was the image of his sister. Then he managed to make the acquaintance of his father, who was a sort of foreman in the big warehouse. He was a perfect Frenchman, but spoke fair French-Canadian English, though certainly he was quite an uneducated man; yet George liked him.

There was no time to lose, so George invited Lamont to his hotel, making him understand that he had a story to tell him. This he had hardly started to tell, Lamont listening intently, before the good fellow exclaimed rapturously that he knew his "leetle gal" was alive, and that George had come to tell him so. He was greatly excited, and had hardly patience to

hear all particulars about her. It did not really need that George should tell him about the brooch which Gabrielle always wore ; he was already satisfied, quite sure, she was his girl.

With difficulty George persuaded him to tell his own story, which was enthralling ; but by degrees he made out that he and his son, the day of the wreck, left the big boat anchored, with Gilbert, Gabrielle, and the dog on board, whilst they went to find their way into the cove he had been in years before. It was blowing hard, but they found it, and were returning to bring the vessel into safety, when a very heavy squall arose and they were horrified to see that she had broken adrift, that her sail had been set, and Gilbert was endeavouring to head out to sea. They themselves had all they could do to keep afloat, and amidst this turmoil they were horrified to note that Gilbert had lost control of *La Mouette*, and that she was driving ashore, where they knew there was no hope for her.

Paralyzed with this catastrophe, they appeared to have forgotten their own precarious position ; the heavy seas and wind overcame them ; they were driven to the eastward, and finally thrown amongst the breakers ; their little boat was crushed to pieces under them, and they reached the shore more dead than alive.

But they had seen their big boat wrecked ! In the midst of their own terrible fight for life, they had been

horrified to see her driven on, on, to her doom ; on, till she struck, and then, as they believed, the awful seas overwhelmed her!

He explained that he and Félix were so disabled that they lay all night on the beach where they had been thrown ; in the morning they crept along to the place where they considered the big boat had come ashore, and found no vestige of her. Dismayed, half mad with grief, not doubting that his daughter, Gilbert, and all they possessed had vanished, they thought at last of their own condition.

Lamont said he knew well enough where they were ; so having found their gun and ammunition and tomahawk unhurt in the remains of their little boat, and finding his bottle of matches intact in his coat pocket, he and his boy made the best of their way across the island to South Point, where he knew the lighthouse stood. They made the journey safely, and there found some fishermen just returning to a place he knew not far from La Crique at Cape Whittle, where he lived, where his boy and girl were born, and where his wife died.

Subsequently, through the good offices of Mr. Thackeray, he had been removed with Félix to a better place, where there were more people and a school, and there his son had learned a great deal, so much indeed, that when they were moved to where George found them, Félix had got a good berth in this store, and they were both prospering.

This was the story. Now what about Gabrielle? What was their idea about her? Lamont was naturally eager to see his daughter, as eager as his son was to see his sister. George told Lamont about her, said she was at school, described her, explained that she was growing up a lady, and hinted that she was quite different from ordinary women.

Lamont seemed to understand, yet George could clearly see that he was reckoning to have his daughter with him, and would not otherwise be content.

At length, and after much thinking, George decided that, if possible, he would take these two back with him to Port Carling and let the future decide. This he was able to do, and so in a couple of days they reached the Anticosti store. By telegraphing, and arranging with Major Balfe, he and his wife brought Gabrielle to Port Carling. She was prepared for the meeting.

It is difficult to describe their coming together. The longed-for time arrived, and it was a sad disappointment. They met as strangers, naturally; it took some time before they were able to realize their relationship—they never did perfectly—not Gabrielle and her father. She endeavoured to show affection for him, and would soon have succeeded, it was thought, but the trouble was with him. He could not understand that this elegant and beautiful young lady was his daughter; he appeared to be afraid of her. He

told George so, and by and by added that he could not interfere with her life, that he could see it was best for her to keep on as she was, that it would be a failure if he took her to him.

It was a great grief to Gabrielle, but she seemed to recognize the position, too; she quite understood that having been led into this cultured life she could never successfully step back into her father's; whilst he clearly saw that his happiness and comfort could never be very great if he had her to live with him, for she could not enter into his thoughts or take pleasure in his ways.

With Félix it was very different; he and his sister became quickly deeply interested in each other. He had a love for learning, had already made great strides, and really promised to grow to a refined and cultivated man. All our friends liked him and sincerely wished that his father had been more in his style. But wishing was useless, whilst not a word could be said against Pierre Lamont, who appeared to be an honest, God-fearing man—yet it was soon acknowledged that his decision about his daughter was wise, and fortunately she acquiesced in it.

Félix was offered employment at the store at Port Carling, which he gladly accepted, very greatly to his sister's joy—to his father's, too, who before he went back to his work at Chapleau assured Mrs. Young that he was a very happy and a very thankful man, adding, "A proud man halso, to be de fader

of two young ones, si comme il faut, has Félix an' Gabrielle."

* * * * *

Six years have passed since that eventful day on which George Young, Sidney Croly, Walter Clifton, and Gabrielle Lamont were taken off Anticosti in the Allan liner *Parmesian*. Every year since, all those interested had gathered at Belle Isle to pass the anniversary of the day in commemoration.

On this particular occasion all had arrived but Gabrielle and Bertha, who were coming from Toronto, and the boat from Muskoka wharf was to touch at Belle Isle to land them.

She was in sight. All were gathered at the landing—all but George! Flags were flying, garlands were hanging from the trees, and an archway of flowers had been erected at the landing-stage, for it was a day of extra interest this year.

The two girls, each now eighteen, were coming home for good; their school-days were over.

How was it George was not there to welcome them? Strange, every one thought it, very strange. Elneth and her mother stood together looking anxiously along the path leading to the house. "He does not come," whispered the daughter to the mother; "is it not strange? What has come to him? I should have thought he would have been the very first to welcome Gabrielle. Do you understand? Is anything wrong, mother?"

"Oh, yes—I know!" Mrs. Young answered, smiling. "At least, I think I do. George is not himself, he is worrying about her, that's the explanation. Of course you know he is very fond of her, as she is of him, but the silly boy does not think so. She did not come to Port Carling for Christmas, but passed the holidays with the Balfes at Toronto; there was much gaiety there and she wrote a great deal about it, so, if you please, George has taken up the notion that she will not care to give up the gay life to live in a quiet place like ours. It is not so, I'm sure, but that's how he looks at it."

"What are his ideas about her Indian blood? does that trouble him?" asked Elneth.

"No—not the least bit in the world, nor does it affect my opinion of her. I'll welcome her as a daughter. I have faith in her."

"It is a year since I saw her. Has she grown so pretty?"

"Pretty is hardly the word; she is a beautiful young woman, and as good as she is beautiful; so I think, and so does George, I know. But here comes the boat—there she is, and there is Bertha! Oh, how I wish George had not gone off like this and hidden himself! But come." And the two ran down to the little jetty hand in hand, and very soon both the girls were being folded to their hearts, whilst the young Balfes and other youngsters, and the old ones too hardly dared shake hands with the dainty damsels.

An hour after, they were gathered under the shady verandah, in rocking-chairs, swing-chairs, and hammocks, and were enjoying the sweet air and quietness—all but Gabrielle, who was clearly uneasy and troubled. At last with a rosy blush she asked, "Where is George? Why is he not here, then?"

No one replied. But after a few minutes Mrs. Young led her down beside the lake. "George is here, somewhere on the island," she told her. "He is troubled about something. If I were you I would go and talk to him."

The two stopped and gazed at each other intently. There was an eager look in the girl's eyes as she asked, "Would you? Do you wish me to?"

"Yes—yes, with all my heart!" exclaimed Mrs. Young earnestly. "Go—go, my child, and find my son, and oh, may God bless you!"

* * * * *

On a mossy knoll, as distant from the house as possible, George sat with his back against a tree, his knees drawn to his chin, his hands clasped round them. He had been there for an hour, brooding—miserable.

Before him lay the shining lake; a little round wooded islet was floating on the tide; beyond were others, covered with lofty pines and cedars. Many a time he and Gabrielle had sauntered along the lakeside here, happy and gay. He was thinking of this, and regretting that it was all past and done

with, that there would be no more such delights for him.

And why not? Because the foolish fellow imagined that the quiet spot in which his lot was cast was distasteful to her he loved so well. He had not seen her for a year, and he had not heard that she had expressed any wish to see him. She did not join the Christmas gathering because—as he said to himself—“she wishes to put an end to all between us, because amongst the gayer, livelier fellows in Toronto she has found some one she prefers to me.” This was what was grieving him so sorely, and causing him to act so strangely. But that is what he thought, and at that time believed. He was thoroughly cast down, for he loved Gabrielle ardently, and for long believed that she loved him. Nothing had been really said, but for two years at least they had acted, and as he supposed thought, that all was understood.

He heard the hooting of the steamer which he knew had brought her to Belle Isle, and he declared—to himself—that he did not care; he was quite reckless.

It was an hour since the steamer's noise had reverberated along the water. It was very quiet where he sat; only the buzzing of some flies, and the crickets in the ground were audible. After awhile a red squirrel chattered in a tree hard by, and away off in the distance a loon was calling.

He was gazing intently across the water, so absorbed

in his own reflections and sad thoughts that he did not heed the soft footfalls that drew nearer, nearer along the soft moss path. He should have done so; he ought to have noticed the "chip and churr" of a chipmunk—a ground squirrel—as it scurried to its burrow, a sure signal to all the world that some one was passing by. But George took no heed, and yet within a few yards of him, now, was a sight to do eyes good, a vision of such beauty it is not given to poor men often to see.

A tall and graceful girl it was, dressed in some light-flowing stuff, with a broad hat picturesquely poised upon her head. But how can one describe her? She had still abundant hair, now braided and properly disposed; she had still the big black eyes, but they were filled now with intelligence and love; she had still the same sweet mouth and rows of pearl-like teeth, and now her red lips were parted, and she was gazing at poor unhappy George with a radiant and bewitching smile.

She stood there some minutes, then she made a slight sound, and George looked round sharply, and there before him stood his darling with her little hands outstretched, a yearning look upon her face, a smile upon her lips, and love-light in her eyes. She merely said softly to him, "Why, George! why, George!"

It was enough, his eyes were opened. He came to her, he clasped her to his heart, and he pressed his lips to hers—yes, to her willing lips.

“At last, my love, at last!” was all he said, then he took her hand in his and led her up the island pathway to the place where all the party were—he led her to his mother, put Gabrielle’s hand in hers, and merely said, “This is your daughter, mother!”

* * * * *

Sid Croly declares he shall remain a bachelor, but there are so many charming Canadian girls come up Muskoka way in summer, to say nothing of Bertha Balfe, who is a great chum of his, that it will be strange indeed if one of them does not captivate him; and really he is worth catching, for he and George are doing well in business, and take a lead in those parts in all good things.

And thus ends the story of the Anticosti Crusoes.

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