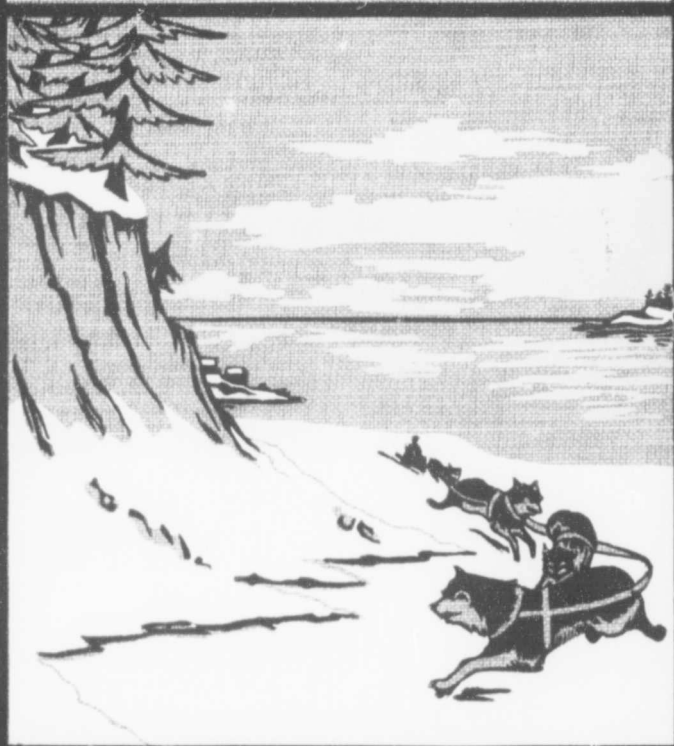


THE WANDERING
TWINS
A Story of Labrador



By MARY BOURCHIER SANFORD



THE WANDERING TWINS







“‘Can’t you tell me where Mr. Donald Stewart is?’”

THE
WANDERING TWINS

A STORY OF LABRADOR

BY
MARY BOURCHIER SANFORD

*With eight Illustrations by
H. C. Ireland*



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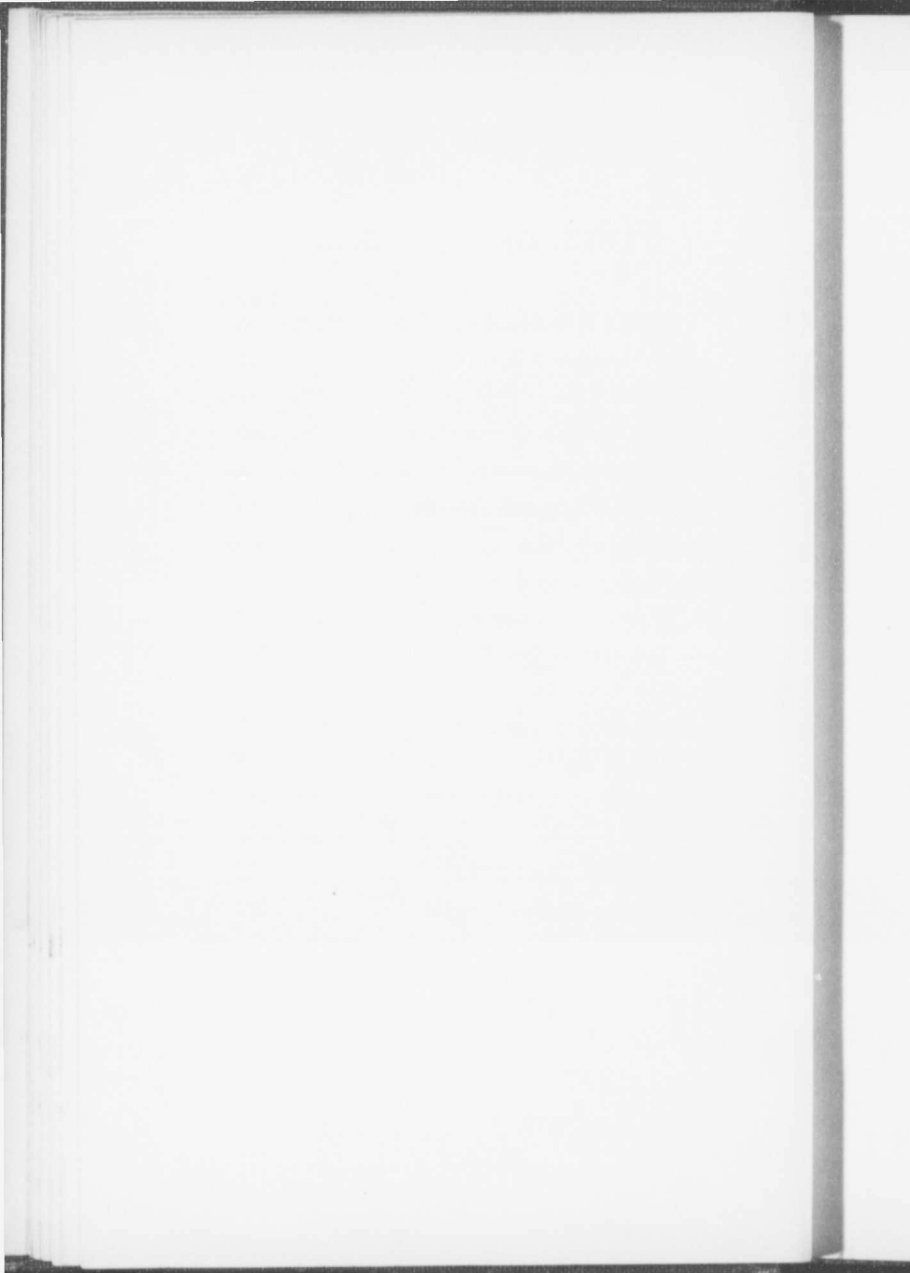
E. H. AND M. H.

DEAR FRIENDS FROM LABRADOR



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The Wandering Twins

*THE ADVENTURES OF TWO CHILDREN
IN LABRADOR*

I

WHERE IS FATHER?

THE little vessel, carrying a gang of fisher folk from Newfoundland to Labrador, tossed and rolled on a stormy sea. The women and girls were stowed in the hold, hatches were battened down, and food was passed to the prisoners through a hole in the cabin roof. But no one had any appetite for the coarse fare; the crowding and lack of ventilation had overcome even those who were accustomed to rough voyages. When the storm abated, the released captives crawled on deck. The fog had begun to clear, and the desolate shore had become visible.

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A fair-haired girl in mourning moved away from her late companions and sat on the deck beside her brother, for chairs were not provided. The two leaned wearily against the railing and gazed landward. They saw a grim headland followed by stretches of precipice, which had been carved by the waves, blasted by frosts, into lofty halls and pillared arches. Water swept through the portals, spray dashed high upon the columns, and, glistening in the sunshine, fell back into the foam.

The boy was roused to interest. "Is n't that a jolly cavern, Rica?" he asked. "A man they call 'Slippery Jake' says that some buccaneers hid a treasure on this very coast hundreds of years ago. They had been driven far out of their course and wrecked; but some of them escaped from the sinking ship with plate and precious stones, doubloons and ingots. All but one died of starvation. That one got away on a raft and was picked up by the crew of a vessel. Before he died he told something about the cavern, but was too far gone to say

WHERE IS FATHER?

where it was. They searched, and others have searched. Jake believes he'll be the man to discover it, and he's going to take me with him. He thinks it's not many miles south of Wabistan."

"I'm rather afraid, Ivan," said the girl, doubtfully, "that Slippery Jake does not always tell the truth."

"About the cave he does, at least he means to. Of course there are lots of stories of treasure, and they can't all be true. It will be a lark to explore for it, anyway. Jake's not a bad sort. They call him 'Slippery' because he's so supple. He can wriggle in and out of all sorts of places where the others can't follow."

Ulrica did not answer. She had grown whiter, and swayed when she tried to sit upright.

"Brace up, Rica," said her brother encouragingly. "We'll get into calm water before long and then you'll be all right."

The vessel had passed beyond perpendicular cliffs to a series of sea slopes, smooth and monotonous. Ulrica remarked dolefully, "They

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say we are near Wabistan. I hope it does not look like this."

"I'm sure it does n't. Jake says there are high rocks there and some trees. I say, is n't it growing chilly? I wish the sun would show again. It was so bright a while ago, and now it feels like rain."

The sky had become overcast, and, as the vessel approached its destination, the coast appeared gray and dull. The little settlement named Wabistan was situated on the shores of a deep inlet. Its huts of logs with moss-filled chinks were perched irregularly on steep rocks. Slippery Jake joined Ivan and Ulrica, and pointed out three small houses which were occupied by French Canadian families.

"There ain't many o' the Frenchies so far north," he explained. "Mostly the white folks on this coast is called 'Livyeres.' Us Newfoundlanders is jest here fur the fishin' season, but Brulots, Charpentiers, an' Marbeufs stays right along, winter an' summer. I'd advise ye to stay with Charpentiers. The bunkhouse

WHERE IS FATHER?

where the fisher girls sleeps ain't fit fur a dainty lady, though after the way ye've roughed it on this boat ye may be able to stand anythin'."

Ulrica looked at him with a startled expression: "You have forgotten. We are going to our father. Has n't he a house here?"

Jake shuffled uneasily: "Ter be sure, I'd forgot fur the minnit. The prospec' o' goin' ashore alwuz mixes my idees. D'ye see them longish, ramshackle buildin's? That's where the fishermen puts up. There ain't much style about them, but these fellers that's been workin' in th' open air all day 'll sleep anywheres that they kin find room ter stretch themselves."

Ulrica had been peering into the motley groups of whites, Indians, and Esquimaux on the wharf. She turned and looked at her brother appealingly: "Ivan — I don't — see father."

"Maybe he did n't get yer letter," suggested Jake. "You mind I said there's never no reg'lar mail in these parts. You owned it wuz months since ye'd heard from him."

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"Oh, Ivy!" faltered Ulrica, laying a trembling hand on her brother's arm, "perhaps — he has gone away!"

"Now, don't get that in your head," said Ivan hurriedly. "He wrote that it was the best place he had seen in Labrador, and that he meant to stay. We'll send some one to look for him as soon as we get ashore. No, better still, we'll find his house and surprise him."

Slippery Jake, who had been leaning heavily on the railing, shook himself as if to throw off some thought that oppressed him, and walked down the deck whistling with unwonted vigor. His manner renewed Ulrica's fears; but she strove to make herself believe that her father was not far, and that trouble would be forgotten in the joy of meeting.

With the exception of Jake, the fishing crew of this vessel had not been at Wabistan. Ivan recalled uneasily that Jake had always evaded an answer to the question whether he had met Mr. Stewart, and had appeared embarrassed when the subject was mentioned. When the

WHERE IS FATHER?

young travellers crossed the gangplank, Jake followed them, watching, listening, yet hanging back a little, that he might not appear to intrude.

Ivan looked with interest at the crowd on the wharf. Though the air was bleak, the Indians were in scant attire. The Esquimaux were clad in wide garments of hairy skin, the long tails of the women's jackets distinguishing them from the coats of the men. Most of the men were above average height, while the women were short, stout, and flat-faced.

Ulrica gave no heed to the appearance of the people. She darted toward a man who seemed to hold a position of authority, and cried imploringly: "Can't you tell me where Mr. Donald Stewart is? We expected he would be here to meet us. He is our father."

"Stewart, Donald Stewart," repeated the fisherman. "I never heard mention of any one o' that name in these parts. When did he come?"

"More than a year ago. He wrote to us

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from this very place. We had a letter last Christmas. We knew we could not hear often, because there is no regular mail service."

"Are you sure you got the name o' the place right? I've been here since the end o' May, and stopped off for a spell last summer, and I have n't seen no strangers around. This is a small station, and we take partic'ler notice o' newcomers. Maybe he was not here in summer time. We'll ask one o' the steady residents. Hi! Jean Brulot! This young lady is lookin' fur a man by the name o' Stewart. Can you tell her anything?"

The Frenchman shook his head. "I know not de name. How 'e look, appair? Tell me; den I try for remembaire."

"He is like my brother and me; we are twins. His hair is only a little darker. He has blue eyes, a straight nose, and a fair moustache. He is forty years old, and is tall and straight, with square shoulders."

"Six feet one in his stockings," added Ivan.

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"I tink you mistak de place," said Jean Brulot. "Such man lak dat 'e never come here in de many year I live by Wabistan."

"No, no, we did not mistake," protested Ivan. "We wrote it and spelled it over and over. He said it is Indian for 'marten.'"

"Dat 's right. Eet do mean Indian of marten, for dey trap much many of dose marten in de wood back beyon'."

Ivan turned to his sister. Her face was white, and her eyes had a strange, fixed stare, as if they looked without seeing. "Rica!" he cried, in alarm. "Don't be like that. Don't give up."

At that moment a tall, dark youth, in blue overalls and blouse, darted toward the fainting girl and caught her in his arms. Women and children crowded about him, but he commanded them to make way, and strode with his burden to the nearest cottage.

"Jacques! Jacques Charpentier, give her to me!" cried Slippery Jake. "Ye' ain't got the strengt' ter carry her up that rock."

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Jacques's only answer was a quickening of pace.

The crowds followed, but Slippery Jake dispersed them at the entrance to the Charpentier cottage. "Git back, back ter yer work, every one o' ye. Let her be alone when she wakes t' her trouble. Exceptin' her brother an' Jacques himself, not one is to go in there. I'll watch outside an' carry the news ter ye when she's better." The man to whom Ulrica had first appealed came up and repeated the order, and the people moved away with reluctant steps.

Jacques, panting from his exertion, deposited his patient on a bunk that was built into the wall. He spoke hurriedly in French to a woman who was holding a babe in one arm, and employing the free hand in turning a fish in the frying-pan. The woman, in turn, addressed her children, and cleared them, with several snarling dogs, out of the cabin. Ivan, who had found some water, bent over his sister, bathed her face and hands, and tried to speak words of hope to her deaf ears.

WHERE IS FATHER?

When Jacques came to her side, he felt her pulse. "Have not the fear," he said reassuringly. "Soon will she wake again. But the sorrow, — then will it come back heavy on her heart."

Following his words, Ulrica gave a gasping sigh, and presently opened her eyes. Jacques moved to the other side of the room, and busied himself in infusing some tea and toasting scones.

"On the water it was rough; vairee sick she was, and nothing she did eat; this it will give her the little strength," he explained.

His mother thought fish would be more strengthening, but he shook his head.

"Not yet, so soon. From the fish she would now turn away; but the cakes, vairee hot, of the good brown in color, they are like what you call — *delicat*."

Ulrica had raised herself, and was resting weakly on her brother's arm.

Jacques darted to her side: "The *Mademoiselle*, does she desire to sit?" he inquired.

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“Yes,” she faltered; “near the door, where there is air.”

Jacques seized an easy-chair of Wabistan manufacture. Its back was covered with a soft feather pillow, and its seat was of woven deer-skin. He drew it to the bunk, and said gently, “If the Mademoiselle will me permit to assist her, with Monsieur, her brother, I will carry her in the chair to the door.”

Ulrica bent her head in acquiescence, and the two boys conveyed her to a spot where the breezes blew upon her.

“The house, so many people it does contain, so little there is of room, the air it cannot be of purity,” remarked Jacques apologetically. “Some place we must find for the Mademoiselle where she may have the quiet and — the better air.”

“You are — very kind,” quivered Ulrica. “We — don’t — know where to go.” She covered her face with her hands: “Oh, father, father!” she wailed. “Where are you? Ivan, perhaps, perhaps — he is — dead!”

WHERE IS FATHER?

She broke into convulsive sobbing, and Ivan stood by helpless. His heart was sore, but her weeping embarrassed him. He did not know what to do or say.

Jacques understood better. "Ask her not to cease the cry," he advised. "It will make less the pain at the heart. It is the way with the woman; also sometimes — with the man too."

He returned to the stove, and presently, when Ulrica's sobs had become softer, he carried to her the hot, toasted scones, and something steaming in a cup.

"It is not the tea you know," he explained. "Of that we have not any. This is the tea of Labrador, and we believe it gives refreshment. When you have eaten, when something of strength does return to you, something of hope may come also with it."

He stood for a while watching her, urging her to eat and drink, and smiled with pleasure when a faint color rose in her pale cheeks. Presently he turned to Ivan: "I leave you now

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with Mademoiselle in the care of my mother. I will speak with the men, especially with him they name Robins. While Monsieur Sinclair, the agent, remains absent, Monsieur Robins takes the charge. He it was who spoke with Mademoiselle. We will seek some cabin where you may live. It may be one is —” he sought for the word, “one is — what you call — unvacat — not occupi.”

Ivan caught his hand. “You’re awfully good. I don’t know what we should have done without you. I’ll be thankful if you can find a place for us, — a place where my sister can be alone for a while.”

Jacques flushed at the expression of gratitude. “Soon will I return,” he promised. “While I am gone, my mother, she will do for you all that her possibility is. She speaks not the so plain English, but she much does understand.”

When her son had left the house, Mrs. Charpentier carried her infant to the stranger, and tied him in a high chair beside her. “De bapee, Henri, ’e mak her some amuse. ’E mak

WHERE IS FATHER?

her dat she tink not so much sorry," she explained to Ivan.

"Thank you," replied Ivan cordially. "My sister is fond of kids, and this is a jolly one."

Henri was a brown-skinned, handsome child, who had never known shyness. He investigated his new companion with interest, and crowed with delight as he patted her waving hair.

"I say, Henri, you're a model young one," remarked Ivan, shaking the child's finger. "Most chicks of your size would have pulled that hair. Was your big brother Jacques like you when he was small?"

Ulrica was dangling her watch for her playmate, when the children whom Jacques had sent away took the opportunity of his absence to return. They were bright-eyed and rosy-cheeked, and though the June day was chilly, their clothing was scant and their feet were bare. They stood against the wall, gazing timidly at the newcomers, until one took courage to move to Ulrica's side and lay some shells on her lap. Another followed with a collection of bright-

THE WANDERING TWINS

colored stones, and a third contributed a bunch of fragrant flowers.

"You are very kind," said Ulrica gratefully. "See, Ivan, how lovely the flowers are. When I saw the dreary-looking rocks, I thought nothing could grow on them."

"They're ripping," agreed Ivan. "Where did you get them, little girl?"

The child appeared perplexed for a moment, and then explained that she had found the blossoms in a valley where berries would soon be ripe. Presently a squaw with a papoose strapped to her back, and an Esquimau woman with a broad, flat-faced infant in the hood of her jacket, wandered in. The Esquimau baby was sucking the bright-red webbed foot of a bird; and her mother, observing the interest of the strangers, told them in broken English that her people often inflated the feet of a certain large bird and stuffed them with fat as a delicacy for the little ones. The cottage was crowded with curious visitors when Jacques returned, accompanied by Slippery Jake.

WHERE IS FATHER?

“Avaunt, vamousé — clear out, begone, ske-daddle!” cried Jake, waving his hands towards the door, and supplementing his order by seizing two children by the ears and marching them outward.

“Oh, you will hurt them!” protested Ulrica. “They did not mean any harm. They have been so good to us!”

“Don’t you worry,” replied Jake. “Their ears is tough. The youngsters is n’t afeard o’ me. We get along first rate.”

“It was certainly growing rather suffocating,” gasped Ulrica, as the uninvited guests took their departure.

“And now, Monsieur Ivan,” said Jacques, when the cottage was cleared, “if your sister you will here leave in the — the custody of my mother, we will you exhibit the place where you may abode, and you will us assist to make it preparation for Mademoiselle.”

“That’s jolly!” cried Ivan, who had become very restless. “I’ll be back soon, Rica, and take you to our own house.”

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He paused a moment as if uncertain, then stooped and kissed his sister. He objected to any demonstration in the presence of others; but Ulrica was lonely and miserable and his affection comforted her. With a reddening face he followed his companions from the door.

“She has no one but me now,” he said, as if apologizing for his action. “And — of course — she depends on me a good deal.”

Jacques looked at him wistfully: “You are happy, Monsieur Ivan, that it is so. I never had a sister.”

II

A MIDNIGHT EXIT

WHEN Ivan had followed his companions to a log building on the wharf, Jacques explained that it was the storehouse of the planter.

“Ye know fish’ry agents in these parts is called ‘planters,’” added Jake. “Mr. Robins give us the key, so ’s we could fit the place fur you to stop in till Mr. Sinclair gits back. ’Tain’t much ter boast uv in the way uv a house, but ye ’ll hev it all ter yerselves. We ’ll shove things up agin the wall ter make room fur movin’ about in.”

The two compartments of the building were crowded with bales, boxes, kegs, and heaps of miscellaneous articles,—such as scrap iron, broken glass, rusty tools, and bits of rope.

THE WANDERING TWINS

"We the pieces of everything must careful save," remarked Jacques. "No shop is here, no place of some kind whatever where one the goods may buy; thus is the house in much disordliness; no spot appair where you may sleep, may eat; but praisonly you will behold."

So saying, he set to work with vigor, pushing boxes and barrels more closely together, and piling scraps from the floor on top of the compacted mass. He set two long bales together, as a bed for Ulrica, in the inner room, and hastened to the cottage for a feather bed and pillows.

"All of entireness new is this," he explained, when he returned with two young brothers who had assisted him. "Achille, Pierre, quick make the hurry back now, and hither convey the soft pleasant chair for the service of the Mademoiselle Oolrike."

"I the habit make of English to them speak," he said, when the boys had departed in haste. "Otherwise, they remain with the French tongue

A MIDNIGHT EXIT

alone, and that, as I regret, they do not with much purity express."

Ivan's mouth twitched. The English of Jacques was unique, but he spoke more fluently than the other French Canadians at Wabistan.

In a short time a table, formed of two boxes covered with oil-cloth, was set with crockery of various patterns, and when Ulrica, leaning on her brother's arm, reached the storehouse, a substantial meal was ready. It consisted of fried fish, bread, Labrador tea, and a dish filled with amber-colored fruit of the appearance of raspberries, which Jacques said were preserved bake-apple-berries or cloudberryes.

"I guess we'll absquatulate now, an' leave the two o' ye ter yer own devices," suggested Jake, who was embarrassed by Ulrica's gratitude. "If there's anythin' lackin' in the furnishin' o' this sumpchus hotel, or if either o' ye happens ter feel scared in the night, jest blow a wild toot on this here horn, an' a hull regiment of us'll hie ter yer aid."

"Thank you very much," said Ulrica ear-

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nestly. "We shall not be afraid. Every one has been so kind. We feel we are among trusted friends."

Jacques bowed like a courtier, and remarked that the much graciousness of the words of Mademoiselle Oolrike made him the deep plaisir.

When Ivan accompanied the housecleaners to the door, Jake said in an undertone, "I mentioned 'bout the horn, case o' yer sister bein' nervous. The fisher folk is a rough lot mostly, but they 're honest, an' not one o' them kin git on a spree; fur 's long as Mr. Sinclair is boss there 's not a drop o' liquor ter be had fur love or money."

As soon as his assistants had departed, Ivan seated himself on a keg beside the improvised table. "The fish smells good, Rica," he observed, sniffing appreciatively.

"Indeed it does," agreed Ulrica. "A little while ago I was longing to get away from the odor of fish. The ship was fishy, the shore was fishier, and Mrs. Charpentier's little kitchen, with its low ceiling, was fishiest of all; but

A MIDNIGHT EXIT

now I'm hungry. You, poor boy, must be nearly starved."

"I do feel a void within; but I was able to eat a little on board, while you've had nothing for days. This is not such a bad sort of place, after all."

"If only — we knew where — father —" began Ulrica.

Ivan held up a warning finger. "Stop it, Rica," he commanded. "Don't let yourself think a thought, or say a word about that, or you'll break down again. To-morrow, when we've had a good sleep, we'll plan for some way to find him."

The color rose in Ulrica's face, and she turned to her brother with admiring eyes: "You are right, Ivy, we must not talk about it now. You seem years older than you were before — the trouble. Aunt Agatha said it had made a man of you."

Clouds were heavy in the sky, and darkness fell early. Ivan lighted two candles that stood in black bottles. Their flickering rays did not

THE WANDERING TWINS

reach the corners of the room, which, with its strange assortment of stores, appeared dim and weird. Ulrica gave a little shudder, but braced herself, and helped her brother to wash the dishes. This was no easy task, for the water was cold, and scraps of paper took the place of dish-cloths.

"We have no towels, no soap, no nothing," said Ivan rather dolefully. "Why didn't I think of getting the trunks here?"

"If we must stay in this house several days, we'd better have them moved early in the morning," suggested Ulrica. "I feel dreadfully grimy."

She checked a sigh. Not long ago she had lived in a well-appointed home, where a maid had prepared her daily bath. She had crossed the ocean in a fine vessel, and, unaware of the privations awaiting her, had embarked in the rough fishing boat, where a towel and a small tin basin were used in common by all the women on board. But she tried now to put away disquieting thoughts. She was tired and sleepy,

A MIDNIGHT EXIT

and, following Ivan's advice, she went early to rest on her bed of bales. She forgot her troubles in a sound sleep, but after a time she began to dream uneasily. She was on ship-board, imprisoned in the stuffy hold. A tempest was raging; waves thundered, wind roared, timbers creaked; the vessel gave a fearful lurch; the women shrieked that it was overturning, and, battering against the walls, implored that they might be freed. Water began to rush in; Ulrica felt herself suffocating, drowning, and was powerless to escape. She tried to scream for aid, but her voice failed her. Then she awoke.

At first she was bewildered and could not remember where she was. She put out her hand, touched a large barrel at her bedside, and became conscious of the situation. It was no dream that the building rocked in the clutch of the wind and that the waves dashed high. A gale had risen in the afternoon, and the fishermen had drawn in nets, and made preparations to guard against damage. The force of the

THE WANDERING TWINS

storm had increased, and Ulrica was terrified by the straining of the walls.

"Ivan!" she cried. "Ivan, wake up!" But Ivan did not move.

"I must shake him till he is roused," muttered Ulrica, "or we shall be buried in the ruins."

Fearing there might be rats in the storehouse, she had placed a candle and three precious matches near her bedside. She lighted the candle, guarding the flame with her hand, for wind blew through openings in the wall. Looking downward, she saw something glistening on the floor. It was the reflection of the light in water. Her shoes were saturated, and she drew them on with difficulty. When she had dressed in haste, she made her way into the adjoining room, moving warily to avoid a fall over bags or boxes.

"What is it?" asked Ivan drowsily, aroused by the glare of the candle on his eyelids.

"It's a storm, a fearful storm! This house will be washed into the sea, or blown to pieces!

A MIDNIGHT EXIT

If we don't get out at once it will be too late."

Ivan opened his eyes, sat up and listened.

"You're right! It knocks the spots off what we had on board! And they told us this was a sheltered bay!"

"What's that?" asked Ulrica. "I thought I heard voices; but it's hard to distinguish in this wind."

The next moment there was a thundering rap on the door.

"Who's there?" cried Ivan.

"It's me, Jake Tollin, with Jacques Charpentier," responded Slippery Jake. "We've come ter fetch y' out o' this. It's a hurricane, an' no mistake. A part o' the wharf's gone a'ready."

"We'll be ready in half a jiff," shouted Ivan. "Hurry, Ulrica."

As Ivan had adopted the time-saving methods of the fishermen, and thrown himself on the bed without undressing, only a few moments passed before he opened the door, when a puff of wind blew out both candles.

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"Tain't no use tryin' ter carry a lantern," said Jake. "All the men is workin' in the dark, tryin' ter save fishin' stage Number Two. Number One's all right; the rocky point that runs beyond it acts like a kind o' breakwater; but Number Two's not got much chancet."

A flash of lightning, followed by a peal of thunder that reverberated among the crags, illuminated for a moment the figures of the fishermen. Waves were dashing over them as they stood at the end of the "stage," — a long wharf extending far into the water. The flash was followed by blacker darkness. The shouts of the toilers were the only indication that human beings were abroad.

"We can't see a step before us," said Jake, "but Jacques and me knows the way. Ye'll hev ter link ter us an' let us guide ye. Ye need the strengt' uv our arms ter keep ye frum bein' blowed over."

Ivan put his arm through Jake's on one side and Ulrica's on the other. "Now, Rica," he

A MIDNIGHT EXIT

said, "Jacques will flank you on the left and we 'll march steady."

"If the Mademoiselle Oolrike will give me the so great honor," said Jacques, who preserved his politeness in the most trying situations.

"We 'll leave the pair o' ye at Brulot's cottage," remarked Jake Tollin. "It's in a sort o' hollow, sheltered some frum the wind. Jacques an' me 'll come back an' try ter save the things in the storehouse."

"I 'll be with you," declared Ivan. "I'm going to help as soon as my sister is in a safe place."

"Look out! Move slow!" said Jake warningly. "We're nearin' a spot where there's a break in the wharf. If we don't go over that purty gingerly, we 'll go under."

At that moment a gust nearly swept the four off their feet. They huddled together till it had passed.

"When we're safe over that hole we kin walk quicker," said Jake. "Look sharp now with the tips o' yer toes. Ye 'll have ter use

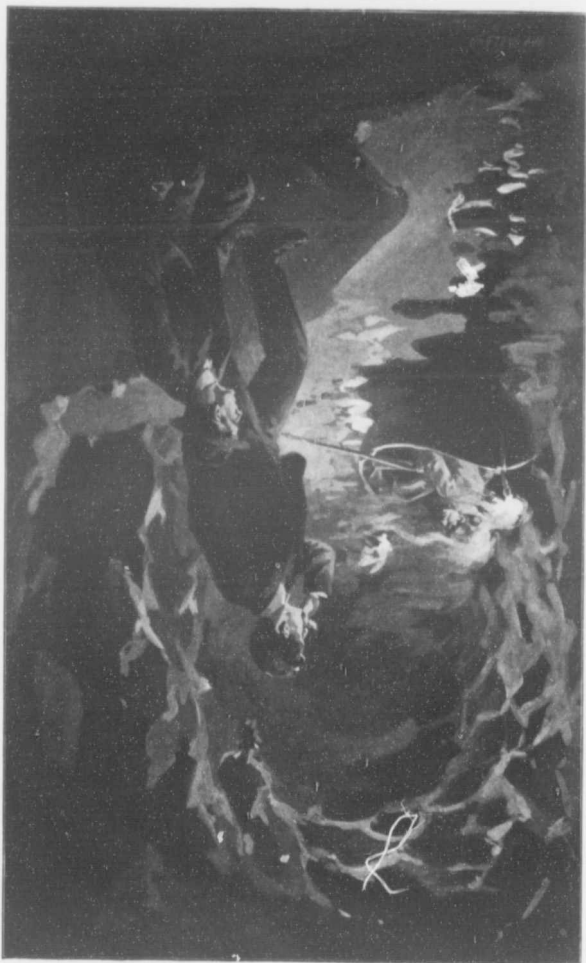
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them fur feelers. Here she is. I touched her with my forard foot. Now, pardners, I'll make a flyin' leap over her; she's a sizable gap; an' when I've got ter th' other side I'll tell yer what ter do."

So saying, he dropped Ivan's arm and jumped. Presently he sang out: "I've arrove all serene 'ceptin' a stubbed toe. Now, pardner Jacques, I've coiled a belt o' rope 'round me slender waist, an' I'll pitch one end ter you. When ye've fastened it tight ter Miss Ulrica, mighty sure, mind yer, let her jump fur all she's worth, an' with me pullin' on her at this end we'll land her safe. Don't be scaret, Miss Rica. We won't let a hair o' yer head come ter harm. Yer a light an' airy bein'; ye'll come floatin' over on the wings o' the wind as if 't wuz yer terry firmer."

"You need n't be afraid, Rica," said Ivan encouragingly. "You know you are a good jumper. You remember that creek we used to go over. Of course that was a run and jump, and we can't run here in the dark; but you'll

“They have come for us! We are saved!”



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A MIDNIGHT EXIT

get all right to the other side. Jake would n't ask you to do it if there was danger."

Ulrica's heart quaked, but she said nothing. She understood that the entire structure might soon be a wreck, and that her chance of safety lay in following directions.

"Have good courage, Mademoiselle Oolrike," said Jacques, when he had tied the rope securely. "I will cry, 'One, Two, Three, Away,' then will you jump as if you would reach the far side of the sea."

Jacques and Ivan cried the signal together, and Ulrica jumped. Jacques shivered with dread, but a moment later he heard Jake's voice: "Bravo! Bravo! She flew through the air with the greatest of ease,—just like the young man on the flying trapeze. Now, friend Ivan, Jacques 'll tie yer up and we 'll have yer over here in two shakes."

"Tie me up!" exclaimed Ivan indignantly. "Indeed, no. I'm going to jump it free and clear."

"Not while I'm runnin' this gang," declared

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Jake. "Ye come over wi' that rope round ye, or stay where ye are."

"He does speak with the wisdom, Monsieur Ivan," counselled Jacques. "You are aware not of the extent of the breakaway."

"Tie on," said Ivan reluctantly; "but I'm not such a kid as you think."

When he had crossed in safety, Jacques followed, and the four paused for a few moments before going further.

"Jiminy!" cried Jake, "that wuz a ticklish business! If I'd hev let yer know my feelin's yer 'd never hev reached this side. When I wuz landin' the young lady my knees wuz shakin' like I hed the palsy. It's a reg'lar gully, that spot; an' it want no use bringin' planks ter make a bridge, fur we ain't got no plank long 'nough."

"I knew you were nervous, Mr. Tollin," said Ulrica. "You were making jokes to keep up your spirits."

"Well, the worst is over now," replied Jake soberly. "Ye'll soon be safe in Brulot's cottage."

A MIDNIGHT EXIT

He had hardly uttered the words when a terrific crash sounded from the stage. Mingling with the noise of breaking wood came the shrieks of women and the shouts of men.

"The stage house! The roof of it has fallen!" cried Jacques in horror.

"Them waves hes beat down the underpinin'!" exclaimed Tollin. "I've been 'feard o' that right along. Jacques, yer must take the young lady ter Brulot's. I've got ter go an' help."

"I will follow you soon," said Jacques. "My brothers are there."

Tollin had run only a short distance when a flame shot upward, then ran along the stage and out upon the water. In its fierce light men and women appeared gesticulating frantically.

"It is the oil, the cod oil!" cried Jacques. "Hogsheads of it were stored the house within. One no doubt did break when the roof did fall, and some man a light held near."

"Mr. Charpentier, you must not stay with us, you must not," commanded Ulrica. "I know you are terribly anxious. Everything is

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brighter now than in daylight. We can easily find our way to the cottage."

"I thank you, Mademoiselle Oolrike. Monsieur Ivan will take you to Madame Brulot. For you the danger now is over, and much there is for the men to do."

Jacques hurried away with troubled heart. Perhaps many had been killed or injured by the falling timbers or the flames. If the fire should reach the other hogsheads the whole stage must go; but if that danger should be averted the oil now blazing would soon burn out. The wood was so wet from the washing of the waves that it would not readily ignite, and torrents of rain had begun to fall. The beacon lights in every cottage were unnecessary now. Rocky shore, sky, and sea were illumined by the burning oil. For a while the brother and sister stood watching, hoping that some one would come with tidings from the scene of peril. When they began to toil up the rocks, anxious women in the cabin doorways stopped them, and begged to know if any one had been hurt.

A MIDNIGHT EXIT

Ivan placed his sister in the care of Mrs. Brulot and hurried to the stage. Soon afterwards young Baptiste Brulot arrived at the cottage with the good news that no one had been seriously hurt, and that the fire would soon be under control. Ivan, who delighted in excitement, became so recklessly daring in his work that Robins, the acting superintendent, threatened to send him ashore unless he showed more prudence. Thereupon he developed exemplary caution, and contented himself with assisting the women to carry the partly cured fish to a place of safety, toiling with unflagging zeal till the last batch was under shelter.

III

FISHER FOLK

WHEN Jean Brulot and his sons came home at dawn, Mrs. Brulot told Ulrica in broken English that there was not a spare bed in the cottage, and that Marie would take her to the bunkhouse. The weary stranger knew that the two small rooms were crowded, yet it seemed hard that she must go out again in search of a resting-place. Accompanied by Marie Brulot and a neighbor, Pauline Marbeuf, she clambered over the rocks to the low-roofed building where the fisherwomen slept. A number of them had just come in, wet, tired, and irritable. They felt Ulrica's presence a restraint; she was not of their kind, and they could not talk freely before her. Several of them had been with her on the vessel from Newfoundland. They were honest

FISHER FOLK

and respectable, but illiterate and rough in speech and manner.

Ulrica perceived that she was unwelcome, and faltered: "There was no other place for me to stay. I'll try not to give you any trouble."

"Sure, honey, we're glad to share the little we have wid ye," said a rosy-cheeked Irish-woman; "an' you so wor-rrn out ye can hardly hould yer head up."

"Oh, thank you!" replied Ulrica, and her voice broke.

"There, there," said the friendly woman, "don't ye fret. Ye can have that spare bunk that's next mine. Sit ye down, fur ye're all av a trimble. Yer boots is wringin' wet, an' you not accustomed to roughin' it."

"She'd better get accustomed to it, then," remarked a girl with a surly face. "When we come over on the boat with her she put on airs and turned up her nose at everything. What's good enough fur us should be good enough fur her."

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"Nivir mind her, darlint," said the Irish-woman soothingly. "She has a sharrup tongue and an oogly timper. There's no love losth betwixt her an' the mosth av us."

There was a strong odor of fish about the woman's damp clothing, but Ulrica nestled to her. "I — did n't mean to put on airs. I tried not to — mind things. But it was all — so different."

"Dif'rent, yis, av coorse it wuz. 'T is aisy to see ye've been brought up widout workin', an' wid plinty av all ye wanted." She glanced at the girl's black dress. "Was it yer mither ye losth, honey?"

"No, my aunt, — Aunt Agatha. Our mother died when we were babies, and Aunt Agatha was the only mother we knew."

"Poor dear," said the woman sympathetically; "an' ye're sore-hearted an' lonesome widout her."

"I'm so glad you are here," sighed Ulrica. "You remind me of Anne O'Rourke."

"An' who might she be, honey?"

FISHER FOLK

"She was my aunt's maid, the niece of Patrick, our gardener. She was always — so kind."

"Sure annywan that had a hear-rt wud be kind to ye an' to that fine by, yer brother. My name's Mollie Murphy, an' whiniver ye're in want av a frind, come to me. An' now git into yer bunk an' forgit yer troobles. Ye'll be betther after a good sleep."

The sides of the low, narrow building were lined with bunks. Air was admitted by one small window, and light was furnished by malodorous seal-oil lamps. The bunks had neither sheets nor pillow cases. Bedding consisted of mattresses and coarse blankets which had seen much service. But Ulrica was too weary to be critical. For many nights she had slept little, and she soon became unmindful of her surroundings in slumber. When she awoke after mid-day some of the women had left the building and others were preparing to go out. A friendly girl who had come from Newfoundland with her approached her bunk and told her that din-

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ner would soon be served in the women's dining-shed near the shore.

"This is a holiday," said Jane Robinson. "While they're fixin' the stage there's no place fur us to work at splittin' the fish."

"Won't you lose money?" asked Ulrica.

"Not a cent. We get so much fur the hull season an' our keep. Some o' the men is paid by the season, an' some fishes on 'share,' givin' part o' the fish to the planter, an' keepin' part theirselves."

"What do you do on a holiday? Can you pick flowers or berries in such stormy weather?"

"You bet we can, later on; they ain't ripe yet. The mosquitoes an' black flies near eats ye up in the valley where the berries grows, but we go, all the same. We're often kep' workin' late nights, so we don't get no chance fur much fun. If we're off early enough, we hev singin' or games on the rocks in th' evenin's."

Jane hurried away, and Ulrica was about to leave the bunkhouse in search of the dining-shed when Ivan knocked at the door.

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"Mrs. Charpentier sent me for you," he said eagerly. "She's kept some dinner jolly good and hot. You must be starving hungry. I'll come up for you presently and take you to see the stage. There's a heavy sea, but the worst of the danger is over."

"Was the storehouse saved? Can we sleep there to-night?" asked Ulrica.

"It's all right, and our trunks will be put in to-day on top of some boxes; but we can't live there until the break in the wharf is mended; besides, it's damp yet; some things on the floor were damaged by the water."

"Oh dear!" sighed Ulrica. "It's dreadful to think of spending another hour in this stuffy place. When there's too much air everywhere else in Labrador, why can't they let some of it into their houses? Where have you been, Ivy? Did you have any sleep?"

"Lots. Slept like a log in one of the sheds. You hurry and get your dinner, then things won't look so black. I'll be waiting at the shore for you."

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Ivan was right; a substantial dinner of bread and fish enabled his sister to take a comparatively cheerful view of the situation, and she accompanied him to look at fishing stage "Number One" with some interest. As this stage had been sheltered from the storm, a number of women and a few men were at work. It was a platform extending about sixty feet into the sea, built on piles, and with a flooring of long poles. The half of the structure nearest the shore was roofed with poles and sods, and under this shelter ran a long table on which the fish were split. Here and there lanterns were hung from the roof above the table, so fish-curing might be carried on by night as well as by day. Women called "headers" were clad in short petticoats, their sleeves were rolled up, and each had a large knife in her hand, with which she beheaded the cod. The bodies were thrown to other women, who slit them and took out the entrails. The "splitters" removed the backbone, after which the fish were washed, laid in piles and salted, the salted fish being ready

FISHER FOLK

for the "flakes," where they would be dried in the sun. Ivan watched the operation with enthusiasm, but Ulrica shuddered.

"You won't mind, Rica, when you get used to it," said her brother encouragingly. "They're dead, and it does n't hurt them."

"I must not mind, because we ought to work at it ourselves. We've hardly any money, and we can't continue accepting provisions from these poor people. We must do something in return."

"We'll find some presents for them when we open our trunks. I mean to work at this, Rica, but it's not the place for you. If Mr. Sinclair, the agent, lets us live in the storehouse, the cooking will keep you busy enough. Mrs. Charpentier will teach you."

Ulrica was silent for a few moments, then she asked suddenly: "Ivan have you met any one who has seen father?"

"No," he answered soberly. "I don't know what to think. I've asked every one I met, and have heard only that no such person has

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been seen here. Mr. Sinclair may know something."

"But how could he write that he was at this place if he had not been. How shall we find him? Where shall we go?"

"I don't know. Try to put it out of your head till we see Mr. Sinclair. Let's go to the broken stage. It's fine to see the water rushing over it; the waves are mountains high."

"In a minute," said Ulrica. She stood, looking steadfastly out upon the sea. Her hands were clenched, her face quivering, while she strove for resolution. She spoke as if she had braced herself with great effort: "If Mr. Sinclair cannot — give us any news, we must stay here and make the best of it. We will work and watch and ask every one; and surely, surely in time we shall find him."

IV

THE COTTAGE ON THE CRAG

A FAIR day had followed the storm. Ulrica and Ivan reclined on a mossy slope overlooking the sea. Far inland they saw the purple mountains; on the fish stage below them the men, clad in blue jerseys tucked into their trousers, were hard at work repairing the wreck.

“Halloo! Jake’s coming up the hill with a stranger!” cried Ivan. “I suppose it’s Mr. Sinclair. He was expected to-day.”

“Oh, I’m glad, glad!” said Ulrica. “And yet — I’m half afraid. If — he does n’t know anything about father — the last hope will be gone.”

The stranger took off his hat as he approached, and this deference to Ulrica established him in her brother’s favor.

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"Ye see I've kep my word, young Ivan," announced Jake. "Mr. Sinclair, let me make yer acquainted with Miss Ulrica Stewart and her twin."

When the agent had acknowledged the introduction, he turned to Jake: "I'll not be back on the wharf for an hour or more, Tollin. You will see that the work is carried out according to direction."

Jake's disappointment was evident. He had expected to remain. But as Mr. Sinclair was the lawgiver, the fisherman made a hasty departure. During the silence that followed, Ivan decided that the newcomer was a gentleman and a man whom one could trust. His appearance was refined, though his clothing was travel-worn and his face roughened by exposure to wind and sun.

"I was sorry to hear from Tollin and others that you have been unable to find your father," began Mr. Sinclair. "Are you certain that Wabistan is the place from which he wrote you?"

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Ivan took a letter from his pocket. "We got this out of the trunk to-day; it's the second letter dated from this settlement. You will see that it says plainly 'Wabistan.'"

He handed the folded paper to the agent, and watched him anxiously. He did not wish any stranger to read it, yet felt it would be impolite to mention this. He noted with satisfaction that Mr. Sinclair looked only at the address, and returned the document without glancing at another word. Yes, he was in truth a gentleman.

"Unquestionably the name is 'Wabistan, Labrador,'" said Mr. Sinclair. "Did your father intend to settle here?"

"Yes; he liked it better than any other place he had seen. This letter was written several months after the first. We knew that he had to give his mail to chance carriers, to be posted in Newfoundland."

"I've wondered if there is another place called Wabistan," said Ulrica. "Father mentioned that the Indians trapped many martens

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there. He said nothing about a fishery settlement; spoke only of Indians and Esquimaux."

"It is not improbable," answered Mr. Sinclair thoughtfully. "Maps of the Labrador coast are imperfect, and few places are marked on such charts as we have. I shall do my best to find out if another Wabistan exists. You little knew the risk you were taking in coming here. I understand that after the death of your guardian you wrote to your father, and followed the letter without waiting for an answer. Had you no relatives with whom you could have remained for a time?"

"None nearer than cousins, in England," said Ivan, "and we did not want — to be dependent — on them. Our Uncle Ivan is with his regiment in India, and he is many years younger than father. He and I were named for a Russian ancestor, and Ulrica for a Swedish one."

"Patrick O'Rourke, our old gardener, arranged for us to come to father," explained Ulrica. "After father's sister, our Aunt Agatha,

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died, it was found out that the estate had been mismanaged by some one she had trusted, other money had been lost by a bank's failing, so we had only about enough to pay our passage. We knew we'd have to rough it out here, but we did n't mind if we could be with father — and — there were reasons why we were glad to leave England. Some people who came with us as far as New York asked the captain of the coasting vessel to see us safe on the way to Labrador, and he put us on the fishing boat."

"How old are you, may I ask?" inquired Mr. Sinclair, after a pause.

"Sixteen last March," said Ivan promptly.

"Poor children! You are little more than children. What do you propose to do? Have you made any plans?"

"We think we'll have to stay here. We have n't money enough to take us away, and it would be no use going elsewhere unless we could hear that father was there. I'm willing to work hard, and my sister and I hope we can have a little cottage of our own."

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The agent drew his hand across his eyes, and when he spoke his voice was husky. "It will be all right about the work, my boy. I hear that you did your part well on the night of the storm. But we leave in September, and what will you do then? Labrador is bitterly cold in winter and the scattered people are often on the verge of starvation. If I had a home to offer you I would ask you to return with me to Newfoundland, but — I lost my wife last year, and my home was broken up."

Ulrica understood now the band of black on his sleeve. "We are very sorry," she said softly.

Presently Mr. Sinclair asked abruptly, "What was your father's occupation? Why did he come to such an isolated place?"

The color rushed to Ulrica's face, Ivan drew himself up, and neither answered.

"Pardon me, I do not wish to be inquisitive," said the agent. "But any information that I can obtain may assist in the search."

"Oh, we understand well that whatever you do is from kindness," said Ulrica earnestly.

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"Don't think for a moment that we were annoyed by your asking."

"Father was in the army," added Ivan slowly. "He was an officer. But why he came here we cannot tell you. It would not help you to find him if you knew."

The agent was perplexed. The wanderers had asked for "Mr. Donald Stewart," and had not mentioned any military title; they would not have acknowledged that their father had been in the army had not his question forced the confession. Their reticence indicated a mystery, perhaps a wrong, in connection with their father's departure from his country; but their frank, earnest faces attested their own integrity. Mr. Sinclair leaned his head on his hands as if in deep thought. When he looked up he pointed to a cottage perched on the summit of a crag: "Would you like to live in that house?" he inquired.

"Like it!" exclaimed Ulrica. "It would be lovely! But—you need it for yourself. The fishermen said you lived there."

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"I have stayed there occasionally; but I don't need it. I spend the greater part of my time at a station north of this. When I am here I can share Robins's cabin. That will give you a roof over your heads and some seclusion. Of course it will be rent free in return for your taking care of it for me."

"Oh, how good you are!" cried Ulrica. "And you know we cannot really do anything in return."

The agent's eyes swam with tears. "If I can make you happier, more comfortable, it will be all-sufficient compensation. I had a daughter of my own who would have been your age if she had lived. She had fair brown hair with lights of gold in it, like yours, and deep blue eyes, too."

Ulrica laid her hand softly on his arm. "You have had great trouble. That is what brings us together. We have had trouble, too—dreadful trouble."

"I know it, my child; but I hope there may be brighter days before you. Let us go now

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to look at our house. It was built by an English rover who spent two summers here and sold out to me last year. One of its advantages is that it is not in favor with the mosquitoes. I have never been troubled with them at Eyrie Cottage."

Ulrica's eyes had grown bright with excitement, and color had come to her pale cheeks. She clambered up the heights so easily that Mr. Sinclair exclaimed: "Well done! One would think you had been a rock-dweller all the days of your life."

"We were often at the seaside where the cliffs were high," she said; "and father encouraged us to climb."

"Did your father always live with you before he came to Labrador?" asked Mr. Sinclair, and immediately regretted that he had put a question which might prove embarrassing.

But Ivan replied readily: "He took us with him wherever his regiment was ordered. We were born at the Cape, where our mother died, and where Aunt Agatha came to us. After-

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wards we lived in Malta; and for the last six years we were in England."

"He was such a good father," said Ulrica wistfully; "so much interested in our studies, our amusements. We used to talk with him about everything we did. He was with us nearly all the time when he was off duty. And he was good to others, too. He was kind to his men, and tried to have recreation for them so they would not drink and gamble. We who knew him well are certain — certain — that —"

She stopped suddenly and stamped her little foot upon the rock. Her head was thrown back, her eyes glowed. Mr. Sinclair understood. Her father's reputation had been attacked, and his child was uttering her defiance against his accusers.

Ivan hurriedly changed the subject: "It'll be jolly ticklish work getting our trunks up these rocks. Perhaps we'll have to haul them with ropes."

Mr. Sinclair thought the men could carry them, unless they were very heavily loaded.

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“It was hard to find room for our boxes on the fishing boat,” said Ulrica. “We brought some linen and blankets, besides a few dishes and knives and forks and spoons. Nearly all the furniture and silver and pictures and things that had been in the family for generations were sold. It did not seem right at all, for Aunt Agatha never went into debt; we paid for everything as we bought it. The money from the sale went for lawyers’ fees and other such expenses. As we were minors, we were not consulted, and no relation was there to look after our interests.”

“That was hard indeed,” agreed the agent; “but in this wilderness you would have no place to store your family silver. I am afraid you will find difficulty even with your table linen. Who will be the laundress?”

“There’s the laundry right before us!” cried Ivan. “Look, Rica! Is n’t that a ripping waterfall? The deep pool below will make a jolly tub.”

“How swell we shall be!” said Ulrica joy-

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fully. "We have a river, a fall, and a lake on our own estate!"

Bounding down the rock-side came the little brook. Faster, faster it ran, as the rock grew steeper, until over a sheer descent it poured in a fall of many feet. Beneath the fall was a deep rocky basin, its edges moss-lined and sprinkled with flowers; and out of a cut in the basin's rim the rivulet poured on again, down, down, till it was lost to sight.

"We think this is a fine view," remarked Mr. Sinclair, happy in the young girl's pleasure.

"It's glorious!" exclaimed Ulrica, her eyes sparkling with enthusiasm. "Ivan, see those wonderful little trees marching up the steep rock as if each one that got ahead was trying to climb higher than its neighbor. They don't measure many inches, and yet they look like grown-ups, not babies."

"They're scrumptious!" declared Ivan. "You can see that they are old by the moss on them. They beat that Japanese dwarf shrub exhibition that we saw in London all hollow."

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“And look out over the ocean, how far we can see! The land is all carved in points and coves, and the water is dotted with islands! There’s one island with hundreds, thousands of birds darting and flying about it and dipping into the sea. They are lovely, with their white breasts flashing in the sunlight!”

“They are feeding on the capelin,” explained Mr. Sinclair. “The capelin is a delicate little fish, much used as a bait for cod. It has a perilous existence in these waters.”

Ulrica’s face saddened: “I wish every living creature could be happy and safe,” she said wistfully.

“I do not believe the fish feel pain keenly,” said Mr. Sinclair. “In our fisheries, where the cod are taken in large traps, they are put to death quickly, and I think almost painlessly.”

Ivan hastened to change the subject, for his tender-hearted sister was evidently still troubled by the fate of the capelin. “What a crowd of fishermen’s boats are out! See, Rica, some of

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them have red sails, and a few have black! They are queer-looking craft!"

A few minutes brought the trio to the cottage door: "Enter and take possession," said Mr. Sinclair. "I proclaim you monarchs of all you survey."

Ulrica beamed appreciation: "It's a dear little place! And, best of all, there's quite a good-sized window in each room."

"Captain Hariot was a fresh-air enthusiast," said Mr. Sinclair. "He knew, too, how to fit a small space with convenient furniture. Those box beds serve also as chests for clothing, and here are cupboards built into the wall."

"Our trunks are very large," said Ulrica doubtfully, taking in the dimensions of the two small rooms. "But we can cover them with chintz, — I brought a few yards with me, — and use them for seats and tables."

"Now I will leave you to explore," said Mr. Sinclair, "and I will send some men up with your trunks."

"We'd better go down with you," suggested

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Ulrica, "and take out what we need for the present. You have no idea what those boxes weigh. It won't be easy getting them up here even after they're lightened."

Mr. Sinclair agreed, and the young housekeepers made the downward journey without any pauses by the way. After selecting some bedding and clothing from their stores, they returned to the new home, accompanied by Jake Tollin and Jacques Charpentier, each carrying a well-filled basket. When the visitors, who had refused an invitation to remain for supper, were well on their way down the rock-side, the proprietors opened the cupboards and inspected their stores, Mr. Sinclair having authorized them to use everything they could find, as he had a sufficient supply elsewhere. They discovered a small bag of flour, and boxes containing oatmeal, rice, and Indian meal; two jars of orange marmalade, four tins of condensed soup, and six tins of vegetables, also a small quantity of sugar.

"I say, let's have a feast to-night for a

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housewarming," suggested Ivan; "orange marmalade on the scones Mrs. Charpentier sent, and sugar in our tea. The sugar won't last long, anyway. I notice that the people here use molasses instead; I suppose it's cheaper."

"Yes, we will," agreed Ulrica; "but after this we must live on bread and fish only for week-days, like the fishermen, and have a treat on Sundays. I'm hungry enough to-night to enjoy dry bread."

"That's good; for in a country without cows we can't get butter. After a while I expect to see you running around with a lump of blubber."

"Never," said Ulrica, with a grimace of disgust. "I'm going to pick berries, and make preserves enough to last all winter."

Late in the evening, when the brother and sister had washed and put away the dishes, and made their beds with clean linen and warm blankets, they went to their cottage door and looked out over the sea. The twilight had grown dim before a brilliant aurora, whose

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lances of light flashed upward to meet in a flame-colored crown, touching the waters below with a glint of fire.

“I do feel more hopeful to-night,” said Ulrica. “It may be because our world looks so beautiful.”

“I think it’s because you’ve eaten a good square meal,” said the practical Ivan, “and because Mr. Sinclair is so encouraging. It may take him months to do it, but I believe he will surely find father at last.”

V

OVER THE PRECIPICE

EARLY in the morning Jake Tollin and two strong fishermen brought the trunks up the cliffs, and found room for the largest, which they named "the ark," in a dry cavern of the rock below the house. Captain Hariot had used this cave as a storehouse. It was as large as the cottage, and was sufficiently light when the sliding door at the entrance was open. It was easily accessible from the cottage, and a broad ledge of rock in front of it gave a sure foothold.

"The captain might have lived here and saved the trouble of building," remarked Ivan. "Miners and engineers in the far West live in natural caves, or in places they have hollowed out in the rocks."

OVER THE PRECIPICE

"We might use it for a schoolroom," suggested Ulrica. "Mr. Jacques Charpentier hopes we will have a class after the fishing season closes. Last year he helped the boys and girls to practise writing on white birch bark. There are quantities of bark in the valley good for writing and drawing, though the trees don't grow large or straight enough for building canoes."

"No more school for me," declared Ivan. "I'm educated well enough for old Labrador. I'll store every one of my school books in the ark. Here are some sea stories and other interesting books to take to the house; I'll make hanging shelves for them and the magazines Mr. Sinclair left. We'll want this chessboard too, and the dominoes."

"Perhaps you'll change your mind about the school when you get tired of fishing," said Ulrica.

"Not I. Jacques is a regular crank about studying, but I'm not built that way. He pores over a dictionary that Captain Hariot gave him, and he listens to every word you say, and tries to speak like you."

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Ulrica laughed merrily: "Think of my being a model for any one!"

On Sunday morning the twins attended a service at the fish stage, where logs and stones served for pews. It was a quiet day, with soft airs and a calm sea. The fisher people were of different denominations, but all listened with reverence while Mr. Sinclair read prayers of the Church of England; and Protestant and Roman Catholic joined in the hymns, for which Paul Charpentier played a violin accompaniment. After the service Mr. Sinclair went with Ulrica and Ivan to the cottage for dinner, and complimented the young housekeeper on her skill.

"This soup and the peas are from the cans that you left," protested Ulrica.

"But you fried the fish and made the scones, and this cloudberry sauce for the rice is excellent."

"She brought cook books with her," said Ivan, "but they need all sorts of things that we don't have. We are learning very fast to

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do without. People here don't use table-cloths and sheets, and they live nearly all the time in the same clothes."

"It is long since I dined with a table-cloth before me," said the agent, "and it is delightful; but I advise you to economize in the use of such luxuries, Miss Ulrica. Your arms are not strong enough for laundry work. Cover your table with oil-cloth, as the Frenchwomen here do. You can easily wash it off, and save yourself much labor."

Ulrica looked wistfully at her white cloth: "I suppose I must give it up; and as long as the flowers last we can make the table look pretty."

She glanced at a vase filled with the miniature mountain laurel of the north, and at a bank of mosses in a rustic basket. The basket hung between the window curtains, which Ivan had put up under her direction. The agent saw the glance and smiled: "It is easy to see a woman's hand here. The place is transformed."

On the following morning Mr. Sinclair left Wabistan, and Ivan went to work at the fishery.

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Ulrica tried to become a skilful laundrywoman, with the pool for a tub and the rocks under the sunlight as a drying-yard; but the unaccustomed toil wearied her, and she could not go to the shore, as she had promised. For many days Ivan left the house after an early breakfast, dined with the fishermen, and returned in the evening for supper.

Sometimes Ulrica went down to the fish stage, but as her brother had stipulated that she should take no part in the work there, she could only watch in silence; the women were too busy to talk to her. For a time her housework helped her to banish thought of her sorrows and loneliness, but on an afternoon when anxiety haunted her, she determined to set off by herself to explore; she had heard there were no beasts of prey in the neighborhood, and she foresaw no danger. The rocks became higher as she went inland, but she clambered on until she reached a level that stretched beyond her vision. She walked for a long distance, interested in the bright-colored mosses and dwarfed trees, and

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did not realize how tired she was until she sat down to rest. She was reclining wearily when she was startled by a peculiar sound, and, looking up, beheld a black body moving behind a clump of trees. She was convinced it was a bear, and she cowered beside a miniature spruce, hardly daring to breathe. Once more she heard the growling noise, and, believing the creature was advancing toward her, she sprang to her feet, and ran, ran, not daring to look behind, until, gasping for breath, and with a sharp pain in her chest, she was obliged to stand still for a moment. She gave one quick backward glance, and saw, or thought she saw, that her pursuer drew nearer; then she went on, on, she knew not where.

Without warning she found herself upon the brink of a chasm. As she looked down, hundreds of feet, into the black water, her head swam; she felt herself slipping and tried to grasp something; but the slender shrub gave way with her weight and she fell. Her cry of terror echoed far, but no one heard it. The

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rocks were jagged, the descent was almost perpendicular, yet one hollowed ledge not far below stretched out a shelter to receive her. It had caught washings of sand from the heights and was thickly moss-grown; therefore when Ulrica aroused from a brief unconsciousness, she found that she was scratched and bruised, but not seriously hurt. No immediate danger threatened, but even if she were able to scale the cliff over which she had fallen, she dared not attempt it, for dread of the creature from which she had escaped. To remain upon the ledge would mean death by starvation or exposure. No one would seek her there. Her footsteps had made no imprint on the hard rock.

She gazed downward, but with a shudder. A descent to the water was her only hope. Perhaps there was a beach along which she could walk to the sea. The precipice seemed to offer no foothold, but here and there trees had sprung, and their roots must be fastened in rocky clefts. She drew a deep, quivering breath, then swung herself from the ledge. For a few moments



"With a rope about his waist, he descended to the ledge."

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she clung to it, her feet dangling while they sought the rock. When they rested upon it she let go the ledge with one hand, and clutched the top of a dwarfed pine. Happily, it was well rooted and sturdy, and in a few moments she was clinging to it while she let herself down farther. More than once in that terrible descent the branches she had caught broke short, and she slipped, but recovered footing. There were long stretches of rock without a tree, but she found little jutting points by which she held, until at length with bleeding hands and torn clothing she reached the bottom. She found there a large flat stone upon which to rest, but, alas! there was no beach, and the stone was near the entrance of a gaping cavern. The water seemed to be of great depth. She thought she was as much cut off from humankind as she had been on the ledge.

Exhausted and despairing, she leaned against the rock-side and sobbed weakly; but she was too tired even to weep long. She was lying on the stone, dizzy and sore, when something

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made her start to her feet with renewing life. It was the sound of paddles. A canoe with two Indians came around a bend in the stream; Ulrica recovered her voice and shouted frantically, and soon the men drew up beside her and helped her to step cautiously into the frail craft. They spoke English brokenly, and she explained that she wanted to reach Wabistan. The elder man said it was four miles distant,—three miles to the mouth, and one along the shore. He had not intended to go in that direction, as the fiord had another branch, but she persuaded him on promise of reward. The two inquired with interest how she had come to the spot where they found her, and gave odd little grunts when she told her story.

Meanwhile Ivan and Jacques were seeking her distractedly. Ivan had arrived at Eyrie Cottage after his day's work, and, discovering his sister's absence, had hastened to the shore, hoping to find her at Mrs. Charpentier's. But neither Mrs. Charpentier nor any of the fisherwomen had seen her since the previous day. The sun

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had set and twilight was over the land when Jacques Charpentier organized search parties to go in different directions. He was about to lead one inland when an Esquimau ran to him crying that a canoe with two Indians and a white girl had just come around the point. The searchers hurried to the wharf, and soon perceived that the girl was Ulrica.

On the landing of the canoe the wanderer sprang to her brother's arms, and Jacques stood apart with pallid face. But when Ulrica pleaded with the sound of tears in her voice: "Don't scold me, Ivan, don't; I can't bear it; I have suffered so much!" he felt impelled to protect her. In his opinion Ivan was too much inclined to be masterful with his sister, and now, when she was weak and exhausted, she needed comforting, not reprimand.

A crowd had gathered when Jacques moved forward; "Tell us how it did happen, Mademoiselle Oolrike," he said gently. "Well we know you meant no wrong."

Ulrica told her story brokenly. When she

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mentioned the black beast, which she thought was a bear, her hearers looked at one another, but remained silent till she had ended.

Then Louis Brulot declared with solemnity: "Dat you did behol' was never bear. 'E was de loup garou, de evil wolf, or 'e was de ghos', de dead man from de cave. 'E try for lead you in, where never you may return. Many have gone dat cave wit'in, not one alive out did come. De fisherman 'e know. De Indian, de Esquimau also, 'e know. 'E fear when 'e pass by."

"Do you mean to tell me you believe there are ghosts in it?" asked Ivan derisively.

"Dat I do mean. My fader, 'e tell you, eferyman so tell you; Jacques also tell you, an' you laugh not at him."

Ivan turned to Jacques: "I know you don't take any stock in such tales."

Jacques replied thoughtfully: "The tale it does make me much of interest. I fear not the ghos', the spirit of the dead man, and often I the desire have that cavern to explore; but to

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my mother I did give the promise that never I so will do, and therefore may I not. After the fall of night, it is true, no man will venture near; and of strange sights and fearsome sounds, many have related. It is the thought of some that contained therein is the treasure from the pirate ship. The Captain Hariot has said that many years ago, near to four hundred, some people of the Normans and the Bretons did found upon this coast a famous town. Oft-times they had battles with the Indians, also the Esquimaux, and once some men of that town called Brest, from their pursuers escaping, did drift far northward their boats within until they did enter for shelter the narrow fiord. There did they perish from hunger and cold, and far within the cave are their bones preserved. Such is the tale; of its truth I know not; the Captain Hariot himself the place did avoid."

Ivan nodded his head, well pleased. He had made a plan, but he kept it to himself.

VI

THE CAVE IN THE FIORD

A WEEK after Ulrica's adventure an American boy arrived at Wabistan with a party on a coasting steamer. He became so enthusiastic about the fishery that he decided to stop over while his friends went northward. He pitched his tent on the rocks, and Ivan spent all his spare time with the stranger. Tom Corning became eager to explore the cavern, and Ivan consequently decided that he required a half holiday and could justly take it, as he was not paid by the day, but by the amount of his work.

Without a word of their intention to Ulrica or any one else, the adventurers started for the fiord early on a warm afternoon. To avoid questioning, they had left their canoe on the previous evening not far from the entrance to

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the fiord, and set out on this afternoon as if they were going for a stroll over the rocks. The entrance to the fiord was between two sharp headlands. When the explorers had paddled the canoe through the narrow pass that sailors call a "hole in the wall," they found themselves in a lagoon enclosed by stony heights. Beyond this tiny lake the fiord narrowed again till the distance between the precipitous walls was only a few yards in width, with a sheer descent of the wall on each side into deep water.

"Seems as if ages ago this had been a mountain split in two by an earthquake," said Ivan, resting on his paddle. "We'll have to look sharp that we don't run against a stone or anything. This would be a nasty place for an accident."

Tom Corning turned his head and gazed at the rocks towering above him. "I don't see how ever your sister did it. There's not a chance of a foothold on either side."

"She's an expert climber," said Ivan proudly;

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"and where she came down on the other side of the cave she had a few trees to hang on to."

"What duffers those fishermen are to be afraid of ghosts," remarked Tom. "They have fine courage, too, on the sea; they would risk any danger."

"They know the sea, and the cave is queer and dark and unknown. It even gives me a creepy feeling, but that's part of the reason why I like it."

"Yes, it makes it more exciting. Jacques thinks it's full of narrow, winding passages. This sort of inland cave that's made in the limestone rocks by the water is more likely to have a jolly lot of rooms and passages than a coast cave that is worn out by the sea. And the sea caves have more level floors. I've been in the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, and have seen the blind rats and landcrabs."

"I've read of some uncanny birds called Gaucharos that live in caves of South America," said Ivan. "They fly abroad sometimes, but only in the dark. I hope we'll find birds or

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beasts in our cave. It will be really our very own, for we're the only ones that have the nerve to go into it. Let's call it the Corning-Stewart, and give our names to the new kinds of birds and fishes we discover."

"It's too bad I can't spend the summer here," said Tom. "I'd like to take back a heap of specimens for our school museum; but if we come every day this week, we may explore the old hole pretty thoroughly. If you take only half days off, you can make it up by working twice as hard afterwards."

"Here we are at the entrance!" cried Ivan. "It's good and wide too; we can paddle right in without knocking against anything. Have you the lantern all right, Corning? It will be dark inside. We must be careful not to let it go out after we light it, for I have only three matches. They are scarce, like everything else in Wabistan."

The water at the mouth of the cavern was deep and the explorers encountered no obstructions, but even at the entrance the light was

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dim, for the rays of the sun were cut off by the towering cliffs of the fiord.

"We must light up at once," said Ivan; "but it does n't matter. There's oil enough in the lantern to last for hours."

"Hurrah!" cried Corning, when the canoe was well within the walls. "This is great! I'm glad you polished up the lantern, Stewart. Look how the stalactites shine! I never saw a roof so dazzling white in any cave before, and I've been in several. This will be a show place for visitors. I'll organize excursions from the States next summer for the Corning-Stewart, and we'll charge admittance. Let's pat ourselves on the back. We'll be capitalists with a monopoly. There'll be more money in it than in those silver foxes you are going to trap in the winter."

"It is fine!" said Ivan with enthusiasm. "Those hangers are almost transparent; and what a whopping high ceiling. It must be thirty feet. I hope there are other chambers too, not only this one great room."

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"I'm sure there are lots of them. See that dark hole over there; that's the entrance to some sort of passage. Let's make for it."

The passage which they presently entered was lofty but narrow, and the water was still deep.

"I hope we'll come to dry ground soon," said Ivan. "Our visitors might be nervous about going far on this underground river."

"There's no sign of a landing place," sighed Corning. "As far as I can see there's nothing but a long hall stretching on and on. It's not what I expected."

"But we may discover all sorts of winds and turns and openings before we get to the end," argued Ivan, who had come to feel a proprietary interest in Labrador, including the heavens above and the caves beneath. He had been gratified by the approval of the American, and was correspondingly disappointed by his slighting remark.

"Well, let's go on anyway, and find out whatever there is to it," suggested Corning, and Ivan readily agreed.

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They did indeed discover many winds and curves and openings, but everywhere the water was deep and the passageways were narrow.

“If we keep on we'll be coming out somewhere in the unexplored interior of Labrador,” remarked Ivan. “There are subterranean rivers that start far inland.”

“If we keep on maybe we'll not come out anywhere. It's a regular labyrinth. I read a story lately about a man that tried to explore one of the old aqueducts under Constantinople. Some people say they are only deep cisterns about two hundred feet long; but my book says no one knows their extent, and that the entrance to one was discovered by accident after it had been lost for hundreds of years. The young Englishman set out in a small boat, the people who were watching saw him disappear under one of the arches, and he never was heard of again.”

“Well that's a nice, cheerful tale to narrate just in this place,” said Ivan drily. “If you want to have your flesh creep and your hair

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stand on end, perhaps I could accommodate you with another."

"No, thank you, it's gruesome enough now. There's a queer sort of air in this last cavity. I think we'd better get out of it. My head feels swimmy."

"Maybe it's carbonic acid gas," suggested Ivan. "My uncle was in a lava cave near Naples, the Grotto del Cane, where the gas comes up through cracks in the floor. Small animals, like dogs, are suffocated by it."

"We shall be suffocated ourselves if we don't hurry out of this. Let's try if it's better under that archway. Paddle for it quick."

The two paddled swiftly, and were congratulating themselves that they had found a purer atmosphere, when, suddenly, without warning, the lantern went out.

"What ever did that?" exclaimed Ivan. "It's a fisherman's lantern, and ought to keep alight even in a squall. Hold the canoe steady while I strike a match."

He struck one on the rough surface of his

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little match box, but it gave not even a glow in the darkness; the second flickered feebly and went out; the third and last did likewise, and Ivan dropped his arms without a word. For many moments the silence was unbroken. The wanderers realized with a heart-sinking that deprived them of the power of speech that in this pitchy blackness the attempt to find their way out of the maze would be well-nigh useless. Ivan had shuddered at the fate that had threatened his sister; but she had been under the open sky, where she could see the sunlight, the starlight. He would have faced death bravely enough in battle, in storm, in flood or fire, but the horror of being imprisoned thus in the vault-like darkness, till reason tottered or death released, unnerved him utterly. After the first vivid, terrifying realization, he sank, for a brief space, into a merciful unconsciousness.

When he came to himself, Corning was speaking in a low, hoarse tone, that sounded muffled and far away: "We took such pains to hide where we were going. No one will ever guess it."

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Ivan answered with difficulty. He seemed to have mislaid his voice somewhere, and to be struggling to discover it: "Even if they should — think of it — they would not dare — to come here. They'd believe it meant — certain death."

And once more there was a long silence, but a silence in which manifold horrors seemed to shout.

"Let's paddle on, anyway," said Ivan, rousing. "Nothing could be worse than this stillness."

"You're right. There's a chance that we may find the way out. Maybe it's only one in a thousand, but still it's a chance."

"But we must go slow, feeling every inch of the way. If we should strike a rock with this tottlish thing — it would be the end."

It was long before Corning replied, almost in a whisper, "Better end so than drag out minutes, hours, days, such as this."

Ivan shuddered, for at that moment he heard a splashing in the water. Whether fish, rep-

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tile, or beast of prey, the unknown creature seemed to be awaiting him. "I — I did n't notice anything alive in this place before," he whispered.

"Nor I. It could n't be that the light frightened them, because — they cannot see; but since we've been in the dark I've heard things flying and swimming."

And, suddenly, Ivan, putting his hand upon the edge of the canoe, felt a slippery, crawling thing.

He struck at it sharply and it fell back into the water.

"What was that?" asked Corning, when he heard the splash, and he gasped when Ivan told him.

"Let's move on, faster," urged Ivan. "There may be more of them."

Seeking escape from the slimy creatures they gave no thought to the sunken rocks, had forgotten that danger threatened there, until they felt the water pouring through a hole in the canoe.

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"We're lost!" cried Corning, but Ivan said not a word. He was stunned into indifference. The canoe did not move. It was impaled on a point of rock, and presently Corning, feeling with his hands, announced: "There is a big stone here. Perhaps if we get out on it and guide ourselves with the paddles we can reach a dry place."

"Maybe we can," said Ivan, roused from his apathy. "Let's fasten the provision bags over our shoulders. We'll need them."

Shivering in the cold water, they picked their way over the stone, in momentary peril of slipping. The waters of Labrador are cold all the year round, but those of the dank cavern had a peculiar, deadly chill. The castaways were benumbed and stiff when they came at length upon a great rock, high and dry above the water line. Other creatures that had been in possession scurried away, splashing loudly as they dived.

"Ivan, do you think — do you think," began Corning, hesitating, as if he feared to give his

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thought utterance, "do you think that it— might be true— what the men believe?"

"No, no," said Ivan hurriedly. "These things are lizards, rats, snakes, I don't know what; but not— not anything that once was— human. You know that too, we both know it; it's the dark and the cold and the awfulness that's put it into your head. We must n't lose our nerve. Let's take a bite. It's ages since we ate anything."

Corning made a cup of his hands, and, dipping a little water, tasted it cautiously: "It's quite pure," he said. "Probably it comes out somewhere as a fine spring. Oh, if only, only, we knew how to go with it to the sunlight!"

"That's good," remarked Ivan cheerfully. "Though the bread and fish are soaked with it they won't poison us. I'm beginning to feel a little— encouraged."

The occupation of eating diverted the thoughts of the hungry boys and gave them a brief respite from their anxieties. Moreover, the taste of the familiar bread and fish of the shore

THE CAVE IN THE FIORD

seemed to diminish the weirdness of the situation. For a while they talked bravely and hopefully, suggesting plans of escape, until Corning, whose teeth were chattering with cold, gave a hollow laugh.

“What’s the use of trying to fool one another? You don’t believe it, and neither do I. Let’s go to sleep and forget for a while. It must be night now, and I’m drowsy.”

“Had n’t we better sleep and watch in turns?”

“What does it matter?”

“If—anything came—the one who was awake could drive it away.”

“As you please, but I can hardly keep my eyes open now.”

“I’m not so very sleepy,” said Ivan determinedly. “I’ll watch first.”

But as he tried to sit beside his companion, wide-eyed, he too passed into the sleep of exhaustion.

He was awakened by Corning’s laugh, a wild, delirious laugh.

“Tom!” he cried, springing up and seizing

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the boy's hands. "Tom! what's the matter? Did you have a bad dream?"

"Hear him!" laughed Corning convulsively. "He wants to know what's the matter. Oh, nothing, nothing at all! We're safe at home in our little beds. It's only a bad dream; ha, ha, a bad dream!"

"Stop it!" commanded Ivan. "Stop it this minute, Tom, or I'll souse you in the water. You're raving."

And still Corning laughed, more wildly than before.

Ivan dipped into the water and threw handful after handful upon his companion until the laugh subsided into a low, gurgling sob.

After a while Corning said, as if ashamed: "I — did n't mean to. I'd been asleep and — I woke up. It was the waking did it. If I go to sleep again — I don't — want to wake."

"I think — I feel my hair turning gray," said Ivan.

Corning began to laugh again immoderately: "What a show you'd be! But you'll never see

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it. Pity they don't give us looking-glasses in here."

"Oh, please don't go on that way, Tom," begged Ivan. "You'd better try to sleep some more. It will make your head steadier."

"Yes, it will make my head steadier," repeated Corning brokenly.

He lay down and Ivan watched anxiously close beside him till his deep breathing testified that he slept. Then Ivan too lay on the cold stone and fell into slumber. A shout aroused him, a ringing shout that echoed through the caverned arches. Some one was calling his name.

"Corning!" he cried, shaking his companion, "wake, wake up! They have come for us! We are saved!" The words ended in a choking sob. In a moment he rallied, stood upright, and shouted loudly in response, and presently Corning, though bewildered and hardly understanding, shouted with him. The light glimmering in the distance came nearer, nearer, the castaways guiding the rescuer with their voices.

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They heard the splash of oars, and presently they saw the boat with torches blazing in prow and stern, and one man alone within it.

“ Jacques!” cried Ivan. “ It is Jacques!”

“ Yes, Monsieur Ivan, it is I,” said Jacques simply. “ The good God did bring me to you. I have said Him many prayers.”

Ivan had said prayers too, but, with a boyish reticence, he had not acknowledged it. Jacques was never ashamed to confess his faith.

“ What time is it?” asked Corning. “ Is it to-morrow?”

“ It is the early morning of the day since you did go. All the night have many sought you, I alone did come here.”

“ I thought your mother would not let you come,” said Ivan.

“ For my amuse, never; but to save the life, yes. The mother of Labrador day by day must herself prepare to see her own son die, by the cold, by the storm, for the duty's sake. Thus, when I did tell her, need is that I seek my friends though it do lead me to the death, she

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said not by one word, Nay. Come now the boat within. It is large, it is strong. I have the lantern also and the many match for accident. While we return, you will tell me what it is that did befall you."

"It was brave of you, it was splendid," said Corning with choking voice. "If — you had not come — we should have been — buried here alive."

Ivan did not speak his thanks till he was in the boat beside Charpentier. Then he grasped his hand tightly. "Jacques," he faltered, "Jacques, I'll never forget it, never. You would have given your life for us."

And Jacques answered slowly, "If — I had not found you — Mademoiselle Oolrike, she would — have died."

"Was she very much frightened?" asked Ivan with anxiety.

"Her face was like the death when she did come to the shore on fall of night. Monsieur Ivan, often must the life be risked of necessity; but for your sister, promise me, you will not

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again seek the danger when it need not be. Without father, without brother, in this strange land, how could she endure?"

Jacques was deeply moved. Suddenly, as if some thought had disturbed him, Ivan turned and looked curiously at Charpentier, and the young Frenchman dropped his eyes.

"Let's — let's tell you how we got tangled up in here," suggested Ivan. "Are you sure you know the way out?"

"It is not so long. You came by roundabout. Also, at one place and another, I have left the mark to guide me. Yes, I would hear of that which did befall you; alone, here in the darkness, it must have been of horror."

"Stewart felt his hair turning gray," said Corning; "but it is n't visible, not in a single curl. I say, Stewart, it's good and long; you're in fine trim for football."

"I have n't time to cut it here," said Ivan shortly. He was sensitive on the subject of his curly locks, and had formerly kept them closely cropped.

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“What matters?” said Jacques pacifically. “In the winter it will serve for the warmth. And now, as we go, relate to me the tale of your adventure. Soon will we pass without the cave, and once more the sun you will behold in his beauty.”

VII

BIRDS AND BERGS

FOR several days after the adventure of the cave, Ivan devoted his leisure to Ulrica, striving penitently to make amends for the fright he had given her. Corning spent his evenings with the brother and sister, and often called at Eyrie Cottage to offer assistance to the young housekeeper. He assured her that he had learned to make excellent bread while he was on a hunting trip, and that he would be honored if she would appoint him her baker.

“But I have no oven,” she said. “With this sheet-iron stove we can neither bake nor roast. Everything must be cooked on top.”

“I’ll make you an oven in the ground,” said Corning. “We had one outside our camp last year. And I’ll set up some poles and lines for

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your laundry yard, even if I have to split the rocks to do it. I'm invaluable in the domestic line. I covered my mother's house with contrivances until she could hardly set down her foot without tripping over one. If I could stay here long enough I would construct a local climate and grow my own vegetables."

"Is n't he an all-round good fellow?" asked Ivan one evening after his guest had departed.

"He's very good-natured and amusing," said Ulrica cordially. "Except Mr. Charpentier he is the brightest person I have met here."

Ivan looked at her with a questioning expression. "But, Rica, how can you compare the two? Corning is a gentleman, and though Jacques is one of the best fellows in the world, you — you should n't forget that he is only a fisherman."

"Ivan!" cried Ulrica, her voice shaken with indignation. "You speak of him in that way, and he saved your life!"

"Yes, he did, and I shall be grateful to him forever. O, I know, Rica, that he is noble and

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brave and fine; but that does not make him quite — quite the sort of — person — father or Aunt Agatha would like as your companion.”

“You are much mistaken. Aunt Agatha would have appreciated him as he deserves. I don't know what to make of you, Ivan. You used to say you didn't care for rank or birth if you liked a boy; and now, when you are a fisherman yourself, you look down on one that works beside you.”

“No, I don't look down on him. I have told you I admire Jacques, though he is rather sentimental and moony; but — but it's different about — one's sister.”

“Do not trouble yourself about your sister,” said Ulrica coldly. “Mr. Charpentier is a gentleman through and through. His father was highly educated and of a good old family; he taught his sons, and they have studied from the books he left. He lost his money and married when he was poor, and Mrs. Charpentier was not his equal. Mr. Paul told me that; I am sure Jacques would not have mentioned it, for

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he is devoted to his mother. The father died last year when Henri was a few days old. He was very handsome; I saw his picture; Jacques is like him."

Ivan swung his foot and did not answer. His well-meant efforts had annoyed his sister; he felt that she was disappointed in him and regarded him as an ingrate. He jumped up abruptly, took a pail and went to the spring for water. When he returned, Ulrica had gone to her room. She had not said good-night to him, and he was very uncomfortable; they had not come so near a quarrel since the days of early childhood, when they had had little squabbles and made up with tears and kisses. He resolved to avoid the delicate subject hereafter lest he might blunder further. He rose early on the following morning, and was frying the fish in the pan when his sister appeared.

"Oh, I did n't know it was so late!" she exclaimed, reproaching herself.

"It is n't late. I thought I'd get a move on, as Jake says, and save you a few steps."

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“It’s very good of you, Ivy,” she said affectionately, and when she kissed him, he hoped he had made his peace with her.

He watched her curiously. The little girl who had been his playmate was growing into a beautiful young woman, and he had not kept pace with her; she seemed older than he. She was presiding now over the cracked dishes on the rough table with that air of distinction that had marked her Aunt Agatha. Her hair, which used to hang in two long braids, was coiled upon her head. The new style was becoming — but — Ivan gave a little sigh, it was a sigh of regret for his old companion. He went to the shore that day determined to make much of Jacques, to whom he felt he owed a reparation, though Jacques was unaware of it. Ulrica was preparing to descend into the cave storehouse when she saw her brother clambering up the crag as quickly as its steep side would permit. “Rica,” he cried, when he came within hearing, “hustle all you can and come for a day’s egg-gathering. The men have lent us two

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big boats and we are going to the islands. The Brulots, Marbeufs, and Charpentiers are getting ready. Corning is coming, too, and so is Jake Tollin. It was decided suddenly because this is such a fine day. We want to collect enough eggs for the winter. Bring along something to eat and all the baskets and pails you can lay hands on."

"How jolly!" cried Ulrica. "I'm so glad I bought a big pail and a basket yesterday from that Indian woman, Mrs. Shawatin. I paid her for them with a dress I had outgrown. We can pack dozens of eggs. If you'll put up the dried deer's meat you got in trade from the Nascaupée, I'll spread the scones with orange marmalade. There won't be any left for another Sunday, but never mind. We'll pick berries and make preserves."

Ivan nodded his head well pleased. Ulrica was his girl twin again. A merry party started from the wharf, followed by the longing eyes of the fisherwomen on the stage. Ulrica had no thought of fear till a disturbance in the

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water revealed two great creatures with backs of glossy black and high, pointed fins.

“Don't be scared,” said Jake Tollin. “They're goin' after fish, an' they'll keep clear of us, so long's we don't touch them. They're gram-puses, what the Frenchies call *grand poisson*. Sometimes they're as much as twenty-one foot long.”

Ulrica watched them anxiously till they had passed from sight, and she peered into the clear water lest others of their kind might be following. She breathed more freely when the boats approached a group of islands, which were surrounded by innumerable birds — gulls, terns, and ducks — which were swimming and diving in the water, and flying in myriads about the rocks. At first view the largest island appeared to be inaccessible, but on the farther side the cliffs sloped to a beach where landing was easy. The rock above the beach was formed in natural terraces, and the top of the island was almost flat.

“It seems mean to steal their eggs, poor

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things," said Ulrica, as some birds fluttered away on the approach of the invaders.

"Those birds do much accommodate," explained Jacques. "If we the eggs remove, once, twice, three times, always with the same number do they replenish the nest. We rob them not of all they do possess."

"Look!" cried Corning. "There's a bird carrying its egg away under its wing."

"It's what they call a murre," said Tollin. "I've heard o' them doin' that away south o' this at the Bird Rocks, where there's a cannon sometimes fired in foggy weather. When they're scared at the sound o' the cannon, each sittin' bird takes its egg between its thighs an' tries to get away with it, but mostly they drop the eggs after they fly a few yards."

An egg of the murre or guillemot, which had probably been dropped in this way, was found unbroken on a bed of moss. It was of a bright green, with curious markings, and was pear-shaped. Jacques pointed out that this was a provision of nature for the guillemot's egg,

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which was not laid in a nest, but in a crevice of the bare rock. Its shape enabled it to turn upon its point instead of rolling. Eggs of the usual shape would roll down the rock and break. Many of these eggs were found, of great variety in size and coloring. A few were pure white, others were marked with blotches and lines of pink, green, purple, and blue, and some had spots and lines of black. The eggs of the razor-billed auk were far in the crevices of the rock and were taken with difficulty from the watchful birds. Ivan, who had recklessly thrust his hand into a hole, drew it back hastily and wrung his finger at which an auk had snapped.

On a neighboring island most of the eggs were those of wild ducks. The strangers remarked a group of very noisy, scolding birds. Jacques explained that the Esquimaux give these birds the name *tauk-sok*, but the Newfoundlanders call them "old squaws." The women gathered the down which lined the nests of the eider duck. These nests were large, twelve to fifteen inches in outside diameter, with a mass

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of down five or six inches deep. Ulrica said nothing, as she would not reproach any one, but Jacques saw the trouble in her face, and tried to reassure her.

“In this also,” he said, “the birds do accommodate. When the nest is removed once, again the mother plucks the down from her breast; if twice it is taken, the father he does also pluck the down. More than twice we take it never; and again upon the bird it does always grow.”

But Ulrica would not touch the nests, and she gazed with so much sympathy at a pair of ducks who were seeking their vanished home that she was unmindful of her egg-gathering. Jacques caught up the basket which she had placed on a bed of moss, and filled it with the olive-colored eggs. He showed her then how to test the eggs, to reject those that were not fresh, and to pack the sound ones with moss so that they should not break.

Jake Tollin interrupted the work to announce with glee that he had discovered some cormorants' nests on the shelf of a high cliff. When

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the eggers hastened to the cliff side and looked over, the cormorants flew to a distance, and Jake with a rope about his waist descended to the ledge. The nests were very large, made of thick birch branches, and each nest contained five eggs. Jake filled a basket with the long, pointed eggs, which were of a tea color, fastened it to a light rope, and the boys above drew it carefully upward. When the sailor followed his collection and reached the top of the cliff, Ulrica gave a gasp of relief.

"Why, Miss Rica," he said, "wuz you scared? You look reel white."

"I remember when I was over the precipice myself," she said. "If the rope had broken you would have been dashed to pieces."

"But I knowed it wuz a tough one, an' them fellers holdin' on would n't hev let go. I wuz all right, bless ye. I'm afeared this here Labrador's goin' to be too rough on yer nerves."

When all the baskets were filled, the enthusiastic young people still desired to remain, therefore Jake Tollin with Achille Brulot and

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Bernard Marbeuf embarked with the older women, leaving the lively ones to follow at their leisure. As the sea was calm and all the lads were good sailors no one thought of danger.

On the departure of the elders, Louis Brulot suggested returning by a different course, as the strangers desired to see a great iceberg at close range, and even Jacques, the prudent, agreed. Under the sunshine from a clear sky, the pinnacles and towers, the columns and arches of the berg gleamed like jewels of many colors. The waves shone green as they dashed against it, and far up into the highest peak went a broad band, blue as a sapphire.

“How wonderful that is!” said Ulrica.
“What is the cause of it?”

She turned to Jacques for explanation, and his answer was ready:

“Where the blue does appear, long, long ago was a great crack that with the water filled and froze; but the ice of it was never so hard as the ice of the berg; therefore does it quickly melt and its waters run down sparkling in the sun.”

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"There is a reindeer with branching horns!" cried Ivan. "Beside it is a knight in armor with a spear. Where there are so many shapes the berg is beginning to melt. Jake says the ice is hard as flint, and each berg is only a piece off a great glacier in Greenland."

"Look, there's an arch in it!" exclaimed Ulrica. "It seems to go right through from one side to the other."

"Hurrah!" from Tom Corning. "Let's sail under it and come out at the farther side."

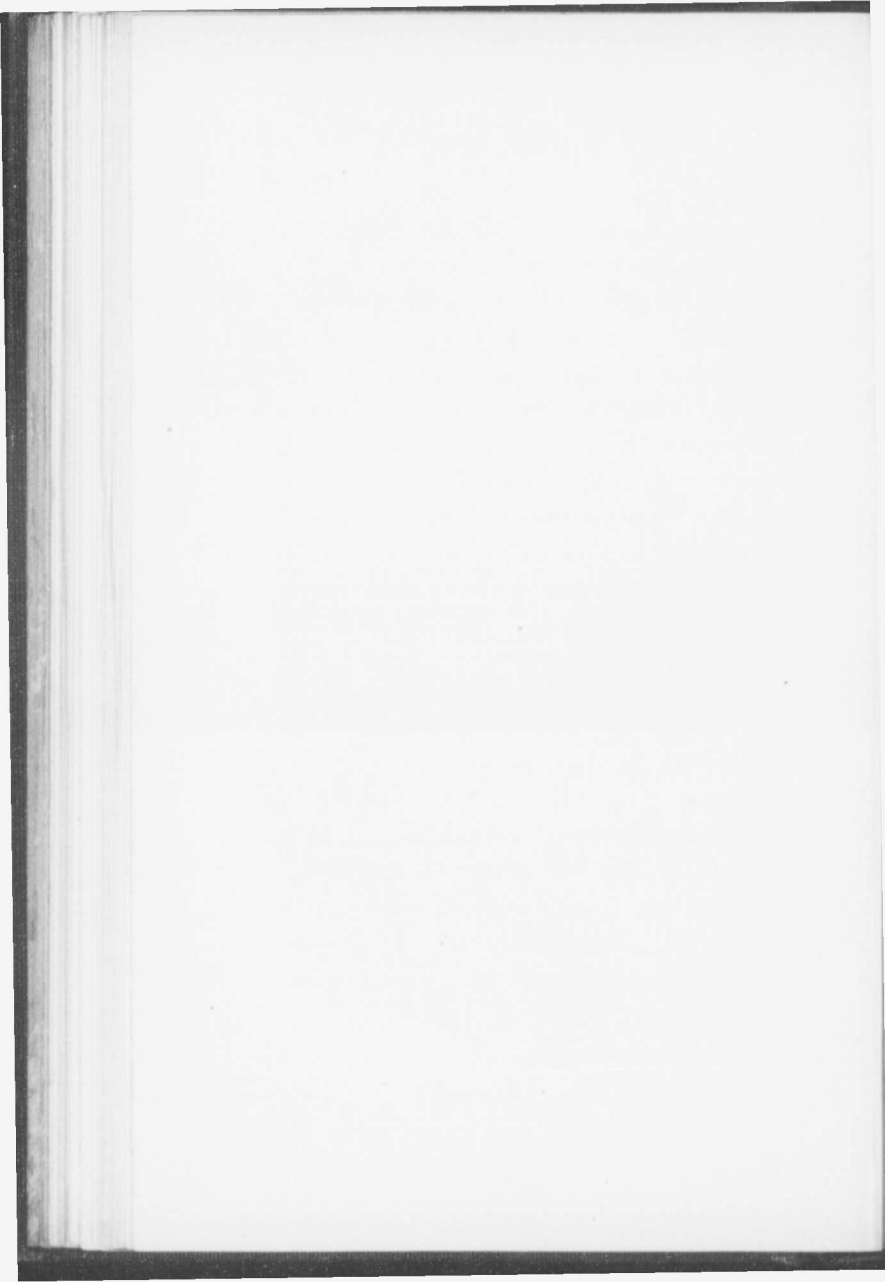
Ivan eagerly seconded the bold proposition, but Jacques and Louis were silent. Louis knew the peril of such an attempt, but shrank from being outdone in daring by the American boy. Jacques looked inquiringly at Ulrica. Had she uttered a word of protest, he would have decided at once in the negative; but the berg had fascinated her and she hailed the suggestion with delight.

"O, let us go!" she begged, and Jacques no longer hesitated.

"Take down the sail," he commanded. "If



“Let's sail under it and come out at the farther side.”



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close we pass, it necessary will be to row. Sharp, swift, look out for the ice beneath! The berg that remains the water below more enormous is than that above, and also of shapes it has many."

Ulrica gave a little shiver, but her courage returned when she remembered how Jacques had steered the boat in safety amid the submerged rocks beyond Wabistan harbor. Soon the adventurers were able to peer down through the water at the foundations of the great mass, which branched out in menacing and fantastic forms. A broad channel at the entrance to the arch confirmed their hope that the chasm extended to the bottom of the berg; if so, the only difficulty would be to keep the boat from contact with the great ice roots on either side.

All over the surface of the berg, water trickled or poured in sparkling, winding streams, or in falls and cataracts. It splashed the faces of the explorers, and drops innumerable fell ringing on the sea. Louis Brulot held a pail beneath an overhanging ledge, and drew it into the boat

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full of pure water, intensely cold. At the very entrance of the arch, Joseph Marbeuf made the disquieting suggestion that if a part of the berg should break off, the whole mass would roll over, upset the boat, and drown passengers and crew.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Tom Corning. "With all its waterfalls, this old berg is solid at the heart. Hurrah! We're right under the arch! Let's stop a minute and shout. There are splendid echoes here."

The oarsmen paused and the girls joined them in shouting. They gleefully asked questions of the berg in French and English. Where had it come from? How many years had it lived? How far had it travelled? Was it aware that long ago, in Arctic lands, it had been snow on the mountain side, and had been pressed hard and harder till it had become sound enough to resist the ocean? They kept silence while making believe to wait for reply, and regretted that they could not address the visitor in the tongue of its country. Ivan remarked that he wondered

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how a stranger so polished could refrain from answering polite inquiry. As if in mocking commentary, a sharp, ringing crack followed his words, and a trembling of the ice-mass shook the boat.

“Row, row, for the life!” cried Jacques, seizing his oars. “The berg, it bursts, it explodes! Swift, quick, or we be buried in the sea!”

Tom and Ivan grasped their oars, but had hardly dipped them in the water when they heard a louder, sharper report, accompanied by a crash, a roar, and a rumbling more awful than that of any thunder they had known. Huge blocks of ice fell before the entrance to the arch, and glistened green and white upon the waters. The berg rocked to and fro, nearly overturning the boat, whose occupants, stunned by the shock, sat powerless. Corning recovered self-possession and dipped his oars.

“Too late!” cried Jacques. “Be still, be still. In that alone a chance is.”

The rocking of the berg continued. The wild

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motion of the water threatened to dash the boat against the walls of the icy cavern. The French girls shrieked, but Ulrica did not utter a cry. Ivan moved to her side and put his arm about her. Jacques commanded, "The oar hold fast! With it guard well so we be hurled not against the wall!"

Marie Brulot began to cry that her mangled body would be lost and father and mother would never know her fate. Ulrica caught her hand, and with quivering, white lips tried to say words of cheer. Marie grew calmer, and for moments no one spoke.

Jacques broke the ominous silence with unsteady voice: "More still it has become. If the oar break not yet may we be saved. Wait, move not at all. If that happen which I hope, praisonly we row out from the farther side."

The berg was regaining equilibrium; the rocking was less violent, the swell abated; and at length Jacques gave the word: "Take the oar and with carefulness row on. *Le bon Dieu* He save us. We return with our life."

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Oars had been broken by the impact against the icy walls, but two sound pairs remained. The boat glided out from the archway, but no one spoke until the berg was many yards away. Then the oarsmen rested. They drew long breaths. Their endurance had been severely strained.

The setting sun illumined sky and sea with crimson and gold. Pinnacles of ice were clothed in flame, and the brilliance of the berg was reflected in the water.

"Le bon Dieu He paint it," said Pauline Marbeuf. "Le bon Dieu hear our prayer. When I pray my fear go from me."

Jacques bowed his head reverently: "Yes, le bon Dieu save us, though we deserve it not."

Tom Corning had commented that he liked all of Jacques but his moralizing, and he now hastened to remark: "Look at the berg! It will rock like that till it gets its balance. Every time even a small piece of ice breaks off, the old berg has to rock until the balance becomes true."

Jacques took up his oars and began to row.

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He did not speak again until his boat was well within the harbor, not far from home. "One moment stop the oar," he asked. "Something I wish to say." He turned to Ulrica: "Mademoiselle Oolrike, deeply I the shame feel for the danger to which I bring you. Of that danger Ivan could not know, and Louis and myself we spoke not. Why spoke we not? For the fear alone that the stranger think of us as coward. But when we the word held back, that was to act the coward. When we in peril lay, quick through my heart did it go that you may die by reason of my fault. Therefore do I ask your pardonment, and tell you of my sorrow."

"Humph!" ejaculated Marie Brulot, and spoke aside to Pauline. "Has he not eyes for any other? Is it that she alone was in the danger?"

Ivan grasped his friend's hand and shook it warmly: "It's fine of you to take the blame, Jacques; but it was our doing as much as yours. Tom and I were determined to go."

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Jacques shook his head. "You mistake. I could have prevented. But I say now to Mademoiselle Oolrike, ever afterward she may trust me. If Ivan does accompany with me, never again do I lead him into peril unless it is that of which there is no avoidance."

"I do trust you, Jacques," said Ulrica earnestly. "I am satisfied always to know that Ivan is with you."

Jacques's lips quivered, and Tom Corning said aside: "Bless the boy! He's growing sentimental. I'd better save the situation."

Then he cried aloud: "Three cheers for Jacques Charpentier, the noblest Labradorian of them all," and led the cheering with a vim.

VIII

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TOM CORNING'S companions delayed their return, and Ivan suggested that they had persuaded the captain of the coasting steamer to take them to the North Pole. Corning was well supplied with money, but it pleased him to think that he should earn his board. He joined the workers on the "stage," and became expert in splitting and salting fish, for which the superintendent paid him in fresh or unsalted fish, known as "green-fish." He had labored diligently beside Ivan for a week, when he left the stage and hastened to inform Ulrica that a berry-picking party would go to the valley on the following morning.

"Let me help you to get something ready for the luncheon, or dinner, or whatever they

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call the picnic feed," he urged. "Ivan is so stuck on his work that I could n't tear him away. What do you want to take?"

The subject required consideration. "I'll try to make some gingerbread," said Ulrica, after a pause. "Of course I must use fat instead of butter, and the wild birds' eggs are dreadfully fishy; but we are always so hungry that we don't mind much. I can boil some eggs hard and take the last of our coffee; that will be a treat, for no one else has a grain."

"Ivan says we must pick enough berries to set you up in preserves for the whole winter," remarked Corning. "Won't you allow me to present you with my share of molasses for the purpose? I understand that the people here use molasses for preserving instead of sugar. It would be a little memento of me."

"Oh, thank you! but we could not do that," protested Ulrica.

"Why not? You could mark the jars that you had filled with the fruits of my toils, and think of me in the winter evenings while you

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sat with said jars before you and enjoyed the contents thereof. Heigh-ho! Am I in truth growing sentimental? I must have caught it from Jacques."

"No, no," declared Ulrica. "Take your fish home as they are, or trade them for molasses, and I'll preserve your berries for you to take to your mother."

"What a joke on the mater!" laughed Corning. "She thinks her hopeful son is unique, that some day all the world will open its ear to hearken to his utterance. Alas! what a blow 't will be, when she learns that he gave his brains, his eyes, his hands, his fluent tongue, in trade for greenfish and molasses!"

"Indeed she'll be proud of you. Take your preserves home, eat them in the winter, and think of Labrador."

"I don't need any preserves to make me think of Labrador."

Corning rolled his eyes, gazed upward at the ceiling, and then turned to Ulrica.

"Don't be foolish," she advised. "I must

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begin on my gingerbread. You may beat the eggs."

"That is gracious of you, madam. I assure you I am an expert. The cook at home used to let me do it, and I was always allowed to scrape the dish that the cakes had been mixed in, as a reward for good conduct."

"If you stay long enough in Labrador, you'll prefer blubber to cake batter."

"That is true. One must cultivate a taste for the native dainties. When you go back to England you will turn up your nose at roast beef and plum pudding, and long for dried cod and seal oil. Did you ever hear of 'pipsey'?"

"No," said Ulrica, "what is it?"

"Codfish dried in the sun without salt, powdered, mixed with fresh seal oil, and eaten with cranberries; good to prevent scurvy from too much salt food. Sounds appetizing, does n't it?"

"Ugh! what a horrid mixture!" said Ulrica. "My fat and fishy gingerbread will be a delicacy in comparison."

Soon after dawn of the following day, the

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young housekeepers, with Tom Corning, walked over the rocks to the winding river, where the other berry-pickers waited in boats and bark canoes.

The river's course was between steep and rocky shores, but the landing place was a sandy beach at the entrance to a wide valley. There was summer warmth in the valley, a soft, humid air like that of a conservatory. The trees were larger than any the strangers had heretofore seen in Labrador; the mossy carpet was sprinkled with wild flowers, and the lark sang joyously. The Labrador jay, too, was there, the yellow warbler, the ruby-crowned kinglet, and the rare Lapland longspur, remarkable for its lengthened hind claw. The valley led to a larch-bordered swamp where cloudberryes were abundant, and on the dry land near the river grew the dewberry, a fruit resembling a blackberry, with a delicate wine flavor.

Late in the afternoon, when the picnickers had filled their pails and baskets, they sat on a mossy slope, to refresh themselves with the

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remnants from the midday luncheon. Ulrica was about to raise a cup to her lips, when, glancing in the direction of a berry patch, she saw two moving objects.

"Look, look at those black things!" she exclaimed. "What can they be?"

"Bear! He is de bear!" cried Pauline Marbeuf, jumping up in haste and spilling her coffee on the ground.

"De bear! Where dey is?" asked Mrs. Marbeuf in terror.

"There, there, among the berries!" said Ulrica, pointing to the spot.

Confusion followed. Mrs. Brulot seized baby Pierre, and, unmindful of her pails heaped with fruit, rushed to the river. Mrs. Charpentier, carrying Henri, and with two children clinging to her skirts, was close upon her neighbor. Mrs. Marbeuf with her daughters took to her heels, but Ulrica remained beside her brother.

"Shall we fight them or run?" asked Ivan of Achille Brulot. "I have n't had experience with bears."

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“Fight no good,” responded Achille. “We no de gun have. De black bear he’s not fierce; we leave him by lone, he eat de berry. We go near, boder him, one dat de cub have, she come fight us. Dose foolsome women dey de basket leaf behin’, de pail also. We dem now pick up an’ go. You tink we present dem on de bear. Oh no, not much!”

Reassured by Achille’s coolness, Ulrica took a pail and a basket, and, keeping near her brother and Corning, began to walk toward the river, looking back uneasily from time to time to see if the bears were following. Suddenly, Marie Brulot, who had remained with Ulrica, stopped short, as if overcome with fright, uttered a blood-curdling yell, threw down her berries and ran; and Achille, whom she had clutched, ran with her.

The bears had moved from one part of the berry-patch to another, and she had imagined they were in pursuit. They would probably have slunk out of sight had they been left unmolested; but Tom and Louis, perceiving their

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startled movements, and believing they were about to make an attack, advanced in a threatening attitude, armed with sticks and stones, and the mother bear made ready to spring. Louis, taking careful aim, hit her on the head with a large stone. The poor creature, infuriated by pain, sprang toward him, while her companion rushed at Tom. Corning brandished a heavy stick, which the animal dashed aside. It was almost upon him, when Ulrica, who had half unconsciously held on to her pail of berries, darted to his rescue, and hurled the contents of the heaped pail directly at the head of the bear. It was an effective missile, for the creature, blinded by the juice that had accumulated in the bottom of the pail, turned around dizzily, and gave Ivan opportunity to seize a stone and deliver a stunning blow. Louis, meanwhile, was fighting for his life, and Ivan, leaving Tom to cope with the temporarily disabled enemy, went to the French boy's assistance.

With sticks and stones the lads were keeping their antagonist at bay when the voice of Mrs.

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Brulot was heard, shouting encouragement. She hastened toward the combatants, flourishing a long line of hide with a noose at one end, and while the boys harried the bear with stones, she skilfully threw the running noose over its head and drew it tight. Then the plucky woman helped her son to fasten the prisoner to a stout tree, while Ivan turned to help Tom, who had wounded the other bear in the foreleg.

The morning had been fair, and in the excitement of the bear fight no one had heeded the threatening clouds that now hid the sun. A flash of lightning and a thunder peal were followed by great drops of rain and a sudden fall in the temperature. Mrs. Brulot seized Ulrica, and dragged her away despite the girl's protests. "Run, we run for de shore," she cried. "De bear, he too lame, he no your brudder hurt now. We go under de canoe. De boy, dey all right, dey take care demselves."

"Come," said Louis, addressing Ivan and Tom. "De bear, we him kill not widout de gun. We by night return we find him again.

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He limp not far. De little one, she stay by de mudder."

So saying, he turned and followed his mother and Ulrica; but Tom and Ivan remained in the hope of dispatching the wounded animal. To their astonishment, it seemed to regain the use of its maimed limb, and suddenly made a dash for them, when they ran for their lives, not heeding in what direction they were going. When they stopped perforce, to take breath, the bear was not in sight, and they found themselves in a mountain pass which was bare of vegetation. Rain was falling heavily and the fugitives looked for shelter. Ivan pointed to a huge boulder.

"Big stones like that are dotted all over Labrador. If they are lying above hollows, there is room to squeeze under."

"It looks as if it had dropped from the sky," said Tom. "Yes, let's go for it."

But the boulder lay flat on the ground and would afford no refuge.

"I'm about played out," said Corning. "We

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may as well sit here and take our shower bath."

"No, you wait here while I go and prospect. The rain seems to be holding up a little."

Ivan hurried off, and presently Tom heard his encouraging shout: "Come along, old fellow! I've found a tiptop place."

Corning followed the voice around a bend into a wide ravine. The floor of this hollow, as well as part of the walls, was covered with a dense growth of dwarfed spruce and fir, the intertwining branches of which spread out flat on the top like a table, and completely hid the trunks.

"It's tight as a waterproof canvas," said Ivan exultantly. "Not a drop of rain can touch us when we're under that."

"But is there room? It is n't more than four feet high and it looks like a solid mass."

"Yes, we'll get through all right. I've been under one. Of course we must stoop and creep and look sharp that we don't bang our heads against the trunks. They are twisted and grown

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together in some places; but there are pretty wide stretches where there is room to lie down comfortably. The people here call it a tuckermel bush."

The wanderers crept under the bush with care, but they were well bumped and scratched before they reached a spot where they could sit upright. On bright days a little sunlight could penetrate the dense vegetation, but now the enclosure was dark as night. No rain came through the closely woven branches, though it was falling in torrents.

"One comfort is that the flood has discouraged the mosquitoes," remarked Tom. "I'm sure my face is swollen to twice its natural size. I'll have to invent a mosquito eradicator before I bring my tourists up here."

"They're awful pests," agreed Ivan. "It's good they've let up on us for a little while. We're better off than the others are down at the shore. I hope my sister —"

His words were cut short by a crackling of the bushes, followed by a muffled growl. He

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grasped his companion's arm: "Tom, it's — it's a bear! I forgot — Jacques told me they hide under tuckermel!"

"Two of them — they're coming!" whispered Corning. "Let's try to — creep out."

The bears which had scented their prey were approaching as fast as the tuckermel would permit; and the terrified fugitives, who could see nothing, did not know in what direction to turn.

"Ouch!" exclaimed Tom, who had struck his head sharply.

"I do believe we're going farther in," mourned Ivan. "It's getting more and more tangled up. We don't know where they are. We may creep right into their jaws!"

The growls had ceased, and the crackling of branches was not audible above the roar of the wind and the swish of rain.

"I wish — they'd make a noise," gasped Tom. "This — is awful!"

Then something moved almost at his elbow. He was stunned with terror, for he was utterly

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helpless. The unknown thing caught his sleeve. He tugged to free himself, but in vain. He shuddered, believing that in a moment he should feel the teeth of the creature in his flesh, and his senses reeled. It gripped his waist. Was it going to smother him, hug him to death? He tried to cry to Ivan, who seemed strangely silent, but, as in a nightmare, his voice refused utterance. The invisible thing was dragging him he knew not where, and he had no power to resist. Horror upon horror loomed before him and he swooned. When he came to himself a report of guns was ringing in his ear. He was outside of the bush alone, and the rain had ceased. What had brought him here? Where was Ivan? How had he been saved from the bear? He sprang to his feet and shouted for his friend.

Presently he heard the voice of Ivan, a cheery voice, and unafraid: "Tom, old fellow, where are you?"

He ran in the direction of the cry, calling as he went.

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“The bears are done for,” cried Ivan when he came in sight. “Two Indians who were under the tuckermel shot them. One of them caught hold of you, and you made such queer noises that he thought you were strangling and pulled you out into the air. I don’t know how ever they managed to shoot the bears under that bush, but they ’re both stone dead. I mean the bears, not the Indians, but it’s no wonder I’m a little mixed. They’ll come with us now and finish the two we had the fight with. We’re to keep the mother and cub, and they’ll take the other. It’s most extraordinary to find four so near together. Mitasing and Weokuk, the Indians, say this valley is richer in berries than any other place in Labrador, and that’s what brought the bears.”

“Well!” exclaimed Corning, “we’ve touched the top notch! Even if the other fellows have gone as far as Hudson’s Bay, they can’t beat us for adventures. I would n’t swop stories with them for all their coasting.”

Mitasing and Weokuk soon found and put

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to death the maimed bear. They shot the defenceless mother who was tied to a spruce tree, but saved the cub alive. Mrs. Brulot, by whose lasso the mother had been caught, had bespoken the cub for the captain of the coasting steamer, who had promised to pay liberally for a young bear. Great was the rejoicing when the wanderers arrived at the river bank, the Indians hauling the dead animal and Tom and Ivan leading the cub. The dead mother and her living young one were placed in the largest boat, to be rowed home by Achille and Louis Brulot, while Mrs. Brulot and her small children were transferred to Ivan's boat.

The picnickers were on the homeward way, the boys talking jubilantly of their adventures, when Ulrica, who had been very quiet, suddenly burst into weeping.

"Why, Rica, what's the matter?" asked her brother anxiously. "Were you hurt?"

"N-no, b-but you and T-Tom, Mr. C-Corning, were so n-nearly killed. B-besides, it all seems so cruel."

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"My sister is n't used to this sort of thing," said Ivan apologetically. "She is brave, very; but she hates to see anything hurt."

"She's the pluckiest girl I ever saw," declared Corning, "and has the most presence of mind. She saved my life. If she had not come to help me just at the right moment, I should not have been here now."

"She vairee mosh tire'," said Mrs. Brulot, putting her arm around Ulrica. "She more better be praisonly after she eat an' sleep."

Mrs. Charpentier, in a neighboring canoe, overheard and remarked, "Why dey let her so tire' become? She nevaire be enough strong for walk, walk, all de day. If my Jacques did here come, more better care he take by her."

Ivan started. How could Jacques Charpentier's mother dare to say that her son, a stranger, would have taken better care of Ulrica than her own devoted brother? Then his conscience gave him a twinge. Of late he had often left her heavy work to do, far too heavy

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for her strength, while he roved with Tom Corning. He meant well, very well, but he sometimes forgot. He would be more mindful for the future. No French Canadian fisherman should usurp his privileges.

IX

A PITIFUL CONFESSION

TOM CORNING had hoped to return to New York showing the scars of his encounters, but when the coasting steamer stopped for him at Wabistan, he embarked sound of flesh and bone. "Remember, this is not a last good-bye," he cried from the vessel's deck. "I shall certainly be with you next summer, and we'll have a rattling good time."

Ivan answered huskily and Ulrica's lip quivered. With the departure of the friendly lad the world without seemed to be shutting itself off from the deserted pair, and the rugged hills of Labrador looked bleaker, drearier than ever before.

Mr. Sinclair, the agent, arrived on the following day, but he had no news of the lost father.

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He had sent inquiries to Hudson's Bay posts, and to "planters" in charge of fisheries; sooner or later his messages would reach every known settlement of Labrador, not only on the Atlantic coast but the Canadian territory on the gulf. Whenever a vessel was seen in the distance the anxious boy and girl hastened to the wharf, only to return with slower steps and in bitter disappointment.

In September a steamboat was sighted, and the word went forth that it was the ship of the Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen. Doctors and nurses are connected with this mission, and in the lonely settlements, far from regular physicians, the arrival of the mission vessel is looked for eagerly. There had been many accidents at Wabistan, and serious inflammations had developed in cuts and fractures from lack of proper care. Two girls who had been hurt on the fish stage lay tossing feverishly in the bunkhouse; a man with a bone protruding from his broken arm walked feebly to the wharf; a lad who had suffered tortures from a fish hook embedded

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in his flesh limped to the boat on his festering foot; mothers, with fretful, teething infants in their arms, hastened to seek advice; and men and women, boys and girls, with cuts and bruises, sprains and burns, swelled the waiting crowd. The sun had set before the twins had opportunity to present their case. The need of the sick and wounded was more urgent than the anxiety of the lonely boy and girl. But at last, when the patients had been treated, and the doctor was preparing to return to his vessel for the night, the brother and sister approached him.

Dr. Greville started when he saw them; they were so different from the people among whom they dwelt. Ivan had put on his Sunday suit for the occasion. Ulrica's hair was neatly coiled upon her head, and a white ruching at the throat relieved her black dress. Her refined, delicate-featured face flushed as she introduced herself and Ivan. In her happier life, she had been self-possessed, but her misfortunes had begotten timidity. Her voice was sweet and soft, and her enunciation singularly clear.

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"Dr. Greville," she began, and the doctor bowed. "We are Ivan and Ulrica Stewart-Dun—" She paused a moment as in confusion, then recovering herself, continued, "Ivan and Ulrica Stewart. We want very much to talk to you, for we have many things to say. Could you possibly come to our cottage, where you would not be disturbed? Am I asking too much? I know you are tired after such a busy day."

"I am used to it," said the doctor cheerily. "I shall be very glad to go with you, but I hope that no one of your family is ill."

"We are the only ones of the family here," explained Ivan. "We live alone in that cottage on the crag, that Mr. Sinclair, the agent, lent us. No one is ill there. It's—it's worse than illness—a worse kind of trouble."

"I am very sorry to hear it. You are young to have serious trouble. Wait here a few minutes while I speak to one of my crew, then I will walk up the rocks with you."

During the climb to Eyrie Cottage the twins

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did not refer to their story. They inquired about the patients and heard that the girls who were ill in the bunkhouse and the man with a broken arm would go on the mission boat to the hospital at Battle Harbour.

“What good news!” said Ulrica. “Those poor things have had a miserable time. It’s bad enough to be ill in a light, clean room, with people who love you doing everything they can for you. I felt the difference when I had a sore throat here, though our cottage is a palace compared with the bunkhouse.”

On arrival at the cottage Ulrica had some difficulty in persuading her guest to take the easiest chair, as he assured her he was not accustomed to coddling himself.

“But you need rest,” she insisted. “Do sit there while I make you a cup of tea. It’s real tea, — Ceylon, not Labrador. I know it will refresh you. Please don’t say no. The kettle is boiling. I came to the cottage while you were busy with your patients and made the fire on purpose.”

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The doctor was about to decline, but perceiving that his young hostess would be disappointed, he said, "Thank you, I'm sure I shall enjoy a cup of 'real tea.'"

A tray on the table held three dainty china cups. Ulrica looked at the delicate ware wistfully. It was a part of her other, different life.

"One lump or two?" she asked when the tea was ready. She meant to put in the sugar herself, as she did not wish her guest to see that the bowl contained only six small lumps.

"Thank you," he said, "I never take sugar; and I enjoy tea without milk."

"You have an accommodating taste," remarked Ivan, "as there are no cows in Labrador, at least not near Wabistan."

The visitor had pleased Ulrica by drinking two cups of her tea, before she referred to the object of his visit. Then, supplemented by Ivan, she told how they had come to Wabistan to find their father, and how sadly they had been disappointed.

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Dr. Greville listened sympathetically. "I am very, very sorry for you, more than I can say. I wish I had known this before I went north; I am on my return journey now. I will inquire at all the stopping places southward, and do everything in my power to help you."

"There 's something more," said Ivan abruptly. "My sister and I talked it over and made up our minds we'd tell you what we could not even tell Mr. Sinclair. You are almost the same as a clergyman,—a doctor as much as a clergyman will keep a secret,—and I want to talk to you confidentially as man to man." The boy stood with head erect and shoulders squared, as if he had rallied his courage. He was tall for his age, and the bronzing of his face by sun and wind added to his manly appearance.

The doctor looked at him earnestly: "I do hope I can be of service to you, and you may be sure I shall respect your confidence."

"We would not tell any one on earth this—about our own father," said Ulrica, "if we did

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not think the telling it might help you to find him; and if we were not so certain, certain sure that he never, never did it. It was because — they had accused him — because it hurt him — deep down in his soul — that he — called himself — Stewart — ”

Ulrica paused, for her visitor looked troubled. “Don’t, don’t think he took a name that did not belong to him,” she pleaded. “He would not do that. He had a right to it. It is our own name, but it is only the first part; the whole is Stewart-Dundas.”

“Colonel Stewart-Dundas!” exclaimed the doctor involuntarily.

Ivan reddened and bit his lip. “Yes, Colonel Stewart-Dundas. We are proud of the name and proud of our father. Some day people will know, the very people who condemned him, that we have reason to be proud. We need not tell you why they don’t think so now. You know it. It was in all the newspapers. We could not hide it.”

Dr. Greville held up his hand, as with a

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gesture for silence. "Yes, yes, dear boy, I know. Don't pain yourself by telling me of it."

But Ulrica went on impetuously: "You know that he — he who was so honorable — so true — so every way good — was — cashiered, because they accused him of conduct — unworthy of an officer and a gentleman. Indeed, they might well have called it unworthy if he had done it, because —"

"Because it was a particularly mean kind of swindle," added Ivan. "How could they have been so mad, so blind? He would not put his finger on any such business as that."

Ulrica clenched her hands and walked to the window, where she stood and stared hard at the sea. She feared she might break down and cry, and that would embarrass the visitor, as her tears always embarrassed her brother.

Dr. Greville caught Ivan's hand in a strong grasp. The boy's face was working; there was misery in his eyes; but the handclasp comforted him.

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"You are kind," he faltered presently. "You are sorry for us and want to help us; but — you believe it. I don't blame you. You did not know him. If he had been your friend, you would have known it was impossible."

"No, no, do not think that I believe it. I happened to be in England at the time and I heard the case discussed. It seemed incredible to me as to others that a man of his character could be accused of — that transaction. If there was false witness, I hope with all my heart that the truth will be discovered."

"We know there was false witness, we are sure of it," declared Ivan. "Father was made a scape-goat, and some one perjured himself. His men think so, the men he did so much for. They used to come to see us and Aunt Agatha. It seemed to comfort them to talk about it. Corporal Byrnes ground his teeth and said he did n't think it was any harm to pray that the guilty man would be found out and punished according to his deserts."

"God bless them," said the doctor brokenly.

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"Their allegiance does honor to them as well as to your father."

Ulrica returned from the window. Her face was white.

"Dear child," said Dr. Greville, "you are worn out. Promise me you will not talk any more or think any more about your trouble to-night. I will write you from Battle Harbour, and let us hope I may have good news."

"We will be on the wharf to-morrow to see you off," said Ivan, "and all Wabistan will be with us to wish you a safe journey."

"The telling was hard," said Ulrica, when the visitor had gone; "but it was a relief. We don't seem so much alone since some one else — some one with a heart — knows all about us."

X

THE HUT IN THE VALLEY

IVAN enjoyed the movement, the excitement of the fishery, and as the season drew to a close he tried to put away thought of lonely days to come. He found delight in watching the landing of a haul of cod, or in looking down through the clear water to see the salmon leap in the folds of the net. It was not necessary to watch and wait in dead silence as when fishing for trout in a river. The cod took the bait or entered the traps while conversation went on in the boats above them. When the fishermen sailed from one net to another at a distance, they told stories or sang songs. The songs were merry, the stories thrilling; they were stories of adventure on land and sea, of hairbreadth escapes, of terrific storms; and they were not confined to this northern

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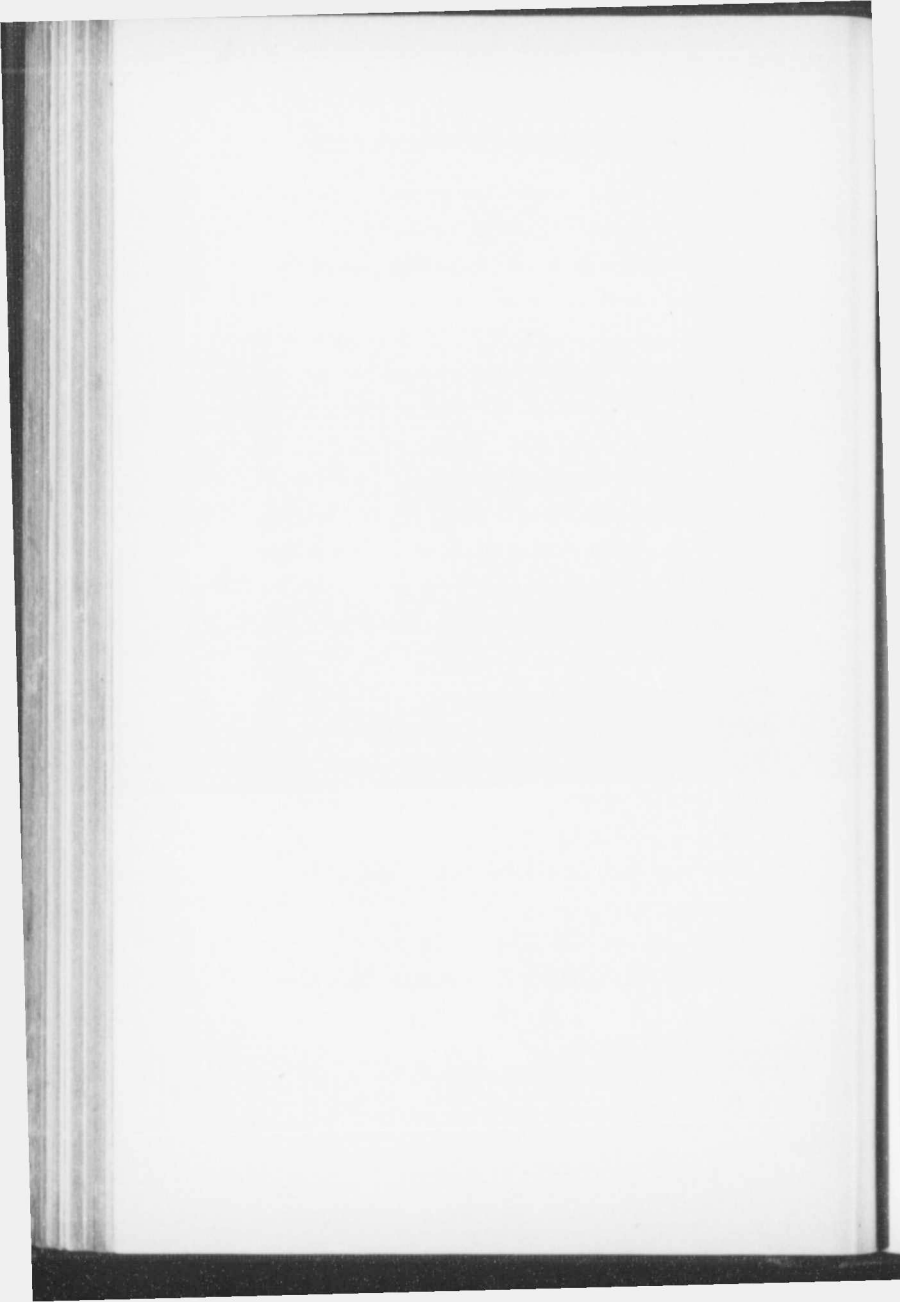
coast, for some of the fishermen sailors had encircled the globe. Work usually went on all day and often far into the night, but work when enlivened by such tales was not dreary; and sometimes, in an evening of leisure, the men gathered for a fish bake on the shore, when around a great bonfire that cast a rosy glow on the water, they sang choruses and told more stories. On these occasions, Ivan sometimes forgot his sister; and after watching for him long after the evening shadows had fallen, she left the cottage to seek him. He was always attractively penitent after such lapses, and endeavored to make amends by attentions that pleased her, and by helpfulness in the housework.

The autumn days were cold, ice had formed in the pools and some snow had fallen when the last fishing crew from Newfoundland left Wabistan. The boy and girl watched the receding boat with sinking hearts. They no longer hoped to hear of their father this year. Navigation had become more dangerous, and it was



"The cottage stood in a grove of spruce."

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not probable that another vessel would come to Wabistan before the spring. The coast would soon be choked with ice, and the remaining inhabitants would be shut in for the winter.

When Mr. Sinclair called at the cottage to say good-bye, he told the wanderers that the three French Canadian families would care for them as for their own flesh and blood; he promised to continue his inquiries for the missing father, and to write if he heard anything; but it was evident that he, too, had given up hope of any early news. He sent from the storehouse all that remained of the season's provisions, — a barrel of flour, some Indian meal, buckwheat, rice, coffee, and a large jar of molasses; also a gun with powder and shot for Ivan, and yards of heavy flannel, red and gray, with needles, thread, and thick woollen yarn for Ulrica.

“It was jolly good of him,” said Ivan, as he looked over the stores. “Flour is twelve dollars a barrel this year in Labrador.”

On the day after the fishermen had sailed,

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Ivan went with his companions to the inland valley where the residents would pass the winter. He wanted to choose a site for a house, and told Ulrica she must not see it till the house was finished and furnished; all the men had promised to lend a hand in the building. Thereafter, in her brother's absence, Ulrica was occupied in preparation for colder weather. She made two suits each of heavy flannel underwear for herself and Ivan, and a gray flannel dress trimmed with red for herself. The stitches were large and the garment was baggy, but style was not considered at Wabistan. She began to knit woollen stockings, and promised that when Ivan had killed a seal she would learn to make sealskin boots and clothes. One day she held a quilting bee, when the women of the settlement helped her to make two large ticks and fill them with down and the feathers of wild birds. The treat for this occasion was buckwheat cakes and molasses, with the usual Labrador tea, from the evergreen, leathery leaves of a shrub of the heath family. On bright days the women and

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girls went cranberry picking, when they were free from the tormenting black flies and mosquitoes, the pests of the summer.

When the French families moved to the valley Ulrica was left alone all day in her high perched cottage. She agreed with Ivan that she would be more comfortable there than in any of the crowded valley cabins. As she had not seen a wild animal near the coast, and as it was improbable that any stranger would reach Wabistan at this season, she was not afraid. But the lonely days, when she knew there was not a human being within many miles, grew terrible to her. She longed for the sound of a voice, the touch of a hand. Even the Indians and Esquimaux had gone away, the Indians to a wooded region inland, and the Esquimaux to a Moravian mission on the coast. For days the sky was heavy with clouds and the sea leaden and dreary. Sometimes the desolate girl walked on the shore, finding companionship in the booming of the waves; but the winds were keen, and she returned shivering to her cottage. Snow

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lay deep in the hollows; the steep rocks were slippery and walking was dangerous. One day there was a tempestuous wind and heavy snow. Late in the evening Ivan had not returned. Ulrica watched anxiously and grew terrified by weird shadows and dismal sounds. She put a beacon light in the window and went from time to time to the door to peer through the storm. At last, worn out, she fell asleep in her chair. The striking of the clock aroused her. She started up, wide awake now, and realized that it was midnight. What had happened to her brother? Perhaps — perhaps he had been lost in the blinding snow!

There was some one outside. She heard the crunching sound of a footstep on the frosty rock, and ran to the door. But she paused with her hand on the latch, for a quick intuition told her that Ivan was not near. She turned down the lamp and looked out through a tiny hole in the blind. A man was standing on the threshold, but in the darkness she could not see whether he was a stranger or one of

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the valley dwellers. Another look made her reel and grasp a chair for support. The man was of the height of her father! The wayfarer began to batter angrily upon the door, as if enraged that no one had opened for him. He talked rapidly too, but his words seemed to be an unintelligible jabber.

Ulrica grew cold with fear. She had heard of a demented half-breed who lived about thirty miles inland, and who had wandered alone last year to Wabistan. Was this man the crazed Denis Lebeau? If so, he might break down the door and kill her. The cottage was of one story, but a space between the rafters and the pointed roof offered a shelter. Ivan had constructed a rough ladder and had made a storage place up there. If she could climb and draw the ladder after her she might be safe. Her feet were on the ladder when the creature without left the door and attacked the window. Ulrica heard the smashing of glass, and took a desperate course. Summoning the courage of her soldier ancestors she went to the

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door, drew the bolt with trembling hands, and invited the stranger to come in. When he entered she greeted him with a smile.

His clothes were tattered; he was pinched and hollow-cheeked, and his wild eyes had no light of reason in them; but he did not appear ferocious. He pointed to his mouth and shook his head sadly, "Hongry," he muttered, "hongry."

Ulrica nodded, motioned to a chair, and made haste to set food before him. He ate like one starving. When she filled his plate again, he took her hand, and patted it softly, muttering and looking up at her as if in thanks. She believed now that he would do her no harm, and tried to make him understand that her brother was coming, but he only laughed and muttered. When he had eaten till he was satisfied he lay down on the floor and fell asleep.

Ulrica was watching him, wide-eyed and racked with anxiety, when once more she heard a step without, followed by a knocking at the door. She did not hesitate now. This one was surely a friend. She had not fastened

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the bolt, but had been ready to flee if danger threatened. She opened the door and met Jacques Charpentier.

"O Jacques!" she cried, "Jacques, where is Ivan, my brother?"

"He is safe, all safe, Mademoiselle Ulrica." (He had learned to pronounce her name.) "He did try to come to you, but Jean Brulot held him back lest he be lost by the way. The storm is heavy and wild for one who is unaccustomed; but I, many times have I passed through it when it was more heavy, more wild than this; therefore no danger was for me."

"Oh, I am thankful, so thankful you have come!" she faltered. "Jacques, you always come when I need you most."

He looked at her wistfully, and held back the words he longed to say.

"Come in," she said, "but be still, for some one is here."

He started at sight of the man stretched on the floor, and, low-voiced, she related her adventure.

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“O Mademoiselle Ulrica!” he moaned. “Never again shall you be left so. He might have sent you to the death. For the days to come Ivan shall remain by your side, and I, with Paul and Louis, will do all the new house does need. Ivan shall not set his foot within the valley till that day when you go there with him.”

“And what of him?” she asked, pointing to her slumbering guest.

“Ah!” said Jacques, troubled; “but one thing is to do, to take him to my home. My mother it will disturb; but I may not turn him out to freeze, to starve, in the wild. No one will he harm, unless with unkindness he is met. Two years ago, a strong young man he was, but twenty and four. Far out on the desolate table land he lost himself; for days, for weeks, he did wander alone in the bitter cold, without food. When the trappers did find him, he was thus, with the many white threads in his hair. To his people we will send the word, and soon as possibility is they will seek him and return.”

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The man moved and rubbed his eyes, then turned and slept on.

"Go now, Mademoiselle Ulrica," said Jacques. "I will watch by this one, and in that other room that is Ivan's you will sleep till morning."

"No, no," she answered. "You are tired, you need rest. I will watch him. I shall not be afraid, knowing you are near."

But Jacques shook his head. "Mademoiselle Ulrica, for the moment I am the Dr. Greville, him will no one disobey. Your face is white, your eyes do speak of the necessity for sleep. Go and wake not till I tell you I depart."

Ulrica smiled softly. "You are very good to me," she said, then she went away. And Jacques sat by the madman with his eyes on her closed door.

At daylight the stranger awoke. When Jacques spoke to him in French, he nodded, arose, and put his arm on the young man's shoulder.

Jacques knocked at Ulrica's door. "Mademoiselle Ulrica," he said, "sleep on. Safe will

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you be till Ivan does come. We go now with speed, for this one does trust me with the confidence of a friend."

Ivan arrived in the afternoon full of apologies and regrets. He brought a well-filled basket, — roasted spruce partridges from Mrs. Charpentier and brook trout from Louis Brulot. "Rica, I started to come to you," he said pleadingly, "but Brulot and Marbeuf took me back by force. They said I should be lost and you would be alone for good. I believed you were safe, but I could not sleep for thinking how frightened you would be. Ugh! It makes me shiver to think of your being alone with that madman!"

"Where is he now? Will Mrs. Charpentier let him stay?"

"Only for one night. They will make him a bed in the lean-to. Early to-morrow Paul Charpentier and Achille Brulot will harness the dogs to a komatik and take him to his home. His father is French and his mother Indian, and he has brothers and sisters. I suppose they are

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all searching for him. Jacques is going to send word to Dr. Greville about him; he thinks he might get well if the doctor could send him to some hospital."

"Jacques always thinks of the right thing," observed Ulrica.

Ivan shrugged his shoulders. "He's awfully good and sensible, and all that, but I feel more at home with a chap who breaks a commandment once in a while."

Ulrica tapped her brother's hand. "Now, Ivan, you know you don't really mean that."

"Indeed I do mean it. A fellow who always remembers, and is cram full of wisdom and consideration and all manner of righteousness, is n't natural. It's uncanny. I don't say that Jacques is a prig. He's too brave and manly for that; but if he'd just make a crack in one of the ten; not a regular smash up, but a crack, he would n't seem so uncomfortably superior."

On the following days the young house-keepers packed crockery and breakable articles in boxes and baskets with the dried moss which

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they had stored for the purpose. On the last day they made their bedding into bales.

"How shall we move the stove?" asked Ulrica.

"Never mind that. We'll talk about it later."

Ivan's expression suggested a mystery, and Ulrica inquired: "Do you mean we are not to take it? Have you made fireplaces and dug an oven in the ground?"

"Wait and see. We've built bunks in the walls, and put up shelves for your pantry; that's all I'll tell you now. Jacques and Louis will soon be here with two big komatiks to take the things as far as the river, and we'll go up to the valley in boats. We'll have to break the ice as we go, but it's quite thin yet. We'll let the dogs draw the empty komatiks overland; at least we'll take off everything breakable. There are so many ups and downs in the rocks."

When Jacques arrived, with Louis Brulot and Joseph Marbeuf, the three, assisted by Ivan, lowered the furniture from the crag's top to the

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comparatively level ground at its foot. There they strapped the goods to the sledges with stout thongs, and seated Ulrica on a smaller sledge among soft bundles.

Ulrica's sledge or komatik was made of a long piece of board, which had been steamed and turned up in the front in the form of a shoe. An upright back was attached near the rear end, and the whole was covered with smooth hide. It had no runners and resembled a toboggan. The larger komatiks were of the usual pattern, two long runners of wood held in position by numerous cross-pieces. These runners were shod with hoop iron. Similar sledges are often shod by the Esquimaux with walrus ivory or whalebone attached to the runners with wooden pegs. Sometimes the bottom of the runner is coated with vegetable mould, which is frozen on and shaped with a knife or plane to resemble the head of a large T rail; it is then coated with a thin skin of ice.

The four dogs attached to Ulrica's komatik were of Esquimaux breed, with fox-shaped

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heads, long hair, and erect, sharp ears. Their feet, by way of protection from the sharp, ice-covered rocks, were covered with small bags of sealskin tied around the ankle, with three small holes in each bag for the claws. Jacques, as the most careful driver, guided Ulrica's sledge; he called "Auk" when he wanted his dogs to turn to the right side, and "Ra" when they should go to the left. When the travellers had passed over very rough ground they reached a smooth beach on which they could go to the river. The beach was coated now with glare ice, but the sure-footed dogs made their way over it safely.

Ulrica looked at the sea with pathetic eyes. She had longed for release from the loneliness of Eyrie Cottage, and had rejoiced to hear that the winter home was ready; yet she dreaded leaving the shore, for she could no longer stand upon the cliffs and peer into the distance, hoping without ground for hope that she might catch sight of a sail or the vapor from a steamboat, and hasten to the wharf to greet her lost father.

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She sat on the komatik in silence, and Jacques, divining her thoughts, did not disturb her by a word.

The trip up the river was cold, and the coating of ice made the journey slower. It was late in the afternoon when the boatmen landed at a low beach, which led to a sheltered valley. The valley and hillsides were covered with evergreen trees, which were taller than the dwarfed trees of the shore. A walk over crisp snow brought the travellers to the cottage, which stood in a grove of spruce. Though the frame was of logs, not a log was visible, the chinks had been filled with moss, and the whole had been covered with sods. The glass in the windows was of great variety in shape and size. It had been washed ashore with a wreck and had been piled in a corner of the agent's storehouse. The windows had roughly constructed wooden shutters, and, as high as their sills, on all sides of the house, a bank of moss and sods was held in place by boards. When Ulrica had approved this device for excluding the cold, she was per-

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mitted to enter the cabin. She clapped her hands when she saw a large cooking stove.

"How delightful!" she cried. "It has a real oven! Where did you get it?"

"Mr. Sinclair lent it," said Ivan. "It had been used for cooking the fishermen's meals. We had not time to make a proper chimney, so the pipe carries the smoke right out through the roof. We've put bits of tin and stones about it so the roof won't catch fire. You're to sleep in this room because it will be warmer. I'll be all right without a stove; I don't want to get too tender."

The board floor was laid upon the ground without fastening, but the moss between the cracks helped to keep the boards in place.

"Of course the floor is rather wobbly, Rica," remarked Ivan apologetically; "but you'll soon learn which are the trippiest places. You'll have to look out when you are carrying hot water or anything that might scald you. We made it pretty firm under the rug." He pointed with pride to a large bearskin beside the bunk:

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"I shot the bear myself and Mr. Brulot cured the skin. Before the winter is out I'll cover the whole floor with rugs and furs."

"And, now, the wall, behold it!" said Jacques. "I hope it does receive your approvement."

The walls were almost covered with pictures and reading matter from magazines. Ulrica had looked at them, but had refrained from speech, and Jacques had felt uneasy.

"I hope you don't mind because we did n't ask you for the books, Rica," said Ivan doubtfully. "We wanted to give you a surprise. That paper will be fine for keeping out draughts."

"But Mr. Sinclair left them for us to read. I'm afraid he'll think we did not appreciate his kindness."

"He'll understand all right. All the people here use old books and magazines for their walls. What would you do? There are no shops, no paper hangers, and wind gets in through the tiniest cracks. I think it's a jolly good scheme. If a load of old literature arrives, the whole of it is cut up for the walls. Jacques has seen

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houses papered in several languages and all sorts of creeds. Last year a Roman Catholic priest and a Baptist minister came to the coast at the same time, and met at a house that was papered Catholic and Protestant, side by side, in strips. They both laughed till they nearly rolled off the bench, and the two bunked together like beloved brethren."

"True is that, Mademoiselle Ulrica," added Jacques. "In our house of the winter a most remarkable many kind of what to read you will behold. From the wall, in the long evening, I do instruct my little brothers of how to write and spell; better they do like it thus displayed than closed up within the book."

"I've learned lots from the papering at Mrs. Charpentier's," asserted Ivan; "and Jacques will improve his mind when he comes here."

"Permit to me the remark, Mademoiselle Ulrica," observed Jacques, "that when I the pleasure enjoy to arrive on your house, I require not the reading from the wall for my improvement."

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"You teach us far more, Jacques, than we can teach you," said Ulrica.

"Come along now," begged Ivan, "and see the pantry. We could not dig a cellar."

The storeroom was a substantial shed at the back of the house. While Ulrica was admiring it, the Brulot and Marbeuf girls came to offer assistance in putting the cottage in order. They brought with them a rabbit stew, bread and cranberries for supper. Willing hands soon arranged the furniture in place and stored the provisions in the pantry. Before ten o'clock Paul and Achille returned from their northern journey and reported that they had left Denis Lebeau in safety with his family. When all the visitors departed late at night the new house looked cosy, and the young proprietors went to rest very tired, but full of gratitude and almost happy.

XI

THE LOUP GAROU

THE new home was comfortable, the storehouse was well filled, and the young householders grew hopeful. As Ivan had not killed any seals, he bought sealskin and dogskin from an Indian, paying for the skins and for two pairs of snowshoes with a few pounds of flour and some of Ulrica's old ribbons. The skins had been stretched, dried, and made waterproof, to prevent their shrinking from damp. Ulrica cut out boots and caps for herself and brother, and the Indian chewed the edges of the skin to prepare them for the needle. The soles of Ivan's boots were of seal, and the uppers, reaching to the knees, of dogskin. At first, even with two or three pairs of stockings under the boots he felt every roughness through

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the soft sole, but soon learned to enjoy tramping in them.

Game had been plentiful this year, and the boys now discovered tracks of martens near a small lake. The shallower parts of this lake were frozen to the bottom, but fish were closely packed in the deep places. The young trappers constructed dead falls in the neighborhood of the lake and caught a number of martens and fishers. The season for marten trapping would soon be over, but would open again in March. Ivan made brilliant plans for travelling in the spring to one of the Hudson's Bay posts, and realizing wealth from the sale of his furs; but he had a sad awakening from his golden dream when, one morning, he found every trap torn open at the back and partially destroyed.

"Who did it?" he asked, gazing in bitter disappointment at the wreck.

"Kekwaharkess, the Evil One," said Jacques. "In English, it is wolverine. He loves the destruction, and not alone that which he requires for food does he break and destroy, but all

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things within his reach. He can spring the trap of steel, and crush the trap of wood, and yet always escape. Far away must we go and seek another ground."

When Ulrica heard that the trappers would journey far, she concealed her fears. Like the women of Labrador she had learned to speed with cheerful words those who set forth to meet danger. Ivan had invited the French girls, Pauline and Marie, to stay with her in his absence. They offered to make cakes for the party, but the trappers declined dainties. They expected to shoot game for daily needs, and took with them only some dried venison and fish, hardtack, and Labrador tea.

The three friends, Jacques, Louis, and Ivan, set out on a bright morning in a large komatik drawn by eight dogs. They were provided also with light toboggans and snowshoes. They had fastened their provisions and utensils to the vehicle with stout thongs of hide and tied the blankets down over all. Jacques and Louis wore complete suits of skins. Ivan was clad in two heavy

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suits of flannel undergarments and an outer suit of blanket cloth, the coat double breasted and belted at the waist; a cap, boots, and mittens of seal and dogskin completed the costume; the mittens extended to the elbow. Each boy carried a fire-bag and a hunting knife attached to the belt on one side and a small hatchet on the other. The snow was crisp, the air bracing, and when the hunters, after bumping over uneven ground, had reached an ice-bound river, the eager dogs, exhilarated by the atmosphere, sped swiftly over the frozen surface.

“It’s glorious!” cried Ivan. “If we keep up this pace, we’ll soon cover a hundred miles. Jacques, would n’t it be jolly to go far inland, to explore the places where no human being has ventured? Who knows that it is a desolate wilderness? There may be warm, sheltered valleys. There may be all sorts of treasures. I say, let’s try it.”

Jacques shook his head. “I have promise made to Mademoiselle Ulrica for your care; also my mother would grieve if I did take a risk

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that was not of necessity. To explore would in truth give me delight, but I fear we should find no treasure of this country far within. Some say it is a vast and terrible plateau, upon which are scattered many stones, and no one can tell how such boulders on that land did arrive. Others believe that over the interior spreads everywhere water, water. Greatly I desire to see for myself, but it may not be."

"I daresay there's lots of water," agreed Ivan. "Mr. Brulot told me that he has gone for hundreds of miles from lake to river and river to lake, and only portaged for short distances."

In the afternoon the travellers observed on the borders of a lake some curious mounds of snow. Bark had been removed from trees in the vicinity, and other trees had been cut down. As these signs indicated the presence of beavers, the hunters determined to camp for the night at some distance from the lake, so the dogs should not alarm any small animals that might seek air holes in the ice for fish. The lake lay

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in a great plain, which was dotted here and there with groves of larch and black spruce. The eager boys set to work at once to construct a beaver trap. They cut a number of stakes, sharpened them at one end, chopped away the ice near the beaver lodge, and drove the stakes into the ground between the lodge and the shore, to prevent the beavers running through the passage which connected their home with the storehouse on the bank. They next staked up the entrance to the storehouse, to imprison those who had taken shelter there. Cutting through the frozen mud and sticks of which the lodge was constructed was hard work; after vigorous chopping, the hatchets touched the interior, and Louis, putting in his arm, drew out a fat beaver. It had lain so long dormant that it did not awake to realize its position, and was quickly put to death by a blow on the head.

Jacques looked rueful: "It does not seem fair to take him by stealth from his sleep, when waking he is so skilful, so wise; yet we must live, and after December ends, it is of proba-

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bility that we trap nothing; it may be not even a bird."

Louis felt no scruples, and drew out beaver after beaver while Jacques was feeding the dogs. Twilight came before his work was done, and then he assisted Jacques and Ivan to make a cache for the storage of the beavers. The toilers ate a supper of dried meat and hardtack, for they were too weary to prepare and cook the beaver meat.

They made their bed beneath a large pine tree, using their snowshoes to excavate a hollow about four feet deep, which they covered with pine broom. With a great pile of wood blazing at the foot of their primitive couch, they wrapped themselves in blankets, pulled their caps over their ears, and huddled close together. The red firelight gleamed on the snowy ground and sparkled on the snow-laden branches, but the sleepy travellers did not heed its beauty. They knew that the burning logs could melt the hard snow only directly beneath the pile, and that the dogs, which had burrowed holes for

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themselves, would give the alarm upon any approach of danger. Thus satisfied of safety, they fell into slumber, and icy lake and snowy plain, firelight and starlight, faded from their vision.

The trappers occupied the following day in making dead falls for martens and foxes, at a distance from the beaver lodge. They had decided to leave the cache and traps after marking them carefully, to travel farther, and to return in a few days. As they sat around their fire that evening the wan twilight gave place to another light that streamed up from the horizon at the north, then circled until it seemed to encompass the heavens. From tints of palest green it passed to yellow, violet, and crimson, and its lances of flame joined in a crown of fire. The broad plain and the distant mountains glowed and reflected the revel of color. Jacques stood entranced, but Louis trembled.

“Never before, never not once, saw I such red upon de sky. My fader, he did say it is de sign of trouble, of evil dat will come.”

“But, Louis, I’ve seen the Aurora rosy red

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and crimson many times since I've been in Labrador," argued Ivan.

"Not like to dis, never like to dis. It make me de fear."

The superstitious boy was much disturbed, and late in the night, when his companions had closed their eyes, he lay awake, fearful of disaster.

After a breakfast of beaver meat the trappers started westward over a frozen river. They halted where the river widened into a lake, whose many islands were capped with thickets of evergreens. Balsam, fir, and spruce grew upon the lake shore. It was an alluring habitation for wild creatures, and the travellers decided to spend the rest of the day in setting traps near the banks. Jacques suggested camping for some time in the neighborhood, but his companions desired to go on. On the farther side of the lake the river entered a deep defile, and soon after the start on the following day the hunters were speeding on the komatik between high, precipitous rocks. The river was narrow and

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its course so winding that many times a jutting crag appeared to block the passage; but the eager dogs, dashing around curves, brought the explorers again in sight of an open way. After many miles the defile widened, but still rugged promontories shut out the view, until, suddenly, upon passing a towering headland, the travellers found themselves upon a great frozen lake. Far across it loomed a mountain range, whose peaks seemed to pierce the heavens. Ivan pointed to a sharp one curiously carved: "Let's make for that. Let's see what's on the other side."

Jacques did not object. He desired to investigate and foresaw no danger. The day was fair, the peak would be an unfailing guide, and the defile would mark the way to return. Yet, keen observer as he was, Jacques was mistaken. After dashing over the crisp snow for hours, the travellers found themselves apparently no nearer their destination. Either the condition of the atmosphere had deceived Jacques, or his sight had been dimmed by the constant white glare. The clear sky of the morning had be-

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come overcast, the sun was hidden, and presently, with gusts of piercing wind, snow began to fall. It was hard, cutting snow, like frozen rain, which beat upon the faces of the boys and covered their garments. As the crystals fell they blinded the drivers, who feared that they were moving in circles. They left the dogs to take their own course, hoping that the keensighted animals would discover land. But night came on, black night, relieved only by the gleam of the snow, without sign of a landing place. The dogs were called to a halt and fed, and after the wanderers had eaten a cold meal with benumbed fingers, they huddled together in their blankets with the shivering dogs beside them.

When they arose at dawn, stiff and aching, the dogs had disappeared. They shouted vociferously, and presently some mounds of snow broke open and the animals bounded from their shelter. The storm had ceased, but clouds obscured the sun, and the lost ones looked in vain for the peak or the defile. Many miles in the

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distance they saw a hilly country, and about noon they reached a pass between the hills. It led, by a gradual ascent, to a desolate tableland, a measureless, barren plain. Not a tree grew upon it, not a winter bird hovered in the air, not a trace of living thing was near. The great waste lay in a silence unbroken save by the cry of the wind.

"Even the wild creature does forsake it," said Jacques gloomily.

"De light it tell us, de red light," mourned Louis. "It warn' us of de evil. Here do we arrive to die. Nevermore do we return."

"Upon me is the sin," cried Jacques. "My promise to Mademoiselle Ulrica is broken. I did assure her I would preserve Ivan from danger, and, behold, I have not kept my word."

"Don't be a blooming idiot, Jacques," said Ivan emphatically. "You are no more responsible than I am. I'm not going to plead the baby act. You could not foresee that storm. And who says we are lost, starved, frozen, anyway? Let's hustle around and find a way

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out. After we've had a square meal, we'll feel jollier."

The square meal consisted of a portion of dried meat and hardtack, with snow to quench the thirst. There was no fuel in sight for a fire. Louis suggested burning the toboggans, but his companions said no, not yet.

"We still have flour and meat," said Ivan. "We're not so hard up as those fellows who went to the barren grounds and lived for days on boiled moose-skin and made soup from one little mouse. At the worst, we can boil our moose-skins."

"De dogs must have feed," returned Louis despondently. "All dat we have is not enough for deir one good dinner."

At the moment, the dogs were snarling over their meagre fare, and when they had devoured every scrap, they looked up with fierce, hungry eyes. The eyes grew fiercer, more hungry, the fury more ominous as days passed, each day bringing a diminished portion. The travellers had twice returned to the lake and crossed from

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one shore to another, only to find themselves on a similar dreary plateau. After earnest consultation they had decided to make for what appeared to be a forest to the westward. Day after day the clouds hung low, and from time to time snow fell. The dimmed light relieved the eyes from blinding glare, but it was depressing and increased the difficulties of travel. More than once unwilling lips had broached the question whether self-preservation demanded the sacrifice of one or more of the dogs. It had been difficult to restrain them from tearing one another, and at any moment they might attack their masters. All the boys knew well that other famishing brutes of that breed had devoured human beings, and Louis, the prophet of evil, recalled some hideous stories.

On a day when the starving, maddened animals had eaten the last scrap of food, the wanderers came upon a thicket of tall trees. The sight of vegetation renewed hope and energy. The boys chopped wood, kindled a fire, and boiled some strips from a moose-skin that they had

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used as a covering, adding to the stew a quantity of the inner bark of a tree. The larger portion of the softened skin quieted the raging of the dogs. As the friends sat around the fire that evening, Louis started, and bent his ear as if listening.

“What’s up?” inquired Ivan.

Louis held up his finger as a signal of silence, and whispered in an awe-filled voice: “Don’ you hear him? Don’ you know all it mean? Dat is — it is — de loup garou!”

Ivan smiled incredulously. He had heard of the *loup garou*, the werewolf, the man in the form of a wolf who lives on human flesh; but he had no more faith in it than in other superstitions of his companion. Jacques also was skeptical, but his artistic temperament inclined him to enjoy folklore and fairy tales, and to retain a semblance of belief in them.

“I hear it now,” said Ivan. “It is a far distant, dismal howl. What makes you think it is the loup garou?”

“Because, once before I hear it, once when I

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travel wit my uncle. He tell me it is de evil wolf. De soun' of him is more differen' dan any oder."

"Seldom is a wolf discovered in Labrador," said Jacques. "In the barren grounds, where are the caribou, there also are the wolves; elsewhere they have become most rare."

"Let's have our guns ready for the fellow," advised Ivan. "He seems to be heading this way."

"De gun, what use is dat?" asked Louis. "De loup garou, no gun can destroy. He appear, he disappear. Where he go, no eye can behol'. To shoot him, I would not dare."

"I'd dare," replied Ivan. "Come on, Mr. Loup Garou."

"No, no, say not dat," besought Louis. "Maybe you bring him. Behol' de dog; dey shiver wit' fear."

In truth the dogs, with hair bristling, eyes staring, had the appearance of terror, and Ivan patted his favorite, Dash, who was trembling.

"It's because they are weak for need of

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food," he said. "They have lost their pluck. Be ready for him, Dash, old boy; he'll be here soon."

"No, no," expostulated Louis, as the howls sounded nearer. "To kill him is not de possibility, but us he will kill. From his eye, no one can hide. He see in de dark, t'rough all tings he see. I am not de coward in de fight, de storm; but I fear him dat is not man, not wil' beast, him I do fear. Las' year on a col' night dere come at our house a man wit de face of one wolf, an' my fader he drive him away. De wolf dat come is de same, de loup garou. He remember me, he have de revenge."

Ivan shrugged his shoulders. "How can you believe such stuff? If he's as big as his howl, we'll have a jolly fight, but we're more than a match for him."

"He comes!" cried Jacques. "He is at hand."

The howls had ceased. When the animal arrived in full sight of the fire, it stood still, its eyes glaring. To the boys, whose vision was

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distorted by starvation, it appeared to be of gigantic size. Ivan fired, but aimed wildly, and struck a tree above the head of the wolf. The creature bounded forward. Jacques fired in his turn, and thought he had wounded the beast. The dogs rushed into the fight and seized him, but he freed himself from his assailants, and, with a prolonged howl, dashed into a defile. The dogs pursued him, followed by their masters, Louis accompanying, because he feared to remain alone. The rocks were steep and high on both sides of the narrow pass. The moon shone through a rift, and the hunters saw their prey fleeing fast.

“On de snow is not one spot of blood,” whispered Louis. “You strike, but harm him not. Come back, return. De place it is bewitch’, enchant’. If you come not, he lead you where you never escape.”

At that moment, with a dismal howl, the wolf disappeared, as if the ground had opened and swallowed him; simultaneously, the moon went under a cloud, and the pursuers were in

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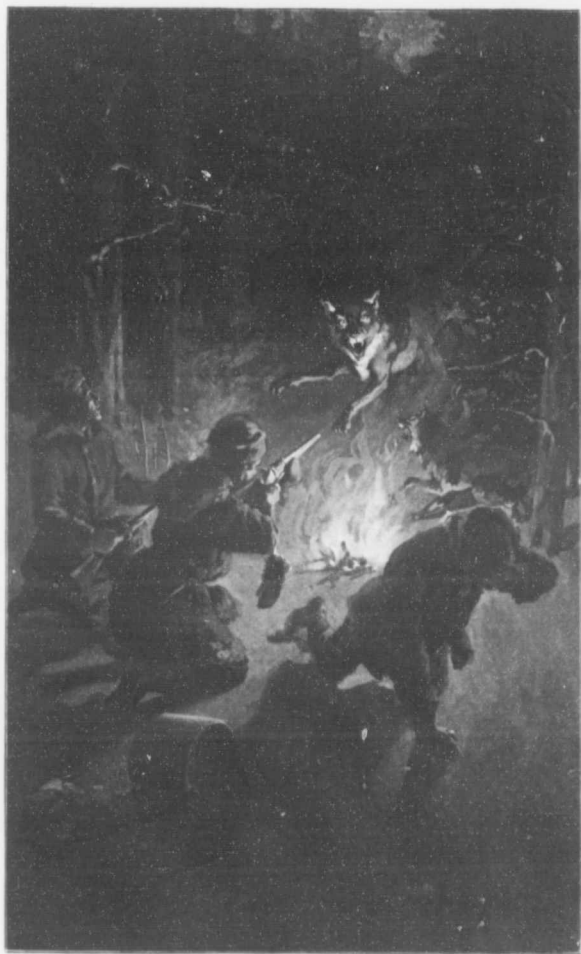
darkness. Louis was in an agony of dread, and Jacques counselled retreat. "Before us is the precipice, over which in the darkness we may fall. We know not the way, it is folly to proceed. If it is possible the dogs will discover him."

As the defile apparently led to a chasm, Ivan agreed to return. The three walked abreast and were obliged to feel the way. They heard no sound but the moan of the wind and the crunch of their feet upon the snow.

"Soon shall we behold the fire, that will guide us," said Jacques encouragingly. He had hardly uttered the words, when, without warning, he pitched downward, and his friends also fell upon their faces in the snow. Except for a few scratches, they were unharmed, but much startled.

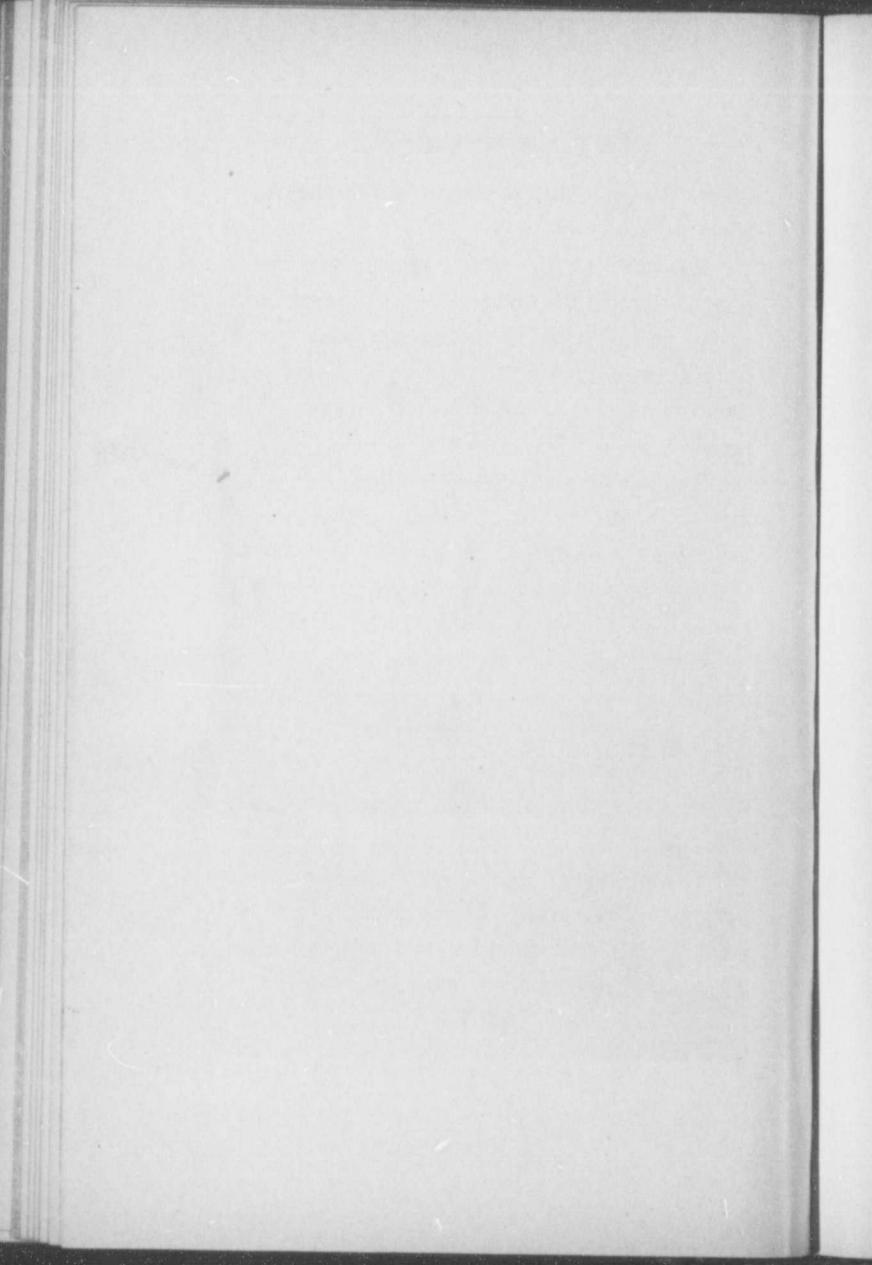
"He — prepare it for us," quivered Louis. "We get not out dis place wit' our life."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Ivan. "It's only a little hollow. Such passes are full of them. Don't you remember the pot-holes near Wabistan? We can climb up on the other side. It's



"The creature bounded forward."

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queer, though, that we did n't notice the hole when we came this way."

"We came not this way," said Jacques. "I perceive that in the darkness we did choose the wrong path. Where the mountain does sharp jut out, there does the pass divide in two forks. Carefully must we proceed, or we wander from the fire, we know not where."

When the three clambered out of the hollow, they called in vain for the dogs; not a sound indicated the direction the animals had taken. Occasionally a gleam of moonlight revealed to the wanderers a great length of ravine stretching before them; but at other times they were obliged to feel every step of the way, and feared that by going farther in the darkness they might be hopelessly lost. They decided, therefore, to remain beneath an arching rock until daylight; and, after scooping out a hollow in the snow, they huddled together till morning. They arose stiff with cold, and tried with limping feet to make their way out of the pass. They had not gone far when they

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saw the opening by which they had entered, and heard the barking of dogs. Dash bounded toward Ivan, and tugged at his trousers. There was blood upon his chops and hair.

“Look!” exclaimed Ivan. “Have they killed the wolf, or — one of the team?”

“Not either,” replied Jacques eagerly. “That not the fur of dog or wolf is. Come and see.”

A few yards away, in a recess of the defile, the seven were feasting. They snarled at the approach of their masters, but the boys pushed near enough to see the mangled body of a huge bear. The creatures had probably discovered it dormant in a cavern and put it to death while it slept.

When they emerged from the ravine they were greeted by a savory odor and a cheerful blaze. They had expected to find only dead ashes on the spot where they had left their fire. Beside the flaming pile stood a tall, gaunt man.

“An Indian!” cried Jacques. “A Nascaupée! He has food. We perish not.”

“It’s good we came in time, or he might

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have skedaddled with some of our things," commented Ivan. He tried to speak lightly; he considered it unmanly to show emotion, but his heart beat fast. The stranger might not only save him and his companions from starvation, but guide them out of the terrible wilderness. In the silence of the night he had thought of the desperate wandering day by day, the hunger pains, the increasing weakness that would end in death. Ulrica would watch for him in vain, and never know how he had died. And now he would go back to her, to life, to hope, to happy years.

The Indian waited by the fire with the stolidity of his race. He was frying something in a pan that he had found on the komatik. When the friends were near enough he pointed to the body of a wolf, which had a gunshot wound in the side. "Him die, I find," explained the Nascauppee. "I say I come, I see hunter."

"What do you think now of your loup garou?" asked Ivan of Louis.

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Louis shook his head: "Dat not de loup garou is. Dat is one small wolf. De loup garou he was immense, big, inormouse."

"All right, if it pleases you to think so. I'm hungry enough to eat loup garou or any other kind."

The Indian explained that he had been trapping alone, and had wandered from his tribe. Though the table-land which the boys had crossed was barren, the hill country they had reached was well stocked with game in the thickets. The stranger had a gun, but had used up all his ammunition. The young hunters looked at one another. The glance was an expression of thankfulness that they had secreted their powder so carefully, otherwise their visitor would have appropriated it. Jacques described the great lake encircled by mountains, and asked if the Nascaupée knew where it was. The Indian bargained. If the white men would pay him in food for his gun, and give him also one of their hunting knives, he would guide them to the high peak by the wide

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water. They joyfully assented, and also agreed to remain in the hill country long enough to secure provision for their journey.

On the following days the young hunters discovered another dormant bear in a cavern, and trapped a number of lynxes and rabbits. Archook, the Nascaupee, said that the rabbits had been almost exterminated in the previous winter by a throat disease that crosses the country every five years. When rabbits are scarce the lynx produces no young; this year both rabbits and mountain cats were plentiful.

On the homeward way, Archook guided his companions by a direct route. In two days they reached the great lake, and they travelled on its shores until they were beneath the peak and could see the defile in which the river lay. They had no difficulty in crossing when Archook had left them, and by nightfall they were safely encamped on the river banks. At the lake of islands they dug out their traps from the snow, and found two black foxes, three red ones, and a number of martens. The heavy snow fall

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had safely hidden the catch from other animals. At the beaver lake several martens and fishers with a silver fox had been entrapped and concealed beneath the snow. The beavers in the cache were also intact, and, with the air of conquering heroes, the elated huntsmen returned to the watchers in the valley.

XII

A LABRADOR CHRISTMAS

AFTER the first week in December the intense cold drove away all the fur-bearing animals except rabbits. The young trappers caught rabbits in great numbers, and the women made the skins into quilts and rugs. They cut the pelts into strips, which they braided, then they sewed the braids together, and covered them on one side with a patchwork quilt. The boys shot spruce partridges and willow grouse or ptarmigan. The willow grouse, which are a tawny red in summer, are pure white in winter, and are not readily distinguishable from the snow-covered ground. They often bury themselves in the snow, the sentinel cock alone keeping his head above ground. The birds were so tame that they merely looked about inquiringly at the

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sound of a gun, instead of taking flight. The hunters frequently noosed them with string at the end of a long stick.

As hunting so near home left plenty of time for other occupations, Ivan suggested building a large meeting-house of snow, after the fashion of an Esquimau winter house. "There's a great, flat, cleared place," he said, "about half way between our cottage and the other houses. We could have church on Sundays in our snow hall, and entertainments on week-days. It would make a tip-top dining-room for Christmas. The girls have been talking of a big dinner for the whole settlement; but we could n't all squeeze into any one of the rooms we have now."

The neighbors were pleased with the proposal, and early one morning all the young people began to roll balls of snow, which they smoothed, cut into squares, and joined solidly together. They left spaces for two doors and several windows, and filled in the windows with solid sheets of ice. The doorways, unlike the small apertures of the Esquimau houses, which

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are approached by long, narrow passages, were arranged so as to be left open for ventilation when the building was unoccupied, and hung with skins and rugs at meeting times. The walls near the doorways were icebound by pouring water over them. A heavy carpet of evergreens was laid on the floor, and blocks of snow for benches were thickly strewn with pinebroom, which adhered to the frozen surface, and gave protection from the cold of the snow blocks. There was no time to make furniture before Christmas, and it was arranged that tables and chairs from the cottages should be carried to the meeting-house for use at the Christmas dinner, and that rustic tables and benches could be constructed later from the wood of the valley.

On the completion of the building, the workers kindled a fire in the deep fireplace, which they had lined with small stones embedded in snow. The ice-crusts on the walls sparkled in the reflected flame, contrasting with the green of the pine-covered floors, and the panels of fir branches.

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The builders played an Esquimau game to celebrate the occasion. They suspended a small bone, pierced in four places, on a string from the roof. The contestants stood in a circle, each with a long hooked stick, and endeavored to strike the holes. The victors marched three times around the room, singing a song of jubilation.

Interested in his work, Ivan had not observed that his sister was downcast. The day before Christmas he went with his friends to shoot grouse, and on his return found Ulrica with her head on the table, crying bitterly. She started up when she heard him, and tried to remove the traces of tears. "What is it, Rica?" he asked kindly. "Have you been lonely?"

"It's — it's because on other Christmases we had father and Aunt Agatha, and our own dear home, and now it's too different. Everyone is so kind, and I do try to keep cheerful; but sometimes I feel as if I could not bear this life much longer."

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"You've been a brick, Rica. You have seemed so bright that I hardly knew you cared so much. It's rougher on you than on me. In the spring, if we don't find father, perhaps we can go to one of the Hudson's Bay posts, where you would see some people of your own kind."

"We never could find better friends than the people here. They have done so much for us, and we can do so little in return."

"Don't you believe that. You've done heaps for them. They would not have thought of the Christmas celebration if you had not started it; there'd have been no carols, no presents, no nothing. And now every one, from the oldest grandmother to the smallest kid, is looking forward to it."

Smiles drove away Ulrica's tears. "Look at my Christmas cake," she said, opening a cupboard. "It's a funny shape because I had not a proper pan to bake it in; but it's a beautiful brown color. It's mixed with sea birds' eggs, and has dripping for butter, mo-

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lasses for sugar, and dried blueberries in place of currants and raisins and candied peel. And see, here are dozens of crisp little cookies made with molasses, dripping, and flour. They are for the children; and so is the candy that I made of molasses with dried fruit sprinkled in."

"Yes, these kids like sweets," said Ivan. "When I gave a piece of bread with molasses on it to an Esquimau boy, he made a face at me, and threw it away. He'd rather suck a piece of fat."

After supper the young housekeepers put away their dishes, refilled the stove, and packed baskets with presents for the three families. Ulrica had made woolly balls for the babies, and rag dolls, dressed as Indians and Esquimaux, for the little girls. Ivan had constructed miniature sets of furniture, carts, and sleds, from wood and bone. For each of the older boys the two contributed a book from their small library. Ulrica ransacked her stores and found some gay ribbons for Pauline and Marie and some old Christmas cards for the mothers

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and grandmothers. The moonlight night was clear, the snow gleaming like jewels on the ground and the laden evergreens. The twins set out in high spirits, and received a cordial welcome at every cottage.

"To-morrow, very early," said Jacques Charpentier, "we will have the pleasure to call on Mademoiselle Ulrica."

"Come to breakfast," suggested Ivan. "My sister will make pan-cakes."

But Jacques declined this invitation, though he said he should arrive before breakfast.

Ulrica was awakened by the barking of dogs and the gay laughter of boys. She had gone to bed late and slept soundly. She dressed hurriedly, and called through the door an apology to her guests for keeping them waiting. When she opened the door she saw a sled with six fine dogs harnessed to it.

"De komatik, also de dog, we give to Mademoiselle and to Ivan," explained Louis Brulot.

"Oh, how good of you!" cried Ulrica. "We

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have so often wished for a komatik and dogs of our own."

Ivan urged the donors to remain for breakfast. But they declined; they had promised their mothers that they would breakfast at home.

"You go," said Jacques to his companions. "I follow presently."

Louis seized Joseph Marbeuf, who was curious to learn why Jacques lingered: "Get one move on you, Zhoseph. Jacques, what care he for de breakfas' while he look at Mademoiselle Oolrike?"

Jacques took a package from the komatik and followed Ulrica into the cottage, while Ivan led the dogs to the shed and unharnessed them.

"Mademoiselle Ulrica," began Jacques with some embarrassment, "it will give me the great pleasure if you receive the little work I have performed for you. You have beheld the paintings of beauty in your country, and this that I have made is of small worth; yet with much gratefulness and kind thought have I done it."

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He removed the covering from a drawing on white birch bark, which was set in a frame of dark wood handsomely carved.

Ulrica took it into her hands and looked at it for moments without a word. It was a picture of a shallow stream with willows and alders upon its banks. The trees, bending over, made a sheltered arbor above the water, in which they were reflected. The figure in the foreground was that of a young girl who had set free a fox from the trap in which he had been caught; and the animal, recognizing its deliverer, was looking up into her face with pathetic eyes. "Jacques," she said presently, "it is wonderful, wonderful! I never saw a more real picture. It is alive. I can hear the water ripple and see the sunlight flicker down between those branches. I always said you were a poet, but I did not know you were an artist too. How good of you to do so much for me!"

The young man's dark, handsome face glowed with delight. He wished he might tell her that

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he longed to spend his life in her service. He believed that some day she would return to her own country and that he should be left desolate. He dreaded to think of that day, and reproached himself for selfishness. He ought to wish all good for her, though it should take her far from him.

"I knew not I could draw that which is worthy," he said. "Your good words, Mademoiselle Ulrica, have brought me hope. One ancestor we had who was a great artist, and sometimes my father said: 'The gift has come to the boy; reprove him not that he wastes the hour with the pencil and the bark.'"

When Ivan came in, boisterous in his delight over the dogs, Ulrica handed him the picture. He gave a long whistle: "I say, Jacques, that's swagger! You've got 'Shadow Creek' with the drooping willows down fine. And it's Rica's very self,— just the look on her face when she's worrying her soul about some poor beast."

"I did take the liberty," remarked Jacques

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apologetically. "The thought arrived on me that day when Mademoiselle Ulrica begged that we use no more the steel trap in which the animal does so often suffer torture."

"Those traps *are* cruel," agreed Ivan. "I've heard that when a fox is caught by one leg he eats it off close to the trap and limps off on the remaining three."

"It is true," answered Jacques seriously. "And when he is caught by two legs he cannot escape, and often may be in torment for many days. Always I urge the dead fall, that kills on the moment, without long pain and imprisonment."

"But it does n't hurt them as it hurts human beings," argued Ivan. "They have n't the same kind of nerves."

"I know not how their pain may differ from that which we feel; but I know well that they suffer. The wild creature that has run free in the forest, lapped the pure water, leaped on the rocks, does he not suffer when he finds himself bound, and struggles all vainly for escape?"

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One day in the cold winter I found a fox caught by the forefeet in a trap. He had become frozen, so that no life appeared to remain in him, yet something told me that he lived. I begged my father, who had set the trap, to give him to me. Yet when I brought him to the home, when I rubbed him with snow to restore the frozen limbs, and once more the blood began to run in the veins, I grieved that I had not made the end to his suffering while he could not feel; for he uttered the long, mournful cry, like the cry of a human. Many days he lived, and I hoped he would recover, for I loved him. He followed me with his eyes, seeming to beseech me to make him well; but too sorely he had been tortured, and on the seventh day he died."

Ulrica sighed: "It seems so cruel that living creatures should prey one upon another."

"Many things are hard for the understanding," replied Jacques thoughtfully. "I know not why destruction of one life by another should be of necessity; yet here in this land

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if we kill not we die. I believe not the less that the great God does love and care for the creatures He has made. Behold how in the winter He does bestow on the wild bird the clothing of pure whiteness, that it may conceal itself against the snow; and how he does give to the sea bear the short, thick-set hair upon the foot, that it may walk the slippery ice with safety. One summer there came to Wabistan a man of much learning whom I did question of such perplexions. He did reply that by necessity for self-preservation many good qualities did become developed that dwarfed would have been in the safe and sheltered life. Him I accompanied when he sought knowledge of the rock, the tree, the water, and many things he did teach me for my comforting."

"I say, Jacques, you'd better be a parson, not a painter," broke in Ivan. "You'd be a corker at preaching. You're improving in your English, too. You do use some words that I never saw or heard of, 'perplexions,' for instance; but I always know what you mean."

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Jacques colored: "I intended not to make the sermon. Let me say but one thing to Mademoiselle Ulrica, then I go. The wild creature is my friend. Since I was a child I have loved him, and I know that one of his kind does differ from his fellow as does one man from another. Had I the free time, gladly would I watch him by the hour together, at his work, at his play, so I might have knowledge of his ways; and gladly would I take the pencil or the brush and paint him so others might see him as my own eyes behold him."

"Bully for you!" ejaculated Ivan. "I say, Jacques, don't go. Stay to breakfast with us. Watch Rica and me hustle. We'll have it ready in three shakes."

"That is what you name the slang," returned Jacques, smiling. "I thank you, but to my mother I said I would be with her. At eleven of the clock we will meet in our church."

Timepieces in the settlement were not accurate, and soon after ten the inhabitants began

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to assemble in the meeting-house. Before the opening of the service the grandmothers were presented with easy-chairs. The boys had made the wooden frames and the girls had upholstered backs and seats with feather cushions. Grandmother Brulot wept with gratitude, and the voice of aged Madame Marbeuf trembled so that she could hardly express her thanks. Jacques conducted the service, and Paul played accompaniments on his violin for the carols.

At twelve o'clock the women hurried home to superintend their cooking, while the boys and girls set the tables, which were covered with Ulrica's linen. Long before the feast was ready the children seated themselves, and they gazed with wide-open eyes as the luxuries were carried in. The first course consisted of soup, scalloped salmon, rabbit stew, roast ptarmigans, and two plump wild-geese, with cranberry sauce. There was plum pudding for dessert, with small dried fruits instead of the usual raisins and candied peel, and a syrup of preserved fruit juice; there were pies, with a dripping crust; dough-

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nuts also cooked in dripping, and cakes of several varieties but of similar materials. Every one was hungry, every one was in good spirits. The seal-oil lamps that supplemented the warmth of the blazing logs in the fireplace were odorous, but no one complained. After dinner the little ones went home with their mothers, and the young men and maidens spent the afternoon in playing games, — English, French, Indian, and Esquimau. Then the merry-makers ate a light repast of cold game, cakes, and pies, and separated after a rousing cheer for Mademoiselle Ulrica Stewart, who had planned the Christmas celebration.

XIII

UNDER THE SNOW

BITTERLY cold weather set in the day after Christmas, and the old inhabitants said it was not less than 50° below zero. Even the bread that was placed near the stove froze hard, and was thawed out, slice by slice, and water standing in a pail not far from the fire became a solid mass. As the bunks were fast to the walls, Ivan suggested "sleeping bags," such as the Esquimaux use when travelling. They are usually made of sealskin, with the hair outside, lined with reindeer skin, with the hair inside. As there was no seal-skin available, Ivan accepted a snowy-white rabbit-skin blanket, formed of more than a hundred skins sewed together.

On the last day of the year gales intensified the cold. Ivan and Louis set out to hunt ptar-

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migan, but all the birds had hidden themselves from the storm. When Ivan re-entered the cottage, his gun became white from the congealing of the atmosphere on the cold iron.

"It was even worse than this one year," he remarked. "Mr. Brulot told me that after he had been warm from running, the moisture from his body froze so that the ice had to be hammered out from the inside of his clothes before he could take them off."

Snow fell fast in the afternoon and the cottagers could hardly see beyond their door. Snow drifts were whirled in the grasp of the storm; wind tore through the valley, howled and shrieked around the houses, and dashed ice crystals against the windows.

"What a row the dogs are making!" exclaimed Ivan. "I wonder if they are scared, or are trying to set up opposition howls. I'll have to go and quiet them."

The dogs were housed in a shed next the storeroom. Ivan gave them some meat, which subdued them until they began to fight for the

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tidbits, — fighting being the principal occupation and diversion of Esquimau dogs when they are not in harness.

The boy looked serious when he returned to his sister. "If this wind keeps up, Rica, I'm afraid it will blow sods off the house. Some are loosened, though I thought they had been frozen fast. Louis told me of a cottage that fairly blew to pieces in a gale."

Ulrica shivered, for the shriek of the storm took a wilder note:

"If it blows down we shall be buried beneath it."

"Don't worry; there's no danger of its blowing down. I'm only afraid that snow may drift through cracks in the walls. Last year Paul and Jacques found a family about thirty miles from here almost frozen; their floor was covered with snow, and they had no wood. We have piles of wood and lots of clothes, but we may be awfully uncomfortable."

No visitors arrived that evening, and the young householders retired early. The fury

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of the gale had diminished, and they fell asleep without anxiety. After midnight, Ulrica heard her brother get up and put wood in the stove. He went to the window and breathed upon the thickly frosted pane, but the icy covering was too heavy and he could not see through it. He opened a chink of the door, but closed it quickly. "The snow is whacking down awfully fast," he remarked. "It seems to be coming from all directions."

When Ulrica woke again she heard Ivan moving in his room. It was still dark, with a darkness of a peculiar, impenetrable quality. "Ivan," she called, "isn't it a long, long night?"

"Well, rather! Do you know what time it is?"

"Not exactly; it must be nearly morning."

"It struck ten a few minutes ago."

"Ten! Why, it's pitch black, — as bad as the darkness of Egypt!"

"Because we're snowed in. Don't be uneasy, though. If we can't dig ourselves out for

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days we'll be all right. We've lots of grub and heaps of fuel. There's wood enough under cover for a week. I don't know where I put my lamp. It's awfully shivery in here. I hope the fire has n't gone out."

"Oh, I do hope not! I can't see a gleam of light from the stove."

"It will be a sorry business if there is not a coal there, for we have used up all our matches."

"But you have the firebag I made for you, with the flint and steel in it."

"I'm afraid I left it at Brulot's. I went in yesterday with Louis. I took it out of my belt to show Mrs. Brulot and forgot to pick it up again. It's sure to be safe there."

Ulrica did not answer. Putting on her moc-casins and a heavy skirt, she went to the stove. She could not see a spark. If the fire had gone out, she and her brother would be compelled to exist in cold and darkness for days, to eat frozen food, and to grope to find it.

"Ouch!" cried Ivan. "I stubbed my toe

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against something and my ankle seems to be twisted. I can't stand."

Ulrica dropped the stick in momentary despair. Presently she braced herself, raked the cinders diligently, and was rewarded by a faint glow. She hurriedly groped for some shavings, blew upon the expiring embers, and ignited the tinder. When her fire had begun to burn, she lighted her lamp and went to help Ivan, who sat on the side of his bed nursing his foot.

"I don't know how you'll manage if I'm crippled, Rica," he said dolefully. "You can't possibly dig a passage out to the dogs; and if they are not fed they'll tear one another to pieces."

"I'll do it in some way," answered Ulrica, her courage rising with her effort to cheer her brother.

"It would n't be safe for you to go near them. I've heard blood-curdling stories of half-starved Esquimau dogs."

"I can let food down over a small opening

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at the top of the door. Let me rub your foot and see if you can stand on it."

"No; I can rub it all right. Please light my lamp, and if I can hobble I'll help you with breakfast presently."

When Ulrica returned to her room and saw a cheerful blaze, she felt encouraged.

"The top of the pipe outside must be free from snow," she said, "or the fire would not burn so well. Hereafter we will keep one lamp lighted at night. You should have a large one to warm your room."

By the time she had thawed the bread sufficiently to enable her to cut it in slices for toasting, there was a good bed of coals. She thawed and fried some smoked herring, and then helped Ivan to limp to a chair. His foot was less painful, and when his hunger had been appeased, his spirits revived.

"This is a rare old way to celebrate New Year's Day," he remarked.

"I'd forgotten it was New Year's Day," said Ulrica, rather dismally.

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“Let’s have a good time anyway, Rica. My foot is not so bad as it was. I’ll be able to hustle after a while. I can wash the dishes now if you bring the water to the table.”

“There is not much water to bring. To be sure there is plenty of snow outside, but I can’t get at it. The door opens outward, and there is such a weight of snow against it that I could n’t make a crack wide enough to put a knife blade in.”

“But the little low door of the shed opens inward. It’s a wonder it has n’t been forced in by the load on it. I wish I could help you. It’s too bad you should have to carry pails of snow.”

Ulrica smiled, and did not remind her brother that she had many times carried loads of wood and water far beyond her strength. His intentions were always of the best, but he often forgot to execute them. When she went to the back of the shed to try to open the door, Ivan called: “Be careful, Rica. Open it only

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a little way, or so much snow will fall in that you can't shut it."

But the snow did not fall in. It was so hard, so firmly packed, that after Ulrica had with much difficulty forced open the door, for it adhered to the frozen mass without, she was obliged to chop out chunks with the hatchet. When she had filled her pails and a large pot on the stove, she put a heavy block against the door. When the water boiled she made a larch poultice for her brother's foot. Following the advice of Mrs. Charpentier, she had stored a quantity of the soft rind of the common larch. After boiling this for some time, she kneaded it into a poultice, and, either from its healing properties, or the massage she had administered, Ivan was soon able to limp about the house. Ulrica's anxiety now was for the imprisoned dogs, whose dismal howling sounded through the walls. Their kennel did not communicate by a door with the cottage. It was an addition to the provision shed on the east side, and its door also opened to the north.

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In order to reach the captives, it would be necessary to make a tunnel about two yards in length from the storeroom door.

"I don't believe the kennel is cold," said Ivan. "They have a warm bed, and the snow keeps the wind out. But they are hungry and thirsty, and scared by the darkness."

Although the distance was short, Ulrica spent two hours in chopping, scooping, melting the snow for the passage to the kennel. Ivan tried to limp after her with a light, but, finding that his footing was unsteady, he placed the light close to the entrance. When his sister announced that she had found the door, he crawled after her with the meat which he had thawed, and which he had attached in large lumps to thongs of hide.

"Be very careful, Rica," he called. "Don't open the door wide enough to let one of them out. If they should rush at you in this cramped place, who knows what might happen? Make it just large enough to drop the meat over the top of the door."

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Not long before, a girl of thirteen years, in the next settlement, had been torn to pieces by Esquimau dogs, and Ulrica knew the danger. "I'll do my best," she said, with a little shiver. "The door is stuck fast and may give way with a jerk."

"Come back to the shed and let me go first. I'm afraid they may jump at your hands when you throw the meat in. The door is not high, you know."

"I'll be careful. It's yielding, I'm sure. It will open in a minute."

"Do wait, Rica. You might fall right in, and they would devour you. Feel for the loop of hide that we use as a handle; it's near the button that fastens the door. Tie one of the thongs tight to it and pass the end back to me. I'll hold on to it, so the door can't open far. Leave only a few inches' space, not enough for one of their bodies."

Ulrica's hands trembled while she followed her brother's directions. Perhaps the knot in the stiff thong would not hold. Perhaps the hide handle was not fastened securely to the

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door. When she passed the end of the thong to Ivan he cautioned her again: "Do be careful, Rica. Don't push in suddenly. Bear against it gradually."

The dogs, excited by the voices without, were leaping against the door, but as it opened inward, this was a factor of safety, and would prevent a sudden opening when the adherence of the wood to the snow gave way. When Ulrica felt the jerk caused by the breaking of the timber from the icy mass, she called to Ivan, who drew the thong tightly toward him, then loosened it cautiously, to permit the opening of about half a foot. The dogs, scrambling over one another, got their snouts in the narrow passage, and Ulrica threw down a piece of meat. She could see dimly from the light that stood at the entrance of the tunnel.

"Hold fast, Ivan!" she cried. "If they push their heads out, they will force in the door and jump on us."

Ivan felt the tug of the thong as the excited animals strained upon the wood. The meat had

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fallen a few inches from them, and their inability to get at it maddened them. In another moment they would have wrenched the thong from Ivan's grasp had not Ulrica, shuddering with dread, thrust a long, thin portion of flesh over the top of the door. The hindermost dog pounced upon it, and a moment later his companions turned from the doorway and struggled fiercely for possession. Ulrica then threw over more meat, and with a long stick thrust into the kennel the chunk that had fallen near the opening. When the animals withdrew to the middle of the kennel, she lowered a tin of water by a leathern rope. She then quickly closed the door, leaving a knotted end of the thong outside, so the pan could be drawn up and refilled.

“That was a ticklish business, Rica,” said Ivan, when the two were safely housed again. “My nerves went awfully tricky when I thought of what might happen to you. You're a brick of the brickiest kind. No boy could have done better.”

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The admission of her equality with a boy was a compliment indeed from Ivan. "Everything else will seem comparatively easy," said Ulrica modestly. "We can feed them to-morrow before they get so hungry."

Ivan awoke on the following morning free from pain and with only a slight stiffness in his ankle. After breakfast he set to work vigorously to excavate a tunnel to daylight. He toiled hard until six o'clock in the evening, but not a ray of light from the outer world was visible.

"If we are shut up here two days more we shall have used all the wood in the shed." Ulrica's voice was anxious.

"Then we can burn oil," said Ivan cheerfully. "The Esquimaux heat their houses by seal-oil lamps, and do their cooking on them, too."

"But their houses are so stuffy and smelly. Besides, we have only two lamps."

"We could fill those earthenware dishes with oil and fasten flannel around the edges instead

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of wicks, leaving the flannel a little above the edge. I saw an arrangement like that in an Esquimau house. The lamp was of soapstone, and a pot was hung over it on a tripod. This kind of oil does not explode, and we could look out for fire."

It was not necessary, however, to resort to the seal oil for fuel. When Ulrica was in the shed on the following day, selecting a grouse for dinner, the blowing inward of the door from a rush of cold air through the tunnel signified that her brother had succeeded. He returned to the house in high spirits. "It's still snowing and blowing," he announced; "but the wind is not so high nor the snow so heavy. We'll try to go over to Mrs. Charpentier's after dinner."

"It's a good thing the snow packs so hard when it falls," said Ulrica. "If it did not, we should sink out of sight in the drifts."

While the prisoners were at dinner a vigorous knocking and shaking at the shed door was followed by the entrance of Jacques and Louis.

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“Rejoiced are we to find you in safety!” exclaimed Jacques, grasping Ivan’s hand, but with his eyes on Ulrica. “Only this morning were we able to dig ourselves outward from the deep-covering snow. And now, until the spring arrives, we must within the enclosure remain.”

“O Jacques!” cried Ulrica. “Do you mean that we shall have to live in this smothered-up way and creep out through the tunnel?”

“Not dat,” interrupted Louis. “We will chop, we will dig, we will around each house make one clear up space to de sky; but dat space mus’ be narrow, small.”

“Don’t you see, Rica?” chimed in Ivan. “It will be a little yard four or five feet wide on every side of the house, with high walls of snow beyond, and we shall have to cut steps on an incline up to the snow level. We shall be sheltered from the wind. We must scoop out our meeting-house in the same way.”

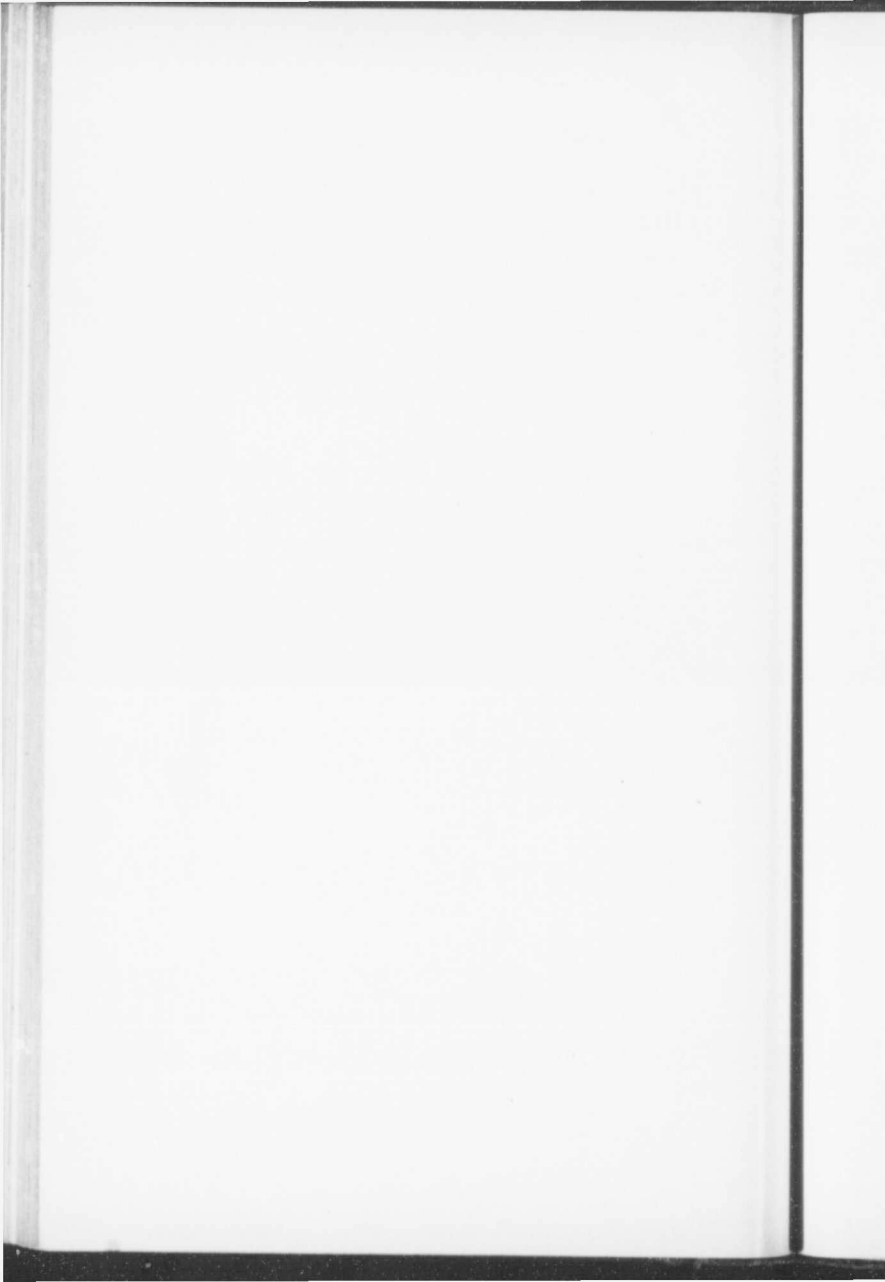
“Each cottage a fortified castle will be,” said Jacques.

“And we’ll have our moat, too,” remarked



"The boat rose upon a gigantic wave."

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Ulrica; "for there will be dreadful floods in the spring."

"Sufficient unto the spring are the floods thereof," said Ivan. "We can dig fast as soon as the snow begins to melt."

"Our dinner we did already eat," said Louis in reply to Ulrica's invitation. "We climb now upon your roof and de snow clear off, so he break not your house wit'in."

"And to-morrow," added Ivan, "we will excavate our fortifications."

XIV

AN INDIAN RAID

HEAVY snowfalls, high winds, and intense cold followed the blizzard. As the dwarfed trees were buried deep in the valley, the settlers were obliged to seek their wood supply on the steep hillsides, where they dug and chopped away the hard snow before they could cut the trees. Ptarmigan and rabbits had disappeared. The fish in the lakes and streams were inaccessible, for it was impossible to reach the air holes in the ice. The stock of salt fish, seal, and beaver meat diminished rapidly, for Labrador dogs have enormous appetites. But the young people did not let anxious thought make them unhappy. On clear days they enjoyed long trips in their komatiks over the frozen plain, and snow-shoeing or tobogganing down the hills. In the even-

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ings they played games, told stories, or sang choruses.

In the third week of January the men divided into parties and went farther inland in search of game. Pauline Marbeuf and Marie Brulot came to stay with Ulrica in her brother's absence. The day after the hunters had set out Ulrica heard a knocking at her door and hastened from the storeroom; but her impatient Indian visitors had already opened the door and entered the house. Several women and children pointed to their mouths and shook their heads, to signify that they had had nothing to eat; and one said: "Meat, no; hunger, much." They explained by signs and monosyllables that they had travelled a hundred miles since the great storm and had found no game; and that they were encamped on a plain about a mile away.

Pauline and Marie had gone to see if all was well in their homes, and in their absence Ulrica prepared an abundant meal for her famishing guests. When the two girls returned they said

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that groups of squaws and children had visited the neighboring cottages and had eaten ravenously. They had been warned that they must not call again. Ulrica knew that the Indians were improvident, and would not store provisions for times of scarcity, but she could not look at the pinched faces of the papooses and refuse them food. On successive mornings she ministered to mothers and children; on the fourth day all the women and children from the encampment were turned from the other houses and came to her door. She was in the provision shed when the suppliants arrived, and Pauline Marbeuf hurriedly drove them away.

That evening, while Marie was helping her mother at home, Pauline sat by the fire with Ulrica. She confided that she was engaged to Achille Brulot and was very happy. "And now would it be well," she said, "if Marie would marry wit' my brudder; but no, for she does love Paul Charpentier, and he, never care he for de poor Marie."

"I am sorry," said Ulrica, "sorry for Marie.

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Mr. Paul Charpentier loves only his work and his violin."

"You mistake," said Pauline, lowering her voice, though no one else was near. "Paul Charpentier, he love de daughter of de factor at Fort Michikau, de Hudson Bay pos'. Paul, he is much educat; he study by de college at Quebec, den he go an' work in de office of de factor; but when dat factor discover how de eye of Paul is set on de yong lady, he send him away. Evermore Paul he keep wit' himsef; seldom he talk wit' a girl one word."

Ulrica was interested in the romance, but she felt uncomfortable. Her Aunt Agatha had held a high ideal of honor before her, and she thought she should not listen to what Paul would not wish her to hear. But when she gave a turn to the conversation, Pauline made a jesting remark on the devotion of Jacques to Mademoiselle Oolrike, and Ulrica began to talk rapidly of the probable success of the hunting party.

Hitherto Ulrica had regarded Marie as rather

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tiresome, and much less companionable than the vivacious Pauline, but, as a girl with an unrequited attachment, she had become interesting, and Ulrica received her on her return with a solicitous tenderness. She brought out a non-intoxicating beer made from the tips of young spruce branches sweetened with molasses, and warmed up a stew from the remains of a Canada goose. As this bird is graminivorous, it has not the unpleasant fishy flavor that pervades the flesh of gulls and divers. Ulrica selected the most dainty portions for Marie, and observed that heart's sorrow had not affected that young woman's appetite.

The three girls went to bed without a thought of fear, Pauline and Marie bunking together in the inner room. About midnight Ulrica awoke with a sense of impending trouble. Something was going to happen, some danger threatened. She sat up, and thought she heard voices in the distance. Perhaps the hunters had come back. She rose and went to the window, but could see nothing through

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the heavy frost on the panes; but the voices were more distinct, the men were drawing nearer. Lighted by the glow from the fire, Ulrica ran to the inner room and aroused her companions. Both were heavy with sleep, and she had to repeat her tale before she could make them understand.

"Pauline, Marie," she cried, "people are coming, and I don't know who they are! It sounded like many voices and the tramp of many feet! Hurry, come to the window, the door, let us try to see!"

As the native girls had removed only their outer garments, they were dressed and ready for visitors in a few moments. Pauline drew the bolt and peeped through the door, but hastily closed and rebolted it.

"De Indian; it is de Indian!" she cried. "De moon, she is full, I see him plain. He is many, — maybe one hondred. He has de spear, de gun. He come, he kill us, for we rayfuse de food to his squaw. Noting we can help ourself."

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"They have no powder," said Ulrica quickly. "The squaws told me the men had used it all up."

Marie gave a little wail. "Maybe dey kill all our men, — my fader, an' Achille, an' Paul."

"Marie," commanded Pauline sternly, "stop you spik dat nonsense wit' yourself. Dose men deir all right far, far away. Plenty biznet you haf tak' care of dis house, no time dere is for be frighten 'bout some one more. Mademoiselle Oolrike, come, qvick, get de big knife, de ol' gun dat won' shoot, de shovel, de pike, de poke; mak' all ready; also mak' ready de pot, de pan; on de stove de water boil; dey open brek de door, we trow de water all over dem, an' while dey scal', we zhomp on dem wit' de spear, de knife, and drive dem off, like Monsieur Ivan say, 'presto, rapide.'"

By the light of a shaded lantern the three defenders hurriedly collected their weapons and began to prepare for defence; but they had not nearly completed their inadequate preparations when the assailants battered on the door.

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"No good for fight," moaned Marie. "I go hide." So saying, she hastened to the inner room and crawled beneath the mattress of the bunk.

"Pauline," said Ulrica, "they will break down the door in a minute, and if we throw water on them it will touch only a few, and the others will be furious. I've heard these Indians don't harm white people. Let us open the door and ask them what they want."

For answer Pauline filled a pail with boiling water and stood, in warlike attitude, beside Ulrica; but, startled by the sound of blows from a hatchet on the wood, she tilted the pail and spilled some of the water on her foot. With a howl of pain, she hastily set down her weapon and rushed in to take refuge by Marie. Ulrica, deserted, drew the bolt and faced the enemy. "What do you want?" she asked boldly.

"Meat," replied the foremost man. "Meat, bread, all food."

"I have fed your wives, your children," she

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pleaded. "Would you take all from us, and leave us to starve?"

The man shrugged his shoulders and gave a guttural laugh. Then, followed by his companions, he strode through the room and into the provision shed at the back. His squaw had told him where Ulrica kept her stores.

Half an hour later, when Pauline and Marie crept from the bunk, hardly a crumb remained in the cottage; the marauders had not only carried away all the food they could discover, but had seized the rugs and furs, and all the bedding, except the mattresses; the wind blew through a dismantled house, for the door hung loose, and would not remain closed. When the tramp of the invaders had passed beyond hearing, the shivering girls hastened to the other cottages, where they found frightened mothers and wailing children. No one had been hurt, but every house had been left bare of provisions.

On the following day the hunters returned, sorely disappointed. They had shot a few rab-

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bits, but not enough to suffice for more than two or three days with the most careful management, and they foresaw little prospect of success in another trip. On hearing the bad news of the raid, Jean Brulot and Pierre Marbeuf went out to reconnoitre, and found the Indian camp deserted. Probably the ammunition of the marauders was exhausted and they would not risk an encounter with the guns of the hunters.

Jean Brulot consulted with his neighbor, Marbeuf, and agreed to take his grown sons, two Charpentier boys, Joseph Marbeuf and Ivan, and go to the sea to hunt seals. Pierre Marbeuf, with the other young men, would remain in the valley to guard the cottages, making only short excursions in the immediate neighborhood in quest of game. The small portion of dried fish and meat that the hunting party had brought back was packed for the sealers, and Jean arranged to take most of the dogs to the seal hunt, not to assist in the seal catching, but to forage for themselves on the shore.

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Mrs. Charpentier invited Ulrica to stay with her, and Ulrica accepted with many thanks, though she dreaded the days in the crowded hut, where she could find neither privacy nor quiet.

XV

ADRIFT ON THE ICE

THE large fur seal of the Pacific does not inhabit the North Atlantic. Of the five varieties of hair seals on the Labrador coast, the harp seal is the most numerous and the gray seal the rarest. The small, ringed seal supplies the principal food of the Esquimaux. The great square-flipper or bearded seal, from twelve to sixteen feet in length, is difficult to catch. The hooded seal is also a powerful animal. The male has a shot-proof hood or bag on his nose, which he inflates and draws over his head when he is attacked; he sits on his tail and hind legs while fighting, and defends himself with teeth and flippers. The hood seals are larger than the harps, but their oil is not so good. The harp seal is so called from a curved line of dark spots on his

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back, which makes a figure resembling an ancient harp. This mark begins to appear when the seal is three years old, and is fully defined in the following year, when the animal is known as an "old harp."

The seal hunters set out for the floe ice in two boats. One boat was manned by Jean Brulot, with his sons Achille and Baptiste, and Joseph Marbeuf. Paul and Jacques Charpentier, Louis Brulot, and Ivan took the other boat. A strong wind from the shore had driven the ice several miles out to sea. The boatmen knew they could reach the floe with ease, but would need all their strength to pull back against the wind. To the south and west the sky was clear, but an ominous black cloud hung in the northeast. Jean foresaw that it indicated a storm, but believed the weather would continue fair until nightfall, leaving sufficient time to go to the ice field and return. But when the boats had covered half the distance, he looked about him anxiously. Cloud after cloud had issued from the dark mass and spread over

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the heavens. The temperature had fallen many degrees. The piercing wind had become a hurricane. The waves were rushing upon one another, their crests gleaming white against the darkened waters. Higher they rose, and the troughs between them widened. Here and there a ray of sunlight, piercing the blackness, fell with a yellowish glare on zigzag lines of foam. Spray dashed over the boatmen and froze on everything it touched, encasing boats, oars, and living beings in ice. Jean Brulot's long beard was a mass of icicles. The boys, with leather gloves ice-coated, could hardly move the oars.

Snow began to fall, — hard, glistening bullets, a continuous volley from ambushed heights above. The missiles struck the faces of the rowers, and, glancing off, went hissing into the waves. The gale clamored to drive the oarsmen upon the ice; the cold sought to benumb and destroy them; the rolling waves threatened to overturn them. Now they were in a chasm between mounting waters, which, behind and

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before, appeared like hungry maws, waiting to devour. Again they were lifted to a rolling top, tossed a moment on the frothing height, and shot down again. And ever the uproar grew louder and the waves sped faster.

Each felt the approach of doom and dared not utter his thought. Jacques broke the silence: "Le bon Dieu, He knows. On the sea, on the land, alike is He. I — fear not."

Ivan had suffered intensely. The pain in his fingers had darted up his arm, to his side, all over his body. But as his casing of ice grew stiffer, as movement became more difficult, a pleasant languor stole upon him; everything appeared dreamlike and far away. Jacques shouted to him, "Ivan, awake! If you wake not, you die!" But he replied drowsily, "Don't bother me. I'm tired." Jacques beat upon his face and body with blows as hard as his benumbed hands would permit, and saved himself in restoring his comrade.

Again he called: "Ivan, awake! We approach the ice! In a moment we may be upon

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it! Ready you must be to leap from the boat! If you leap not, swept beneath the floe you may be to sink forever!"

Ivan looked about him in a daze. His torpid brain vaguely comprehended that something was required of him. When the boat struck a huge cake of ice, apart from the main body, he staggered to his feet, and would have fallen overboard had not Jacques grasped and held him. The men had drawn in their oars, to save them from breaking against the ice. They watched keenly, their eyes moving from the rolling waters to the great ice floe. For a moment wave and sky were illumined by a long, shifting light that seemed to stretch across the sea; then the light vanished, leaving darkness intensified.

The boat which Paul Charpentier commanded rose upon a gigantic wave, and the boatmen involuntarily closed their eyes, not doubting that they should be dashed against the mass which they could no longer distinguish. Instead, they were carried above the floe in the

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rush of waters, their boat was overturned, and they were thrown out upon the glare ice. Before they could rise, another wave was upon them, suffocating, blinding, filling eyes, mouths, and ears with salt water. They struggled to their feet, fearing they should be washed out to sea. The floe was so slippery from continual floods of water which froze directly on contact with the icy floor, that they fell repeatedly. But they regained footing, and went on manfully, dragging the heavy boat, and supporting Ivan, who was still but semi-conscious.

When they were at last beyond reach of the waves, many yards up the floe, they looked in vain for a sign of the other boat. They shouted, but if answer came, it was overpowered by the clamor of the elements. Their hearts grew still with dread. Had their comrades been forced under the ice or lost beneath the waves? Each was asking the question, when the boat, which had lain in a deep trough, appeared riding upon a mountain of water, and presently descended from its crest

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into a wide rift which cut through the floe like a river, and where the force of the waves was abated. The boys who stood on the solid mass ran with long ropes to the aid of their fellows. Those in the boat grasped the ropes, while the lads on the ice threw themselves face downward and pulled with all their might. They were able to draw the boat close to the floe, when the boatmen alighted in safety and hauled their vessel out of reach of water.

Jean Brulot said a prayer of thanksgiving, while his companions stood with bowed heads. They had come to a part of the ice which had not been washed by the waves, and which was covered with hard snow. But the wind was blowing in great gusts, and to avoid being swept off their feet, the eight linked arms, and with the boats harnessed to them, went over the frozen surface while they sought a place of safety. They discovered two long hills which offered a refuge from the tempest. These elevations had been formed by the rushing together of great bodies of ice, the collision

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shattering innumerable crystals and throwing them upward in heaps.

The men drew the boats into this welcome haven, and set to work vigorously to break the ice from their clothing. They assisted one another in turn, beginning with Ivan, whom they rubbed and pounded after they had removed his coat. Ivan was now fully conscious of the situation, and begged his friends to desist; he assured them that he felt sufficiently warm, and did not wish to return to his sister looking as if he had been in a prize fight.

The castaways still faced a serious problem. By keeping in motion they might resist the cold, but how dare they rest or sleep? To burn the boats would be to cut off means of communication with the land, and no other fuel was available. They answered the question that night by cutting and scraping the ice from one of the boats, propping the vessel on each side with lumps of snow, to steady it, and sleeping in it by turns, four at a time. The men who watched gave up their coats to

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the sleepers, and jumped, ran, beat their arms over their breasts, and rubbed one another's hands and faces to prevent freezing. The gale had somewhat diminished by morning, but the wind was still high and the sky overcast. Great waves, capped by creamy froth, dashed their spray far over the floe. The outline of the shore was dim, and the lines of cloud and headland appeared to blend.

The haggard castaways took their portion of frozen bread and meat and chopped it into mouthfuls with their hatchets. They had brought provision for one day only. They felt the thud and boom of the waters beneath the ice. On the one side they looked out on the raging sea, and then turned their eyes to a seemingly interminable plain broken by hummocks and ice ridges.

Their hope of finding seals was growing faint; but soon after breakfast they set out to explore, the two groups going in opposite directions. When Paul had led his crew about a mile along the borders of the floe, he pro-

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posed to strike toward the interior, where seals had perhaps come up through breaks in the ice. The explorers had not gone far when Jacques called out: "Behold, over there! It is like a great hill of snow! Something there is beneath it!"

He pointed toward a huge heap, which had not been formed from drift nor from the crashing together of ice cakes. Paul suggested that as the floe had drifted from the far north, the pile was perhaps the cache of voyagers whose ship had been caught in the ice. But when the eager boys reached the spot and began to chop vigorously, they discovered the wreck of the ship itself. It had been caught between the ice cakes and then frozen in. The wood, embedded in the hard snow, was dry. The discoverers had flint and steel in their firebags, and were soon rejoicing in a blaze. Though only a portion of the wreckage had been cast upon the ice, it would supply sufficient fuel to serve for days, perhaps for weeks.

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When the boys had chopped farther, and had decided that no treasures were concealed, Paul and Louis set out to seek Jean Brulot and his party, while Jacques and Ivan walked toward the boats for a kettle and some meat. When Paul returned with his delighted comrades, Jacques was cooking a stew in a large pot, while Ivan superintended the boiling of snow-water for tea. The diners, seated near the welcome blaze upon a beam which they had drawn from the wreck, grew light hearted over their meal. The portions were small, and did not satisfy hunger; but the wrecked men, thankful that their immediate needs had been supplied, had faith that they would be preserved from starvation.

After dinner the two parties separated to search for seals in new directions. Paul's crew had walked a long way without result, when Ivan cried: "Look at that rum kind of hump on the ice! Let's investigate!"

Paul believed it was only a drift, but Ivan turned and ran toward it. "Great Scott!" he

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shouted. "It's an animal! A whopping big fellow, too!"

His companions hurried to the spot. The creature, which was only lightly covered with snow, was frozen fast to the ice. It was about fifteen feet in length, and a horn-like projection, several feet long, issued from its upper lip.

"He is the narwhal!" exclaimed Jacques. "I know him by the description. Seldom has he been seen south of the Hudson's Strait. He is gray, with white below, and many gray spots. He has the long tusk, which is his tooth. Sometimes there is one tusk, sometimes two, but never more. It may be he was caught between the ice floes in the far north."

"Halloo!" cried Ivan. "It was n't the ice jam that killed him. There's a harpoon sticking in his head!"

"Ah!" cried Jacques. "The man who killed him, where is he?"

"He's all right," declared Ivan. "It's likely the narwhal got away from him after

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he had struck it. Let's give him a vote of thanks, and then cut off enough for supper."

"Dat is well," answered Louis. "Enough of food is dere for de long time."

When the four returned to the fire at sundown, each had a portion of meat slung over his shoulder with thongs of hide. The adhering blubber was three inches deep. The other party, empty-handed and depressed, had arrived at the wreck, and now rejoiced over the abundant provision. Narwhal meat fried in its own fat, with bread soaked and fried, made a delicious supper. Before nightfall the wind moderated and blew toward the shore. The sky cleared, and the full moon sprang, as it seemed, from the ocean, silvering the waves, and covering the ice plain with crystal gems. With thankful hearts the wearied castaways lay down by the fire and sank into refreshing slumber.

They were delighted in the morning by the appearance of a number of seals upon the ice, and killed so many that they were unable to take all in one load to the shore.

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On approaching the land, the voyagers were greeted by the howling dogs. Esquimau dogs rarely bark, but are proficient howlers. The animals had feasted on refuse which they had dug from the snow beneath the fish stages. They had found also small fish, clams, and mussels that had been cast ashore in a recent storm, and deposited above the usual wave line.

On the following day it was evident that the ice field had drifted toward the shore. With a calm sea and light winds, the boatmen easily reached the floe, and loaded their vessels with seals and frozen narwhal meat. Their anxiety was at an end. They had little fear of another Indian raid, and believed they had ample provision to support the little colony until spring, when they would find game in the woods and fish in the open water.

XVI

A JOYFUL MEETING

WHEN Ivan returned from the sealing expedition, he saw that his sister had grown very thin and pale, and that she was not roused even by his recital of his perils. She went about her work with dragging steps, and readily accepted offers of help. Early in March she developed a hacking cough, and became so weak that she could not rise from her bed. She turned with loathing from the seal meat, which was now the sole provision of the settlement, for neither flour nor preserved fruit remained. Jacques roamed valley and hillside in search of game, and discovered some cranberry bushes with berries, which had been kept fresh under their shelter of snow. Mrs. Charpentier stewed the fruit for Ulrica, and Jacques was comforted for the

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time when he heard she had eaten and relished it. He, too, had grown pallid and thin. If she should die, he knew that the world would be desolate for him.

The weather became milder. Partridge and ptarmigan returned to the woods, and the failing girl took a little roast game or broth, but did not regain strength. The women and children crowded to the cottage and tried to interest her. She did not tell them that she longed for quiet, and that the shrill voices of the little ones increased her headache.

At the time for the spring sealing, Ivan said he would remain in the valley with his sister, but the men persuaded him to go with them. Their wives would nurse Ulrica in turn, and give her every care in their power. She was no worse now than she had been for many weeks, and he could do her no good by staying beside her and fretting. Ulrica herself, advised by Mrs. Brulot, told him to join the party. Jacques longed to stay behind, but duty called him to the sea, and he did not utter his

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longing. Often, late in the night, he wandered by the cottage, with his eyes on the dimmed light that shone from the window. Ah! if he could watch by Ulrica as her brother watched, he might find some little comfort in serving her; but he could not even see her; and he shivered with dread when he thought that he might not see her again until he, with others, should be summoned to lay her to rest forever. He had been strong and self controlled, but now it seemed to him that he must break down and tell some one what he felt; yet he did not. He was not aware that his friends had observed his devotion. A certain dignity in him restrained them from remark, while they did not themselves understand why they dared not speak to him as they spoke to one another. When he reached the shore and saw the blue sea sparkling under the sunlight, and heard the bustle and excitement of the sealing, he took heart. The weather would soon be mild. At the opening of navigation Ivan and his sister would return to Eyrie Cottage,

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and Ulrica would gain strength in watching and hoping for the coming of her father.

The young seals which are taken in the spring are born about the last week in February, and are called "whitecoats," from the snowy whiteness of their skins. Their dams leave them on the ice until they are a few weeks old, when they are able to go into the water. They grow very rapidly, — from about five pounds at the time of birth to forty or fifty pounds four weeks later, when the fat beneath the skin is three or four inches deep. There are many thousands on the large ice fields, and though to the unaccustomed eye they all look alike, each mother recognizes her own little white pup when she comes on the ice to suckle it. The law of Newfoundland does not allow the killing of the whitecoats until they are fourteen days old, but at the earliest date permitted by law, sailing-vessels and steamers hasten to the March sealing. A large crew at work on an ice floe can kill thousands of the baby seals in a day. Sometimes the sealers

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shoot the whitecoats, but usually stun them with a seal-bat, then stab them to the heart, and strip them of fat and pelt.

In his eagerness to reach the ice, Ivan had for the time forgotten his troubles. "I hope no vessel will get to the field ahead of us," he remarked to Jacques.

"Not many from Newfoundland come as far north as Wabistan," said Jacques; "and I see not the sign of one. It may be we have the floe to ourselves."

On arrival, the settlers found the field occupied only by innumerable white pups and mother seals. But later in the day a steam sealer came around a headland, and was soon charging through the floe ice, its great double stems, filled with solid oak, and its thick sheathing of hard wood, called "ice chocks," enabling it to do so without injury.

When the boat was well alongside the solid floe, its men got out on the ice, and set to work without paying attention to those who had preceded them. Ivan walked toward the

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new arrivals with his sealing-bat in hand, and watched them with interest. He was looking at a group of dexterous workers when a man, leaning on the arm of a sailor, slowly left the boat and walked for a short distance on the ice. The stranger was clad in a suit of hair sealskin, with a hood, such as some Labradorians wear, covering his ears and partly hiding his face. He stooped, he faltered in his gait, yet Ivan gazed at him with a dawning sense that the newcomer was in some way associated with himself and his past. For a time he did not think of this feeble traveller as his father, — his father of quick, firm step and military carriage. But when he saw the face under the hood, his heart beat quickly; his cheeks flushed, then grew very pale. The eyes were sunken, the nose was pinched, the face thin and wan; but pitifully changed though it was, the boy could not mistake it.

With a glad cry of recognition, which startled the bystanders and bade them pause in their work of slaughter, Ivan darted forward, and,

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half laughing, half sobbing, threw his arms about his father's neck, all his boyish shrinking from any display of emotion forgotten in the joy of reunion. The sailors moved apart and stood watching. Colonel Stewart-Dundas faltered, "My son, my son!" But Ivan, recovering speech, fired questions at him.

"Did you know we were here, father? Did you come to find us? Did you hear about us from Mr. Sinclair or Dr. Greville? Where did you come from? Have you been very ill, or have you had an accident?"

To which his father replied: "Yes, I have been very ill from blood poisoning following a gash in my arm. I came from the hospital at Indian Harbour, where the nurse and doctor gave me messages from Dr. Greville and Mr. Sinclair. I was laid up there for many weeks, and tried in vain to find means to communicate with you. I had been ill in a fisherman's hut on the coast, and had lost hope of recovery when a Moravian missionary discovered me and sent me to the hospital."

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“But you are better now; you are going to get quite well,” said Ivan anxiously.

“Yes, I am much better. I suffer now only from weakness. The doctor hesitated about letting me come; but he decided that as I might not have another opportunity for months, the disappointment would be more harmful to me than the hard voyage. That vessel stopped over at Indian Harbour, and when I heard that it was on its way to Wabistan, I got ready in two hours. Tell me now of yourselves. How is Ulrica, my little girl? Have you had a trying winter? I believed you were safe — with Agatha.” His voice broke; his sister had been very dear to him. “A letter from Dr. Greville told me all. You have been on my mind continually. My poor, sensitive little daughter, how has she borne such a life?”

Ivan began to talk rapidly. He feared to tell his father of Ulrica's illness, lest the shock should weaken him. He described the cottage in the valley, and spoke of the kindness of the settlers, especially of the women, who had

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promised to take care of Ulrica during his absence.

“And Rica is not a little girl now, dad. Remember, you have not seen her for more than two years. She is nearly five feet six, and looks quite grown up. We shall be seventeen to-morrow. She’s tall enough now for a woman; but I’m going to catch up to you before I stop. Let’s measure after a while and see how many inches I have to do yet. And how did it happen about the name of the settlement? Is it true that there’s another Wabistan?”

“Yes; I was at an Indian encampment of that name on an inlet. I sent a number of letters addressed to you in England, but they evidently miscarried.”

Ivan observed his father’s increasing pallor, and asked anxiously, “Had n’t you better get on the ship and sit down, dad? You’re not able to stand, and it’s too cold for you out here.”

“I want to know first if I can go ashore. Did you come with the men who are working

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beyond that ridge over there? I saw them from the boat, and hoped they were Wabistan people."

"Yes; they are the French Canadians who have been so kind to us. They will take you ashore this evening when they go back to sleep in their huts. We could n't get to the valley to-night, but we can start early in the morning. Jacques Charpentier will go with us. He can drive the dog team better than I can. I get along fast enough, but have the luck of striking jolty places."

At that moment a mother seal came up through a hole in the ice, and turned her head from side to side, in a vain search for her little "whitecoat." In the place where she had left it, surrounded by many other fat, white pups, she saw only red, quivering bodies. She appeared bewildered by the scene of carnage, and fixed her large, pathetic eyes upon the strangers, as if beseeching aid.

"Poor creature!" said Colonel Dundas. "Who can tell how much she feels?"



"With a glad cry of recognition, Ivan darted forward."

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Ivan threw down his sealing-bat. He had not the sympathy of Ulrica and Jacques, but he had never been cruel; and at this moment his heart was very tender. "It's a mean business, anyway," he said, "slaughtering those poor, defenceless little things. They are so tame, they just keep still and let you strike them. There's no sport in it. Of course those sealers have to do it. It's their only way of living. But for myself, I want no more of it."

"They are beautiful, attractive little creatures," said Colonel Dundas. "The Esquimaux do not understand the symbolism of the words 'Lamb of God,' because they have never seen a lamb; so the Moravian missionaries point out to them the gentleness of the baby seals, and teach them of the 'Seal of God.'"

While he spoke, the mother seal, with a great yelp, as of anguish, turned from the field of death, and disappeared beneath the floe.

"Take me now to speak to your friends," requested Colonel Dundas. "Then I will re-

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turn to the ship till they are ready to leave the ice."

"Some of them may stay out here all night," said Ivan. "But if they do stay, they will let us have a boat, and Jacques and I can sail it."

The sealers from the Newfoundland vessel had resumed their work, and the French Canadians, who were many yards distant, had looked up from time to time, but had kept their places. They understood that Ivan had met some one whom he knew well, and had surmised that it was his father. Jacques had been too much agitated to give attention to his sealing. When he saw the two approaching, he left his section and hastened to meet them.

"O Jacques!" exclaimed Ivan. "This is my father, Colonel—Mr. Stewart. I'll tell you later how he heard of us and how he came here. We want to know if we can get to shore before dark, and start for the valley early to-morrow morning."

Jacques's face worked, and for moments he could not speak. "I do rejoice," he said at

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last, brokenly. "And now — now — Mademoiselle Ulrica — she will be well."

"Ulrica! Is my daughter ill?" asked the startled man.

Jacques was troubled. Ivan had kept the news from his father, and he had blunderingly told it.

"I ask your pardon," he stammered. "Of late Mademoiselle Ulrica has not strong appeared; but it was the trouble of the mind, and now, on your return, that will be healed."

Ivan hastened to explain: "I did not tell you, father, because I thought it would worry you. Ulrica is not worse than she has been for weeks. If I had not felt sure of that I would not have left her. Jacques is right. She will begin to improve as soon as she sees you." He turned to Jacques: "My father has been ill, too, — very ill indeed. That is the reason I did not tell him at once."

"Alas! I perceive that for myself," said Jacques compassionately.

Colonel Dundas looked at the young man

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with interest. "Ivan has told me that you have been very kind to him and to my little daughter. I do thank you most sincerely."

Jacques colored deeply and looked embarrassed. His usual fluency deserted him and he could not find a word for reply.

His embarrassment did not lessen when Colonel Dundas asked somewhat abruptly: "How old are you, Jacques?"

"Twenty last week," he answered, lamely.

"Just three years older than we are," remarked Ivan.

Again poor Jacques blushed. Three years seemed to him the ideal difference in age between man and wife. He had told himself repeatedly that he must never think of marriage with Ulrica; he could not give her such a home as she should have, but repeatedly the thought had filled his mind. Could the scrutinizing eyes now fixed upon him read his secret? He understood well that knowledge of that secret would displease Ulrica's father. An uncomfortable silence was broken by Ivan:

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“Is n't Jacques a tall fellow, dad? Most of the men here are rather short; but Jacques is half a foot taller than Rica, and she's away over the other girls.”

On the afternoon of the following day, Ivan threw open the door of the cottage and dashed in. He had come in advance to break the news gently. Ulrica lay with closed eyes. Pauline, who sat in silence by the bedside, had been unable to interest her.

“Is she asleep?” whispered Ivan.

“No, she sleep not, but also she care not. De strengt' too far go from her.”

“Rica, Rica, dear,” besought Ivan, “listen to me. I have brought you good news—most delightful good news—as a present for our birthday.”

She looked up at him. His cheeks were rosy, his eyes sparkling. His joy inspired her. “What is it?” she asked weakly, but with more animation than she had shown for days.

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"Some one has come, Rica, — some one you will be glad, overjoyed, to see."

"Some one be come," interrupted Pauline. "Some one dat is de veesitor. Ivan, you mus' breeng not yet any one by here. You house-keep not so much tidy lak your seester. At de firs', you mus' give me de help for mak it appair more better. On de floor everyting is, — de pot, de basket, de coat, de rug, de deesh, de broom, de kettle, de shovel, de boot, — all very much heap up. Do you pairmit one stranzh zhenteelman for all such disorder behol'? No, you disgras not de house. You me assis' swif', rapeed, fas'."

Pauline whisked about as she spoke, thrusting pots and pans into the storeroom, straightening rugs, and smoothing Ulrica's bunk, with an agility that almost made Ivan speechless. When he recovered from his momentary bewilderment, he turned again to his sister. No suggestion of the arrival of her father had reached her dulled brain. The unnatural slowness of comprehension indicated how far her

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strength had failed. "Rica, Rica, dear," he pleaded, "can't you guess? It's — it's the one you want to see more than any one else in the world."

She raised herself slightly on her elbow, stared at him wildly, and then, gasping, "Father," she sank back white and motionless.

"She's dead!" groaned the terrified boy. "It has killed her! I thought it would make her well!"

"No, no; she don' be dead," cried Pauline. "She faint lak dat when firs' she come at Wabistan. Breeng de water, qvick. We rub de hand, de face; she all be better praisonly."

When Ulrica opened her eyes, she asked brokenly: "Is it true, Ivy; is it really true? Is father —"

"Yes, Rica, it is quite true. He came in a sealing vessel. He is waiting with Jacques a little way down the valley. Are you able to see him yet? Are you strong enough? Or shall he go to Mrs. Charpentier's, and come here later?"

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“Oh! no, no! let him come now. I am — stronger already. I almost — think I could sit up.”

“Don’ you try dat,” commanded Pauline. “An’ firs’, before you see your fader, or any oder one, you be dreenk dis. You eat noding, you dreenk noding; sure course you be seeck.”

Ulrica obediently took the broth which she had refused earlier in the day. A little color came to her face, and Ivan took courage to tell her, “Father has been rather ill himself, Rica, so please seem as cheerful and as well as you can. He was in the hospital at Indian Harbour when he heard that we were in this country. Of course he is ever so much better, or he could not have come. But you’ll see that he is changed, and you must try not to worry. The doctor said he would be all right with good care.”

Jacques was not mistaken. From the hour of her meeting with her father, Ulrica began to regain strength. The doctor at Indian Har-

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bour had supplied his patient with delicacies that tempted the girl's poor appetite. When the captain of the sealer heard that Mr. Stewart's daughter was lying ill in a valley cottage, he sent canned vegetables, flour, and rice, which the father accepted gratefully for his child's sake; yet he was a penniless man, and a proud one, and felt with pain that he could not return these favors from strangers.

Ulrica recovered so rapidly, that before the time came for the sailing of the vessel she was able to sit up in an easy-chair and receive the captain of the sealer, when the good man assured her gallantly that her thanks more than repaid him for the little he had done. In April, when the atmosphere was milder, though the snow was still deep, she went for short trips on the komatik; and early in May, she resumed her place as housekeeper, leaving her father and Ivan free to hunt and trap.

XVII

AU REVOIR, OLD LABRADOR!

IN late April and early May Colonel Stewart-Dundas spent some happy hours in the valley cottage. His joy at reunion with his children, their love and confidence, and the health-giving atmosphere of the valley, had almost restored to him his former vigor. He had despondent moments, when the burden of false accusation weighed heavily upon him; but with effort he cast it off, determined that he would not weaken himself by unavailing regret. In the evenings and on very stormy days, the boys and girls studied under his direction with Ulrica and Ivan, though their attainments differed widely. He did not confine his teaching to school hours. The young men delighted to accompany him on fishing trips, when he talked to them of the history

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and customs of foreign peoples, of interesting discoveries in science, and, for the special benefit of Jacques, of art and artists.

The food supply no longer caused anxiety. Spruce partridge, ptarmigan, and snow buntings thronged the woods, and wild geese sought the marshes; the air was musical with the song of larks; the coast was alive with gulls, terns, and ducks; and cranberries lay in abundance beneath the melting snow.

The thawing of the snow made travel difficult, and the hunters often waded waist deep in slush. To avoid a flood, the cottagers spent days in digging away the snow fortifications surrounding their cabins. When the ice in the river became soft, in the condition that is termed "slob ice," the hunters rowed through it, for the komatiks were useless at this season. When the snow lay only in hollows of the rocks and the deepest valleys, the settlers returned to the shore. Colonel Stewart-Dundas had written a long letter to his lawyers in London, and sent it by the captain of the seal-

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ing vessel to Newfoundland; the little family in Eyrie Cottage now watched anxiously for the fishing boats, believing that an answer would come by one of them. The climate of Labrador was too severe for Ulrica, though Ivan could bear it well, and Colonel Dundas had therefore determined to remain at Wabistan and work with the fishermen for this season only; even if he should learn from his lawyers that all his money had been lost beyond recovery, he hoped to make enough to take his children to Canada or the United States, where he could obtain employment, and they could have suitable companionship.

On a morning in June Ulrica was in the cottage, singing as she worked. She had found some early wild flowers on the hillside, and surrounded them with moss and grasses. Her father and Ivan were busy at the shore, for two fishing crews had already arrived from Newfoundland. When she had set her table and put the fish in the pan, she went to the door to see if the hungry men were on the

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way. Ivan was coming, Ivan alone, and he almost leaped up the steep crag. Fear shot through her. Perhaps something had happened to her father. This Labrador was so full of perils. But Ivan waved his cap, and shouted, though his breath was nearly spent: "Rica, Hurrah! There's a ship coming, a steamboat! Perhaps it is the mission boat; perhaps there is news from England!"

Ulrica, trembling with excitement, forgot her fish, and would have left it to burn, had not its lively sputtering compelled her attention, when she removed it to a cooler spot.

She hastened to the wharf with her brother, and on the way they met Louis Brulot, whose face was downcast. "De ship its course be turn," he explained. "It go far away. It come not by here."

Ulrica gave a pitiful cry, and ran to seek consolation from Jacques. "Is it true," she asked, her lip quivering, "that the boat has changed its course? Is it not the mission boat? Is it not coming to Wabistan?"

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“Wait, Mademoiselle Ulrica,” said Jacques tenderly. “Be not so disappointed. True it is that the vessel has turned; but near that place are many great and dangerous rocks beneath the sea. My belief it is that the captain, perceiving them, has gone out of his course for safety. Keep brave your heart; all may be well.”

Jacques had judged correctly, — the captain had altered his course to pass outside the danger belt. Presently Ivan called the glad news: “It is; it is the ship of the mission! I know it well! It is coming, coming here!”

Quickly the vessel drew nearer, nearer, near enough for the watchers to see three men upon the deck, who waved their handkerchiefs joyfully in response to a salute from the shore. The settlers recognized Dr. Greville, but speculated regarding his companions. One of the two was a stranger to Ulrica and Ivan; the other they knew well! Ulrica, speechless, gripped her brother’s arm, and Ivan, too, was silent.

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Colonel Dundas was not on the wharf. Robins had called him aside to arbitrate in a dispute about wages. The assistant superintendent had perceived that Mr. Stewart was a man accustomed to authority, and, in the absence of Sinclair, had often conferred with him in difficulties. Ulrica did not hesitate to interrupt the conference. With her swiftest step she ran to the shore, not once tripping on the rickety wharf. Panting, she clutched her father's hand, and cried, her voice rising higher with each repetition, "Father, father, father! He did not forsake you! He has come, he has come! It is — it is — Uncle Ivan!"

Colonel Dundas's face went white. He turned to Robins: "If you will excuse me, Mr. Robins, I will talk with you of this matter later."

"To be sure, Mr. Stewart," replied Robins cordially. "I'm right glad if it's your brother that's come, and I hope he brings good news."

But when Ulrica and her father reached the wharf, no Uncle Ivan was in sight. Dr.

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Greville, with a dignified stranger, had just crossed the gangplank.

Colonel Dundas was clad in blouse and overalls, but the newcomer at once recognized the man whom he had crossed the ocean to seek. "I am happy to see you again, Colonel Stewart-Dundas," he said, extending his hand. "I am Gray, — Major Gray, of the Guards."

The fisher folk drew nearer and listened in astonishment. What title had the stranger given to the man whom they called Mr. Stewart?

The Colonel took the proffered hand, but replied somewhat stiffly: "Yes, when you knew me, Major Gray, I was Colonel Stewart-Dundas."

"It is a name that all England should delight to honor," said the stranger heartily.

Then, with the suddenness that often characterized the entrances of his nephew, Uncle Ivan appeared upon the scene. "My very dear Donald, and his Majesty's faithful soldier and servant," he began, seizing both of his brother's

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hands, and shaking them vigorously, "why, oh why did you hide yourself in such a forsaken corner of the earth? If we had not chanced upon Dr. Greville we might never have discovered you. Hawtrey and Hawtrey got your letter, but for all your explanation they did not know how to reply to Wabistan, which is not on any post-office guide in civilization. And why, in the name of common sense, you dear Quixotic, idealistic, and most guileless dreamer, why did n't you remain in England and fight your case to a finish, instead of creeping off to this wilderness to nurse your broken heart, because of the idiot — I beg its august pardon — the mistaken verdict of a court-martial? I always said you needed a guardian, and now I'm dead sure of it."

Colonel Dundas had drawn his daughter's arm within his own, and she stood by him, trembling with joyous excitement, her beautiful eyes shining darker through their tears.

"Bless you, Ulrica!" exclaimed the impetuous uncle, embracing his niece. "How you

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have grown! You're handsome, too, worthy of the finest of the Stewart-Dundas, and the women have been celebrated for their beauty. You'll cause a stir when you make your *début* in London, and carry off the most eligible *parti* of the season."

Jacques overheard and caught his breath. He clenched his teeth, but a sound like a moan came through them.

"Don't put nonsense into the child's head, Ivan," said Colonel Dundas, looking proudly down on his daughter, and patting her arm. "She is my little girl in heart still, and has no thought of the world's gayeties."

"But what does it all mean, Uncle Ivan?" clamored Ivan the younger. "Why don't you tell us straight? Have they found out for certain sure, what we knew all the time, that father never did it? Are they going to give him back his rank and his sword, and repay him for what they made him suffer? How did you come here? And why did you never write?"

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“I did n't write because I had been ill of a fever and sent to the hills. I never heard a word of this blessed business for months, and even then my letters, in some unexplained manner, went astray. As soon as I could get leave I went to England to ferret out the mystery, and most happily I succeeded. Yes, young Michael Ivan, it does mean that they are sure now your father suffered unjustly, and those who condemned him will make all the reparation in their power. It's too late to undo all the harm. They can't—bring back—Agatha. But where she is, I think she knows the truth. Gray, pardon us; let me present my niece and nephew. Ivan, my namesake, is a promising fellow,—the very counterpart of his uncle. Ulrica has the disposition of her father.”

“And now, how soon are we going back?” asked Ivan, when he had welcomed Major Gray.

“The day after to-morrow, I believe. Dr. Greville will take us to Battle Harbour, where

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we will get a boat for New York via Newfoundland; and after a few days in New York, we will sail for England."

And again Jacques Charpentier, standing with others near, could not restrain a moan.

"Come to our cottage, where we can talk it over quietly," said Colonel Dundas. He looked for Dr. Greville, but that energetic physician was already surrounded by importunate patients.

"It's no use," declared Ivan. "I remember how it was when he was here before. Unless you've got a burn or a boil or a fracture or a fever, you can't get within yards of him. He has done his good work for dad, and thinks he can leave him to himself for a while."

On the way to the cottage Ulrica clung to her father, looking up into his face in rapturous silence. Ivan and his uncle went lightly up the crag, while Major Gray, panting a little as he climbed, began to explain how the innocence of Colonel Dundas had been proved. When the party arrived at the cottage door, Ulrica's eye fell on the pan of fish. "Oh!"

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she exclaimed. "I had forgotten all about dinner! Does any one care for eating?"

"I can answer for myself," said Uncle Ivan. "I'm hungry enough to devour a caribou, horns and all. This Labrador air sharpens the appetite. And even you, Rica, must not try to live on happiness alone, for you don't look very robust."

"Ivan, please put some wood in the stove," directed Ulrica. "The fire is not out." She turned to her uncle: "I can give you only fish and bread, for there are no vegetables in this part of Labrador; but father thinks I cook very well, and the dinner will soon be ready."

Colonel Dundas, with his guests, sat by the door and talked, and Ulrica listened while she went about her work. At the shore her mind had been so occupied by the thought of her father's restitution that she had not observed Ivan's question about the time of departure, and she started when he now repeated it.

"Is it really settled sure, Uncle Ivan, that we are to go the day after to-morrow?"

"Yes, young man," replied Ivan the elder,

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"it is settled sure. Dr. Greville cannot possibly spare more time."

"Jacques Charpentier will be awfully cut up," remarked Ivan, thoughtfully, "and I'm sorry enough to leave him."

Ulrica's head reeled, and she put up her hand dizzily. "Jacques!" she exclaimed, unmindful of those who heard, and her voice was a wail. Every eye was turned on her, and Colonel Dundas was greatly disturbed. The expression on his face brought Ulrica to herself; for the moment she had forgotten everything but the near parting. She caught up a pail: "I am going to the spring for water," she announced, and walked unsteadily to the door.

Uncle Ivan rose quickly: "Allow me, Rica," he began; but his brother touched his arm: "Let her go — alone."

With quick sympathy the father understood. His child had realized suddenly — in the crisis of parting — something of what Jacques Charpentier had become to her.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Ivan. "I always

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knew that Jacques was spoons on her, but I never thought — ”

“ Who is this young man, Donald? ” asked Uncle Ivan. “ Have you ever observed — anything — ”

“ On his part, yes. I saw it on the first day when I met him. But I am convinced that he has never uttered a word of it to her. He is the soul of honor, — one of the finest fellows I ever met. His father was a man of gentle birth, — Jacques has told me much about his family, — but the boy has been brought up here in poverty, as a fisherman. He has educated himself, however, in his intervals of leisure. His father left a few classics in Latin, Greek, and French, and Jacques has absorbed them. He has artistic genius, too, but — ”

“ But it’s a mighty good thing we are going so soon, ” commented Uncle Ivan. “ Rica may fret for a day or two, but she’ll soon get over it. At her age it can’t be lasting. ”

The father sighed. “ I wish I were sure of that. ”

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"It's a perplexing complication, Dundas," said Major Gray; "but I agree with your brother. This is only one of the little romances of early youth, and separation will efface it from the child's mind."

Colonel Dundas arose, and walked back and forth in the narrow room. "The question is," he said, stopping short, "have I the right to separate them?"

"My good Donald, have you taken leave of your senses?" inquired his brother, aghast. "Of course you have the right; and the one thing I'm most thankful for is that you can exercise it speedily. You would not think of remaining here?"

"No, certainly not. But I owe the lad much. He saved my son's life at the risk of his own. He has been the devoted friend of both my children, sacrificing himself repeatedly for their sakes. And, with all his adoration for Ulrica, which he could not hide from me, he has conducted himself invariably with the most admirable reserve. I have wished that I

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could aid him to develop his talent. Is it not my duty to do so now? Must I not consider *his* rights?"

Captain Dundas shook his head: "You're a problem, Donald, and, as I remarked before, you need a guardian. Surely you would not think of consenting to an engagement. Ulrica might marry anybody."

"She is a most attractive and beautiful girl," said Major Gray. "It would be a sad pity —"

"Three years ago, Gray," said Colonel Dundas, "I should have regarded such a possibility as you and my brother regard it; and I confess that even now it is not welcome; but my experiences have changed my views in many ways. I understand now, from close association, what worth an honest, noble man may possess though his occupation be lowly. Jacques Charpentier is a gentleman; I have never met any one more refined in feeling. And I can trust him. He is too unselfish and too true to speak of love to my child now. If I give him the opportunity to better himself, I believe he will

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rise to a position that he need not hesitate to ask her to share with him. Meanwhile she will be free; she will see many others, and be able to test the strength of her regard for the young man."

The day had seemed miserably long to Jacques Charpentier, who had craved for freedom from the crowd of fishermen, whose conversation was more than usually distasteful to him. At dinner and supper his mother and Paul had talked continually of the approaching departure of Ulrica and her brother, and had watched him closely. He knew they were looking for some show of feeling on his part, and he had striven manfully to conceal every trace of it; but though he ate while the food well-nigh choked him, he could not keep the strain and huskiness from his voice, nor smooth the haggard lines in his face; and he was painfully aware that those keen observers would comment upon him when he had left them. When he was free at last he went to a hollow in the rocks, where he had often found seclusion, and there,

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lying upon the cold stone, he shook with tearless sobbing. The sound of footsteps made him spring up quickly, but not before the girl he loved had seen him in his dejection. Ivan was with her, and called out cheerily:

“Is n’t that a jolly sunset, Jacques? Old Labrador is wild and lonely, but it’s grand.”

The sterile mountains far inland were clad in crimson, luminous and transparent, and presently upon the crimson a sheath of glowing gold came down. Jacques gazed upon the splendor that had lost its power to delight his artist eye. He saw as one unseeing.

“Of course I’m glad,—glad to go away, back to my own country,” continued Ivan; “but I’m pulled both ways. I love this old land, and I’m sorry to leave it.”

Jacques’s face quivered, and he turned away his head. When he looked at Ulrica she was smiling. Was it possible that she cared not at all? Was it nothing to her that she must part with the friends who were with her through all her sorrows of the past year?

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“Would n't you like to hear how it all came about, Jacques?” she asked. “Such wonderful things have happened.”

“Yes, yes,” he faltered. “Pardon me, Mademoiselle Ulrica. I desire very much to hear.”

“I'll make it short now,” she went on, “for we'll have time abundant to talk of it later.” Jacques looked at her in perplexity, and she smiled again. “Father's real name is Stewart-Dundas; he is Colonel Stewart-Dundas. He called himself only by the first part of it, because he had been accused of doing something very dishonorable, — something about a contract, — and when he was tried and found guilty, he was so cruelly hurt that he wanted to creep away and hide where he would never see any one whom he had known. That is why he came here, far from his old home.”

Then Jacques forgot his own trouble, and the red flag of indignation unfurled itself in his face. “They accused your father of the dishonor! I understand it not at all. Were they madmen? Were they without sight? The

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first day I beheld him I knew, — there is one man whom all others may trust. Ivan, you say you resemble him not; but you are altogether like him in that; you would scorn to speak the lie; you would do nothing that was not of the true honor.”

“Thank you, Jacques,” said Ivan heartily. “I hope I shall always live up to your good opinion. Father is so honorable himself that he cannot mistrust others. He is a good commander, and one of the bravest of men, but he knows very little about business; and when some swindlers got up a scheme, and made use of his name, he was not able to prove that he had had nothing to do with the transaction. Uncle Ivan ferreted it all out. He got leave of absence on purpose, and followed clues, until he discovered enough to expose the whole gang, and then the ringleader confessed and exonerated father completely. The good old dad did not want us to hear about the meanness and crooked dealing; he would like to keep all knowledge of such things far from us; but

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even Dr. Greville thought we should understand this matter fully, and the dad has a great respect for his judgment."

"And now father will be restored to his rights," added Ulrica; "but he won't remain in the army. We will spend this summer in our old place and make plans for the future. We thought everything had been lost, but it was not so. Our affairs have turned out better than the lawyers expected, and we shall have plenty to live on very comfortably."

"We are going to stay in New York for a few days," said Ivan, "and get ourselves rigged out. I wanted to arrive in London in skins and feathers, and astonish the natives; but the dad and Uncle Ivan objected. We shall buy a few things in St. John's, Newfoundland, so as to be fairly presentable when we strike New York. I'll feel like a fish out of water when I put on a fashionable suit. Would n't I love to do Broadway in this guise, with Tom Corning strutting beside me. He'd be up to it."

"We hope Tom — Mr. Corning — will go

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to England with us," said Ulrica. "We should be so — happy — all together."

She hesitated, blushed, and appeared suddenly embarrassed, and a new misery began to gnaw at Jacques's heart. Young Corning had been very attentive to Ulrica last summer, and she had not been indifferent to him. He would cross the ocean with her, he would visit her in her home, and then — then — From Jacques's view, to see Ulrica was to love her.

"Yes, we think old Tom will go with us," said Ivan. "He meant to come to Labrador this year, but he won't care to when we are gone. Perhaps his governor will let him go to school — or college — or whatever it's to be — with — with us." He changed the subject abruptly. "Oh! I say, Jacques, did you know that Dr. Greville has Denis Lebeau on board? He's quite harmless. The doctor is going to send him to a sanitarium in Massachusetts, and he believes the poor fellow can be cured."

"I am glad — for you," said Jacques, trying hard to control his voice. "You will be —

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happy now." He had paid no heed to the news of Lebeau.

"We'll have to hustle if we're going to get away on time," remarked Ivan. "Isn't it a sudden 'Presto! Change!' performance? Your mother is awfully busy, too, just now; but Rica and I will help her to get you ready."

"Help my mother — to get — me ready! I know not — what you — mean."

"True, you don't know. I meant to break it to you gently; but Uncle Ivan says I'm not a lucid explainer. This is it in a nutshell: The dear old dad thinks your genius ought to have a chance; besides, he's very fond of you. Of course he's fond of me, too, because I am his own son, but your ways are more like his than mine are. So you are to go to England with us, coach with a tutor for college, if you want to go there, and study art in particular. Probably you and I will not live at home with father and Rica, but we will be there in holiday times and on occasions. I bet you'll knock the spots off the other fellows. The dad is

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confident you will be a great painter some day."

"Father has not spoken to Mrs. Charpentier yet," said Ulrica; "but he thinks she will not refuse. And we hope — we hope — that you will be — glad to come."

"Glad!" Jacques could say no more. The tears that nature had refused to his grief came readily with his joy, and he bent his head to hide them. When he looked up, Ulrica's sweet eyes, too, were dim, and there was something in them that Jacques had never seen before, — the revelation of her woman's heart. He needed not the spoken word; the look in her eyes sufficed. She would wait for him — it might be for years — yet she would wait — until he should be free to speak.

Old Susanne Charpentier's heart was proud, but it was also sore. Jacques was her favorite son; the home would be empty when he left it, and she knew that the strangers with whom he was going were nearer akin to him than were the mother and brothers of his own

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blood. Jacques affectionately tried to cheer her by the hope that he would make a great name, and come back to her some day, and she struggled bravely to hide her grief.

When Mr. Sinclair arrived on the morning of the departure, he gave his fishing crews a half holiday, to commemorate the reunion of father and children, and men and women gathered on the wharf.

Jake Tollin talked quickly to hide his feelings: "Ivan, ye've got ter ship fur these here parts agin," he declared. "We never had no fair chance ter look fur that treasure."

"We found the best treasure in all Labrador when we found father," said Ulrica.

"We found a new brother, too," added Ivan, putting his arm affectionately on his companion's shoulder.

From the deck of the mission vessel the voyagers waved their hands and called last messages to friends on the wharf. Susanne Charpentier's eyes were blinded with tears, but she held her head proudly and waved her

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adieux. When the great headland had shut Wabistan and its people from their vision, a group of three watched the receding shore. The hills of the foreground were green with the uniform of the firs, — valiant soldiers, who had fought for every inch of foothold, and who scaled the rocky battlements from base to summit. The distant heights were clad in sapphire, — treasure from the vaults of heaven for the mountains of a wilderness land.

“Old Labrador, you are beautiful, beautiful!” sighed Ulrica. “Have any other mountains in all the world such colors as yours?”

The eyes of Jacques were on the vanishing glory, but his thoughts were with the good old mother, whom he could not see. Would she miss him sadly? Had he always been tender and dutiful to her, as he should have been? His companions understood and turned aside.

“Jacques, we will come back some day,” said Ivan, after a long silence; “some day we will come back with father, you and Rica and I.”

“Not to live always, but to visit,” said

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Ulrica. "Such presents we will bring with us, — bonnets and dresses for your mother, a fine violin for Paul, toys for the children, clothes and furniture, and all sorts of things for everybody. There is a great storeroom in our house, and we will keep a place in it for our Labrador collection."

The light came back to Jacques's face, his lips smiled, his eyes glowed. "Yes, happy that day will be!" he cried. "I will write to my mother to comfort herself in thinking of the time to come, and to remember not the long hours, the years, between; I will tell her to look, look well into the future, until she sees me a famous painter, returning to her laden with all things that she needs."

He turned to Ulrica, and his eyes rested on her: "Ah! yes," he said, lingering on the words, — "glad indeed that day will be when we return to behold the land — all of us together."

