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RINKA PROSTRATE ON THE GROUND.—Page 65.

THE WALRUS HUNTERS

A ROMANCE OF

THE REALMS OF ICE

BY R. M. BALLANTYNE

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THE WALRUS HUNTERS

A ROMANCE OF THE ICE-WORLD

CHAPTER I.

A SURPRISE, A COMBAT, AND A FEED.

THERE is a river in America which flows to the north-westward of Great Bear Lake, and helps to drain that part of the great wilderness into the Arctic Sea.

It is an insignificant stream compared with such well-known waterways as the Mackenzie and the Coppermine; nevertheless it is large enough to entice the white whale and the seal into its waters every spring, and it becomes a resting-place for myriads of wild-fowl while on their passage to and from the breeding-grounds of the Far North.

Greygoose River was the name given to it by the Dogrib Indians who dwelt in its neighbourhood, and who were wont, every spring and autumn, to descend its waters nearly to the sea

in quest of game. The Eskimos, who, coming from the mysterious north, were in the habit of ascending it a short way during open water in pursuit of their peculiar prey, named it Whale River.

The Indians and Eskimos did not often meet while on these trips. They did not like meeting, because the result was apt to be disastrous. Besides, the land was wide and the game plentiful enough for both, so that they were not much tempted to risk a meeting. Occasionally, however, meetings and encounters did take place, and sometimes bitter feuds arose, but the possession of fire-arms by the Indians—who were supplied by the fur-traders—rendered the Eskimos wary. Their headstrong courage, however, induced the red men to keep as much as possible out of their way. In short, there was a good deal of the spirit of "let-be for let-be" between the two at the time of which we write.

One morning in the spring-time of the year soon after the floods caused by the melting snows had swept the ice clean out of Greygoose or Whale River, a sturdy young Eskimo urged his sharp kayak, or skin-covered canoe, up the stream in pursuit of a small white whale. But the creature gave him the slip, so that, after an energetic chase, he turned his light vessel towards the left bank of the stream, intending to land.

Cheenbuk, for such was his name, was one of those sedate beings whose energies run calm and deep, like a mighty river. His feelings, whatever they might be, did not usually cause much agitation on the surface. Disappointment did not visibly depress, nor did success unduly elate him. The loss of the whale failed to disturb the placid look of grave contentment which sat on his good-looking countenance.

For it must be noted here that Cheenbuk was a handsome savage—if, indeed, we are entitled to style him a savage at all. His features were good, and strongly marked. His young beard and moustache were black, though not bushy. His dark eyes were large and full of tenderness, which expression, by an almost imperceptible raising of eyelid and contraction of brow, was easily transmuted into a gaze of ferocity or indignation. His bulky frame was clothed in the seal-skin garb peculiar to his people; his hair was straight, voluminous, and unkempt, and his motions gave indication of great strength combined with agility.

And no wonder, for a large part of our young Eskimo's life had been spent in battling with the forces of Nature, and the hardships of life as displayed in the Arctic regions—to say nothing of frequent conflicts with the seal, the walrus and the polar bear.

Running his kayak among the rushes of a small

inlet, Cheenbuk stepped out of the hole in its centre into the stream. The water was ankle-deep, but the youth suffered no discomfort, for he wore what may be styled home-made waterproof boots reaching to above the knees. These had been invented by his forefathers, no doubt, in the remote ages of antiquity—at all events, long before india-rubber had been discovered or Macintosh was born.

Drawing his little craft out of the water, the young man took some food from its interior, and was about to begin his truly simple meal by eating it raw, when a distant sound arrested his hand on the way to his mouth. He turned his head slightly on one side and remained for some moments like a singularly attentive statue.

Presently the voice of a wild-goose was faintly heard in the far distance. Evidently the young Eskimo desired a change of fare, for he laid down the slice of raw seal, on which he had been about to regale himself, and disengaged a long slender spear from the bow of his kayak.

It is well known that wild-geese will, with proverbial stupidity, answer to an imitation of their cry, particularly in spring. Indeed, they will answer to a very bad imitation of it, insomuch that the poorest counterfeit will turn them out of their course and attract them towards the crier.

Availing himself of this weakness, our Eskimo

hid himself behind a bush, and was opening his mouth to give vent to a stentorian goose-call when he was checked, and apparently petrified, by a loud report, which echoed among the neighbouring cliffs.

The youth knew the sound well. He had heard it only once before, but, once heard, it could never be forgotten. It was the gun, or, as his people called it, the fire-spouter, of an Indian. Plunging quietly into the underwood, he hastened towards the spot where a little wreath of smoke betrayed the position of what may be almost styled his hereditary foe.

Cautiously, carefully, and with a catlike motion that could hardly have been excelled by an Indian brave, Cheenbuk advanced until he reached the edge of a partially clear space, in which he beheld an Indian leisurely engaged in pushing the head of a large grey goose under his belt. At his side, leaning against a tree, was the long-barrelled fowling-piece, which he had just reloaded. It was one of those common, cheap, flint-lock affairs which were supplied by the fur-traders in those days.

The Indian was a tall, powerfully built middle-aged man, and, from his look and manner, was evidently unsuspicious of the presence of a foe. He seemed to be quite alone.

The Eskimo poised his light spear, but hesitated to launch it. He shrank from killing a defence-

less foe. The hesitation betrayed him, for at the moment the sharp ear of the red man heard, and his eye discovered him.

The gun flew to the Indian's shoulder, and the Eskimo launched his spear, but by good fortune both weapons failed. The well-directed spear was cleverly dodged, and the gun missed fire.

To re-cock the weapon, take a more deadly aim, and pull the trigger, was the work of three seconds; but again the flint proved faithless. Cheenbuk, however, divined the meaning of the attempt, and sprang upon his foe to prevent a repetition of the action, though he was now practically unarmed,—for the little stone knife which he carried in his bosom was but ill suited for deadly combat.

The Indian clubbed his gun to meet the onset, but the Eskimo, evading the first blow, caught hold of the weapon with both hands, and now began a fierce and prolonged struggle for possession of the "fire-spouter."

Both hands of each combatant being engaged, neither could venture to draw his knife, and, as the men were pretty equally matched, both as to size and strength, they swayed to and fro with desperate energy for a considerable time, each endeavouring to throw the other, while the sweat poured down their faces and their breathing came in fitful gasps.

At length there was a pause in the conflict. It

seemed as if they had stopped by mutual consent to recover breath for a final effort.

As they glared into each other's faces, each felt surprised to see little or nothing of the evidence of that deadly hatred which usually characterises implacable foes. Suddenly Cheenbuk relaxed his grip of the gun and stepped back a pace. In so doing he put himself, to some extent at least, at the mercy of his adversary. With quick perception the Indian recognised the fact. He drew himself up and dropped the gun on the ground.

"Why should we fight? The hunting-grounds are wide enough!" he said, in the grave sententious tones peculiar to his race.

"That is just what came to my thought when I let go," answered the more matter-of-fact Eskimo.

"Let us part, then, as friends," returned the red man, "and let us do it in the manner of the pale-faced traders."

He extended his right hand as he spoke. Cheenbuk, who had heard a rumour of the white man's customs—probably from men of his race who had met with the crews of whalers—advanced, grasped the extended hand, and shook it in a way that might have done credit to any Englishman! He smiled at the same time with a slightly humorous expression, but the other maintained his solemnity. Fun is not a prominent characteristic of the red man.

"But there is no need that we should part before feeding," said the Eskimo.

"Waugh!" replied the Indian, by which it is to be presumed he signified assent.

The reconciled foes being both adepts in the art of cookery, and—one of them at least—in woodcraft, it was not long before a large fire was blazing under a convenient fir-tree, and the grey goose soon hissed pleasantly in front of it. They were a quiet and self-contained couple, however, and went about their work in profound silence. Not that they lacked ideas or language—for each, being naturally a good linguist, had somehow acquired a smattering of the other's tongue,—but they resembled each other in their disinclination to talk without having something particular to say, and in their inclination to quietness and sobriety of demeanour.

Here, however, the resemblance ceased, for while the Eskimo was free and easy, ready to learn and to sympathise, and quick to see and appreciate a joke, the Indian was sternly conservative, much impressed with his own rectitude of intention, as well as his capacity for action, and absolutely devoid of the slightest tinge of humour. Thus the Eskimo's expression varied somewhat with the nature of the subjects which chased each other through his mind, while that of the red man never changed from the calm of dignified

immobility—except, of course, when, as during the recent struggle, his life was in danger.

While the goose was roasting, the erstwhile foes sat down to watch the process. They had not to watch long, for the fire was strong and neither of them was particular. Indeed, the Eskimo would gladly have eaten his portion raw, but waited patiently, out of deference to what he deemed his companion's prejudices.

"You are alone?" said the Eskimo interrogatively.

"Yes—alone," returned the Indian.

To such men, this was mental food for at least a quarter of an hour. By the end of that time one side of the bird was sufficiently done. The Indian turned the stick on which it was impaled, drew his scalping-knife, and commenced on the side that was ready while the other side was being done. Cheenbuk drew his stone knife, cut a large slice of the breast, and also fell to work. They ate vigorously, yet the process was not soon over, for the goose was large and their appetites were strong. Of course they had no time or inclination for conversation during the meal. When it was finished, the grey goose was reduced to a miserable skeleton. Then both men sighed the sigh of contentment, wiped their knives on the grass, and looked gravely at each other.

Cheenbuk seemed as if about to speak, but was

arrested in his intention by the strange and unaccountable proceedings of his companion, who now drew forth a gaily decorated bag which hung at his belt behind him. From this he extracted a whitish implement with a little bowl at one end, and having leisurely filled it with a brown substance, also drawn from the bag, he put the other or small end of the instrument between his teeth. Then he took up a burning stick and applied it to the bowl.

The Eskimo had been gazing at him with ever-widening eyes, but at this his mouth also began to open, and he gave vent to a gentle "ho!" of unutterable surprise, for immediately there burst from the Indian's lips a puff of smoke as if he had suddenly become a gun, or fire-spouter and gone off unexpectedly.

There was profound interest as well as astonishment in the gaze of our Eskimo, for he now became aware that he was about to witness a remarkable custom of the red men, of which he had often heard, but which he had never clearly understood.

"Does it not burn?" he asked in breathless curiosity.

"No," replied his friend.

"Do you like it? Hi—i!"

The exclamation was induced by the Indian, who at the moment sent a stream of smoke from

each nostril, shut his eyes as he did so, opened his mouth, and otherwise exhibited symptoms of extreme felicity.

"Would you like to try it?" he asked after one or two more whiffs.

Cheenbuk accepted the offer and the pipe, drew a voluminous whiff down into his lungs and exploded in a violent fit of coughing, while the tears overflowed his eyes.

"Try again," said the Indian gravely.

For some minutes the Eskimo found it difficult to speak; then he returned the pipe, saying, "No. My inside is not yet tough like yours. I will look—and wonder!"

After being admired—with wonder—for a considerable time, the Indian looked at his companion earnestly, again offered him the pipe, and said, "Try again."

The obliging Eskimo tried again, but with the caution of a child who, having been burnt, dreads the fire. He drew in a little smoke by means of the power of inhalation and choked again slightly, but, being now on his mettle, he resolved not to be beaten. The Indian regarded him meanwhile with grave approval. Then it occurred to Cheenbuk to apply the power of suction instead of inhalation. It was successful. He filled his mouth instead of his lungs, and, in his childlike delight at the triumph, he opened his mouth to

its full extent, and sent forth a cloud with a gasp which was the combined expression of a puff and a "ho!" Again he tried it, and was again successful. Overjoyed at this, like a child with a new toy, he went in for quite a broadside of puffs, looking round at his friendly foe with a "ho!" between each, and surrounding his head with an atmosphere of smoke.

Suddenly he stopped, laid down the pipe, rose up, and, looking as if he had forgotten something, retired into the bush.

The Indian took up the discarded pipe, and for the first time displayed a few wrinkles about the corners of his eyes as he put it between his lips.

Presently Cheenbuk returned, somewhat paler than before, and sat down in silence with a look, as if of regret, at the skeleton-goose.

Without any reference to what had passed, the Indian turned to his companion and said, "Why should the men of the ice fight with the men of the woods?"

"Why?" asked Cheenbuk, after a few moments' profound meditation, "why should the men of the woods attack the men of the ice with their fire-spouters?"

This question seemed to puzzle the Indian so much that he proceeded to fill another pipe before answering it. Meanwhile the Eskimo, being more active-minded, continued—

"Is it fair for the men of the woods to come to fight us with fire-spouters when we have only spears? Meet us with the same weapons, and then we shall see which are the best men."

The Indian looked at his companion solemnly and shook his head.

"The strongest warriors and the best fighters," he said, "are not always the best men. He who hunts well, keeps his wives supplied with plenty of food and deer-skin robes, and is kind to his children, is the best man."

Cheenbuk looked suddenly in the face of his sententious companion with earnest surprise in every feature, for the sentiments which had just been expressed were in exact accordance with his own. Moreover, they were not what he expected to hear from the lips of a Dogrib.

"I never liked fighting," he said in a low voice, "though I have always been able to fight. It does nobody any good, and it always does everybody much harm, for it loses much blood, and it leaves many women and children without food-providers —which is uncomfortable for the men who have enough of women and children of their own to hunt for. But," continued the youth with emphasis, "I always thought that the men of the woods loved fighting."

"Some of them do, but I hate it!" said the Indian with a sudden look of such ferocity that

the Eskimo might have been justified in doubting the truth of the statement.

The flash, however, quickly disappeared, and a double wreath of smoke issued from his nose as he remarked quietly, "Fighting lost me my father, my two brothers, and my only son."

"Why, then, do you still come against us with fire-spouters?" asked Cheenbuk.

"Because my people will have it so," returned the red man. "I do what I can to stop them, but I am only one, and there are many against me."

"I too have tried to stop my people when they would fight among themselves," returned the Eskimo in a tone of sympathy; "but it is easier to kill a walrus single-handed than to turn an angry man from his purpose."

The Indian nodded assent, as though a chord had been struck which vibrated in both bosoms.

"My son," he said, in a patronising tone, "do not cease to try. Grey hairs are beginning to show upon my head; I have seen and learned much, and I have come to know that only he who tries, and tries, and tries again to do what he knows is right will succeed. To him the Great Manitou will give his blessing."

"My father," replied the other, falling in readily with the fictitious relationship, "I will try."

Having thus come to a satisfactory agreement

this Arctic Peace Society prepared to adjourn. Each wiped his knife on the grass and sheathed it as he rose up. Then they shook hands again after the fashion of the pale-faces, and departed on their respective ways. The red man returned to the wigwams of his people, while the young Eskimo, descending the river in his kayak, continued to hunt the white whale and pursue the feathered tribes which swarmed in the creeks, rivulets, and marshes that bordered the ice-encumbered waters of the polar seas.

CHAPTER II.

WARUSKEEK.

Alas for the hopes and efforts of good men! At the very time that Cheenbuk and the Indian were expressing their detestation of war, elsewhere a young Eskimo was doing his best to bring about that unhappy and ruinous condition of things.

He was an unusually strong young Arctic swashbuckler, with considerably more muscle than brains, a restless spirit, and what may be styled a homicidal tendency. He was also tyrannical, like many men of that stamp, and belonged to the same tribe as Cheenbuk.

Walrus Creek was the summer residence of the tribe of Eskimos to which Cheenbuk belonged. It was a narrow inlet which ran up into a small island lying some distance off the northern shores of America, to discover and coast along which has been for so many years the aim and ambition of Arctic explorers. How it came by its name is not difficult to guess. Probably in ages past

some adventurous voyagers, whose names and deeds have not been recorded in history, observing the numbers of walruses which scrambled out of the sea to sun themselves on the cliffs of the said creek, had named it after that animal, and the natives had adopted the name. Like other aborigines they had garbled it, however, and handed it down to posterity as Waruskeek, while the walruses, perhaps in order to justify the name, had kept up the custom of their forefathers, and continued to sun themselves there as in days of yore. Seals also abounded in the inlet, and multitudes of aquatic birds swarmed around its cliffs.

The Eskimo village which had been built there, unlike the snow-hut villages of winter, was composed chiefly of huts made of slabs of stone, intermingled with moss and clay. It was exceeding dirty, owing to remnants of blubber, shreds of skins, and bones innumerable which were left lying about. There might have been about forty of these huts, at the doors of which—or the openings which served for doors—only women and children were congregated at the time we introduce them to the reader. All the men, with the exception of a few ancients, were away hunting.

In the centre of the village there stood a hut which was larger and a little cleaner than the

others around it. An oldish man with a grey beard was seated on a stone bench beside the door. If tobacco had been known to the tribe, he would probably have been smoking. In default of that he was thrown back upon meditation. Apparently his meditations were not satisfactory, for he frowned portentously once or twice, and shook his head.

"You are not pleased to-day, Mangivik," said a middle-aged woman who issued from the hut at the moment and sat down beside the man.

"No, woman, I am not," he answered shortly.

Mangivik meant no disrespect by addressing his wife thus. "Woman" was the endearing term used by him on all occasions when in communication with her.

"What troubles you? Are you hungry?"

"No. I have just picked a walrus rib clean. It is not that."

He pointed, as he spoke, to a huge bone of the animal referred to.

"No, it is not that," he repeated.

"What then? Is it something you may not tell me?" asked the woman in a wheedling tone, as she crossed her legs and toyed with the flap of her tail.

Lest the civilised reader should be puzzled, we may here remark that the costume of the husband and wife whom we have introduced—as, indeed,

of most if not all Eskimo men and women—is very similar in detail as well as material. Mangivik wore a coat or shirt of sealskin with a hood to it, and his legs were encased in boots of the same material, which were long enough to cover nearly the whole of each leg and meet the skirt of the coat. The feet of the boots were of tough walrus-hide, and there was a short peak to the coat behind. The only difference in the costume of the woman was that the hood of her coat was larger, to admit of infants and other things being carried in it, and the peak behind was prolonged into a tail with a broad flap at the end. This tail varied a little in length according to the taste of the wearer—like our ladies' skirts; but in all cases it was long enough to trail on the ground —perhaps we should say the ice—and, from the varied manner in which different individuals caused it to sweep behind them, it was evident that the tail, not less than the civilised skirt, served the purpose of enabling the wearers to display more or less of graceful motion.

"There is nothing that I have to hide from my woman," said the amiable Eskimo, in reply to her question. "Only I am troubled about that jump-about man Gartok."

"Has he been here again?" asked the wife, with something of a frown on her fat face. "He is just as you say, a jump-about like the little

birds that come to us in the hot times, which don't seem to know what they want."

"He is too big to look like them," returned the husband. "He's more like a mad walrus. I met him on one of the old floes when I was after a seal, and he frightened it away. But it is not that that troubles me. There are two things he is after: he wants to stir up our young men to go and fight with the Fire-spouters, and he wants our Nootka for a wife."

"The dirty walrus!" exclaimed Mrs. Mangivik, with as much vigour as if she had been civilised, "he shall *never* have Nootka. As for fighting with the Fire-spouters, I only hope that if he does go to do so, he will get killed and never come back."

"H'm!" grunted Mangivik, "if he does get killed he's not likely to come back."

"Who is not likely to come back?" asked a young girl, with an affectionate expression in her pretty brown eyes, issuing from the hut at that moment and seating herself close to the old man. The girl's face, on the whole, was unusually pretty for that of an Eskimo, and would have been still more so but for the grease with which it was besmeared—for the damsel had just been having a little refreshment of white-whale blubber. Her figure was comparatively slim and graceful, and would have been obviously so but for the ill-

fitting coat and clumsy boots with which it was covered.

"Your mother and I were talking of a bad man, Nootka," said Mangivik.

"Ay, a very very bad man," exclaimed Mrs. Mangivik, with a decided nod of her head.

"If he is so very bad," returned Nootka, "it would be good that he should never come back. Who is it?"

"Gartok," answered her mother, with the air of one who has mentioned the most hateful thing in creation.

Nootka laughed.

"Surely you are not fond of him!" exclaimed Mangivik, regarding his daughter with a look of anxiety.

"You know that I'm not," answered the girl, playfully hitting her sire on the back with the flap of her tail.

"Of course not—of course not; you could not be fond of an ugly walrus like him," said the father, replying to her pleasantry by fondly patting her knee.

Just then a young man was seen advancing from the beach, where he had left his kayak.

"It is Oolalik," said Mrs. Mangivik, shading her eyes with her hand from the sun, which, in all the strength of its meridian splendour, was shining full on her fat face. "He must have made a good

hunt, or he would not have come home before the others."

As she spoke Nootka arose hastily and re-entered the hut, from out of which there issued almost immediately the sounds and the savoury odours of roasting flesh.

Meanwhile Oolalik came up and gave vent to a polite grunt, or some such sound, which was the Eskimo method of expressing a friendly salutation.

Mangivik and his wife grumped in reply.

"You are soon back," said the former.

"I have left a walrus and two seals on the rocks over there," answered the youth, sitting down beside the old man.

"Good," returned the latter. "Come in and feed."

He rose and entered the hut. The young man who followed him was not so much a handsome as a strapping fellow, with a quiet, sedate expression, and a manly look that rendered him attractive to most of his friends. Conversation, however, was not one of his strong points. He volunteered no remarks after seating himself opposite to Nootka, who handed him a walrus rib which she had just cooked over the oil lamp. Had Nootka been a civilised girl she might have been suspected of conveying a suggestion to the youth, for she was very fond of him, but, being

an Eskimo of the Far North, she knew nothing about ribs or of Mother Eve. The young man however required no delicate suggestion, for he was equally fond of Nootka, and he endeavoured to show his feelings by a prolonged stare after he had accepted the food.

One is irresistibly impressed with the homogeneity of the human race when one observes the curious similarities of taste and habit which obtain alike in savage and civilised man. For a few moments this youth's feelings were too much for him. He stared in admiration at the girl, apparently oblivious of the rib, and sighed profoundly. Then he suddenly recovered himself, appeared to forget the girl, and applied himself tooth and nail to the rib. Could anything be more natural—even in a European prince?

Nootka did not speak—young women seldom do among savages, at least in the company of men,—but she looked many and very unutterable things, which it is impossible, and would not be fair, to translate.

"Will the others be back soon?" asked Mangivik.

Oolalik looked over the rib and nodded. (In this last, also, there was indication of homogeneity.)

"Have they got much meat?"

Again the young man nodded.

"Good. There is nothing like meat, and plenty of it."

The old man proceeded to illustrate his belief in the sentiment by devoting himself to a steak of satisfying dimensions. His better-half meanwhile took up the conversation.

"Is Gartok with them?" she asked.

"Yes, he is with them," said the youth, who, having finished the rib, threw away the bone and looked across the lamp at Nootka, as if asking for another. The girl had one ready, and handed it to him.

Again Oolalik was overcome. He forgot the food and stared so that Nootka dropped her eyes, presumably in some confusion; but once more the force of hunger brought the youth round and he resumed his meal.

"Has Gartok killed much?" continued the inquisitive Mrs. Mangivik.

"I know nothing about Gartok," replied the young man, a stern look taking the place of his usually kind expression; "I don't trouble my head about him when I am hunting."

He fastened his teeth somewhat savagely in the second rib at this point.

"Do you know," said Mangivik, pausing in his occupation, "that Gartok has been trying to get the young men to go to the Whale River, where

you know there are plenty birds and much wood? He wants to fight with the Fire-spouters."

"Yes, I know it. Gartok is always for fighting and quarrelling. He likes it."

"Don't you think," said the old man suggestively, "that you could give him a chance of getting what he likes without going so far from home?"

"No, I don't choose to fight for the sake of pleasing every fool who delights to brag and look fierce."

Mrs. Mangivik laughed at this, and her daughter giggled, but the old man shook his head as if he had hoped better things of the young one. He said no more, however, and before the conversation was resumed the voice of a boy was heard outside.

"Anteek," murmured Nootka, with a smile of pleasure.

"The other hunters must have arrived," said Oolalik, polishing off his last bone, "for Anteek was with them."

"He always comes first to see me when he has anything to tell," remarked Mrs. Mangivik, with a laugh, "and from the noise he makes I think he has something to tell to-day."

If noise was the true index of Anteek's news he evidently was brimful, for he advanced shouting at the top of his voice. With that unaccount-

able ingenuity which characterises some boys, all the world over, he produced every sort of sound except that which was natural to him, and caused the surrounding cliffs to echo with the mooing of the walrus, the roaring of the polar bear, the shriek of the plover, the bellow of the musk-ox, and, in short, the varied cries of the whole Arctic menagerie. But he stopped short at the door of the hut and looked at Oolalik in evident surprise.

"You are back before me?" he said.

"That is not strange: I am stronger."

"Yes, but I started off long before you."

"So you thought, but you were mistaken. I saw you creeping away round the point. When you were out of sight I carried my kayak over the neck of land, and so got before you."

"Have you told?" asked the boy anxiously.

"Never said a word," replied Oolalik.

"Here," said Nootka, holding out a piece of half-cooked blubber to the boy, "sit down and tell us all about it. What is the news?"

"Ha!" exclaimed Anteek, accepting the food as if he appreciated it. "Well, I've killed my first walrus—all alone too!"

"Clever boy! how was it?" said Mrs. Mangivik.

"This was the way. I was out by myself—all alone, mind—among the cliffs, looking for eggs; but I had my spear with me, the big one that

Cheenbuk made for me just before he went off to the Whale River. Well, just as I was going to turn round one of the cliffs, I caught sight of a walrus —a big one—monstrous; like that," he said, drawing an imaginary circle with both arms, "fat, brown, huge tusks, and wide awake! I knew that because his back was to me, and he was turning his head about, looking at something in the other direction. I was astonished, for though they climb up on the cliffs a good height to sun themselves on the warm rocks, I had never seen one climb so high as that.

"Well, I drew back very quick, and began to creep round so as to come at him when he didn't expect me. I soon got close enough, and ran at him. He tried to flop away at first, but when I was close he turned and looked fierce—terrible fierce! My heart jumped, but it did not sink. I aimed for his heart, but just as I was close at him my foot struck a stone and I fell. He gave a frightful roar, and I rolled out of his way, and something twisted the spear out of my hand. When I jumped up, what do you think? I found the spear had gone into one of his eyes, and that made the other one water I suppose, for he was twisting his head about, but couldn't see me. So I caught hold of the spear, pulled it out, and plunged it into his side; but I had not reached the heart, for he turned and made for the sea.

There was a steep place just there, and he tumbled and rolled down. I lost my foothold and rolled down too—almost into his flippers, but I caught hold of a rock. He got hold at the same time with his tusks and held on. Then I jumped up and gave him the spear again. This time I hit the life, and soon had him killed. There!"

On concluding his narrative the excited lad applied himself to his yet untasted piece of blubber, and Nootka plied him with questions, while Oolalik rose and went off to assist his comrades, whose voices could now be heard as they shouted to the women and children of the colony to come and help them to carry up the meat.

CHAPTER III.

PEACE OR WAR—WHICH?

Soon afterwards the Mangivik family received another visitor. This was the bellicose Gartok himself, whose heart had been touched by the fair Nootka.

Like his rival, he sat down opposite the maiden, and stared at her impressively across the cooking-lamp. This would seem to be the usual mode of courtship among those children of the ice; but the girl's mode of receiving the attentions of the second lover varied considerably. She did not drop her eyes shyly under his gaze, but stared him full in the face by way of a slight rebuff. Neither did she prepare for him a savoury rib, so that he was obliged to help himself—which he did with much coolness, for the laws of hospitality in Eskimo-land admit of such conduct.

After some desultory conversation between Gartok and his host, the latter asked if it was true that there was a talk of the tribe paying a visit to Whale River.

"Yes, it is true," answered the young man. "I came to see you about that very thing, and to tell you that there is to be a meeting outside the big hut to-day. We shall want your advice."

"Why do the young men wish to go there?" asked Mangivik.

"To get food, and wood for our spear-handles and sledges, and berries, and to have a good time. Perhaps also to fight a little with the Fire-spouters."

The youth glanced furtively at Mangivik as he concluded.

"To get food, and wood, and berries is good," observed the old man; "but why fight with the Fire-spouters? We cannot conquer them."

"You can ask that at the meeting. It is useless to ask it of me."

"Good, I will do so. For my part, I am too old to go on long expeditions, either to hunt or fight —but I can give advice. Is Cheenbuk to be at the meeting?"

"Did you not know? Cheenbuk has already gone to the Whale River. We only propose to follow him. He may not like our business, but he 'll have to join us when we are there."

Having picked his rib clean, and receiving no encouragement from Nootka to remain, Gartok rose and departed.

That afternoon there was a large meeting of the heads of families in front of what was known as

the big hut. There was no formality about the meeting. Unlike the war councils of the Indians, it was a sort of free-and-easy, in which blubber and other choice kinds of food did duty for the red man's pipe. The women too were allowed to sit around and listen—but not to speak—while the hunters discussed their plans.

Gartok, being the biggest, most forward, and presumptuous among them all, was allowed to speak first—though this was contrary to the wishes, and even the custom of the tribe. He did not make a set speech. Indeed, no one thought of delivering an oration. It was merely a palaver on a large scale.

"We want spear-handles," said Gartok, "and wood for our kayak-frames, and deer for food, as well as birds and rabbit-skins for our underclothing."

"That is true," remarked one of the elderly men; "we want all these things, and a great many more things, but we don't want fighting. There is no use in that."

"Ho! ho!" exclaimed several voices in approval.

"But we do want fighting," retorted Gartok firmly; "we want the pretty coloured things that the Fire-spouters sew on their clothes and shoes; also the iron things they have for cutting wood; and we want the spouters, which will make us

more than a match for them in war; and we can't get all these things without fighting."

"Do without them, then," observed Mangivik sharply; "why should we want things that we never had and don't need? Listen to me, young men—for I see by your looks that some of you would like a little fighting,—even if we had the spouting things, we could not make them spout."

"That is a lie!" exclaimed Gartok, with the simple straightforwardness peculiar to the uncivilised. "Once I met one of the Fire-spouters when I was out hunting at the Whale River. He was alone, and friendly. I asked him to show me his spouter. He did so, but told me to be very careful, for sometimes it spouted of its own accord. He showed me the way to make it spout—by touching a little thing under it. There was a little bird on a bush close by. 'Point at that,' he said. I pointed. 'Now,' said he, 'look along the spouter with one eye.' I put one end of it against my cheek and tried to look, but by accident I touched the little thing, and it spouted too soon! I never saw the little bird again; but I saw many stars, though it was broad daylight at the time."

"Ho! hoo!" exclaimed several of the younger men, who listened to this narration with intense eagerness.

"Yes," continued Gartok, who had the gift of

what is called "the gab," and was fond of exercising it,—"yes; it knocked me flat on my back—"

"Was it alive, then?" asked Anteek, who mingled that day with the men as an equal, in consequence of his having slain a walrus single-handed.

"No, it was not quite, but it was very nearly alive.—Well, when I fell the man laughed. You know his people are not used to laugh. They are very grave, but this one laughed till I became angry, and I would have fought with him, but—"

"Ay," interrupted Anteek, "but you were afraid, for he had the spouter."

Before Gartok could reply Mangivik broke in.

"Boo!" he exclaimed contemptuously, "it is of no use your talking so much. I too have been to the Whale River, and have seen the fire-spouters, and I know they are *not* nearly alive. They are dead—quite dead. Moreover, they will not spout at all, and are quite useless, unless they are filled with a kind of black sand which is supplied by the white men who sell the spouters. Go to the Whale River if you will, but don't fight with any one—that is my advice, and my hair is grey."

"It is white, old man, if you only saw it," murmured Anteek, with native disrespect. He was too good-natured, however, to let his thoughts be heard.

"Come, Oolalik," said Mangivik, "you are a

stout and a wise young man, let us hear what you have got to say."

"I say," cried Oolalik, looking round with the air of a man who had much in his head, and meant to let it out, "I say that the man who fights if he can avoid it is a fool! Look back and think of the time gone away. Not many cold times have passed since our young men became puffed up—indeed, some of our old men were little better—and made a raid on the Fire-spouters of the Whale River. They met; there was a bloody fight; six of our best youths were killed, and numbers were wounded by the little things that come out of the spouters. Then they came home, and what did they bring? what had they gained? I was a boy at the time and did not understand it all; but I understood some of it. I saw the fighters returning. Some were looking very big and bold, as if they had just come from fighting and conquering a whole tribe of bears and walruses. Others came back limping. They went out young and strong men; they came back too soon old, helped along by their companions. Two were carried—they could not walk at all. Look at them now!"

Oolalik paused and directed attention to what may be called an object-lesson—two men seated on his right hand. Both, although in the prime of life, looked feeble and prematurely old from

wounds received in the fight referred to. One had been shot in the leg; the bone was broken, and that rendered him a cripple for life. The other had received a bullet in the lungs; and a constitution which was naturally magnificent had become permanently shattered.

"What do you think?" continued Oolalik. "Would not these men give much to get back their old strength and health?"

He paused again, and the men referred to nodded emphatically, as if they thought the question a very appropriate one, while some of the peacefully disposed in the assembly exclaimed "ho!" and "hoo!" in tones of approval.

"Then," continued the speaker, "I passed by some of our huts and heard sounds of bitter weeping. I went in and found it was the wives and sisters of the men whose bodies lie on the banks of the Whale River. There would be reason in fighting, if we had to defend our huts against the Fire-spouters. Self-defence is right; and every one has a good word for the brave men who defend their homes, their women, and their children. But the Fire-spouters did not want to fight, and the men who lost their lives at the fight I am speaking of threw them away for nothing. They will never more come home to provide their families with food and clothes, or to comfort them, or to play with the children and tell them of fights

with the walrus and the bear when the nights are black and long. Most of those poor women had sons or man-relations to care for them, but there was one who had no relation to hunt for her after her husband was killed—only a little daughter to take care of her. I speak of old Uleeta, who is—"

"That is a lie!" cried Gartok, springing up and looking fierce. "Old Uleeta is, as you all know, my mother. She had *me* to hunt for her when father was killed, and she has me still."

"You!" exclaimed Oolalik, with a look of scorn, "what are you? A hunter? No, only a fool who wants to be thought very brave, and would leave his mother and sister to the care of old men and boys while he goes away to fight with the Fire-spouters! No," he continued, turning away from the angry young man with cool contempt, "old Uleeta has no son."

Gartok was so taken aback with this behaviour of Oolalik, who was recognised as one of the gentlest and most peacefully disposed of the tribe, that he stood gaping for a moment in surprise. Then, observing the half-amused, half-contemptuous looks of the men around him, he suddenly caught up the unfinished handle of a spear that leaned against the wall of the hut beside him, and made a desperate blow with it at the head of Oolalik.

But that youth had expected some such demon-

stration, and was prepared for it. Being very agile, he made a step swiftly to one side, and the handle came down on the skull of a walrus which hung on the wall with a violence that would have surprised its original owner had it been within.

Before the blow could be repeated Oolalik sprang towards his assailant.

Eskimos know nothing of a blow "straight from the shoulder," but they know how to cuff. Oolalik brought his open hand down on Gartok's cheek with a pistol-shot crack that tumbled that fire-eater head over heels on the ground.

The man was too strong, however, to be knocked insensible in that way. He recovered himself, sitting-wise, with his mouth agape and his eyes astonied, while the whole assembly burst into a hearty fit of laughter. High above the rest was heard the juvenile voice of the delighted Anteek.

What the fire-eater thought we cannot tell, but he had the wisdom to accept his punishment in silence, and listened with apparent interest while Oolalik concluded his remarks.

The effect of this belligerent episode was to advance the cause of the peace party considerably —at least for a time—and when the meeting broke up, most of the people returned to their various homes with a firm determination to leave the poor Fire-spouters alone.

But Gartok, who was still smarting under the

disgrace to which he had been subjected at the hands of Oolalik, managed to rekindle and blow up the war-spirit, so that, two days later, a strong party of the more pugnacious among the young men of the tribe set off in their kayaks for the Whale River, taking with them a few of the women in one of their open boats or oomiaks—chiefly for the purpose of keeping their garments in repair.

CHAPTER IV.

WAR PREVAILS.

It would seem, at times, as if there were really some sort of spiritual communication between people whose physical frames are widely sundered.

For at the very time that the Eskimos, in their remote home on the ice-encumbered sea, were informally debating the propriety of making an unprovoked attack on the Dogrib Indians—whom they facetiously styled Fire-spouters—the red men were also holding a very formal and solemn council of war as to the advisability of making an assault on those presumptuous Eskimos, or eaters-of-raw-flesh, who ventured to pay an uncalled-for visit to the Greygoose River—their ancestral property—every spring.

One of their chiefs, named Nazinred, had just returned from a visit to the river, and reported having met and fought with one of the Eskimos.

Immediately on hearing this, the old or head chief summoned the council of war. The braves

assembled in the council tent in solemn dignity, each classically enveloped in his blanket or leathern robe, and inflated, more or less, with his own importance. They sat down silently round the council fire with as much gravity as if the fate of nations depended on their deliberations,—and so, on a small scale, it did.

After passing round the pipe—by way of brightening up their intellects—the old chief held forth his hand and began in a low voice and deliberate manner:—

"My braves," said he, "those filthy eaters-of-raw-flesh have, as you know, been in the habit of coming to Greygoose River every spring and trespassing on the borders of our hunting-grounds."

He paused and looked round.

"Waugh!" exclaimed his audience, in order to satisfy him.

With a dark frown the old chief went on:—

"This is wrong. It is not right. It is altogether unbearable, and more than the Dogribs can stand. They *won't* stand it!"

"Waugh!" again said the audience, for the old man had delivered the last sentence with considerable vehemence, and meant that it should tell.

Being apparently destitute of a flow of ideas at that time, the speaker had recourse to a not uncommon device among civilised orators: he

cleared his throat, looked preternaturally wise, and changed the subject.

"When the sun of spring rises over the ice-hills of the great salt lake," he continued, pointing towards the Pole, "when it melts the snow, opens the lakes and rivers, and brings the summer birds to our land, the braves of the great Dogrib nation take their guns, and bows, and canoes, and women, and travel nearly as far as the icy sea, that they may hunt and feed—and—sleep, and—and—enjoy the land. Nobody dares to stop us. Nobody dares to hinder us. Nobody dares even to look at us!"

He paused again, and this flight of oratory was received with a very decided "ho!" of assent, as it well might be, for during nearly all the year there was nobody in that uninhabited land to attempt any of those violent proceedings. Dilating his eyes and nostrils with a look of superlative wisdom, he continued:—

"But at last the Eskimos dared to come and look at our hunting-grounds. We were peacefully disposed. We warned them not to come again. They came again notwithstanding. We took our guns and swept them away like leaves that are swept by the winter winds. Are not their scalps drying in our lodges? What we did then we will do again. Has not one of our chiefs—Nazinred—been attacked by one of them? No doubt more will follow that one. My

counsel is to send out a band of our braves on the war-path. But first we would like to know something. As the Eskimo did not take the scalp of Nazinred, how is it that Nazinred did not bring home the scalp of the Eskimo?"

The old chief ceased, amid many "ho's!" and "hoo's!" with the air of one who has propounded an unanswerable riddle, and all eyes were at once turned upon Nazinred. Accepting the challenge at once he stretched forth his hand:—

"My father has spoken," he said, "but his words are not the words of wisdom. Why should we fight the Eskimos again, and lose some of our best young men, as we lost them in the last great fight? The Eskimos have come near our lands, but they have not of late hunted on them. They have only looked and gone away. And even if they did hunt, what then? The land is wide. We cannot use it all. We cannot kill all the birds and deer, and even if we could we cannot eat them all. Would it not be wise to live at peace with the Eskimos? They have many great teeth of the walrus and skins of the seal. Might not the white traders, who take our furs and give us guns and powder, be willing to take these things too? Thus we could buy from the one and sell to the other, and fill our lodges with tobacco, and guns, and beads, and cloth, and powder and ball, and other good things."

The Indian stopped at this point to ascertain the effect of his remarks, but only a few faint "ho's!" greeted him. The councillors did not feel quite sure of their own minds. His remarks about peace and war were not palatable, and his suggestions about trade were a novelty. Evidently Nazinred was born much in advance of his time.

"It is true," he continued, "that I had a struggle with a young Eskimo; but he was very strong, and so was I. Before I could kill him he caught hold of my gun, but he could not force it from me, and I could not force it from him. As we strove we looked into each other's eyes and we each saw peace and good-will there! So we ceased to fight. We kindled a fire and sat down and fed together. As the light slowly increases while the sun rises, so light came into my mind. The Dogribs have always talked of the Eskimos as if they were fools. I found that this young man was not a fool—that he was wise—wiser than some of our own braves. His mind was deep and wide. He did not talk only of food and sleep and hunting. He spoke of things past and present and future, and of the Great Spirit, and the world to come. Also of peace and war; and we both agreed that peace was good and war hateful. More than that, we found that it was foolish. Then we parted. He went, I suppose, to his people on the sea of ice, and I came home.

He told me that none of his people were with him—that he was alone. There is therefore no occasion for the young men to look fierce or go on the war-path."

Having thus tried to throw oil on the troubled waters Nazinred came to an abrupt pause.

Instantly one of the younger councillors, named Magadar, sprang to his feet. He was unusually excitable for an Indian. Indeed, he differed a good deal from his companions in other respects, being passionate, impulsive, hasty, and matter-of-fact; in his speech-making too he scorned the use of symbol and metaphor, but went straight to the point at once in the simplest and most forcible language at his command.

"Braves," he said, looking at the previous speaker with a dark frown, "the Dogribs know nothing of those strange and stupid notions that have just come out of the lips of Nazinred. He says that this dirty Eskimo is a deep thinker and a man who loves peace. How does he know that one of that sort may not think so deeply as to deceive him? How does he know that the young man is not a liar—that many of his warriors may not be in our hunting-grounds even at this moment, though he says there are none? As for his talk about the Great Spirit and the future, what does he know about either the one or the other? Is he wiser than the Dogribs?

Does his attack on Nazinred look like a lover of peace? His leaving off when he found that Nazinred was his match seems to me more like sly wisdom than the hatred of war. My advice is not to trust these dirty men of the ice, but to take our guns at once and drive them from the land."

It was quite evident from the way in which this speech was received that the war party was in the ascendant, and there is no doubt that Magadar's advice would have prevailed, and a war party been organised forthwith, but for the arrival of a band of successful hunters, who had been out for some time in quest of food.

For a considerable part of that winter those Indians had been in a condition of semi-starvation. They had managed with difficulty to sustain themselves and families on rabbits, which were scarce that year. With the return of spring and the wild-fowl, however, things had begun to improve, and the hunting party above referred to was the first of the season that had returned to camp heavily laden with geese, ducks, plover, and other supplies of food, so that the half-famished people gave themselves up to feasting, and had no time to think further of war.

Thus many days were passed without any reference being made to a fight with the Eskimos, and Nazinred, believing that the fancy to go on the war-path had passed away, set off on what

was to be a long hunting expedition with three of his comrades who were like-minded with himself. Among other plans, this party intended to visit the establishment of the fur-traders on Great Bear Lake.

Thus when the belligerent party of Eskimos arrived at the mouth of Greygoose, or Whale, River, they found the place, as they had been accustomed to find it, a complete solitude.

At first they expected to overtake their comrade Cheenbuk there, but he was not found, having gone a considerable way inland in pursuit of game. Being aware of his peaceful proclivities, however, the Eskimos were not sorry to miss him, and they set about making an encampment on the shore at the mouth of the river, intending to leave the women there while they should be engaged in hunting and in searching for the Fire-spouters.

Meanwhile these Fire-spouters, having eaten and slept, and eaten and slept again, to the extent of their capacities, began to experience a revival of the war-spirit.

In front of one of the lodges or leather tents, one morning early, there sat two squaws engaged in ornamenting moccasins and discussing the news of their little world.

It was one of those bright genial mornings in spring peculiar to Arctic lands, in which Warmth comes out with a burst victorious, and Cold shrinks

away discomfited. Everything looked as if a great revival of Nature were at hand—as in truth it was, for the long Arctic winter is always driven away with a rush by the vigour, if not the violence, of the brief Arctic spring.

One of the women was young and pretty—yes, we might almost say beautiful. It is quite a mistake to suppose that all savages are coarse, rough, and ugly. Many of them, no doubt—perhaps most of them—are plain enough, but not a few ot the Indian squaws are fairly good-looking, and this one, as we have said at the risk of being doubted, was beautiful; at all events she had a fine oval face, a smooth warm-coloured skin, a neat little nose, a well-formed mouth, and jet-black hair, with large lustrous eyes, to say nothing of her teeth, which, like the teeth of most Indians, were regular and brilliantly white. Her name was Adolay—that being the Indian name for Summer.

The other squaw was her mother. She was usually styled Isquay—which means woman—by her husband when he was at home, but, being a great hunter, he was not often at home. Poor Isquay might have been good-looking in her youth, but, alas! hard work, occasional starvation, and a rough life, had prematurely dissipated her beauty, whatever it might have been; yet these conditions could not put to flight the lines and dimples of kindliness which played about her weatherworn

eyes and cheeks. You see, she had a gentle, indulgent husband, and that made her happy and kept her so.

"Magadar is stirring up the young men again to go on the war-path," said the younger woman, without looking up from the embroidered moccasin with which she was engaged.

"Yes, I know it. I heard him as he passed our tent talking to Alizay. I don't like Alizay; he is like gunpowder: the least thing sets him off, and he flashes up horribly."

"But many of our other braves have no desire to quarrel with the Eskimos," said Adolay; "indeed, some are even fond of them. And some of the men of the ice are very handsome. Don't you remember that one, mother, that we met when we went last spring with some of our men to shoot at the Greygoose River? He was a fine man—big and strong, and active and kind—almost good enough to be a Dogrib."

"I remember him well," returned Isquay, "for he saved my life. Have you forgotten that already?"

"No, I have not forgotten it," answered the girl, with a slight smile. "Did I not stand on the river-bank with my heart choking me when I saw the ice rushing down with the flood and closing on your canoe—for I could do nothing to help you, and none of our men were near! And did I not see the brave man of the ice, when he heard my cry,

come running like the deer and jump into the river and swim like the otter till he got to you, and then he scrambled on a big bit of ice and lifted you and the canoe out of the water as if he had the strength of a moose-deer, after which he guided the ice-lump to the bank with one of your paddles! Forget it! no. I only wish the brave Eskimo was an Indian."

"I think you would be offering to be his squaw if he was," said the mother with a short laugh.

"Perhaps I would. But he's only an eater-of-raw-flesh!" Adolay sighed as gently as if she had been a civilised girl! "But he has gone away to the great ice lake, so I suppose we shall never see him again."

"Unless," said Isquay, "he comes back this spring with his people, and our braves have a fight with them—then you would be likely to see his scalp again, if not himself."

Adolay made no reply to this; neither did she seem shocked at the suggestion. Indeed, Indian women are too much accustomed to real shocking to be much troubled with shocks of the imagination. Holding out her moccasin at arm's-length, the better to note the effect of her work, she expressed regret that her father had gone off with the hunters, for she felt sure he would have been able to allay the war-fever among the young braves if he had remained at home.

"Ay, he would easily have put down Alizay and

Magadar; but the old chief can do nothing, he is growing too old. The young men don't mind him now. Besides, he is warlike as well as they."

While they were conversing thus, the young men referred to had finally decided to go on the war-path—to search for the Eskimo who had fought with their chief Nazinred, find him and kill him, and then continue the search for his companions; for they had set him down as a liar, believing that no Eskimo had the courage to visit their hunting-grounds by himself.

To resolve and to act were almost simultaneous proceedings with those energetic savages. In a very short time between twenty and thirty of them left the village in single file, armed with the deadly gun, besides tomahawks and scalping-knives, and took their way to a neighbouring creek on the banks of which their canoes were lying.

CHAPTER V.

A RENCONTRE AND FLIGHT.

THUS it naturally came to pass that the two bands of men who had gone to the same place to meet each other met in the course of time.

There was a good deal of wandering about, however, before the actual meeting took place, for the Eskimos had to provide a quantity of food on landing on the Arctic shore, not only for themselves, but to supply the four women who had accompanied them, and were to be left on the coast to fish and mend their spare garments and boots, and await their return.

"We shall not be long of coming back," said Gartok as he was about to leave his mother, old Uleeta, who was in the crew of one of the oomiaks.

"I wish I saw you safe back, my son," returned the woman, with a shake of her head, "but I fear the Fire-spouters."

"*I* don't fear them," returned the young man boastfully, "and it does not matter much what you fear."

"He will never come back," said one of the other women when he was gone. "I know that because I feel it. There is something inside of me that always tells me when there is going to be misfortune."

The woman who thus expressed her forebodings was a mild young creature, so gentle and inoffensive and yielding that she was known throughout her tribe by the name of Rinka, a name which was meant to imply weakness. Her weakness, however, consisted chiefly in a tendency to prefer others before herself—in which matter Christians do not need to be told that she was perhaps the strongest of all her kin.

As the weather was comparatively warm, the women contented themselves with a tent or bower of boughs for their protection. They were not long in erecting it, being well accustomed to look after themselves. In less than an hour after their men had left them they were busy with seal-steaks over the cooking-lamp, and the place was rendered somewhat home-like by several fur garments being spread on the rocks to dry.

"Yes, Gartok will get himself killed at last," said old Uleeta, drawing her finger across the frizzling steak and licking it, for her appetite was sharp-set and she was impatient. "He was always a stubborn boy."

"But he is strong, and a good fighter," remarked

Rinka, as she spread a sealskin boot over her knee with the intention of patching it.

"I wish all the other men were as strong as he is, and ready to fight," said one of the other women, giving the steak a turn.

It must not be supposed that, although the Eskimos are known to their Indian friends—or foes—as eaters-of-raw-flesh, they always prefer their food in the raw condition. They are only indifferent on the point, when the procuring of fire is difficult, or the coldness of the weather renders it advisable to eat the flesh raw, as being more sustaining.

"I only wish that they would not fight at all," said Rinka with a sigh, as she arranged the top-knot of her hair. "It makes the men too few and the women too many, and that is not good."

The fourth woman did not express an opinion at all. She was one of those curiously, if not happily, constituted creatures, who seem to have no particular opinion on any subject, who listen to everything with a smile of placid content, who agree with everybody and object to nothing. They are a sort of comfort and relief in a world of warfare—especially to the obstinate and the positive. Her name was Cowlik.

"There is no reason why we should continue to roast our seal-meat over a lamp now," observed

old Uleeta. "There is plenty of wood here. Come, we will gather sticks and make a fire."

The others agreeing to this, three of them rose and went into the bush, leaving Cowlik to watch the steaks.

Meanwhile the young men who had followed the lead of Gartok—fifteen in number—were cautiously ascending the Greygoose River, each in his kayak, armed with a throwing-spear, lance, and bow. One of their number was sent out in advance as a scout. Raventik was his name. He was chosen for the duty because of his bold, reckless nature, sharpness of vision, general intelligence, and his well-known love for excitement and danger.

"You will always keep well out of sight in advance of us," said Gartok to this scout, "and the first sight you get of the Fire-spouters, shove in to some quiet place, land, haul up your kayak, and creep near them through the bushes as quietly and cleverly as if you were creeping up to a bear or a walrus. Then come back and tell us what you have seen. So—we will land and attack them and throw them all into the river."

"I will do my best," answered Raventik gravely.

"It is not likely," added Gartok, "that you will find them to-day, for they seldom come down as far as here, and they don't know we are coming."

The scout made no reply. Having received his

orders he stepped into his kayak and paddled off into the stream, against which he made but slow progress, however, for the river happened to be considerably swollen at the time. He was also impeded at first by his comparative ignorance of river navigation. Being accustomed to the currentless waters of the ocean, he was not prepared by experience to cope with the difficulty of rushing currents. He went too far out into the stream at first, and was nearly upset. Natural intelligence, however, and the remembrance of talks to which he had listened between men of his tribe who had already visited the place, taught him to keep close in to the banks, and make as much use of eddies and backwater as possible. The double-bladed paddle hampered him somewhat, as its great length, which was no disadvantage in the open sea, prevented him from keeping as close to the banks as he desired. Despite these drawbacks, however, Raventik soon acquired sufficient skill, and in a short time a curve in the river hid him from the flotilla which followed him.

Now it so happened that the Indians who were supposed to be a considerable distance inland were in reality not many miles from the spot where the Eskimos had held their final conference, which ended in Raventik being sent off in advance. It was natural that, accustomed as they were to all the arts of woodcraft, they should discover the

presence of the scout long before he discovered them; and so in truth it turned out.

The Indians had ten birch-bark canoes, with three warriors in most of them—all armed, as we have said, with the dreaded fire-spouters and tomahawks, etc.—for, as they were out on the war-path for the express purpose of driving the dirty Eskimos off their lands, Magadar had resolved to make sure by starting with a strong and well-equipped force.

Of course Magadar's canoe led the van; the others followed in single file, and, owing to the nature of their paddles, which were single-bladed, and could be dipped close to the sides of the canoes, they were able to creep along much nearer to the bank than was possible to the kayaks.

At a bend in the river, where a bush-covered point jutted out into a large pool, Magadar thrust his canoe in among some reeds and landed to reconnoitre. Scarcely had he raised his head above the shrubs when he caught sight of Raventik in his kayak.

To stoop and retire was the work of a few seconds. The men in the other canoes, who were watching him intently, at once disembarked, and, at a signal from their chief, carried their light barks into the bushes and hid them there, so that the Eskimo scout would certainly have passed the place in half an hour without perceiving any sign

of his foes, but for an incident which enlightened him.

Accidents will happen even in the best regulated families, whether these be composed of red men or white. Just as the last canoe was disappearing behind its leafy screen, one of the young braves, who was guilty of the unpardonable offence of carrying his gun on full-cock, chanced to touch the trigger, and the piece exploded with, in the circumstances, an appalling report, which, not satisfied with sounding in the ears of his exasperated comrades like a small cannon, went on echoing from cliff to cliff, as if in hilarious disregard of secrecy, and to the horror of innumerable rabbits and wild-fowl, which respectively dived trembling into holes or took to the wings of terror.

"Fool!" exclaimed Magadar, scarce able to refrain from tomahawking the brave in his wrath—"launch the canoes and give chase."

The order was obeyed at once, and the flotilla dashed out into the stream.

But Raventik was not to be caught so easily as they had expected. He had turned on hearing the report, and swept out into the middle of the river, so as to get the full benefit of the current. His kayak, too, with its sharp form, was of better build and material for making headway than the light Indian canoes—propelled as it was with the

long double-bladed paddle in the strong hands of one of the stoutest of the Eskimos. He shot down the stream at a rate which soon began to leave the Indians behind.

Seeing this, Magadar laid aside his paddle for a moment, raised his gun to his shoulder, and fired.

Again were the echoes and the denizens of the woods disturbed, and two other Indians fired, thus rendering confusion worse confounded. Their aims were not good, however, and Raventik was interested and surprised—though not alarmed—by the whizzing sounds that seemed close to his ears, and the little splashes in the water just ahead of him. Fortunately a bend in the river here concealed him for some time from the Indians, and when they once more came in sight of him he was almost out of range.

In the meantime his comrades, amazed by the strange sounds that burst on their ears, put hastily on shore, carried their kayaks into the bushes, and climbed to the summit of a rising ground, with the double purpose of observing the surrounding country and of making it a place of defence if need be.

"Raventik must have found our enemies," said Gartok to Ondikik, his lieutenant, as he led his men up the slope.

"That is certain," returned Ondikik, "and from the noise they are making, I think the Fire-

spouters are many. But this is a good place to fight them."

"Yes, we will wait here," said Gartok.

As he spoke Raventik was seen sweeping into view from behind a point in the middle of the most rapid part of the river, and plying his long paddle with the intense energy of one whose life depends on his exertions. The Eskimos on the knoll gazed in breathless anxiety. A few minutes later the canoe of Magadar swept into view.

"The Fire-spouters!" exclaimed Ondikik.

"Three men in it!" cried Gartok. Then, as one after another of the canoes came into view, "Four! six! ten of them, and three men in each!"

"And all with fire-spouters!" gasped the lieutenant.

"Come," exclaimed Gartok, "it is time for us to go!"

The Eskimos were by no means cowardly, but when they saw that the approaching foe was double their number, and reflected that there might be more behind them, all armed with guns, it was no wonder that they bethought themselves of retreat. To do them full credit, they did not move until their leader gave the word—then they sprang down the hillock, and in three minutes more were out in their kayaks making for the mouth of the river at their utmost speed.

On seeing this the Indians uttered a wild war-

whoop and fired a volley. But the distance between them was too great. Only a few of the balls reached the fugitives, and went skipping over the water, each wide of its mark.

"Point high," said Magadar to Alizay, who had just re-charged his gun.

The Indian obeyed, fired, and watched for the result, but no visible result followed.

"That is strange," muttered the chief; "my brother must have pointed too high—so high that it has gone into the sun, for I never yet saw a bullet fired over water without coming down and making a splash."

"It may have hit a canoe," said Alizay. "I will try again."

The second shot was, to all appearance, not more effective than the first.

"Perhaps my brother forgot to put in the balls."

"Is Alizay a squaw?" asked the insulted brave angrily.

Magadar thought it wise to make no answer to this question, and in a few seconds more the kayaks doubled round a point that jutted into the stream and were hid from view.

But the two bullets had not missed their billets. One—the first fired—had dropped into Gartok's canoe and buried itself in his left thigh. With the stoicism of a bold hunter, how-

ever, he uttered no cry, but continued to wield his paddle as well as he could. The other ball had pierced the back of his lieutenant Ondikik. He also, with the courage of a savage warrior, gave no sign at first that he was wounded.

At this point, where the Eskimos were for a time sheltered by the formation of the land, the Grey-goose River had a double or horse-shoe bend; and the Indians, who knew the lie of the land well, thought it better to put ashore and run quickly over a neck of land in the hope of heading the kayaks before they reached the sea. Acting on this belief they thrust their canoes in among the reeds, and, leaping on shore, darted into the bushes.

The Eskimos, meanwhile, knowing that they could beat the Indians at paddling, and that the next bend in the stream would reveal to them a view of the open sea, kept driving ahead with all the force of their stout arms. They also knew that the firing would have alarmed their women and induced them to embark in their oomiak, push off to sea, and await them.

And this would have turned out as they had expected, but for an unforeseen event which delayed the women in their operations until too late—at least for one of the party.

CHAPTER VI.

A SURPRISE, A STRUGGLE, AND A CAPTURE.

When the Eskimo women, as before related, made up their minds to discard the cooking-lamp and indulge in the luxury of a wood fire, they sent one of their number into the bush to gather sticks. The one selected for this duty was Rinka, she being active and willing, besides being intelligent, which last was a matter of importance in one totally unaccustomed to traversing the pathless woods.

The girl obeyed orders at once, and soon had collected a large armful of dried branches, with which she prepared to return to the encampment. But when she looked up at the small trees by which she was surrounded, she felt considerably puzzled as to the direction in which she ought to walk. Of course, remembering that her back had been toward the sea when she set out, nothing seemed simpler than to turn round with her face towards it and proceed. But she had not done this for many minutes, when it occurred to

her that she must have turned about more or less, several times, during her outward journey. This brought her to an abrupt halt. She looked up and around several times, and then, feeling quite sure that the shore *must* lie in a certain direction pointed out by Hope, set off in that direction at a good round pace. As the wood seemed to get thicker, however, she concluded that she was wrong, and changed direction again. Still the undergrowth became more dense, and then, suddenly coming to the conclusion that she was lost, she stood stock-still and dropped her bundle of sticks in dismay.

For a few moments she was stunned, as if her position were unbelievable. Then she became horrified and shouted to her companions, but her feeble, unassertive voice was unable to travel far, and drew forth no response. Indeed, she had wandered so far into the forest that, even if possessed of a man's voice, she might have failed to attract the attention of the women. Then the sound of distant firing began to salute her ears, and in an agony of anxiety she ran hither and thither almost blindly.

But there were other ears besides those of Rinka which were startled by the guns.

Sitting under a tree—all ignorant of the presence of his brethren or of the warlike Indians—Cheenbuk was regaling himself on the carcass of

a fat willow-grouse which he had speared a little before the firing began.

Our Eskimo was making for the coast where he had left his kayak, and had halted for a feed. The sport in the woods, after its novelty wore off, had lost interest for one whose natural game, so to speak, was bears and walruses, and he was on his way back when this rattle of musketry arrested him.

The sudden eruption of it was not more puzzling to him than its abrupt cessation. Could it be that some of his tribe had followed him to the river and fallen in with the men of the woods? He thought it not unlikely, and that, if so, his assistance, either as fighter or peacemaker, might be required.

Bolting the remainder of the willow-grouse precipitately, he jumped up, grasped his weapons, and made for the coast, as near as he could guess, in the direction of the firing.

It happened, at the same time, that one of the young Indians, who was on his first war-path, and thirsted for scalps as well as distinction, chanced to keep a more easterly direction than his fellows, when they took to the bush, as already related. This man, coming to an open glade whence he could see the shore, beheld the Eskimo women launching their oomiak in a state of frantic alarm. They were also signalling or beckoning eagerly as

if to some one in the woods. Casting a hurried glance to his right, he observed poor Rinka, who had just got clear of the forest, and was running towards her companions as fast as her short legs could carry her.

Without a moment's hesitation, he took aim at her and fired. The poor girl uttered a loud shriek, threw up her arms, and fell to the ground. It chanced that Cheenbuk was within a hundred yards of the spot at the moment, but the bushes prevented his seeing what had occurred. The report, however, followed by the woman's shriek, was a sufficient spur to him. Darting forward at full speed, he quickly cleared the underwood and came suddenly in view of a sight that caused every nerve in his body to tingle—Rinka prostrate on the ground with blood covering her face and hands, and the young Indian standing over her about to operate with the scalping-knife.

The howl of concentrated rage and horror uttered by Cheenbuk instantly checked the savage, and made him turn in self-defence. He had run to finish his horrible work, and secure the usual trophy of war without taking time to re-load his gun, and was thus almost unarmed. Grasping his powder-horn he attempted to rectify this error—which would never have been committed by an experienced warrior,—but before he could accomplish half the operation, the well-aimed spear

of Cheenbuk went whistling through the air, and entering his chest came out at his back. He fell dead almost without a groan.

Cheenbuk did not stop to finish the work by stabbing or scalping, but he kneeled beside the wounded girl and gently raised her.

"Rinka," he said, softly, while he undid her jacket and sought for the wound, "is it bad? Has he killed you?"

"I feel that I am dying. There is something here." She laid her hand upon her side, from a small wound in which blood was issuing freely.

The heart of the man was at once torn by tender pity and bitter indignation, when he thought of the gentle nature of the poor creature who had been thus laid low, and of the savage cruelty of the Indian who had done it—feelings which were not a little complicated by the reflection that the war-spirit—that is, the desire to kill for mere self-glorification—among some of his own people had probably been the cause of it all.

"It is useless. I am dying," gasped the girl, drawing her bloody hand across her forehead. "But don't leave me to fall into the hands of these men. Take me home and let me die beside my mother."

She was yet speaking when old Uleeta and her companions came forward. Seeing that no other Indian appeared, and that the one who had shot

Rinka was dead, they had quelled their alarm and come to see what had occurred. Cheenbuk, after stanching the flow of blood, availed himself of their aid to carry the wounded girl to the oomiak more comfortably than could have been possible if he had been obliged to carry her in his own strong arms.

With much care they placed her in the bottom of the boat, then the women got in, and Cheenbuk was about to follow, when the report of a gun was heard, and a bullet whizzed close past old Uleeta's head—so close, indeed, that it cut off some of her grey hair. But the old creature was by no means frightened.

"Quick, jump in!" she cried, beginning to push off with her paddle.

Cheenbuk was on the point of accepting the invitation, but a thought intervened—and thought is swifter than the lightning-flash. He knew from slight, but sufficient, experience that the spouters could send only one messenger of death at a time, and that before another could be spouted, some sort of manipulation which took time was needful. If the Indian should get the manipulation over before the oomiak was out of range, any of the women, as well as himself, might be killed.

"No," he cried, giving the boat a mighty shove that sent it out to sea like an arrow, "be off!—paddle!—for life! I will stop him!"

Old Uleeta did not hesitate. She was accustomed to obedience—even when there were no fire-spouters astern. She bent to her paddle with Arctic skill and vigour. So did her mates, and the oomiak darted from the shore while the Indian who had fired the shot was still agonising with his ramrod—for, happily, breech-loaders were as yet unknown.

Cheenbuk was quite alive to his danger. He rushed up the beach towards his foe with a roar and an expression of countenance that did not facilitate loading. Having left his spear in the body of the first Indian, he was unarmed, but that did not matter much to one who felt in his chest and arms the strength of Hercules and Samson rolled into one. So close was he to the Indian when the operation of priming was reached, that the man of the woods merely gave the stock of his gun a slap in the desperate hope that it would prime itself.

This hope, in the artillery used there at that time, was not often a vain hope. Indeed, after prolonged use, the "trade gun" of the "Nor'-West" got into the habit of priming itself—owing to the enlarged nature of the touch-hole—also of expending not a little of its force sidewise. The consequence was that the charge ignited when the trigger was pulled, and the echoes of the cliffs were once more awakened; but happily

the Eskimo had closed in time. Grasping the barrel he turned the muzzle aside, and the ball that was meant for his heart went skipping out to sea, to the no small surprise of the women in the oomiak.

And now, for the second time since he had landed on those shores, was Cheenbuk engaged in the hated work of a hand-to-hand conflict with a foe!

But the conditions were very different, for Alizay was no match for the powerful Eskimo—in physique at least, though doubtless he was not much, if at all, behind him in courage.

Cheenbuk felt this the moment they joined issue, and on the instant an irresistible sensation of mercy overwhelmed him. Holding the gun with his right hand, and keeping its muzzle well to one side, for he did not feel quite certain as to its spouting capacities, he grasped the Indian's throat with his left. Quick as lightning Alizay, with his free hand, drew his scalping-knife and struck at the Eskimo's shoulder, but not less quick was Cheenbuk in releasing the throat and catching the Indian's wrist with a grip that rendered it powerless.

For a minute the Eskimo remained motionless, considering how best to render his adversary insensible without killing him.

That minute cost him dear. Five of Alizay's

comrades, led by Magadar, came upon the scene, and, as it happened, Cheenbuk's back chanced to be towards them. They did not dare to fire, for fear of hitting their comrade, but they rushed unitedly forward with tomahawk and scalping-knife ready.

"Take him alive," said Magadar.

Cheenbuk heard the voice. He disposed of poor Alizay by hurling him away as if he had been a child, and was in the act of facing round when Magadar threw his arms round his body and held him. To be seized thus from behind is to most men a serious difficulty, but our Eskimo made short work of his assailant. He bent forward with his head to the ground so violently that the Indian was flung completely over him, and fell flat on his back, in which position he remained motionless. But it was impossible for Cheenbuk to cope with the other four Indians, who flung themselves on him simultaneously, and seized him by arms, legs, and throat.

Of course they could have brained or stabbed him easily, but, remembering their chief's order to take the man alive, they sought to quell him by sheer force. Stout and sinewy though the four braves were, they had their hands full during a good many minutes, for the Eskimo's muscles were tougher and harder than india-rubber; his sinews resembled whip-cord, and his bones bars

of iron. So completely was he overwhelmed by the men who held him down, that little or nothing of him could be seen, yet ever and anon, as he struggled, the four men seemed to be heaved upward by a small earthquake.

Alizay, who had risen, stood looking calmly on, but rendered no assistance, first, because there was no room for him to act, and second, because his left wrist had been almost broken by the violence of the throw that he had received. As for Magadar, he was only beginning to recover consciousness, and to wonder where he was!

Suddenly Cheenbuk ceased to strive. He was a crafty Eskimo, and a thought had occurred to him. He would sham exhaustion, and, when his foes relaxed their grip, would burst away from them. He knew it was a forlorn hope, for he was well aware that, even if he should succeed in getting away, the spouters would send messengers to arrest him before he had run far. But Cheenbuk was just the man for a forlorn hope. He rose to difficulties and dangers as trouts to flies on a warm day. The Indians, however, were much too experienced warriors to be caught in that way. They eased off their grip with great caution. Moreover Magadar, having risen, and seeing how things were going, took off his belt and made a running noose of it. He passed the loop deftly round Cheenbuk's legs and drew it

tight, while the others were still trying vainly to compress his bull-neck.

The moment that Cheenbuk felt the noose tighten on his legs he knew that it was all over with him. To run or fight with his legs tied would be impossible, so, like a true philosopher, he submitted to the inevitable and gave in. His captors, however, did not deem it wise or safe to relax their hold until they had swathed his body with deerskin thongs; then they removed the belt from his legs and assisted him to rise.

It is not the custom of Indians to indulge in much conversation with vanquished foes. They usually confine their attentions to scowling, torturing, and ultimately to killing and scalping them. The Dogribs who had captured Cheenbuk could not speak the Eskimo tongue, and being unaware of his linguistic powers, did not think it possible to speak to him, but one of their number stood by him on guard while the others dug a grave and buried the Indian whom he had slain.

We have already made reference to our young Eskimo's unusually advanced views in regard to several matters that do not often—as far as we know—exercise the aboriginal mind. While he stood there watching the Indians, as they silently toiled at the grave, his thoughts ran somewhat in the following groove:—

"Poor man! Sorry I killed him, but if I had

not he would have killed me—and then, perhaps, some of the women, for they had not got far away, and I don't know how far the spouter can send its little arrows. I wonder if they *are* little. They must be surely, for I've never seen one. Hoi! hoi! what fools men are to kill one another! How much better to let each other alone! I have killed *him*, poor man! and they will kill me. What then? The ice and snow will come and go all the same. No one will be the better for it when we are gone. Some will surely be the worse. Some wife or mother may have to rub her eyes for *him*. No one will care much for *me*. But the walrus and the seal-hunt will not be so big when I am gone. I wonder if the Maker of all cares for these things! He must—else he would not have made us and put us here! Did he make us to fight each other? Surely not. Even I would not shape my spear to destroy my kayak—and he must be wiser than me. Yet he never speaks or shows himself. If I had a little child, would I treat it so? No—I *must* be wrong, and he *must* be right. Speech is not always with the tongue. Now it comes to my mind that we speak with the eyes when we look fierce or pleased. Perhaps he whispers to me inside, sometimes, and I have not yet learned to understand him."

Cheenbuk had now dropped into one of his

frequent reveries, or trains of thought, in which he was apt to forget all that was going on around him, and he did not waken from it until, the burial being concluded, one of the Indians touched him on the shoulder and pointed to Magadar, who had shouldered his gun and was entering the bushes.

Understanding this to be a command to follow, he stepped out at once. The others fell into line behind him, and thus, bound and a captive, our Eskimo turned his back finally—as he believed—on what we may style his native home—the great, mysterious northern sea.

CHAPTER VII.

FLIGHT AND MISFORTUNE.

WHILE the scene we have described was being enacted, the other Indians, who had crossed the neck of land for the purpose of cutting off the men in the kayaks, failed in the attempt, partly owing to the distance being greater than their memories had assigned to it, and partly to the great speed of the kayaks when propelled by strong men fleeing for their lives.

All the kayaks were well out of gunshot range when the shore was reached, except one which lagged behind. At this one the Indians discharged several volleys, but without effect, and soon after it also was beyond range.

The little vessel which thus lagged behind belonged to the unfortunate Gartok, whose leg, it will be remembered, was wounded by one of the balls discharged by Alizay. Despite his energy, and desperate though the situation was, Gartok could not overcome the depressing influence of pain and hæmorrhage. He fell gradually behind

the others, each of whom was too anxious about his own safety to think much of his comrades.

When the firing ceased and the flotilla was well out of range, Gartok laid down his paddle and bound up his wounded limb with some scraps of sealskin; at the same time, hailing the kayak nearest to him. As soon as it was discovered that their chief was wounded, all the Eskimos came clustering round him. Among them was his lieutenant Ondikik.

"You also are wounded," said Gartok, observing the pallor of his face.

"Yes; I can find no arrow, but there is blood."

"Is it bad?" asked the chief, with an angry exclamation at their misfortune.

"I cannot tell," replied Ondikik, "but—"

He finished the sentence in the most expressive manner by fainting dead away, and falling over to one side so heavily that he would have infallibly upset the little craft if his comrades had not been close at hand to prevent that catastrophe.

"Hail the oomiak!" cried Gartok, in a voice that, for him, felt singularly feeble. "Put him into it, and let two of the women change with two of the men."

In a few minutes the women's large open boat was alongside, and poor Ondikik was, with some difficulty, transferred to it. Two men then gave up their kayaks to two of the women, and took their places in the oomiak. While this was being

done some of the people gave a shout of alarm, for it was observed that Gartok himself had quietly fallen back in a state of insensibility.

The men, therefore, lifted him also out of his kayak and laid him beside his lieutenant.

This accomplished, the little fleet paddled out to sea, and they soon lost sight of the Arctic shore. They did not again pause until they reached a group of small islets, on one of which they encamped for the night.

Fortunately the weather at this time was calm and warm, so that those hardy inhabitants of the icy north required no better lodging or bed than the cold ground, with the star-spangled sky for curtains. With lamps flaring, seal steaks and wild-fowl simmering, and hot oil flowing, they quickly made themselves comfortable—with the exception, of course, of the warlike Gartok and the hot-headed Ondikik. These two, being fellow-sufferers, were laid beside each other, in order, perhaps, to facilitate mutual condolence. To do them justice, they did not grumble much at their fate, but entertained each other with a running commentary on the events of the day.

"And that is strange news that my old mother tells me," resumed Gartok, after a short pause in the conversation. "Cheenbuk must have given the Fire-spouters sore heads from the way he gripped them."

"I wish I had been there," growled Ondikik.

"I 'm glad I was *not* there," returned Gartok. "I could not have saved him from so many, and it would not have been pleasant to go into slavery—if not to torture and death. Poor Cheenbuk! he was ever against war—yet war has been forced on him. I fear we shall never see him again. Hoi! my leg is bad. I can't understand how the Fire-spouters could hit it without the little thing going through my back first."

"I wish all the Fire-spouters were deep in the inside of a whale's belly," growled Ondikik, whose wound was beginning to render him feverish and rusty. "Arrows and spears can be pulled out, but when the little spouter things go in we don't know where they go to. They disappear and leave an ugly hole behind them."

At this point Raventik, on whom the command had devolved, came forward with a choice piece of juicy walrus blubber on a flat stone for a plate.

"Our chiefs will eat," he said, "it will do them good—make their hearts strong and ease the wounds."

"No," said Gartok decisively, "none for me."

"Take it away!" cried the other sharply.

"No?" exclaimed Raventik in surprise. You see, he had never in his life been wounded or ill, and could not understand the possibility of refusing food, except when too full of it. Being a

sympathetic soul, however, he pressed it on the invalids, but received replies so very discouraging that he was induced to forbear.

Old Uleeta turned out to be a more intelligent, it not more kindly, nurse. After she had eaten her supper and succeeded in bolting the last bite that had refused to go down when she could eat no more, she came forward with a bladder full of water, and some rabbit skins, for the purpose of dressing the wounds.

"Gently, mother," said Gartok with a suppressed groan, "you lay hold of me as if I were a seal."

"You are quite as self-willed, my son," replied the old woman. "If you had not gone out to fight you would not have come back with a hole in your leg."

"If I had not come into the world I should not have been here to trouble you, mother."

"There's truth in that, my son," returned the woman, as if the idea were new to her.

At this Ondikik groaned—whether at the contemptibly obvious character of the idea, or at ideas in general, or in consequence of pain, we cannot tell.

"You said, mother, that Cheenbuk gave them a good deal of trouble?"

"Ay, he gave them sore hearts and sore bodies."

"They deserved it! what right had they to come with their fire-spouters to attack *us*?"

"What right had you to go without your fire-spouters to attack *them*?" demanded old Uleeta, somewhat maliciously.

Gartok, who was destitute neither of intelligence nor of humour, laughed, but the laugh slid into a most emphatic "hoi!" as his mother gave the leg a wrench.

"Softly, mother, softly! Treat me as you did when I was so big," he exclaimed, indicating about one foot six between his hands.

The old woman chuckled, or rather "hee! hee'd!" a little and continued:—

"Yes, Cheenbuk fought like a bear. We could not see him, for they were all on top of him at once, but hi! how he made them heave! I wonder they did not use their knives."

"They felt sure they had him," said her son, "they wanted to drive him to their huts and kill him slowly to amuse their women."

This was such a horrible idea that the old woman became unusually grave.

"These Fire-spouters are worse than white bears," she said, "for these never torture other beasts, though they often kill them."

"True, mother. Now I wish you would go away and leave my leg alone. Ondikik there needs your help. Go to him and hurt him as much as you please. I won't grumble."

'You were always a thankless boy—ever since

you could speak," replied the dame, reproachfully.

"Did you ever hear of any one being thankless before he could speak?—hoi! mother, you've tied it too tight. Slack it a little."

After complying with her son's request, old Uleeta went to Ondikik, to whom, however, she could render but little service, owing to the nature of his wound. Then she paid a visit to Rinka, whose injuries, however, proved to be more alarming than severe; after which she joined the rest of the tribe at supper.

While the Eskimos were thus proceeding to their home among the islands of the Arctic sea, the captors of Cheenbuk were paddling up stream to the lands of the Dogrib Indians.

At first the stout Eskimo meditated an attempt to escape. Indeed he made one vigorous effort when they were leading him through the bush with his hands tied behind him. Just as they came to the place where the canoes were lying, the thought of home, and of his probable fate as a prisoner, pressed so heavily on him that he suddenly became furious, tripped up the man beside him with his foot, kicked over the one behind him with his heel, ran his head like a battering-ram into the back of the man in front of him, and then strove to burst his bonds with a succession of mighty wriggles, but, not being quite equal to

Samson, he failed, and on seeing that two savages stood over him with drawn scalping-knives, while Magadar put the muzzle of a gun to his head, he deemed it wise to give in and uttered the exclamation "hoi!" with the air of one who feels that his game is played out. He marched forward after that in submissive silence.

On reaching the canoes, however, a fresh burst of indignation assailed him, and for a moment he meditated sending his foot through the bottom of the frail craft which was to carry him into exile, but on second thoughts he decided to delay the performance of that violent measure till they were well out in the middle of the current, when there would be the chance of drowning some of his foes as well as himself. By the time the desired position was reached, however, his spirit had calmed down a little and his philosophic mind—to say nothing of his heart—had begun to suggest the uselessness of gratifying his feelings by a revenge which he probably could not enjoy much while in the process of drowning, and, doubtless, could not enjoy at all after he was drowned.

Thus it came to pass that our hero restrained his passions, and, in process of time, found himself a prisoner in one of the lodges of the Dogrib Indians.

CHAPTER VIII

IN THE HOUR OF NEED

On reaching the Indian village Cheenbuk was firmly bound to a tree a little way outside the camp, and left there to his meditations, while his captors went to the old chief's tent to hold a council.

Meanwhile the women and children went to look at the captive. Among them were Adolay and her mother. The moment the former set eyes on Cheenbuk she recognised him as the youth who had rescued her mother from drowning the previous year.

"Mother," she whispered, drawing her parent aside, "that is *him*! Don't you remember him?"

"I think it is," returned Isquay, gazing steadily at the Eskimo, who looked at the crowd which surrounded him with a gaze of supreme contempt, though he did not by any means feel contemptuous.

"Come, mother," said Adolay, with sudden earnestness, "he has not recognised us in the

crowd. I must go and find out what the braves are palavering."

As she spoke she drew her mother towards their own lodge, and there left her while she hurried on to the council tent. In the shelter of some bushes she crept as near to it as possible.

There was no difficulty in making out what was said, for the warriors made no secret of their intentions, and spoke in loud tones.

"He shall die," was the remark of Alizay just as the girl came within hearing, "he has killed one of our braves."

"Ay, and he shall die by torture," said Magadar, who was a relation of the man that had been slain.

"Ho! ho!" exclaimed most of the warriors in tones of approval, but there were a few among them who were silent. They leaned to mercy's side.

"Better to spare his life and make a slave of him," said one of these, "we can keep him always tied like a bad dog till we need him; then we can loose his legs and make him drag our sledges."

"The brave who has spoken is young," said the old chief. "He does not know much about men. Will not the Eskimo watch for his chance, get free from his bonds, kill some of us when we are off our guard, and, perhaps, escape?"

"That is so. He must be killed," remarked

Magadar, with a glance of scorn at the merciful youth, "and the sooner the better."

"Let us do it at once," said one of the blood-thirsty.

On hearing this the heart of Adolay beat anxiously, and for a few moments she was undecided whether to run to the tree to which the Eskimo was bound and set him free by cutting his bonds, or enter the council-tent, tell the story of his having saved her mother's life, and plead that the youth's might be spared. Both courses, she knew, were about equally desperate. If she were to follow the first, all the children would see her do it, and give the alarm, in which case the Eskimo would be pursued and certainly recaptured, for a fugitive in a strange country would have no chance with men well acquainted with every nook and corner of their native land. Besides which, she knew not what terrible punishment might be inflicted on herself for making such an attempt. On the other hand, for a woman to violate the sanctity of a council-tent was so unprecedented that she felt sure it would be sternly resented, and, therefore, useless.

Fortunately she was saved the necessity of acting on either alternative by the arguments of the next speaker, who was one of the blood-thirsty braves.

"Let us not be in haste like women and

children," he said; "if we leave him bound to the tree all night he will have time to think of the fate that is coming, and we shall have good sunlight in the morning, which will enable even the oldest squaw to see well."

After some palaver it was agreed that the execution of Cheenbuk should be postponed to the following day, and that a sentinel should be posted beside him during the night to make sure that he did not manage to undo his fastenings and escape.

On hearing this decision arrived at, Adolay crept back into the bush and hastened to her mother's tent.

"They have fixed to kill him, mother," she exclaimed, anxiously, on entering.

"I expected that, and I'm sorry," returned Isquay, "but we cannot help it. What can women do? The men will not mind what I say. If only Nazinred was here they would listen to *him*, but ——"

"Yes, they always listen to father," interrupted the girl, with an anxious frown on her pretty brows, "but as father is not here you must do what you can for the man."

"You are very fond of him!" said the squaw with a keen look at her daughter.

"Yes, I am very fond of him," replied Adolay with an air of unblushing candour, "and I think, mother, that you should be fond of him too."

"So I am, girl, so I am, but what can I do?"

"You can go and tell the story to the old chief. He is not hard, like some of the young men. Perhaps he may help us."

Isquay shook her head, but nevertheless agreed to try her influence with the old man, and went out for that purpose.

Meanwhile Adolay, who had not herself much faith in her mother's advocacy of the poor Eskimo's cause, resolved upon a separate course of action. Throwing a blanket over her head and shoulders, she started for the place where Cheenbuk stood, scornfully regarding the little boys who surrounded and insulted him by flourishing knives and hatchets close to his defenceless nose. They did not, however, dare to touch him, as the time had not yet arrived for actual torture.

Running forward, Adolay, who was a favourite with the young people, drove them back.

"Keep clear of him," she cried with a fierce glare in her eyes—which was wonderfully realistic, considering that it was a mere piece of acting—"I want to speak to him—to terrify him—to fill him with horror!"

This was quite to the taste of the wretched little creatures, who fell back in a semi-circle and waited for more.

"Can you understand my speech?" she de-

manded as she turned on Cheenbuk with flashing eyes.

The Eskimo thought he had never seen such magnificent eyes before, and wished much that they would look on him more kindly.

"Yes," he replied, "I understand a little."

"Listen, then," cried Adolay in a loud tone, and with looks more furious than before. "You are to die to-morrow."

"I expected it would be to-night," replied Cheenbuk calmly.

"And you are to be tortured to death!"

At this the boys set up a howl of delight.

At the same time the girl advanced a step nearer the captive, and said in a low voice hurriedly:—

"I will save you. Be ready to act—to-night."

The softened look and altered tone opened the eyes of the captive. Although the blanket partially concealed Adolay's face, Cheenbuk at once recognised the girl whose mother he had saved the previous spring.

"I am awake!" he said quietly, but with a glance of bright intelligence.

"Yes, you are doomed to die," continued Adolay, when the boys' howling had subsided, "and if you are to be tortured, we will all come to see how brave you are."

As she said this she went close up to the

captive, as if to make her words more emphatic, and shook her little fist in his face. Then—in a low voice—"You see the cliff behind me, with the dead tree below it?"

"Yes."

"Run for that tree when you are free—and *wait.*"

Turning round, as though her rage was satisfied for the time being, Adolay left the spot with a dark frown on her face.

"Leave him now, boys," she said in passing. "Give him time to think about to-morrow."

Whether it was the effect of this advice, or the fact that the shades of evening were falling, and a feeding-time was at hand, we cannot say, but in a short time Cheenbuk was left to his meditations. He was, however, quite within sight of several of the lodges. As the daylight gradually faded a young brave left his tent, and, shouldering his gun, went to the place where the captive was bound. Examining the bonds to make sure that they were secure, the youth carefully renewed the priming of his weapon, shouldered it, and began to pace to and fro. His mode of proceeding was to walk up to the captive, take a look at him, turn round, and walk about thirty or forty yards away from him, and so on to and fro without halt or variation for upwards of two hours. During all that time he uttered no word to the Eskimo.

Cheenbuk, on his part, took no notice whatever of his guard, but stood perfectly still and looked with calm, lofty indifference over his head—which he was well able to do, being a considerably taller man.

As the night advanced the darkness deepened, and the poor captive began to entertain serious misgivings as to his prospects. Would the girl try to carry out the plan, whatever it was? Yes, he had not the slightest doubt on that head, because, somehow, she had inspired him with a confidence that he had never felt in woman before. But would she be able to carry out her plan? That was quite another question. Then, the darkness had become so intense that he could barely see the outline of the cliff towards which he was to run, and could not see the dead tree at all. Moreover, it occurred to him that it would be impossible even to walk, much less to run, over unknown and perhaps rough ground in darkness so great that he could hardly see the trees around him; and could only make out the whites of the sentinel's eyes when he came close up.

It was therefore with a feeling of relief that he at length observed a faint glow of light in the sky, which indicated the rising of the moon.

Soon afterwards a dark figure was seen approaching. It was Alizay, the blood-thirsty brave, who had come to relieve guard.

CHAPTER IX

TRYING MOMENTS AND PERPLEXING DOUBTS

THE first thing that the new sentinel did was carefully to examine the cords that bound the captive to the tree, and tie one or two additional knots to make him more secure. Then he turned to the other Indian, and asked sharply:—

"Has he been quiet?"

"Quiet as the tree to which he is bound."

"Has he uttered speech?"

"No."

"Good. You may go. I will watch him till morning: after that he will need no more watching."

Alizay looked sharply at the Eskimo while he uttered these words, perhaps to ascertain whether he understood their drift, but Cheenbuk's visage was immovable, and his eyes were fixed, as if in meditation, on the moon, which just then was beginning to rise over the cliffs and shed a softened light over the Indian village.

The new sentinel shouldered his gun and began his vigil, while the other left them.

But other ears had listened to the concluding words of Alizay.

The tree to which the Eskimo was bound stood close to the edge of the bush, or underwood. In front of it was an open space, up and down which the sentinel marched. Had the Indian dreamed of a traitor in the camp he would not have deemed the captive's position as secure as it should be, but the idea of any one in the village favouring a contemptible eater-of-raw-flesh never once entered his imagination.

Nevertheless, Adolay was in the bush behind the tree, and not only heard his words, but saw his movements. Watching her opportunity when the sentinel had just turned and was marching away from the tree, she cut, with a scalping knife, the cord that bound Cheenbuk's right arm and placed the knife in his hand. Almost at the same moment she slipped back into the bush.

Cheenbuk made no attempt, however, to free himself. The sentinel's beat was too short to permit of his doing so without being observed. He therefore remained perfectly motionless in his former attitude.

It was a trying moment when the Indian approached to within a couple of feet and looked him straight in the face, as was his wont at each turn. But Cheenbuk was gifted with nerves of steel. His contemplation of the moon was so

absorbing, that a civilised observer might have mistaken him for an astronomer or a lunatic. Alizay suspected nothing. He turned round, and the Eskimo allowed him to take about five paces before he moved. Then, with the speed of lightning, he ran the sharp blade down his side, severing all his bonds at one sweep.

Next moment he was free, but he instantly resumed his former position and attitude until his guard was within a yard of him. Then he sprang upon him, dropped the knife and seized him by the throat with both hands, so tightly that he was quite incapable of uttering a cry.

Alizay made a vigorous struggle for life, but he had no chance with the burly Eskimo, who quickly decided the fight by giving his adversary a blow with his fist that laid him insensible on the ground.

Springing over his prostrate form he ran straight for the cliff that Adolay had pointed out to him, leaping over fallen trees, and across what looked like young chasms, in a state of reckless uncertainty as to whether he would plunge into ponds or land at the bottom of precipices. With a feeling of absolute confidence that the girl with the lustrous eyes would not have told him to run where the feat was impossible, he held on until he reached the bottom of the cliff and stood beside the dead tree unhurt, though considerably winded.

There he resolved to wait according to orders. To most ordinary men, waiting, when they are filled with anxiety, is much more trying than energetic action. But Cheenbuk was not an ordinary man, therefore he waited like a hero.

Meanwhile Adolay, having seen the Eskimo fairly in grips with the sentinel, ran swiftly back towards the village, intending, before going to Cheenbuk at the cliff, to let her mother know what she had done, and what she still purposed to do—namely to embark with the Eskimo in a birch-bark canoe, guide him across the small lake that lay near the village, and show him the rivulet that would lead him into the Greygoose River. But she had not gone far, when, on turning a bush, she almost ran into the arms of a young Indian girl named Idazoo, an event which upset all her plans and perplexed her not a little—all the more that this girl was jealous of her, believing that she was trying to steal from her the affections of Alizay, whom she regarded as her own young man!

"Why run you so fast?" asked the girl, as Adolay stood panting before her. "Have you seen a bad spirit?"

"Yes, I have seen a bad spirit," answered Adolay (thinking of Alizay), "I have seen two bad spirits," she added (thinking of Idazoo). "But I cannot stop to tell you. I have to—to—go to see—something very strange to-night."

Now it must be told that Idazoo was gifted with a very large bump of curiosity, and a still larger one, perhaps, of suspicion. The brave Alizay, she knew, was to mount guard over the Eskimo captive that night, and she had a suspicion that Adolay had taken advantage of that fact to pay the captive—not the Indian, oh dear no !—a visit. Unable to rest quietly in her tent under the powerful influence of this idea, she resolved to take a walk herself—a sort of moonlight ramble as it were—in that direction. As we have seen, she met her friend, not unexpectedly, on the way.

"I will go with you," she said, "to see this strange thing, whatever it be. There may be danger; two are better than one, and, you know, I am not easily frightened."

Poor Adolay was dismayed by this proposition, and hurried forward, but Idazoo kept pace with her. Suddenly she made up her mind, and, changing her direction, made for the cliff at a rapid run, closely followed by her jealous friend, who was resolved to see the mystery out.

She purposely led her companion round in such a way that they came suddenly upon the waiting Eskimo, whose speaking visage betrayed his surprise at seeing two girls instead of one.

On beholding Cheenbuk standing there unbound, Idazoo stopped short, drew back, and gazed at him in alarm as well as surprise.

"You have now seen the strange sight I spoke of, but you must not tell it in the lodges," said Adolay.

Without answering her, Idazoo turned to fly, but Adolay grasped her by the wrist and held her tight—at the same time motioning with her hand to Cheenbuk.

The Eskimo was prompt as well as intelligent. He did not wait for explanations or allow surprise to delay him. With a bound he was beside the girls, had grasped Idazoo, and looked to Adolay for further instructions.

"Hold her till I tie up her hands," she said, drawing a stout line of deerskin from a pocket in the breast of her dress.

With this she proceeded to bind her inquisitive friend's wrists. Perceiving that she was to be made a captive, the girl opened her mouth and began a shriek, which, had it been allowed full play, would no doubt have reached her friends in the village, but Cheenbuk had observed the intention, and before the first note had struggled into being, he clapped his hand on her mouth and quenched it. Idazoo wore round her neck a brightly coloured cotton kerchief, such as the fur-traders of those days furnished for barter with the Indians. Cheenbuk quietly plucked this off her neck and tied it firmly round her face and mouth so as to effectually gag her. This done they fastened her to the stem of the dead tree.

The whole operation was performed without unnecessary rudeness, and with great celerity.

"Now, Idazoo," said Adolay, when they had finished, "you have done me great injury this night. I am sorry to treat you in this way, but I cannot help it. You *would* come with me, you know. If I could trust you even now, I would take the cloth off your mouth, but I dare not, you might yell, and everybody knows you were never good at keeping your promises. But it does not matter much. The handkerchief is not too tight to prevent the air getting up your nose—and it will give your tongue a rest, which it needs. Besides, the night is not cold, and as our braves pass here every morning when starting off to hunt, you will soon be set free."

The Eskimo showed all his brilliant teeth from ear to ear while this little speech was being made. Then he accompanied Adolay through the bush until they reached the shores of a small lake, beside which a birch-bark canoe was lying, partly in the water. At an earlier part of that evening the girl had placed the canoe there, and put into it weapons and provisions suitable for a considerable voyage.

"You have got this ready for me?" said Cheenbuk.

"Yes. You saved my mother's life once, and I will save yours," replied the girl, pointing

to the bow of the canoe as if ordering him to embark.

"Are you going with me?" asked the youth, with a look of hopeful surprise and a very slight flutter of the heart.

"You do not know the lake. I will guide you to the place where the little river runs out of it, and then, by following that, you will get into Greygoose River, which I think you know."

The Eskimo's heart ceased to flutter, and the hope died out of his expressive eyes as he said, still hesitating, "But—but—I am very heavy and you are very light. A canoe does not go well with its head deep in the water. Don't you think that I should sit behind and steer?"

"And where would you steer to?" asked Adolay, with a somewhat pert smile. "Besides, look there," she added, pointing to the stern of the little craft, "do Eskimos not use their eyes?"

Cheenbuk used his eyes as directed, and saw that a heavy stone had been placed in the stern so as to counteract the difference of weight. With an air of humility, therefore, he stepped into his allotted place, took up a paddle and sat down. Adolay pushed the craft into deeper water, stepped lightly in, and, giving a vigorous shove, sent it skimming out on the lake. Then the two dipped their paddles with a will, and shot over the water like an arrow.

Profound silence was maintained until the other end of the lake was reached, when the moon came out from a bank of clouds and enabled the girl to find the reedy source of the little river without difficulty.

"We will land here and lift the canoe past the reeds," she said, steering the little craft to the side of a grassy bank.

Walking along this bank, and guiding the canoe with their hands, they soon came to an open space in the forest, whence they could see the rivulet winding like a thread of silver through the land in front of them.

"This is the place where we must part," said Adolay with a sudden determination of manner which surprised and puzzled the Eskimo. "You have now no further need for me. You have only to go straight on with the running of the water. There are only two falls on the way, but you will hear the noise before you come to them, and you have only to lift the canoe a short way through the bush to the still water below the falls. Our braves often do that; you will find it quite easy."

"I know something of that," returned Cheenbuk; "we have no falls in our great salt lake, but we have plenty big lumps of ice, and when these are like to crush together we have to jump out of our kayaks and lift them out of the water—ho!

and we do it quick too, sometimes, or we get squeezed flat. But if I go on with the canoe how will you get home? You cannot swim back."

"I can walk round the lake. Are the Eskimo girls not able to walk, that you ask such a question?" said the girl, raising her dark eyes with something of an amused look to the face of her companion, who was looking anxiously down at her.

"Oh yes, they can walk well. Ay, and run too when needful. But—but—I'm sorry that we must part. Must!—why must?"

The youth said this in a meditative tone, for it had occurred to him for a moment that the girl was now in his power; that he could compel her to get into the bow of the canoe, and might steer her to his home at Waruskeek if he chose, whether she would or no. But Cheenbuk's soul was chivalrous. He was far in advance of his kindred and his times. He scorned himself for having even thought of such a thing for a moment; and it was with an air of profound humility that he continued—"Must—of course you must. One of the young braves would have a sore heart if you did not return."

"No one that I know of," she replied quickly. "I care not for the braves; but my mother would have a sore heart if I did not return. Yet I fear to go back, for that Idazoo will tell, and perhaps they will kill me for helping you to escape."

"Then you must *not* go back," said the Eskimo stoutly. "Come with me and I will take good care of you."

"No, I cannot," returned the girl thoughtfully; "I cannot forsake my mother and father in such a way without even a word at parting.

"What is your name?" asked the youth promptly. "Mine is Cheenbuk."

"They call me Adolay; that, in our language, means the summer-time."

"Well, Adolay, I don't know what my name, Cheenbuk, means—perhaps it means winter-time. Anyhow, listen to me. If there is any chance of you being killed you must *not* go back. I will take you to my mother's igloe and you will live with her."

"Have you, too, got a mother?" asked Adolay with interest.

"Ho! yes; and a father too—and they're both fat and heavy and kind. When they come to know that you have been so kind to me, they will receive you with joy."

"No," said Adolay, shaking her small head decidedly, "I *will* not go. They may kill me if they like, but I will never forsake my mother."

"Are you determined?"

"Yes—for sure."

"Then so am I," said Cheenbuk, taking hold of the canoe and turning the bow up-stream. "Get

in, Adolay, and we will return to the lodges of your people and die together."

Cheenbuk had a way of saying and doing things that convinced his hearers that he was thoroughly in earnest. The Indian girl felt this, and regretted much that she had said anything at all about her danger. She now tried to counteract the evil.

"What do you mean?" she said, anxiously.

"I mean that I am not afraid to go back and die with you."

"But it is not certain," she replied, "that they will kill me. If my father was at home they would not dare to do it, and perhaps they will be afraid of his revenge when he comes back. But for you there is no chance at all. They will be sure to kill you with slow tortures."

"I care not. If I go back they will not be so likely to kill you. But listen to me, Adolay. I have a thought. If you come with me to my home in Waruskeek I will take you safe to my father's igloe, and you shall live with my mother and sister. I will not ask you to be my squaw, but you will stay with them till we collect a strong band of young men, when we will go to visit your people and take you with us. If they are friendly—well, and we can traffic together. If they receive us ill there will be a fight—that is all. I do not like fighting—but whatever

happens I promise that you shall be restored to your father and mother. Now, will you go?"

Adolay looked up earnestly into the grave countenance of the young man. There could be no doubt of his thorough sincerity—she felt that—still, she hesitated. It was a bold step to take—even for an Indian heroine!

At that critical moment there broke upon their ears a distant sound that caused them both to start and look round anxiously. It was faint, and so far away that at first they could make nothing of it. A few seconds later it was repeated louder than before. Then a look of intelligence broke over Adolay's countenance.

"I know!" she exclaimed, "Idazoo is shrieking! We should have put the cloth over her nose! She has got her mouth free and—"

Another sharp yell rendered it needless for her to complete the sentence.

"Come," she said, laying hands on the canoe. "Turn it round. We will go!"

A few minutes more and the pair were flying down the swift current of the little river as fast as they could dip their paddles in the stream.

CHAPTER X.

A WILD CHASE AND A SAD FAILURE.

It does not necessarily require the influences of civilised life to make an honourable, upright man, any more than it needs the influences of savage life to make a thorough scoundrel. Of course the tendency of civilisation is to elevate, of savagery to debase, nevertheless it is certain that as we occasionally see blackguards in the highest ranks, so we sometimes find men and women with exalted conceptions of right and wrong in the lowest circles of life.

The truth would seem to be that the Spirit of God is not confined to ranks or conditions of men—a fact that appears to be confirmed by the Scripture statement that "in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him."

Cheenbuk's mind must assuredly have been influenced by a good spirit when, after descending the little river at the utmost speed possible—so as to render recapture for a time at least impro-

bable—he directed his companion to run the canoe on the bank in an eddy formed by a flat rock, and then, against his own most earnest desires, advised Adolay to return to her people.

"While we were paddling down-stream," he said, "I have been thinking much, and I cannot believe that your people would be so hard as to kill you for only helping a poor Eskimo to escape. Now, I have changed my mind. I have often found that it is better to think more than once before acting, if you have time to do so. What I think now is, that we should hide the canoe here, and return to your village on foot together. When we get there—or when we meet them chasing us—you will go on, and I will hide to see how they receive you, and if they receive you kindly—as I feel sure they will do—I will return here to this spot, take the canoe, and go to my home alone. I cannot bear to take you from your father and mother. I think the Great Spirit, who is the father of all, would be angry with me. But I will not force you to return if you are afraid."

"I am afraid," returned Adolay, quickly. "You do not know how angry the men will be: and you don't know how sharp their eyes are. If you were to return with me they would see you long before you could see them, and would give you no chance to hide."

"Then there is nothing to be done but to go on,"

said Cheenbuk, with a sigh which he loyally strove to vent as a sign of regret, but which insisted on issuing forth as a distinct sound of satisfaction!

"You have promised to take me safe to your mother's igloe, and to bring me back to my own home," said Adolay, with a look of confidence. "I will go on and trust you."

Without another word the Eskimo pushed off the head of the canoe, which was caught by the current and swept down stream. Ere long they reached the Greygoose River, and, paddling into the centre of the current, were soon careering towards the sea at a pace which they thought rendered their being overtaken almost impossible. To make quite sure, however, they continued the voyage far into the night, and did not land for a very brief rest until the grey dawn had begun to appear over the eastern tree-tops.

Being both somewhat fatigued by that time they scarcely uttered a word as they encamped, but went about the work as if half asleep. Cheenbuk lifted the canoe out of the water and laid it on the bank, bottom up, in which position it formed a rough and ready tent for his companion, who, meanwhile, carried up the provisions. Seated on the grass beside it they ate a little dried venison, which required no cooking—uttering only a monosyllable now and then with half-closed eyes, and sometimes with an imbecile smile, which

terminated occasionally in an irresistible nod. The feebleness of the light, too, as well as the quietness of the hour, contributed not a little to this state of semi-consciousness.

The frugal supper having been washed down with a draught of water, from Nature's own cup—the joined hands—Adolay lay down under the canoe. Cheenbuk retired to a neighbouring spruce-fir and stretched himself under its branches. Need we add that sleep closed their eyelids instantly?

But the Eskimo was much too experienced a hunter and warrior to allow the drowsy god to enchain him long. Like a dead log he lay for little more than two hours, then he awoke with a start and stretched himself.

"Hoi!" he exclaimed sharply, looking towards the canoe, which was distant from his lair about five or six yards.

The exclamation had scarcely passed his lips when Adolay sprang up, and next moment went blinking, yawning, and stumbling down the bank with the provisions under one arm, the paddles and weapons under the other. Cheenbuk lifted the canoe and followed her. In a few minutes they were once more out in the middle of the strong current, paddling with might and main.

Now, it was well that they had used such diligence in their flight, for the pursuers were closer behind them than they had supposed.

When the unfortunate Alizay was felled by the Eskimo, as we have described, he lay for a considerable time in a state of insensibility, but he was by no means killed—not even seriously damaged—for Cheenbuk's intense dislike to take life had not only induced him to drop the knife with which the Indian girl had supplied him to cut his cords, but inclined him to use his ponderous fist with moderation, so that Alizay, on recovering, found himself none the worse, except for a severe headache and an unnaturally large bridge to his nose.

Gathering himself up, and gradually swelling with rage as he reflected on the treatment to which he had been subjected, he ran at full speed to alarm the camp and begin a search. But where were they to search?—that was the question. There were four points to the compass—though they knew nothing about the compass—and the fugitive might have gone off in the direction of any of these, or between them, and it was too dark a night to permit of his trail being followed by sight, for, although the moon might aid them in the open, it would be quite useless in the darkness of the woods.

A hurried council was held, and a good deal of distracting advice given while the young braves were arming themselves. To add to their perplexities, a lad rushed suddenly into the council tent with glaring eyes, saying that the girl

Idazoo had disappeared from the village. This news greatly increased the fury of Alizay, but he had scarcely realised the truth when another lad, with, if possible, still more glaring eyes and a gaping mouth, rushed in to tell that the girl Adolay was also missing. This blew up the agitation to a frenzy of excitement—not usual among the Red men of the north—because the necessity for prompt action was great, while the impossibility of doing anything definite was greater.

It was just at this point, when the clamour was at its height, that a sound was heard which instantly produced dead silence, while every man and boy became as if petrified, with eyes enlarged and ears cocked to listen.

Again the sound was heard—a distant yell undoubtedly, coming from the direction of the cliff.

All the self-possession and promptitude of the Indians returned in a moment. In a second the braves glided out of the council-tent and disappeared, each making a straight line for the sound, while the women and children left behind listened with profound attention and expectation.

There was no lack of guiding sounds now, for the moment Idazoo managed to clear her mouth of the gag she began and continued a series of shrieks and yells which were intensified in vigour by the

fact that she gradually became hysterical as well as wrathful.

The first to reach the spot was Alizay. On beholding him the girl stopped, and, after two or three exasperated echoes had finished their remarks, a profound silence reigned.

Lovers among the Dogribs are not yet very gallant. Civilisation may do something for them, as to this, in time.

"You can make a noise!' said the youth, stepping up to her.

"I have reason to do so," replied the maiden, somewhat abashed.

"Did Adolay go with him?" asked Alizay as several of the other braves ran up.

"Yes."

"Willingly?"

"Yes—she helped to tie me and showed him the way."

"Where did they go?"

"In the direction of the lake."

Instantly the whole band turned and ran off in the direction mentioned—Alizay being last, as he paused just long enough to cut the bonds of Idazoo, but left her to disentangle herself as she best could.

On reaching the shores of the lake the footsteps of the fugitives showed clear in the moonlight, and the marks of launching the canoe were visible, so that there was no further doubt as to what should

be done. The Indians knew well that there was only one outlet from the lake. Their canoes were close by, and their guns and tomahawks in their hands. Nothing therefore required to be done but to embark and give chase. For this purpose two canoes were deemed sufficient, with three men in each.

Magadar took charge of the leading canoe. Alizay steered the other, and the rest of the braves returned to the village to gloat over the news that Idazoo had to tell, to feast on the produce of the previous day's hunt, and to clear—or obfuscate—their intellects, more or less, with their tobacco-pipes.

As the six pursuers were very wrathful, and pretty strong, they caused their canoes to skim over the lake like swallows, and reached the head of the little river not very long after the fugitives had left it. A stern chase, however, is proverbially a long one, and as they overhauled the chase only inch by inch, there seemed little chance of overtaking it that night. The leaders, however, being men of great endurance, resolved to carry on without rest as long as possible. This they did until about dawn—the same hour at which the fugitives had succumbed—and both parties put ashore at last for a rest, neither being aware of the fact that their separate camping-grounds were not more than three miles apart!

Well was it then for Adolay that her stout protector was a light sleeper, as well as a man of iron frame, and that he had aroused her fully an hour and a half sooner than the time at which the Indians left their camp to resume the chase. It was well, also, that Cheenbuk required but a short rest to recruit his strength and enable him to resume the paddle with his full vigour. The joy, also, consequent upon the discovery that he loved the Indian girl, and that she had made up her mind, without any persuasion on his part, to run away with him, lent additional power to his strong back. Perhaps, also, a sympathetic feeling in the breast of the maiden added to the strength of her well-formed and by no means feeble arm, so that many miles were soon added to the three which intervened between the chasers and the chased. To the horror of Adolay she found when she and Cheenbuk reached the mouth of the river, that the sea was extensively blocked by masses of ice, which extended out as far as the eye could reach.

Although thus encumbered, however, the sea was by no means choked up with it, and to the gaze of the young Eskimo the ice presented no insurmountable obstacle, for his experienced eye could trace leads and lanes of open water as far as the first group of distant islets, which lay like scarce perceptible specks on the horizon.

But to the inexperienced eye of the girl the

scene was one of hopeless confusion, and it filled her with sudden alarm and despair, though she possessed more than the usual share of the Dogrib women's courage. Observing her alarm, Cheenbuk gave her a look of encouragement, but avoided telling her not to be afraid, for his admiration of her was too profound to admit of his thinking that she could really be frightened, whatever her looks might indicate.

"The ice is our friend to-day," he said, with a cheery smile, as they stood together on the sea-shore beside their canoe, surveying the magnificent scene of snowy field, fantastic hummock, massive berg, and glittering pinnacle that lay spread out before them.

Adolay felt, but did not express surprise, for she was filled with a most commendable trust in the truth and wisdom as well as the courage of the man to whose care she had committed herself.

"If you say the ice is our friend, it must be so," she remarked quietly, "but to the Indian girl it seems as if the ice was our foe, for she can see no escape, and my people will be sure to follow us."

"Let them follow," returned Cheenbuk, with a quiet laugh, as he re-arranged the lading of the canoe before continuing the voyage. "They won't follow beyond this place!"

Lifting out the big stone, which had formed a counterpoise to his weight, he flung it on the beach.

"We will change places now, Adolay," he said, "you have guided our canoe when on the inland waters; it is now my turn to steer, for I understand the sea of ice. Get in, we will start."

When Magadar and his comrades arrived at the mouth of the Greygoose River and beheld the aspect of the sea, a cry of mingled surprise and disappointment escaped them, but when they had landed and discovered the canoe of the fugitives far away like a speck among the ice-floes, the cry was transmuted into a howl of rage.

"Quick! embark! Let us after them!" shouted Magadar.

"Death to them both!" yelled Alizay.

For a few minutes the Indians followed the lanes of open water, till their turnings began to appear somewhat complicated; then the warlike spirit became a little subdued. Presently one of the Indians discovered—or thought he discovered—that the lead of water was narrowing, and that the ice was closing in.

Promptly both canoes were put about, and the shore was regained with amazing speed.

After that the Dogribs paddled quietly up the Greygoose River, and meekly returned to their woodland home.

CHAPTER XI.

ENCAMPED ON THE ISLET.

It was with feelings of profound thankfulness and relief that Adolay landed on the first of the islets, and surveyed the chaotic though beautiful floes from which they had escaped.

And in truth Cheenbuk had required all his skill and experience more than once to avoid the dangers by which they had been beset, for, although the weather was perfectly calm and the ice nearly motionless, they had frequently to pass through channels so narrow that the slightest current might have caused a nip and obliged them to take hurried refuge on the floes, while, at other times, when compelled to pass rather close to the small bergs, lumps dropped into the water perilously near to them from the overhanging ice-cliffs.

"There has been some danger," remarked the girl, turning to her protector.

"All is well when it ends well," replied the Eskimo, nearly, but unconsciously, quoting Shakespeare. "But the danger was not very great, for

if the ice had closed in we could have jumped on it, and carried the canoe to the nearest open water."

"But what if a lump had dropped into the canoe and sunk it?" asked Adolay.

"We should have had to scramble on the floes and wait there till—till we died together."

He said this with some degree of solemnity, for it was an uncomfortable reflection.

"I would prefer—" she stopped suddenly, for in the haste of the moment she was going to have said—"that we should live together rather than die together"—but maiden modesty, not unfamiliar even among savages, restrained her, and Cheenbuk, who was not observant in the matter of imperfect speech, took no notice of the abrupt pause.

The evening was far advanced, for it had taken them the whole day to reach the islet, owing to the windings of the lanes of water and the frequency with which they had to turn back in consequence of having run into what may be termed blind alleys. It was resolved, therefore, that they should rest there for the night.

As there was no fear, by that time, of their being pursued by Indians, Cheenbuk resolved that they should have a good warm supper to recruit their somewhat exhausted energies. Of course Adolay was only too glad to fall in with this arrangement, and said that she would go along

the shore and collect small masses of drift-wood for the fire, while her companion lifted up the canoe and made the encampment.

"You will not find much drift-wood, I think," said Cheenbuk, as she was about to set off, "for the currents don't set upon this island much. The long point of the bigger island over there turns the currents off from this one, but perhaps you may find a little."

Adolay found this to be true, for she wandered several miles along shore—indeed, went nearly round the islet, which was a low rocky one, almost devoid of verdure—before she had collected a good bundle of dry sticks.

Meanwhile the Eskimo set to work with characteristic enthusiasm to arrange the camp. Choosing a spot where a low wall of rock sheltered him from the north, he laid a few stones in a heap to mark the place for the fire. Then he carried up the canoe, and laid it down bottom up, so as to face the fire. Underneath it he made a snug nest of twigs and leaves for Adolay to rest in. Then, on the opposite side of the fire, he made another lair—a sort of open-air nest—for himself, after which he collected a good many of the small dead twigs among the scrub, which he piled up in readiness around a large piece of drift timber he had the good fortune to discover not far from the spot where they landed.

This done, he stood back a few paces and admired his handiwork, his head on one side with quite the air of a connoisseur.

Presently he began to wish that Adolay would return, and then sat down to make fire by the slow and laborious Eskimo process of rubbing two pieces of stick rapidly together until the friction should ignite them. He was still absorbed in the work when the Indian girl returned with a bundle of wood which she threw down beside the rest.

"You have had better luck than I expected," said Cheenbuk. "See, I have made you a nest to sleep in," he added, pointing to the canoe.

"It is very nice," she observed, with an appreciative smile. "What are you doing?"

"Making fire," he answered, resuming his work and continuing it with such vigour that beads of perspiration stood on his brow.

Without speaking, the girl went to the canoe and opened a bundle wrapped in deerskin which formed part of its lading. She drew therefrom a firebag, richly ornamented with beads, such as Indian chiefs and braves are wont to carry under their belts. It contained the pipe, tinder-box, flint, steel, and tobacco which are usually supplied by the fur-traders to the Red men.

Cheenbuk was so interested in the proceedings of his companion that he ceased to carry on his

own work, thereby allowing the sticks to cool and losing his labour.

"You need not work so hard," said Adolay, taking a flint, steel, and piece of tinder from the bag and, beginning to strike a light, to the great interest of the Eskimo. "We manage to get fire differently and more easily."

In a few seconds a spark caught on the tinder, which began to smoke, and the girl, wrapping it in a bundle of dry grass, whirled it round at arm's-length until the draught caused it to burst into flame. Thrusting the burning mass into the heart of the twigs, which had been previously prepared, she glanced up at her protector with a look that said plainly, "Watch, now, the result."

But Cheenbuk required no encouragement to do so. He had been watching all the time with mouth, as well as eyes, wide open, and a loud "hoi! hoi! ho!" burst from him as the flame leaped up, suffusing the canoe and wall of rock and the near objects with a ruddy glow which paled everything else to a cold grey by contrast.

"I've seen that once before," exclaimed Cheenbuk with delight, taking up the firebag tenderly, "and have often wished that I had these things for making fire."

"Well, you may have them now. They belonged to my father. All our men carry bags with these things in them."

"And I've seen this too—once," continued the youth, smiling, as he pulled out a tobacco-pipe. Then he bent his head suddenly, put his nose to the bag, and made a face expressive of supreme disgust.

"Ho! and I've seen this too. I have tasted it, and after tasting it I was very miserable—so miserable that I hope never to be as miserable again!"

As he spoke he looked at Adolay with that extreme solemnity which was one of the characteristics of his face.

The girl returned the look, but did not smile. She did not speak, but waited for more.

"The man who showed me these things was a good man," continued Cheenbuk. "I do not know his name, but I liked him much. Yet I think he was not wise to fill his mouth with smoke and his inside with sickness."

"Was he sick?" asked Adolay.

"No—he was not, but—I was."

While he was speaking he drew a long piece of Canada twist tobacco out of the bag, and looked at it sagaciously for some time, nodding his head as if he knew all about it.

"Yes, that is the thing he put in the pipe, and, after making a small fire over it, drew the smoke into himself. At first I thought he would die or catch fire and burst—but he—he didn't, and he seemed to like it."

"All our men like it," said Adolay; "they

smoke every day—sometimes all day. And some of our women like it too."

"Do *you* like it?" asked the Eskimo, quickly.

"No, I don't like it."

"Good—that is well. Now, we will cook some of your dried meat for supper."

By that time the fire was blazing cheerily. As the shades of night deepened, the circle of light grew more and more ruddy until it seemed like a warm cosy chamber in the heart of a cold grey setting. A couple of small stakes were thrust into the ground in such a way that the two pieces of venison impaled on them were presented to the heart of the fire. Soon a frizzling sound was heard; then odours of a kind dear to the hearts of hungry souls—to say nothing of their noses—began to arise, and the couple thus curiously thrown together sat down side by side to enjoy themselves, and supply the somewhat clamorous demands of Nature.

They said little while feeding, but when the venison steaks had wellnigh disappeared, a word or two began to pass to and fro. At last Cheenbuk arose, and, taking a small cup of birch-bark, which, with a skin of water, formed part of the supplies provided by Adolay, he filled it to the brim, and the two concluded their supper with the cheering fluid.

"Ah!" sighed the girl, when she had disposed

of her share, "the white traders bring us a black stuff which we mix with water hot, and find it very good to drink."

"Yes? What is it?" asked Cheenbuk, applying his lips a second time with infinite zest to the water.

"I know not what it is. The white men call it tee," said Adolay, dwelling with affectionate emphasis on the *ee*'s.

"Ho! I should like to taste that teee," said the youth, with exaggerated emphasis on the *ee*'s. "Is it better than water?"

"I'm not sure of that," answered the girl, with a gaze of uncertainty at the fire, "but we like it better than water—the women do; the men are fonder of fire-water, when they can get it, but the white traders seldom give us any, and they never give us much. We women are very glad of that, for the fire-water makes our men mad and wish to fight. Teee, when we take too much of it—which we always do—only makes us sick."

"Strange," said Cheenbuk, with a look of profundity worthy of Solomon, "that your people should be so fond of smokes and drinks that make them sick and mad when they have so much of the sparkling water that makes *us* comfortable!"

Adolay made no reply to this, for her mind was not by nature philosophically disposed, though she was intelligent enough to admire the sagacity

of a remark that seemed to her fraught with illimitable significance.

"Have you any more strange things in your bundle?" asked the Eskimo, whose curiosity was awakened by what had already been extracted from it. "Have you some of the teee, or the fire-water, or any more of the thing that smokes—what you call it?"

"Tubuko—no, I have no more of that than you saw in the firebag. The white men sometimes call it bukey, and I have no fire-water or tee. Sometimes we put a nice sweet stuff into the tee which the white men call shoogir. The Indian girls are very fond of shoogir. They like it best without being mixed with water and tee. But we have that in our own land. We make it from the juice of a tree."

The interest with which Cheenbuk gazed into the girl's face while she spoke, was doubtless due very much to the prettiness thereof, but it is only just to add that the number and nature of the absolutely new subjects which were thus opened up to him had something to do with it. His imperfect knowledge of her language, however, had a bamboozling effect.

"Here is a thing which I think you will be glad to see," continued the girl, as she extracted a small hatchet from the bundle.

"Yes indeed; that is a *very* good thing," said

the youth, handling the implement with almost affectionate tenderness. "I had one once—and that, too, is a fine thing," he added, as she drew a scalping-knife from her bundle.

"You may have them both," she said; "I knew you would need them on the journey."

Cheenbuk was too much lost in admiration of the gifts—which to him were so splendid—that he failed to find words to express his gratitude, but, seizing a piece of firewood and resting it on another piece, he set to work with the hatchet, and sent the chips flying in all directions for some time, to the amusement and no small surprise of his companion. Then he laid down the axe, and, taking up the scalping-knife, began to whittle sticks with renewed energy. Suddenly he paused and looked at Adolay with ineffable delight.

"They are good?" she remarked with a cheerful nod.

"Good, good, very good! We have nothing nearly so good. All our things are made of bone or stone."

"Now," returned the girl, with a blink of her lustrous eyes, and a yawn of her pretty mouth, which Nature had not yet taught her to conceal with her little hand, "now, I am sleepy. I will lie down."

Cheenbuk replied with a smile, and pointed to the canoe with his nose.

Adolay took the hint, crept into the nest which the gallant youth had prepared for her, curled herself up like a hedgehog, and was sound asleep in five minutes.

The Eskimo, meanwhile, resumed his labours with the scalping-knife, and whittled on far into the night—whittled until he had reduced every stick within reach of his hand to a mass of shavings—a beaming childlike glow of satisfaction resting on his handsome face all the while, until the embers of the fire began to sink low, and only an occasional flicker of flame shot up to enlighten the increasing darkness. Then he laid the two implements down and covered them carefully with a piece of deerskin, while his countenance resumed its wonted gravity of expression.

Drawing up his knees until his chin rested on them, and clasping his hands round them, he sat for a long time brooding there and gazing into the dying embers of the fire; then he rose, stretched himself, and sauntered down to the shore.

The night, although dark for the Arctic regions at that time of the year, was not by any means obscure. On the contrary, it might have passed for a very fair moonlight night in more southern climes, and the flush of the coming day in the eastern sky was beginning to warm the tops of the higher among the ice-masses, thereby rendering the rest of the scene more coldly grey. The calm

which had favoured the escape of our fugitives still prevailed, and the open spaces had gradually widened until the floes had assumed the form of ghostly white islets floating in a blue-black sea, in which the fantastic cliffs, lumps, and pinnacles were sharply reflected as in a mirror.

There was a solemnity and profound quietude about the scene and the hour which harmonised well with the sedate spirit of the young Eskimo, as he stood there for a long time contemplating the wonders and the beauties of the world around and about him.

We know not what passes through the minds of untutored men in such circumstances, but who shall dare to say that the Spirit of their Creator may not be holding intercourse with them at such times?

Turning his back at length upon the sea, Cheenbuk returned to the camp, lay down on the couch which he had made for himself on the opposite side of the fire from the canoe, and, in a few moments more, was in the health- and strength-restoring regions of Oblivion.

CHAPTER XII.

HOME—SWEET HOME—AND SMOKE, ETC.

THE favouring calm continued until Cheenbuk with his companion arrived at Waruskeek.

It was about mid-day when their canoe turned round the headland and entered the inlet near the head of which lay the Eskimo village.

The boy Anteek happened to be standing on the shore at the time, beside the young girl Nootka. They were looking out to sea, and observed the canoe the moment it turned the point of rocks.

"Hoi—oi!" yelled Anteek with an emphasis that caused the inhabitants of the whole village to leap out of every hut with the celerity of squirrels, and rush to the shore. Here those who had first arrived were eagerly commenting on the approaching visitors.

"A kayak of the Fire-spouters!" cried Anteek, with a look of intense glee, for nothing was so dear to the soul of that volatile youth, as that which suggested danger, except, perhaps, that which involved fun.

"The kayak is indeed that of a Fire-spouter,' said old Mangivik, shaking his grey head, "but I don't think any Fire-spouter among them would be such a fool as to run his head into our very jaws."

"I'm not ready to agree with you, old man," began Gartok.

"No; you're never ready to agree with any one!" growled Mangivik parenthetically.

"For the Fire-spouters," continued Gartok, disregarding the growl, "are afraid of nothing. Why should they be when they can spout wounds and death so easily?"

Poor Gartok spoke feelingly, for his wounded leg had reduced his vigour considerably, and he was yet only able to limp about with the aid of a stick, while his lieutenant Ondikik was reduced to skin and bone by the injury to his back.

Suddenly Mangivik became rather excited.

"Woman," he said earnestly to his wife, who stood beside him, "do you see who steers the kayak? Look, your eyes are better than mine."

"No. I do not."

"Look again!" cried Anteek, pushing forward at that moment. "He is not a Fire-spouter. He is *one of us!* But the one in front is a Fire-spouter woman. Look at the man! Don't you know him?"

There was an intensity of suppressed fervour in the manner of the boy, and an unwonted glitter in

his eyes, which impressed every one who noticed him.

"Yes, he is one of us," said Mangivik, shading his eyes with one hand, "and he has stolen a Fire-spouting girl with her kayak!"

There was a look of pride in the face of the old man as he spoke, but it was as nothing to the shout of triumph—the shriek of ecstasy—that burst from Anteek as he uttered the word—

"Cheenbuk!"

Just then a strong clear voice came rolling over the water to the shore, and a roar of joy burst from the whole assemblage, for there was no mistaking the voice of their comrade and best hunter. The hearts of Nootka and her mother beat with no ordinary flutter as they heard the familiar shout, and as for Anteek, he went into a paroxysm of delight, which he sought to relieve by bounding and yelling till the canoe touched the shore. Then, by a powerful effort, he subdued himself, and turned his energies into a prolonged look of unutterable amazement at Adolay.

Of course the eyes of the entire population were turned in the same direction—for Eskimos do not count it rude to stare—so that the poor girl felt somewhat abashed, and shrank a little behind her stout protector.

Observing the action, Cheenbuk took hold of her arm gently and led her towards his mother.

"This is my mother, Adolay," he said; "she will take care of you."

"Your *wife*?" asked Mrs. Mangivik, with an anxious look.

"No, not my wife," replied the youth, with a laugh. "Take her to our hut, you and Nootka, while I go and speak with the men.—She saved my life, father," he added, turning to Mangivik, "be good to her."

On hearing this, Nootka and her mother took the girl affectionately by both hands and led her away.

Cheenbuk meanwhile went up to the big hut, just outside of which was held a meeting of nearly the whole population, to receive an account of his adventures from the man whom they had long ago given up as lost.

"My friends," he began, surveying the expectant assembly with a grave straightforward look, "when I went by myself to the Whale River, my intention was to hunt around and find out if there were many birds and beasts on lands near to it, and if many men lived or hunted there, for it came into my mind that this little island of Waruskeek is not the best place in the world to live in, for our tribe is continually increasing. I thought that if there were Fire-spouters there already, we must be content with the lands we have got, for it is not right to take what belongs to other men."

Cheenbuk paused here and looked round, because he knew that he was treading on somewhat new and delicate ground in thus asserting a principle of *right*; and he was not mistaken, for, while the most of his audience remained silent, several of them expressed dissent.

"Besides," he continued, "it is not wise to attack men with fire-spouters, which send into their enemies heavy little things like that which was lately picked out of Gartok's leg; the same as still seems to be sticking in Ondikik's back."

"Ho! ho!" exclaimed a number of the men, as if that truth commended itself to their understandings.

"Well, when I got to the river, I found plenty of white whales at the mouth of it, and great plenty of birds of all kinds, and of deer—a land good for man to dwell in, with many trees that would make sledge-runners, and much dead wood for our fires, and no one living there, nor signs of anybody. Then I thought to myself, Why should we live always among the floes and bergs? The few Fire-spouters whom we have seen and heard of have better food, better homes, better tools of every kind. Why should not we have the same?"

Here the wise Cheenbuk drew from the breast of his sealskin coat the axe and scalping-knife which Adolay had given him, and held them up.

This was a politic move, for it won over almost the entire audience to the young hunter's views, while looks of ardent admiration were bestowed on the coveted implements.

"When men find it not easy to get food," resumed Cheenbuk, in the tone and with the air of a man who has much to say and means to say it, "they change to some place where hunting is better. When fish become scarce, they do not remain still, but go to places where the fishing is better. They always seek for something that is better and better. Is this not true? Is this not wise?"

"Ho! ho!" exclaimed the assembly, assenting.

"Why, then, should not we go to a land where there is much that is far better than we find here, and live as the Fire-spouters live? Did the Great Maker of all things intend that we should remain content with these treeless islands among the ice, when there are lands not very far away where we may find much of all kinds of things that are far better? If it is wise to change our hunting and fishing grounds close at hand, surely it may be wise to change to those that are far away —especially when we know that they are better, and likely to make us more comfortable and happy."

This suggestion was such a tremendous innovation on ordinary Eskimo ideas, such a radical conception of change and upheaval of age-long

habits, that the assembly gazed in awe-struck and silent wonder at the bold young man, much as the members of Parliament of the last century might have gazed if any reckless M. P. had dared to propose universal suffrage or vote by ballot, or to suggest that measures should henceforth be framed in accordance with the Golden Rule.

"After I had travelled a short way inland," continued Cheenbuk, "I met a Fire-spouter. He was all alone. No one was with him. He pointed his spouter at me, and it clicked but would not spout—I don't know why. I threw my spear. It went straight—as you know it always does—but the man was quick; he put his head to one side and escaped. Again he pointed his spouter at me, but again it only clicked. Then I rushed upon him and caught hold of it before it could spout. We wrestled—but he was a very strong man, and I could not overcome him—and he could not overcome me. Our breath came short. The sweat poured down our faces and our eyes glared; but when we looked steadily into each other's eyes we saw that we were both men of peace. We let our bodies go soft, and dropped the spouter on the ground.

"'Why should we fight?' said he.

"'That was just in my thought,' said I.

"So we stood up, and he took hold of my hand in the way that the white traders do, and squeezed it.

I will show you how.—Give me your hand, Anteek —no, the other one."

The boy extended his hand, and Cheenbuk, grasping it, gave it a squeeze that caused the little fellow to yell and throw the assembly into convulsions of laughter, for Eskimos, unlike the sedate Indians, dearly love a practical joke.

From this point Cheenbuk related the rest of his interview with the Indian, and was particularly graphic in his description of the pipe, which he exhibited to them, though he refrained from any reference to its effect upon himself. Then he discoursed of his subsequent exploration of the mainland, and finally came to the point where he met and rescued Rinka.—"But tell me, before I speak more, is Rinka dead?"

"No, she is getting well."

"That is good," he continued, in a tone of satisfaction. "Old Uleeta, I doubt not, told you of the fight I had with the Fire-spouters?"

"She did," cried Anteek, with delight, "and how you gave them sore hearts!"

"H'm! they gave me a sore heart too; but I don't care now! And they would have roasted me alive, but one of their girls had pity on me, helped me to escape, and came away with me. Adolay is her name—the girl you saw to-day."

"Ho! ho! hoi—oi?" broke forth the chorus of satisfaction.

"Yes, but for her," continued Cheenbuk, "I should have been under the ground and my hair would have been fluttering on the dress of a Fire-spouter chief by this time. Now, I have promised this girl that I will get a large party of our young men to go back with her to Whale River and give her back to her father and mother."

At this there were strong murmurs of dissent, and a man whom we have not yet introduced to the reader lifted up his voice.

This man's name was Aglootook. He was the medicine-man of the tribe—a sort of magician; a sharp, clever, unscrupulous, presumptuous, and rather fine looking-fellow, who held the people in some degree of subjection through their superstitious fears, though there were some of the men among them who would not give in to his authority. As Eskimos have no regular chiefs, this man tried to occupy the position of one. He had just returned from a hunting expedition the day before, and was jealous of the interest aroused by Cheenbuk's arrival. Moreover, Cheenbuk was one of the few men of the tribe whom he disliked, and rather feared.

"What folly is this that I hear?" said Aglootook, as he frowned on the assembly. "Are we to get up a war-party and put ourselves to all this trouble for a woman—and a Fire-spouter woman!"

"It is not a war-party that I want," said

Cheenbuk quietly. "It is a peace-party, and such a strong one that there will be no fear of war. I will conduct it, and, as I know the way, will go by myself unarmed to the village of the men of the woods, tell them that I have brought back their girl, and that a large party of my people are waiting at the mouth of the river with plenty of skins and walrus teeth and other things to trade with them."

"But does any one think they will believe that?" said Aglootook with something of scorn in his looks and tone. "Will the Fire-spouters not accept the girl and roast Cheenbuk, and then meet us with their spouters and kill many of us, even though we should beat them at last?"

"It is my opinion there is something in that," remarked Mangivik.

"Besides," continued the magician, "what folly is it to talk of changing our customs, which have never been changed since the First Man created fish and animals! Are we not satisfied with whales and walruses, bears and seals, deer and birds? Is not our snow igloe as comfortable as the Fire-spouters' skin tent? What do we care for their ornaments or other things? What does Cheenbuk know about the Great Maker of all things? Has he seen him? Has he talked with him? If there is such a Maker, did he not place us here, and surround us with all the things that we need, and

intend us to remain here? Why should we go and look for better things? If he had thought that woods and lakes and rivers had been good for us, would he not have made these things here for us, so that we should have no need to go far away to seek for them—"

"Ay, and if Aglootook is right," interrupted Cheenbuk in a calm but firm voice, "why should we go far away to seek the bear, the walrus, and the seal? Why does Aglootook go hunting at all? If the Great Maker thought these things good for us, would he not have made them to walk up to our igloes and ask to be killed and eaten? Why should they even do that? why not walk straight down our throats and save all trouble? Is it not rather quite plain that man was made with wants and wishes and the power to satisfy them, and so advance from good to better? Does not Aglootook prove by his own conduct that he thinks so? He might make life easy by sitting near his hut and killing for food the little birds that come about our dwellings, but he goes on long hard journeys, and takes much trouble, for he knows that slices of fat seal and walrus-ribs are better than little birds!"

There was a general laugh at the expense of the magician, for his mental powers were inferior to those of Cheenbuk, and he felt himself unable to see through the entanglement of his logic.

"Boh!" he ejaculated, with a sweep of his long arm, as if to clear away such ridiculous arguments. "What stuff is this that I hear? Surely Cheenbuk has been smitten with the folly of the Fire-spouters. His words are like a lamp with a very bad wick: it makes too much smoke, and confuses everything near it."

"Aglootook is right," said Cheenbuk, who resolved to end the dispute at this point, "many words are like the smoke of a bad lamp: they confuse, especially when they are not well understood, but the Fire-spouters confuse themselves with real smoke as well as with words. See, here is one of their things; the white traders call it a paip, or piep."

As he spoke he opened the firebag which Adolay had given him and took out of it the clay pipe, tobacco, and materials for producing fire. The medicine-man was instantly forgotten, and the mouths as well as the eyes of the whole assembly opened in unspeakable wonder as Cheenbuk went through the complex processes of filling and lighting the pipe. First he cut up some of the Canada twist, which, he explained, was the tubuk of the white men. Then having filled the pipe, he proceeded to strike a light with flint and steel. In this he was not very successful at first, not yet having had much practice. He chipped his knuckles a good deal, and more than once knocked

the flint and tinder out of his fingers. But his audience was not critical. They regarded this as part of the performance. When, however, he at last struck a succession of sparks, he also struck an equal number of short, sharp expressions of astonishment out of his friends, and when the tinder caught there was a suppressed grunt of surprise and pleasure; but when he put the fire into the pipe and began to smoke, there burst forth a prolonged shout of laughter. To see a man smoking like a bad lamp was a joke that seemed to tickle those unsophisticated children of the ice immensely.

"Is it good?" asked one. "Do you like it?" cried another. "Let me try it!" begged a third.

Mindful of past experiences, Cheenbuk did not indulge in many whiffs.

"No, no," he said, taking the pipe from his lips with solemn gravity. "Not every one who wishes it shall have a taste of this to-day. Only a great man of our tribe shall try it. Some one who has done great things above his fellows."

He looked pointedly at Aglootook as he spoke, with solemnity on his face but mischief in his heart.

Oolalik, however, with the reverse of mischief in his heart, interfered unwittingly with his designs. He seized hold of Anteek, who chanced to be near him, and thrust him forward.

"Here," said he, "is one of the great ones of our tribe, at least he will be one if he lives long, for he has killed a walrus all by himself—on land too!"

The boy, although pretty full of what is known among the civilised as "cheek," was almost overwhelmed by this public recognition of his prowess, and was about to retire with a half-shy expression, when the audience received the proposal with a burst of applause.

"Yes, yes," they cried; "he is a brave boy: let him try it."

Seeing that they were set upon it, Cheenbuk handed the pipe to the boy, and bade him draw the smoke in and puff it out, taking care not to swallow it.

But Anteek did swallow some at first and choked a little, to the great amusement of the assembly. His pride carried him through, however; he tried again, and was successful. Then his "cheek" came back and he went on, puffing out far larger volumes than his instructor had done.

"You had better stop," said Cheenbuk, reaching out his hand to take the pipe; but the boy dodged him with a laugh and went on worse than ever. Seeing this, Cheenbuk smiled significantly and waited. He had not to wait long. Suddenly the face of Anteek became unusually

pale. Placing the pipe hurriedly in the hands of a man near him, he bolted out of the hut and disappeared.

He was not seen again during the remainder of that conference!

CHAPTER XIII.

DOINGS IN WARUSKEEK.

WHILE Cheenbuk was thus entrancing the souls of his friends near the big hut, his mother and sister were exercising hospitality to the Indian girl in their private residence. It was rather a dark and smoky residence, with only one hole in the roof, about eight inches square, to let in light. If truth must be told, it was also somewhat dirty, for, besides having only one large room in which living, cooking, receiving company, and sleeping were carried on, the dogs of the family were permitted to repose there—when they were good! Anything approaching to badness ensured their summary and violent ejection.

Branching from this family room was a little recess, screened off by skin curtains, which formed Nootka's private apartment or boudoir. It was singularly unlike the boudoirs of other lands! Black smoke, instead of whitewash, coloured the walls and ceiling. No glass hung on the wall



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to reflect the visage of the Arctic beauty, but there were several pegs, from one of which hung Nootka's sealskin bad-weather jacket, the tadpole-tail of which reached to the ground, while from another depended a pair of her long waterproof boots. One half of the floor being raised about eight inches, constituted the Eskimo maiden's couch—also her chair and sofa. There was no table, but the skull of a walrus did service as a stool.

To this apartment Nootka introduced her young Indian friend, leaving her mother in the outer hall, and the two maidens at once began, as might have been expected, an earnest and confidential conversation. In their eagerness they had not reflected that each knew not one word of the other's language, but of course the first sentences opened their eyes to the melancholy fact.

They had, indeed, been opened already to some extent, but not so impressively as now when they longed for a good talk.

"Come here," said Nootka—of course in Eskimo—as she dragged rather than led her new friend into the boudoir; "I want you to tell me all about your saving my brother's life."

"I don't understand a word you say," replied Adolay—of course in Dogrib-Indian—with a look of great perplexity in her wide-open eyes.

"Oh! I'm stupid and sorry. I forgot. You don't speak our language."

"What funny sounds! It seems like nonsense," remarked Adolay—more to herself than to her friend.

"So curious!" soliloquised Nootka; "what one might expect from a seal if it tried to speak. Say that over again. I like to hear it."

The perplexity on the face of the Indian maid deepened, and she shook her head, while the look of fun in that of the Eskimo maiden increased, and she smiled knowingly.

Here at last they had hit on common ground —tapped a universal spring of human communication. Adolay at once beamed an answering smile, and displayed all her brilliant teeth in doing so. This drew a soft laugh of pleasure from Nootka and an intelligent nod.

Nods and smiles, however, pleasant in their way though they be, form a very imperfect means of intercourse between souls which wish to unite, and the perplexed expression was beginning again to steal over both their youthful countenances, when something in the nature of a happy thought seemed to strike the Indian girl, for a gleam as of sunlight flashed from her eyes and teeth, as she suddenly beat with her little fist three times on her own bosom, exclaiming, "Adolay! Adolay! Adolay!" with much

emphasis. Then, poking her finger against her friend's breast, she added—"You? you?"

Here again was "a touch of nature" which made these two damsels "kin." Although the "You? you?" was not intelligible to the Eskimo, the gaze of inquiry was a familiar tongue. With a smile of delight she nodded, struck her own bosom with her fist, and said "Nootka! Nootka!" Then, tapping her friend, she said—"Addi-lay?" The Indian, nodding assent, tapped her in return and exclaimed "Nooot-ko?"

After this little sparring match they both burst into a fit of hearty laughter, which roused the curiosity of Mrs. Mangivik in the outer hall.

"What is the joke?" shouted the old lady, who was hospitably preparing a feast of steaks and ribs for her guest.

"Oh, mother, she *is* so funny!—Come, Addi-lay, let her hear your fun," said the girl, taking her guest's hand and leading her back to the hall. "Her name is Addi-lay. I know, for she told me herself. We quite understand each other already. —Speak to mother, Addi-lay. Tell her something."

"I don't know what you want me to do, Nooot-ko," returned the Indian girl, with a bright look, "but I know that whatever you are saying must be kind, for you 've got such a nice face."

By way of emphasising her opinion she took

the face between her hands and laid her own against it.

We have never been quite sure as to what Adolay did on this occasion—whether she rubbed noses or chins or touched lips. All that we are sure of is that the operation was equivalent to a kiss, and that it was reciprocated heartily.

"Didn't I tell you, mother, that she was funny? I'll explain to you what she said when we are alone; but Addi-lay is hungry now, and so am I. Let us feed, mother."

Without more ado the trio sat down beside the cooking lamp and began to do justice to the savoury viands, the odour of which was so enticing that it was too much for the dogs of the family. These had to be expelled by means of old bones. Mrs. Mangivik being an expert shot with such artillery, the hall was soon cleared.

After the meal, conversation was resumed, and conducted with considerably greater ease, owing to the chief subject of it being the Indian girl's costume, which was somewhat elaborate, for, being a chief's daughter, her dress was in many respects beautiful—especially those portions of it, such as the leggings and the head-dress, which were profusely ornamented with coloured beads and porcupine-quill work. The examination of the various parts occupied a considerable time. The mode of ascertaining names had been already discovered,

and looks of admiration require no translation, so that the three women were deeply engaged in a most interesting talk when Cheenbuk and his father entered the hut after the conference.

"Ribs, ribs and slices! Quick, woman," cried Mangivik cheerily as he sat down. "Cheenbuk has been talking and I have been listening till we are both quite hungry.—That is a pretty girl you have brought home with you, my son," said the old man, with a stare of approval. "Almost as pretty as some of our own girls."

"Much prettier, I think," returned the youth, as he quietly selected a rib of walrus that seemed suitable to his capacity.

"Tell your mother how you got hold of her," said Mangivik, whose teeth were next moment fastened in a steak.

Cheenbuk made no reply. Eskimo manners did not require an answer in the circumstances. But when he had taken the edge off his appetite—and it took a good deal of dental grinding to do that—he looked across at Adolay with a genial expression and began to give his mother and sister a second, and much more graphic, edition of the speech which he had just delivered to the men.

Of course the narration served to strengthen the bonds of friendship which had already been formed between the Mangivik family and the Indian girl,

who had been thus unexpectedly added to their circle.

That evening Nootka begged her brother to give her a lesson in the Dogrib language. On the same evening, during a moonlight ramble, Adolay asked him to give her a little instruction in the Eskimo tongue, and, just before he retired for the night, his mother asked him if he intended to take the Indian girl as one of his wives.

"You know, mother," was Cheenbuk's reply, "I have always differed from my friends about wives. I think that one wife is enough for one man; sometimes too much for him! I also think that if it is fair for a man to choose a woman, it is also fair for the woman to choose the man. I would gladly take Adolay for a wife, for she is good as well as pretty, but I do not know that she would take me for a husband."

"Have you not asked her, then?" persisted Mrs. Mangivik.

"No. I have been till now her protector. I can wait. If she wants to return to her people I have promised to take her to them."

"But surely my son is not bound to keep a promise given to one of our fire-spouting enemies?"

"That may seem right to you, mother, but it seems wrong to me. I do not understand why I disagree with you, and with most of my people, but there is something inside of me which, I think,

is *not* me. It tells me not to do many things that I want to do, and sometimes bids me go forward when I wish to draw back. What it is I cannot tell, but I must not disobey it, I *will not* disobey it."

With this answer the old lady had to be content, for she could extract nothing more from her son after that but a smile.

As for old Mangivik, he asked and said nothing, but he thought much.

A few days after Cheenbuk's arrival, it was arranged by the heads of the village that there should be a general scattering of the tribe for a great hunt after seals and wild-fowl, as provisions were not so plentiful as might have been desired. An expedition of this kind was always hailed with great glee by Anteek, whose youth and very excitable disposition were not easily satisfied with the prosaic details of village life.

Previous to setting out, however, an event occurred which was wellnigh attended with disastrous consequences.

It had been arranged that Cheenbuk and his friends Oolalik and Anteek should keep together in their kayaks, accompanied by an oomiak to carry the game. This woman's boat was to be manned, so to speak, by young Uleeta, Cowlik, and two other girls. Adolay had been offered a place in it, but she preferred going in her own

bark canoe, with the management of which she was familiar. Perhaps a touch of national pride had something to do with this preference of the Indian craft. Nootka, who had made several trials of the canoe, was judged sufficiently expert to wield the bow paddle.

While preparations were being made, Adolay and Nootka went to the bay where the canoe was lying—a short distance from the village, on the other side of a high cliff that sheltered the bay from any breeze that might blow in from the sea. The light craft was turned bottom up on the beach, and the two girls carried it down to the water's edge. Launching it, Nootka got in first, and Adolay was preparing to follow when a boyish shout arrested her, and she saw Anteek come skimming round the point in his kayak, wielding his double-bladed paddle with great dexterity and power. In a few seconds the kayak was alongside the canoe and the boy stepped out upon the shore.

"Let me try to steer your canoe," he said, pointing eagerly to the place where the Indian girl was about to seat herself.

Although Adolay did not understand the words, she had no difficulty with the boy's expressive pantomime. She nodded assent cheerfully. Anteek took the paddle, stepped into her place, and the girl pushed them off into deep water.

Delighted with the novelty of their position the

two paddled away with great vigour, and were soon a considerable distance from the shore. Then it occurred to Adolay that she would have some fun on her own account, and perhaps give her new friends a surprise. With this intent she floated the kayak and pushed it alongside of a flat stone in the water from which she could step into it. But she found that stepping into a small round hole in the centre of a covered craft was not the same as stepping into her own canoe, and even when, with great care, she succeeded, she found that her garments rendered the process of sitting down rather difficult—not a matter of wonder when we consider that the kayak is meant only for men.

However, she succeeded at last, and grasping the paddle pushed off to sea. But the long paddle with its blade at each end perplexed her greatly, and she had not quite overcome the awkwardness and begun to feel somewhat at ease when she chanced to touch on a ledge of rock that cropped up at that place near to the surface. Fortunately the rock was quite smooth, else it would have ripped up the skin with which the vessel was covered, but the shock and the paddle together were too much for the inexperienced girl. She lost her balance, and next moment was in the water with the canoe bottom up, and she incapable of extricating herself from the hole into which she had squeezed.

It happened that Anteek and Nootka had observed what Adolay was about, and were watching her with interest, so that before the kayak had turned fairly over their paddles dipped with a flash in the water and they rushed to the rescue. And not a moment too soon, for the poor girl's power of endurance was almost exhausted when her friends turned the kayak violently up. This was well, and Adolay drew a long gasping breath; but now the inexperience of the rescuers came into play, for, being ignorant of the cranky nature of a birch-bark canoe, they acted without the necessary caution, the canoe overturned and they all found themselves in the water. This time Adolay managed to wriggle out of her position, but being unable to swim she could only cling helplessly to the kayak. Nootka, equally helpless, clung to the canoe. Fortunately Anteek could swim like a fish, and bravely set to work to push both crafts towards the shore. But they were a long way out; the weight of the two girls made them difficult to push, and, being separate, they had a tendency to diverge in different directions.

After a few vigorous efforts, the boy, perceiving the difficulty and the extreme danger of their position, at once set up a series of yells that awoke sympathetic echoes in the neighbourhood; but he did not for a moment relax his efforts to push his charge towards the shore.

Startled by the sudden outburst of alarming cries, several men ran along shore in the direction whence they came. Foremost among these was the powerful and active Oolalik. On turning the point and seeing what had occurred he plunged into the sea and swam like a dolphin to the rescue. Great was the size of his eyes, and intense the swelling of his heart, when he saw that Nootka was one of the swimmers.

"Take care of Addi-lay and the kayak," he remarked to Anteek as he drew near, "I will look after Nootka and the canoe."

What Nootka felt on hearing these words we cannot tell, but any one might have seen that, despite her unpleasant position, there was a pleased expression on her wet face.

A very few minutes more sufficed to bring them all safe to land, and no one was a whit the worse, but as the girls required a complete change of garments, it was finally decided that the hunting expedition should be postponed until the following day.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN THE WILD-WOODS AGAIN.

WHILE these events were taking place among the islands of the Arctic sea, the Indian chief Nazinred was slowly pushing his canoe southward in the direction of Great Bear Lake. He was accompanied, as we have said, by three like-minded comrades, one of whom was named Mozwa — or Moose-deer — from some fancied resemblance in him to that uncouth animal.

But Mozwa, although uncouth, was by no means ungenial. On the contrary, he was a hearty good-natured fellow, who always tried to make the best of things, and never gave way to despondency, however gloomy or desperate might be the nature of his circumstances. Moreover, he was a big strong man, full of courage, in the prime of life, and modest withal, so that he was usually rather inclined to take than to give advice—to be led, rather than to lead.

For hours together these men dipped their paddles over the side in concert, without uttering a single word, or giving more than a slight ex-

clamation when anything worthy of notice attracted their attention. The interchange of thought during the labours of the day did not seem to strike them as necessary. The mere being in company of each other was a sufficient bond of sympathy, until an encampment was reached each evening, supper disposed of, and the tobacco-pipes in full blast. Then, at last, their native reserve gave way, and they ventured to indulge a little—sometimes a good deal—in the feast of reason and the flow of soul.

Yet the nature of their voyage was such that white men might have deemed verbal intercourse an occasional necessity, as their route lay through much rugged and wild scenery, where the streams up which they had to force their way were in some places obstructed by rapids and shallows, and a mistake on their part might have brought sudden disaster and ruin. For their canoe was deeply laden with the furs which they had secured during the labours of the past winter, and on the sale of which to the fur-traders depended much of their and their families' felicity or misery during the winter which was to come. But the steersman and bow-man understood their work so well, and were so absolutely in accord, that the slightest action with the paddle on the part of either was understood and sympathetically met by the other.

This unity of action is much more important than the navigators of lakes and oceans may suppose. In those almost currentless waters a steersman in any craft is usually self-sufficient, but among turbulent rapids, where rocks and shoals lie in all directions, and the deep-water track is tortuous, with, it may be, abrupt turnings here and there, a bow-man is absolutely essential, and sometimes, indeed, may become the more important steersman of the two.

One evening, long after the period when they left their native encampment, the friends paddled their little vessel into the backwater at the foot of a long rapid which roared in foaming white billows right ahead of them, offering what seemed an effectual barrier to their further progress—at least by water—and as the sides of the gorge through which the river rushed were almost perpendicular, without margin and with impenetrable bush everywhere, advance by land seemed equally blocked.

Looking backward, Mozwa gave his friend an interrogative glance. Nazinred replied with an affirmative nod, and, all four dipping their paddles vigorously at the same moment, they shot out into the stream. Almost before the canoe was caught by the current it swung quickly into another eddy, which carried it up a few yards close under the frowning cliffs. Here again the Indians paused,

and gazed earnestly at the foaming torrent ahead, which, to an unpractised eye, might have seemed a raging flood, to enter which would ensure destruction.

And indeed the two guides seemed to entertain some such thoughts, for they continued to gaze for a considerable time in silent inaction. Then the bow-man threw back another glance; the steersman replied with another nod, and again the canoe shot out into the stream.

This time the struggle was more severe. A short distance above the point where they entered it, a large rock reared its black head in mid-stream. Below it there was the usual long stretch of back-water. To reach the tail of this stretch was the object of the men, but the intervening rush was so powerful that it swept them down like a cork, so that they almost missed it despite their utmost efforts.

"Almost," however, is a hopeful phrase. They were not quite beyond the influence of the eddy when they reached the end of the tail. A super-human effort might yet save them from being swept back to the point far below that from which they had started. Mozwa was just the man to make such an effort. Nazinred and the others were pre-eminently the men to back him up.

"Ho!" cried Mozwa.

"Hoi!" shouted Nazinred, as they bent their

backs and cracked their sinews, and made the big veins stand up on their necks and foreheads.

A few seconds more and the canoe was floating under the shelter of the black-headed rock, and the Indians rested while they surveyed the battle-ground yet before them.

The next reach carried them right across the river to a place where a long bend produced a considerable sweep of eddying water, up which they paddled easily. Above this, one or two short bursts into the tails caused by nearly sunken rocks brought them to a point full half-way up the rapid. But now greater caution was needed, because anything like a miss would send them downward, and might hurl them with destructive force against the rocks and ledges which they had already passed. A birch-bark canoe is an exceedingly tender craft, which is not only certain of destruction if it strikes a rock, but is pretty sure of being swamped if it even grazes one.

With the utmost care, therefore, and consummate skill, they succeeded in pushing up the rapid, inch by inch, without mishap, until they reached the last shoot, when their skill or good fortune, or whatever it was, failed them, for they missed the last eddy, were swept downwards a few yards, and just touched a rock. It was a very slight touch. A boatman would have smiled at it; nevertheless it drew from the Indians

"ho's!" and "hoi's!" such as they had not given vent to since the voyage began. At the same time they rushed the canoe, with all their strength, for the nearest point of land.

They were scarcely a minute in reaching it, yet in that brief space of time their craft had almost sunk, a large piece of the bark having been torn from its side.

The instant they touched land the two leaders stepped quickly out, and, while they held the craft close to the bank, their comrades threw out the bundles of fur as fast as possible. Then the canoe was turned over to empty it, and carried up the bank.

"That is good luck," said Mozwa quietly, as they stood looking at the large hole in the canoe.

"I have seen better luck," remarked Nazinred, with something that might almost have been mistaken for a smile on his grave countenance.

Mozwa did not explain. Nazinred knew that the luck referred to was the fact that before the accident occurred they had surmounted all the difficulties of the rapid, and that the place on which they stood was convenient for camping on, as well as for opening out and drying the furs on the following day. And Mozwa knew that Nazinred knew all that.

While the latter kindled a fire, arranged the camp, and prepared supper under a spreading tree,

the former mended the canoe. The process was simple, and soon completed. From a roll of birch bark, always carried in canoes for such emergencies, Mozwa cut off a piece a little larger than the hole it was designed to patch. With this he covered the injured place, and sewed it to the canoe, using an awl as a needle and the split roots of a tree as thread. Thereafter he plastered the seams over with gum to make them water-tight, and the whole job was finished by the time the other men had got supper ready.

Indians are in the habit of eating supper in what may be styled a business-like manner—they "mean business," to use a familiar phrase, when they sit down to that meal. Indeed, most savages do; it is only civilised dyspeptics who don't. When the seriousness of the business began to wear off, the idea of mental effort and lingual communication occurred to the friends. Hitherto their eyes alone had spoken, and these expressive orbs had testified, as plainly as could the tongue, to the intense gratification they derived from the possession of good appetites and plenty of food.

"I think," said Mozwa, wiping his mouth with that familiar handkerchief—the back of his hand—"that there will be trouble in the camp before long, for when you are away that beast Magadar has too much power. He will try

to make our young men go with him to fight the Eskimos!"

It must not be supposed that the Indian applied the word "beast" to Magadar in that objectionable and slangy way in which it is used among ourselves. Indians happily have no slang. They are not civilised enough for that. Mozwa merely meant to express his opinion that Magadar's nature was more allied to that of the lower than of the higher animals.

"Yes, and Alizay will encourage him," returned Nazinred, with a frown. "The man is well named."

This remark about the name had reference to the word Alizay, which means gunpowder, and which had been given to the Indian in his boyhood because of his fiery and quarrelsome disposition.

"The geese and the ducks are in plenty just now," continued Nazinred; "I hope that he and Magadar will be more taken up with filling their mouths than fighting till I return—and then I can hinder them."

"H'm!" responded Mozwa. He might have said more, but was busy lighting his pipe at the moment. Nazinred made no further remark at the time, for he was in the full enjoyment of the first voluminous exhalation of the weed.

After a few minutes the chief resumed—

"Our old chief is full of the right spirit. He is

losing power with the young men, but I think he can still guide them. I will hope so, and we will return as soon as we can."

Poor Nazinred! If he had known that his only and beloved daughter, even while he spoke, was on her way to the mysterious icy sea in company with one of the despised Eskimos—driven away by the violence of the fire-eaters of the camp—he would not have smoked or spoken so calmly. But, fortunately for his own peace of mind, he did not know—he did not dream of the possibility of such a catastrophe; and even if he had known and returned home at full speed, he would have been too late to prevent the evil.

For a long time these Indians lay side by side on their outspread blankets, with their feet to the fire, gazing through the branches at the stars, and puffing away in profound silence, but probably deep thought. At least a sudden exclamation by Mozwa warrants that conclusion.

"You think," he said, "that our old chief has the right spirit. How do you know what is the right spirit? Alizay and Magadar, and many of our braves—especially the young ones—think that a fiery spirit, that flares up like powder, and is always ready to fight, is the right one. You and our old chief think that gentleness and forbearance and unwillingness to fight till you cannot help it is the right spirit. How do you know

which is right? You and the war-lovers cannot both be right!"

There was an expression of great perplexity on the Indian's face as he uttered the last sentence.

"My son," replied Nazinred, who, although not much older than his companion, assumed the parental *rôle* in virtue of his chieftainship, "how do you know that you are alive?"

This was such an unexpected answer that Mozwa gazed fixedly upwards for a few minutes without making any reply.

"I know it," he said at length, "because I—I—know it. I—I *feel* it."

"How do you know," continued the chief, with perplexing pertinacity, "that the sun is not the moon?"

Again Mozwa became astronomically meditative.

"Because I see it and feel it," he replied. "The sun is brighter and warmer. It cheers me more than the moon, and gives me more light, and warms me. It warms the bushes and flowers too, and makes them grow, and it draws the beasts out of their holes. Even a rabbit knows the difference between the sun and the moon."

"My son," returned Nazinred, "I have not lived very long yet, but I have lived long enough to see, and feel, and know that the kind spirit is the right spirit, because it warms the heart, and opens the eyes, and gives light, and it is the only spirit

that can make friends of foes. Is it not better to live at peace and in goodwill with all men than to live as enemies?"

"Ho!" responded Mozwa, by way of assent.

"Then the peaceful spirit is the right one," rejoined the chief, with a long-drawn sigh that indicated a tendency to close the discussion.

As Mozwa felt himself to be in a somewhat confused mental condition, he echoed the sigh, laid down his pipe, drew his blanket round him, and, without the formality of "Good-night," resigned himself to repose.

Nazinred, after taking a look at the weather, pondering, perchance, on the probabilities of the morrow, and throwing a fresh log on the fire, also wrapped his blanket round him and lost himself in slumber.

CHAPTER XV.

WILD DOINGS OF THE FUR-TRADERS AND RED MEN.

In course of time, after many a hard struggle with rushing rapids and not a few narrow escapes from dangerous rocks, the Indian voyagers swept out at last upon the broad bosom of Great Bear Lake.

This mighty inland sea of fresh water—about two hundred miles in diameter, and big enough to engulf the greater part of Scotland—was, at the time we write of, and still is, far beyond the outmost verge of civilisation, in the remotest solitudes of the Great Lone Land.

Here the fur-traders had established a small trading post close to the shores of the lake. It was in charge of a Scotchman—we had almost said of course; for it would seem as if these hardy dwellers in the north of our island have a special gift for penetrating into and inhabiting the wildest and most unlikely parts of the world. His name was MacSweenie, and he had a few Orkneymen and half-castes to keep him company while vegetating there.

It was a sort of event, a mild excitement, a pink-if not a red-letter day, when our Indians arrived at that lonely outpost, and MacSweenie, who was in the prime of life and the depths of *ennui*, gave the strangers a hearty and warm reception.

Nazinred had been there before, and was able somewhat to subdue his feelings of admiration and not-quite-exhausted surprise at all the wonderful things he saw; but to the others it was comparatively new, and Mozwa had never been at a trading-post in his life. Being a sympathetic man, he found it difficult to retain at all times that solemnity of manner and look which he knew was expected of him. The chief, who was also sympathetic, experienced deep pleasure in watching his companion's face, and observing the efforts he made to appear indifferent, knowing, as he did, from former experience, that he must in reality be full of surprise and curiosity.

And, truly, in the store of the fur-traders there was a display of wealth which, to unaccustomed Indian eyes, must have seemed almost fabulous. For were there not in this enchanted castle bales of bright blue cloth, and bright scarlet cloth, and various other kinds of cloth sufficient to clothe the entire Dogrib nation? Were there not guns enough—cheap flint-lock, blue-barrelled ones—to make all the Eskimos in the polar regions look blue with envy, if not with fear? Were there not

bright beads and brass rings, and other baubles, and coloured silk thread, enough to make the hearts of all the Dogrib squaws to dance with joy? Were there not axes, and tomahawks, and scalping-knives enough to make the fingers of the braves to itch for war? Were there not hooks and lines enough to capture all the fish in Great Bear Lake, and "nests" of copper kettles enough to boil them all at one tremendous culinary operation? And was there not gunpowder enough to blow the fort and all its contents into unrecognisable atoms?

Yes, there was enough in that store fully to account for the look of awe-stricken wonder which overspread the visage of Mozwa, and for the restrained tendency to laughter which taxed the solemn Nazinred considerably.

"You are fery welcome," said MacSweenie, as he ushered the chief and Mozwa into the store the day after their arrival. "We hev not seen one o' your people for many a day; an' it's thinking I wass that you would be forgettin' us altogether. Tell them that, Tonal'."

Tonal' (or Donald) Mowat was MacSweenie's interpreter and factotum. He was a man of middle age and middle height, but by no means middle capacity. Having left his native home in Orkney while yet a youth, he had spent the greater part of his life in the "Nor'-West," and had proved himself to be one of those quick learners and

generally handy fellows, who, because of their aptitude to pick up many trades, are too commonly supposed to be masters of none. Mowat, besides being a first-rate blacksmith, had picked up the Indian language, after a fashion, from the Crees, and French of a kind from the Canadian half-castes, and even a smattering of Gaelic from the few Scotch Highlanders in the service. He could use the axe as well as forge it, and, in short, could turn his hand to almost anything. Among other things, he could play splendidly on the violin—an instrument which he styled a fiddle, and which MacSweenie called a "fuddle." His *répertoire* was neither extensive nor select. If you had asked for something of Beethoven or Mozart he would have opened his eyes, perhaps also his mouth. But at a strathspey or the Reel o' Tulloch he was almost equal to Neil Gow himself—so admirable were his tune and time. In a lonesome land, where amusements are few and the nights long, the power to "fuddle" counts for much.

Besides being MacSweenie's interpreter, Donald was also his storekeeper.

"Give them both a quid, Tonal', to begin with," said MacSweenie. "It iss always politic to keep Indians in good humour."

Donald cut off two long pieces of Canada twist and handed it to them. He cut them from a roll, which was large enough, in the estimation of

Mozwa, to last a reasonable smoker to the crack of doom. They received the gift with an expression of approval. It would have been beneath their dignity to have allowed elation or gratitude to appear in their manner.

"Solemn humbugs!" thought the trader,—"ye know that you're as pleased as Punch," but he was careful to conceal his thoughts. "Now, then, let us hev a look at the furs."

It took the trader and his assistant some time to examine the furs and put a price on them. The Indians had no resource but to accept their dictum on the point, for there were no rival markets there. Moreover, the value being fixed according to a regular and well-understood tariff, and the trader being the servant of a Company with a fixed salary, there was no temptation to unfair action on his part. When the valuation was completed a number of goose-quills were handed to the Indians—each quill representing a sum of about two shillings—whereby each man had a fair notion of the extent of his fortune.

"What iss it you will be wanting now?" said the trader, addressing himself to Nazinred with the air of a man whose powers of production are illimitable.

But the chief did not reply for some time. It was not every day that he went shopping, and he was not to be hurried. His own personal wants

had to be considered with relation to the pile of quill-wealth at his elbow, and, what was of far greater importance and difficulty to a kind man, the wants of his squaw and Adolay had also to be thought of. Mozwa, having left a squaw, two little daughters, and a very small son, had still greater difficulties to contend with. But they both faced them like men.

"Pasgisségan," said both men, at length, simultaneously.

"I thought so," observed the trader, with a smile, as he selected two trade-guns—the fire-spouters of the Eskimo—and handed them across the counter.

The Indians received the weapons with almost tender care; examined them carefully; took long and steady aim at the windows several times; snapped the flints to make sure that the steels were good, and, generally, inspected every detail connected with them. Being satisfied, they rested them against the wall, the trader withdrew the price of the guns from the two little piles, threw the quills into an empty box under the counter, and looked—if he did not say, "What next?"

Powder, shot, and ball came next, and then the means of hunting and self-defence having been secured, beads and scarlet cloth for the women claimed their attention. It was an interesting sight to see these tall, dark-skinned sons of the forest handling the cloth and fingering

the various articles with all the gravity and deliberation of experts, with now and then a low-toned comment, or a quiet question as to the price.

"You 'll want that," suggested Mowat, as he threw a small thick blanket—quite a miniature blanket—towards Mozwa, "your small boy will want it."

"Ho!" exclaimed the Indian, with a look of surprise in spite of himself, "how do you know?"

"I didn't know. I only guessed; but your question shows me I 'm right. Any more?"

"Yes, two more, but bigger."

"Of course bigger, for it 's not likely they were all born at the same time," returned Mowat, with a grin.

"What iss this man wantin', Tonal'? I can't make him out at all," asked MacSweenie.

It was found that Nazinred had been pointing with eager pertinacity at something lying on one of the shelves which had caught his eye, but the name of which he did not know.

"Oh! I see," added the trader, "it iss a cocktail feather you want."

"Yes, for my daughter," exclaimed the Indian as he received the feather and regarded it with some uncertainty—as well he might, for the feather in question was a thing of brilliant scarlet made up of many feathers,—rigid and over a foot in height.

"It 's not a good plaything for a child," remarked Mowat.

"My daughter is not a child—she is a woman."

"Wow, man," said MacSweenie, "tell him that feather is not for a woman. It iss for a man."

The Indian, however, needed no explanation. That which had captivated him at a distance lost its attraction on closer examination. He rejected it with quiet indifference, and turned his eyes to something not less attractive, but more useful—a a web of brilliant light-blue cloth. He was very fond of Adolay, and had made up his mind to take back to her a gift which she would be certain to like. Indeed, to make sure of this, he determined to take to her a variety of presents, so that among them all she would be sure to find something to her taste.

In this way the Indians spent several days at the "fort" of the traders on Great Bear Lake, and then prepared to return home with a canoe-load of goods instead of furs.

Before leaving, however, they had a specimen of one of the ways in which fur-traders in those lonely regions of the far north enjoy themselves. The whole establishment consisted of the officer in charge—MacSweenie—his interpreter Donald Mowat, and seven men—two of whom were French Canadians, two half-castes, and three Orkneymen. There were also three women, two being wives of

the men from Orkney, and one the wife of one of the half-castes.

The greater part of the day previous to that on which they were to set out on the return voyage, Nazinred and Mozwa spent in testing the quality of their new guns in company with MacSweenie, who took his faithful Donald Mowat with him, partly to assist in carrying the game, and partly for interpreting purposes. And a superb testing-ground it was, for the swampy spots and mud flats were alive with wild-fowl of all kinds, from the lively sandpiper to the great Canada grey goose, while the air was vocal with their whistling wings and trumpet cries, so that, whether they walked among the shrubs and sedges, or sat in ambush on the rocky points, ample opportunity was afforded to test the weapons as well as the skill of the owners.

The beginning of the day, however, was not quite satisfactory. They had scarcely proceeded more than a few hundred yards from the fort when a flock of ducks was observed flying low and straight towards them.

"Down, man, quick!" exclaimed MacSweenie, crouching behind a large bush. "You will get a goot chance, and the gun will kill if ye point straight, for the trade-guns are fery goot, the most of—wow!"

The sudden end of his remark was caused by Nazinred firing, and thereafter rising with the

shattered fragments of the gun in his hand, and a little blood trickling from one of his fingers, while an expression of stern perplexity overspread his visage.

"Well, now, that iss most extraordinary," said the trader, examining the weapon. "I hev not seen such a thing for years. To be sure, they are cheap and made of cast-iron, but they seldom burst like that, an' they usually shoot straight, whatever!—Tell him, Tonal', that he need not concern himself, for I will give him another."

On this being translated, Nazinred seemed content, and began to examine his hurt, which by good fortune was a slight one.

"It might have been worse," remarked Mowat gravely; "I've seen many a man in this country with a short allowance of finger-joints from the same cause."

"What you observe is fery true, Tonal'," said the trader, with a serious air, "it might have been worse. There was a bit of the barrel went past my head that fery nearly put me on a short allowance of life. But come with me to the store an' we will choose a better one."

Half an hour sufficed to select another fowling-piece, which stood all the tests to which it was subjected, and as evening was about to close in the whole party returned well laden with game, and thoroughly pleased with the weapons.

Meanwhile the men of the establishment had been variously employed, cutting and hauling firewood, attending the nets, etc., while the women had been busy making moccasins and mending garments. The cook—an Orkney man—had made extensive preparations for a feast, but this was a secret between him and MacSweenie; the latter being fond of occasionally giving his people a surprise-treat.

It was not indeed easy to surprise them at that time with unusually good food, for the land was swarming with spring life, and they daily enjoyed the fat of it. But there were some little delicacies which were not to be had every day in the wilderness of the far north. Among them was a round object about the shape, size, and consistency of a large cannon ball, which was tied up in a cloth and seemed to require an immense amount of boiling. The smell of this was delicious, and, when ultimately turned out of its cloth it presented a whitey-brown mottled appearance which was highly suggestive.

The cook also had a peculiar talent for making cakes, which no Nor'-Wester could imitate, but which any Nor'-Wester in the land could eat. There were other trifles which it would take too long to mention, and large pots of tea which it would not take very long to drink. That was all the drink they had, happily, for strong young

people with high spirits do not require strong spirits to keep their spirits up!

After the feast, the tables and chairs were cleared away from the central, or reception, hall of the fort, and preparations were made for spending a harmonious evening; for, you see, stout people, in the prime of life, who have not damaged themselves with strong drink, find it difficult to exhaust their energies by means of an ordinary day's work.

"Now, Tonal'," said MacSweenie, "get out your fuddle an' strike up."

"The ladies have not finished their tea yet, sir," replied the interpreter.

"Nefer mind that. Just let them hear the strains of Lord Macdonald's Reel, an' you 'll make them chump whether they will or no."

Thus encouraged, Mowat began, and sure enough there was something so inspiriting in the tuneful tones, the vigorously indicated time, and the lively air, that the excited Highlander gave a whoop that threw Indian war-cries quite into the shade, seized one of the "ladies" by an arm and unceremoniously led her to the middle of the floor. The cook, who was used to his master's ways, led out one of the other ladies in a similar free-and-easy manner, and soon two couples were thundering on the boards in all the glorious *abandon* of a Scotch reel.

They danced nothing but Scotch reels, for the good reason that none of them could dance anything else. Indeed, none of them, except MacSweenie, could dance even these in correct fashion; but the reel, like the Scotch character, is adaptable. It lends itself to circumstances, if we may say so, and admits of the absolutely ignorant being pushed, trundled, shoved or kicked through at least a semblance of it, which to the operators is almost as good as the reality.

Nazinred and Mozwa had never seen anything of the kind before, or heard the strains of a "fuddle." It may well be imagined, therefore, what was the condition of their minds. Native reticence stood them in good stead for a considerable time, though, in spite of it, their eyes opened to an extent that was unusual; but as the fun became faster and more furious, their grave features relaxed, their mouths expanded, their teeth began to show, and they looked at each other with the intent, probably, of saying "We never even dreamed of such things." But that look wrought a transformation, for when each beheld the other's grin of unwonted levity he burst into a short laugh, then, becoming ashamed of themselves, they suddenly resumed their expressions of owlish gravity, from which they could not again be driven until a late period of the evening.

Frequent slices of the mottled cannon-ball, however, and unlimited mugs of highly-sugared tea, had the effect of thawing them down a little, but nothing could induce them to dance.

Next morning they were up by daybreak and ready to start for the farther north.

"Now mind," said MacSweenie, through his interpreter, "don't you be fechtin' wi' the Eskimos. Dance wi' them if ye will, but don't fecht. Better try an' trade wi' them. An' be sure ye bring some more o' your people wi' you the next time you come here. We'll be gled to see you. The more the merrier."

How Donald Mowat translated these words we cannot tell. Perhaps he added to them a few sentiments of his own. However that may be, it is certain that the Indians bade their entertainers farewell with feelings of hearty good-will, and, leaving the lonely outpost behind them, set off on the return journey to their wilderness home.

CHAPTER XVI.

SORROWS AND SINS, AND A BOLD ADVENTURE.

It was autumn before Nazinred and Mozwa drew near to their village. They took things leisurely on the return voyage, for, as Indians have little else to do besides hunt, trap, fish, eat, and sleep, they have no particular inducement to hurry their movements.

It is true that, being affectionate men, they were naturally anxious to rejoin their families, but being also steady-going, with considerable powers of self-denial, they were good men-of-business, from a savage point of view, and gave leisurely attention to the duties in hand.

On arriving at the outskirts of their village, they were surprised to see that one or two children who were playing among the bushes, and who could not have failed to see them, slunk away as if to avoid a meeting. Whatever anxiety the men might have felt, their bronzed and stern countenances betrayed no sign whatever. Landing near the old chief's hut they drew up their

canoe and Nazinred and Mozwa went to announce their arrival. It was contrary to Indian etiquette to betray excitement, or to ask hasty questions. They saluted the old man, handed him a plug of tobacco, and sat down to smoke, and it was not till some time had elapsed that Nazinred calmly asked if Isquay was well.

"Isaquay is well," replied the old chief, and a barely perceptible sigh of relief escaped Nazinred.

Then Mozwa asked about his wife and received a satisfactory answer. Still, it was obvious to both men, from the old chief's manner, that there was something wrong.

"Adolay" . . . said the old man, and stopped.

"Dead?" asked Nazinred, with a look of alarm that he did not attempt to conceal.

"No, not dead—but gone away," he replied, and then related in detail the circumstances of the girl's disappearance. It must have been a terrible blow to the poor father, all the more that he was ignorant at the time of the girl's motive for forsaking her home. But no vestige of feeling did he betray, save a slight contraction of his brows and a nervous play of his fingers about the handle of his scalping-knife. When the recital was ended he made no reply, but, rising slowly, left the hut and went to his own home.

We will not follow him thither: there are

some home-comings which are better left undescribed.

But next day Nazinred relaunched his canoe, and, with a small quantity of provisions and a large supply of ammunition, set off alone for the shores of the Arctic Sea. What he told his wife is not known, but he gave no explanation whatever to any of his comrades as to his intentions.

Arrived at the coast, however, his further advance was rendered impossible by a sharp frost which created the first thin crust that was ultimately destined to turn the sea into thick ice. As even the thinnest coat of ice would be certain destruction to birch bark, the canoe, he was well aware, was now useless. He therefore returned home, and quietly engaged in the ordinary hunting and fishing occupation of his tribe, but from that date he sank into a state of silent despair, from which his most intimate companions failed to rouse him. Not that he gave expression to his feelings by word or look. It was long-continued silence and want of interest in anything that told of the sorrow that crushed him. It is probable that the fact of Adolay being capable of forsaking her parents in such a way tended to increase the grief occasioned by her loss. But he spoke of his feelings to no one—not even to his wife.

Mozwa, who was very fond of his friend, and pitied him sincerely, made no attempt to comfort

him, for he knew the nature of the man too well to think that by any words he could assuage his sorrow.

All the fine things that Nazinred had brought home, and with which he had hoped to rejoice the hearts of his wife and child, were utterly neglected. He let Isquay do what she pleased with them. The only thing that seemed to comfort him was the tobacco, for that, he found, when smoked to excess, blunted the edge of his feelings. He therefore gave himself up to the unlimited use of this sedative, and would no doubt have become, like many others, a willing slave to the pipe, but for the fortunate circumstance that the supply of tobacco was limited. As the autumn advanced, the diminishing quantity warned him to restrain himself. He eked it out by mixing with it a kind of leaf much used by Indians for this purpose, but which, by itself, was not considered worth smoking. Even with this aid, however, he was compelled to curtail the indulgence; then the weed failed altogether, and he was finally induced to engage in philosophical meditations as to the folly of creating a needless desire which could not be gratified. The unsatisfied craving, coupled with the injury to his health, added considerably to the grief with which he was already oppressed. He had a powerful constitution, however. The enforced abstinence soon began to tell in his

favour, and he actually had the courage, not to say wisdom, to refuse occasional pipes offered him by Mozwa when he chanced to visit his friend.

As that friend had not the loss of an only child to mourn, but, on the contrary, was called upon to rejoice in the addition of a new baby, the fine things that he had brought home were the cause of great satisfaction to his family. But alas! Mozwa, although almost perfect, for a savage, had one fault—one besetting sin and moral disease—he gambled!

We almost hear the exclamation of surprise, if not doubt, with which our reader receives this information. Yes; North American Indians are gamblers; many of them are confirmed gamblers. They do not indeed affect anything so intellectual as chess or so skilful as billiards, but they have a game to the full as intellectual and scientific as that *rouge et noir* of Monaco with which highly cultivated people contrive to rob each other by mutual consent, and without being ashamed! Their game is not unknown to the juveniles of our own land. It goes by the name "odd-or-even."

The manner of conducting the game varies a little here and there in its details, but its principle is the same everywhere: "I want your possessions, and get them I will, by hook or crook! I couldn't

think of robbing you—O no; there might be jail or penal servitude on the back of that; and I won't accept your gifts—good gracious, no! that would involve the loss of self-respect. No, no. Let us humbug each other. I will rob you if I can, and you will rob me if you can, and we'll mutually agree to throw dust in each other's eyes and call it 'play'! Nothing, surely, could be fairer than that!"

Of course poor Mozwa did not reason thus. He was not cultured enough for that. In fact, he did not reason at all about the matter, as far as we know, but there can be no question that the poor fellow was smitten with the disease of covetousness, and instead of seeking for a cure, like a manly savage, he adopted the too civilised plan of encouraging and excusing it.

Aware of his propensities, Mrs. Mozwa was much too knowing to allow the goods and trinkets destined for herself and family to remain in his power. She at once appropriated them, and secreted such of them as she did not require for present use. But there were articles which she could not well treat in that way with any shadow of excuse: for instance, the gun, powder and shot, bows and arrows, tobacco and pipes, hatchets and scalping-knives, blankets and masculine garments, which were in daily use. These were frequently lost and re-won before winter had fairly begun, but Mozwa was too fond of the ex-

citement of gambling to make desperate ventures all at once. He liked to spin it out.

One night he had what is styled a "run of bad luck." Being in something of a reckless mood, he went to visit a young friend who was as fond of gambling as himself, and took most of his worldly possessions with him. The friend, with a number of companions, was seated beside the wigwam fire, and quite ready to begin.

Taking a button, or some such object, in his hand, and putting both hands behind his back, the friend began to bob his head and shoulders up and down in an idiotic fashion, at the same time chanting in a sing-song monotone, "Ho yo, yo ho, hi ya yoho!" for a considerable length of time, while Mozwa staked his blanket, a fine thick green one, purchased at Great Bear Lake. We forget the friend's stake, but it was probably supposed to be an equivalent.

Suddenly the yo-ho'ing ceased, both hands, tightly closed, were brought to the front, and the whole party gazed at Mozwa with intense expectation. He was not long in making up his mind. He pointed to the left hand. It was opened, and found to be empty! The blanket was lost. Back went the hands again, and the "yo-ho'ing" was continued. The new gun was the next stake. It also was lost; and thus the game was carried on far into the night, with smaller stakes, until Mozwa

had lost almost all that he had brought with him —gun, blanket, pipes, tobacco, flint and steel, fire-bag, and even his coat, so that he walked home a half-naked and nearly ruined man!

But ruin in the wilderness of North America is not usually so thorough as it often is in civilised lands, owing partly to the happy circumstance that strong drink does not come into play and complete the moral destruction, as well as the physical, which gambling had begun. The character therefore, although deteriorated, is not socially lost. The nature of property, also, and the means of acquiring it, render recovery more easy.

When Mozwa returned home *minus* his new blanket and the beautiful deerskin coat which his wife had made and richly ornamented for him with her own brown hands while he was away, he found his old coat and his old blanket ready for him. The old gun, too, was available still, so that he was not altogether disabled from attending to the duties of the chase, and in a short time afterwards, "luck" being in his favour, he had won back some of his lost possessions. But he was too often in that fluctuating state of alternating excitement and depression which is the invariable accompaniment, in a greater or less degree, of the gambler's sin, whether carried on in the depths of the Arctic wilderness, the well-named "hells" of London, or the gilded *salons* of Monaco.

"You are a fool," said Nazinred one day to his friend—for even among savages there are plain-spoken familiar friends gifted with common sense enough to recognise folly, and spiritual honesty to point it out and warn against it.

"Why does my brother say so?" asked Mozwa, who was not in the least offended by the observation.

"Because you gain nothing by all your gaining except trouble and excitement, and sometimes you gain loss. Here you are, now, obliged to take to your old gun, whose flint will hardly strike fire more than four times out of ten; you are obliged to wrap yourself in the old blanket full of holes; and you come to me to borrow powder and ball."

"That is true," replied Mozwa, with a look of self-condemnation. "But," he added, with a sort of brightly apologetic glance, "sometimes I win, and then I am well off, and it is Magadar who is the fool."

"Does it make you less of a fool because Magadar is one also? Are you comforted to-day, in your poverty, by the thought that you were well off yesterday?"

Mozwa's bright glance faded slowly. He was no match for his friend in argument, and, possessing an honest spirit, the look of self-condemnation began to creep again over his visage, but,

being of a sanguine temperament and hopeful nature, the bright glance returned suddenly.

"Wisdom falls from the lips of my brother," he said. "I was well off yesterday and I am badly off to-day, but I may be well off again to-morrow —if I have good luck."

"Yes, and if Magadar has bad luck?" returned his friend. "You cannot both have good luck. Whatever one gains the other must lose—and so it goes on. Should wise men act thus?"

Mozwa was silent. His friend had never before spoken to him in this way. Indeed, no member of the tribe had ever before given utterance to such curious opinions. He knew not what to reply, and Nazinred relapsed into the moody silence which had characterised him more or less since he became aware of his daughter's departure.

The short autumn of those Hyperborean regions having passed away, the land was speedily locked in a garment of ice and snow, and the long stern winter began.

It was not long before all the lakes and rivers set fast. At first only the lakes solidified, then the more sluggish streams, while the rapids showed out inky black by contrast. Gradually the liquid margins of these were encroached on by the irresistible frost, until they were fairly bridged over, and their existence was only recalled to memory by hollow rumblings below the ice. At last the

intensity of the cold overcame the salt sea itself; the floes, hummocks, and bergs became united into one universal mass, and every sign of liquid disappeared from the polar regions.

It was when this condition of things had arrived that the heart-crushed Nazinred proceeded to carry out a plan over which he had been brooding ever since his return from Great Bear Lake. His inquiries had led him to believe that the Eskimo who had carried off his child belonged to the tribe which had recently been pursued by his compatriots, and that they probably dwelt among the islands, some of which were seen, and others known to exist, off the Arctic coast opposite the mouth of the Grey-goose River. Moreover, a faint hope, that he would have found it difficult to define, was aroused by the fact that the kidnapper of his child had formerly been the rescuer of his wife.

As we have seen, his first attempt to go off in his canoe in search of Adolay was frustrated by young ice forming on the sea, and for a considerable time afterwards the Arctic Sea was impassable to any kind of craft. Now that the sea had set fast, however, his difficulty was removed, and he resolved to undertake the journey on foot.

Well he knew that no man of his tribe, not even Mozwa, would agree to accompany him on such a wild-goose chase. He therefore not only refrained from making to any of them the proposal, but

avoided any allusion to his intentions. Knowing also that Isquay was gifted with such an intense desire for sympathy that she could not resist communicating whatever she knew to a few of her dearest friends—in the strictest confidence—he did not mention the matter to her until all his preparations were completed. Then he told her.

Like a good submissive squaw, she made no objection, though the expression of her face showed that she felt much anxiety.

"Who goes with you?" she asked.

"No one."

"Is it wise to go alone?" she ventured to suggest.

"It may not be wise, but no one would go with me, I know, and I am determined to find Adolay!"

"How will you travel?"

"With a sledge and four dogs. That will enable me to carry food enough for a long journey. I will take my gun, of course."

"But what will you do for fire?" objected Isquay; "there are no woods on the ice."

"I will do without it."

The poor woman was so amazed at this reply that she gave up further questioning.

"You have plenty strong moccasins ready, have you not?" asked Nazinred, "and pemmican, and dried meat?"

"Yes, plenty. And your snow-shoes are mended, and very strong."

"That is well. I will take them, but I do not expect to use them much, for the snow on the Great Salt Lake is not soft like the snow in the woods."

It was afternoon when this conversation was held, and very dark, for the sun had by that time ceased to rise much above the horizon, even at noon. Late in the night, however, there was brilliant light both from the stars and the aurora. Taking advantage of this, Nazinred left his lodge and hastened to the outskirts of the village, where a little boy awaited him with the sledge and team of dogs all ready for a start.

Without saying a word the Indian put on his snow-shoes and took hold of the tail-line of the sledge, which was heavily laden, and well packed. With a slight crack of the whip he set the team in motion.

"Tell the old chief," he said to the boy at parting, "that I go to seek for my daughter among the people of the Frozen Lake. When I find her I will return."

CHAPTER XVII.

NAZINRED'S JOURNEY OVER THE ARCTIC SEA.

WHILE our Indian travelled through the woods he and his dogs were on familiar ground. He encamped at night in the way to which he had been accustomed all his life. That is to say, he selected a spot under a spreading fir-tree, dug away the snow until he got to the ground, which he covered with a carpet of pine branches. At one end of this encampment—or hole in the snow of ten feet or so in diameter—he made a huge fire of dead logs. At the other end he spread his blanket, unpacked his sledge, fed his dogs with some willow-grouse provided for the purpose, warmed up his pemmican and dried meat, melted some snow for drink, and spent the night in comparative comfort. And it is wonderful, reader, how cosy such an encampment in the snow is, when food is plentiful and health strong.

But when our Indian quitted the shore, and began his daring journey on the Arctic Sea, he was surrounded by new and unfamiliar conditions. No

trees were to be had for firewood, no branches for bedding, no overhanging pines for shelter. He had gone there, however, prepared for the change.

The sea near the shore had been set fast when in a comparatively smooth condition, so that, the first day's march over, it was easy. As he had expected, the surface of the snow had been drifted quite hard, so that he could dispense with snow-shoes altogether, and the four dogs found the sledge so light that they felt disposed now and then to run away with it; but Nazinred checked this propensity by holding on to the tail-line, thus acting as a drag. Ere long the shore was left out of sight behind, and the first of the islets—a small group—also passed and left behind.

When night was well advanced the Indian found himself on the ice of the open sea with nothing but hummocks and bergs to shelter him. Being acquainted, by hearsay at least, with some of the methods of the Eskimos, he avoided the bergs, for there was the danger of masses falling from their sides and from overhanging ice-cliffs, and selected a small hummock—a heap of masses that had been thrown or crushed up earlier in the winter, covered with snow, and formed into a solid mound. The light air that blew over the frozen plain was scarcely worth taking into account, nevertheless the Indian chose the lee side of the

hummock and then began to try his "prentice hand" at the erection of a snow hut.

Nazinred had indeed some doubts as to the value of such a cold habitation without fire, but he knew that Eskimos sometimes used such, and what they could do he could dare. Besides, love is strong as death—and he meant to find Adolay or die!

His hut, as might have been expected, was not such as an Eskimo architect would have praised, but it was passable for a first attempt. He knew that the northern masons built their winter dwellings in the form of a dome, therefore he essayed the same form; but it fell in more than once before the keystone of the arch was fixed.

"Never mind," thought Nazinred; "they have done it—I can do it."

Nothing is impossible to men of this stamp. He persevered, and succeeded after a couple of hours in producing a sort of misshapen bee-hive about six feet in diameter, and four feet high. The slabs of snow of which it was composed were compact and solid, though easily cut with his scalping-knife, and formed bricks that could resist the influence of the fiercest gale. At one side of the hut he cut a hole for a doorway, and reserved the piece cut out for a door. It was just big enough to let his broad shoulders pass through, and when he got inside and lay down at full

length to test it, he gave a slight "humph!" of satisfaction. Not that the chamber was cheerful —far from it, for it was intensely dark,—but our Indian was a practical man. He did not require light to enable him to sleep or rest.

While engaged in constructing the hut, he observed that the four dogs were sitting on their tails doing nothing except gazing in curiosity, if not surprise, at his unwonted proceedings. Being a busy man, he naturally disliked idlers, and therefore unlashed some food from his sledge and served out their supper by way of giving them something to do. They ceased idling at once, but after supper sat down on their tails again to watch as before, though in a more languid frame of mind.

When the hut was finished he sat down outside, the night being clear and comparatively warm, or rather, we should say, not bitterly cold. During the meal he kept up the interest of the dogs to a keenly hopeful point by occasionally tossing a morsel to each. When the meal was over, and they knew from long experience that nothing more was to be hoped for, they curled themselves up in the lee of the hut, and, with a glorious disregard of bedding and all earthly things, went to sleep.

It was found rather difficult to get the sledge into the hut, as Nazinred had forgotten to make

allowance for its size, but by enlarging the door and manœuvring, the difficulty was overcome—a matter of considerable importance, for there was no knowing what Arctic monsters might take a fancy to play havoc with its contents while its owner slept.

Then the Indian spread a large deerskin with the hair on over the floor of his hut, and was about to spread his blankets above that, when he remembered that he would want water to drink in the morning—for it is well known that eating snow during the intense cold of Arctic winters is very hurtful. He had provided for this by taking a bladder with him, which he meant to fill with snow each night and take it to bed with him, so that his animal heat—and he had plenty of that—might melt some of it before morning. He was then on the point of closing up the doorway when it occurred to him that if the dogs were inside they might make the place warmer, but upon reflection he feared that they might also make it suffocating—for the dogs were large and the hut was small. After pondering the subject for a few minutes, he decided to take only one of them inside.

"Attim, come," he said quietly, as if speaking to a human friend.

Attim, without any remark save a wag of his tail, arose promptly, entered the hut, and lay

down. You see, he was accustomed to little attentions of the sort.

At last, everything being completed, Nazinred closed the door, plastered it well with snow round the seams, so as to render the place air-tight, wrapped himself in his blankets, took the bladder of snow to his bosom, laid his wearied head on one of his bundles, and prepared to slumber.

But ere he reached the land of forgetfulness an idea struck him, which, Indian though he was, caused him to smile even in the dark.

"Attim," he murmured.

"Here you are," replied Attim's tail with a flop that was quite as expressive as the tongue—and softer.

"You take charge of that," said the sly man, transferring the bladder of snow from his own bosom to that of the dog; "you have more heat than I have."

Whether the Indian was right in this belief we cannot say, but the humble-minded dog received the charge as a special favour, and with an emphatic "I will" from its ever-sensitive tail again lay down to repose.

Thereafter the two went to sleep, and spent six or seven hours of unbroken rest, awaking simultaneously and suddenly to find that the dogs outside were also awake and wishing to get in. Indeed, one of them had already scraped a hole in

the wall that would soon have admitted him had not his master given him a tap on the nose with the butt of his gun.

Of course it was still dark, for the morning was not far advanced, but the star-light and the aurora were quite sufficient to enable them to see their way, as they set out once more on their lonesome journey.

Breakfast was a meal of which Nazinred made no account. Supper was his chief stand-by, on the strength of which he and his dogs slept, and also travelled during the following day. Soon after they had awakened, therefore, they were far from the hut in which the night had been spent.

The Indian's plan was to travel in a straight line in the direction in which the Eskimos had been last seen. By so doing he counted upon either crossing their tracks, which he would follow up, or, coming to some large island which might prove to be their winter quarters, would skirt the shores of it in the hope of meeting with some of the tribes of which he was in search. The expedition, it will be seen, was somewhat of the nature of a forlorn hope, for drifting snow quickly obliterates tracks, and if the natives, when found, should turn out to be hostile, they would probably take from him his little possessions, if not also his life. But Nazinred's love for Adolay was too strong to admit of his allowing such thoughts to

weigh with him. Ere long, he found himself far from his woodland home, lost among the rugged solitudes of ice, with a fast diminishing supply of provisions, and, worst of all, no sign of track or other clew to guide him.

One day, as he was plodding slowly northward, guided by the stars, his faith in the success of his mission began to flag. Hard continuous toil and a weakening frame had no doubt something to do with his depression. His dogs, also, were in much the same condition with himself,—growing thin, and becoming less lively. Clambering to the top of a hummock, he surveyed the prospect before him. It was not cheering. The faint daylight of noon was spreading over the frozen sea, bringing the tops of the larger bergs out into bold relief against the steel-blue sky, and covering the jumble of lumps and hummocks with a cold grey light.

Despite his resolute purpose the poor man sat down on a lump of ice, buried his face in his hands, and meditated.

"Can it be," he thought, "that the Great Manitou knows my grief and does not care? Surely that cannot be. I love my child, though she has fled from me. I am a child of the Manitou. Does He not love me? I will trust Him!"

A cold object touched his hand at the moment. It was the nose of the faithful Attim.

Nazinred regarded the touch as a good omen. He rose up and was about to resume the journey in a more hopeful frame of mind when a dark cloud on the horizon arrested his eye. After a long gaze he came to the conclusion that it was land. Two hours later he arrived at Waruskeek, and with a beating heart made straight for the huts, which could be plainly seen on the shore. But terrible disappointment was in store for him. On reaching the Eskimo village he found that it was deserted.

Nevertheless the improved state of mind did not quite forsake him. It was a comfort to have made a discovery of any kind, and was it not possible that, during the brief daylight of the morrow, he might be able to distinguish the tracks made by the party when they left the place and follow them up?

With this idea in his mind he resolved to encamp on the spot, and indulge himself as well as his dogs with a good feed and sleep.

With this purpose in view he collected all the bits of wood he could find, and, with a few lumps of much-decayed blubber, made a rousing fire in one of the huts. The flame cheered his canine friends as well as himself, and filled the place with a ruddy glow. As the hut was sufficiently large, he invited all the dogs to sup with him—an invitation which, it is needless to say, they gladly

accepted—and we may add that the humble-minded Attim was not jealous.

The hut of which Nazinred thus took possession was that which belonged to old Mangivik. With his usually observant nature, our Indian looked keenly about him while cooking his pemmican, noting every particular with an intelligent eye. Suddenly his gaze became fixed on a particular corner. Rising slowly, as if afraid of frightening away some living creature, he advanced step by step toward the corner with eyeballs starting nearly out of his head. Then with a light bound he sprang forward, grasped a little piece of cord, and pulled out from beneath a heap of rubbish what appeared to be an old cast-off moccasin. And such indeed it was. It had belonged to Adolay! Nazinred, hastening to the fire, examined it with minute care, and a deep "hoh!" of satisfaction escaped from him; for he knew it well as being one of a pair made by Isquay for her daughter's little feet.

Need we say that joy filled the Indian's heart that night, and a feeling of gratitude to that mysterious ever-present yet never visible Being, who—he had come to recognise in his philosophical way—must be the author of all good, though his philosophy failed to tell him who was the author of evil. Nazinred was not by any means the first savage philosopher who has

puzzled himself with that question, but it is due to him to add—for it proves him more scientific than many trained philosophers of the present day—that he did not plead his ignorance about his Creator as an excuse for ingratitude, much less as a reason for denying His existence altogether.

But there was a surprise in store for our Indian chief which went far to increase his grateful feelings, as well as to determine his future course. On looking about the deserted village the following day for further evidences of his child having been there, he came upon a post with a piece of birch bark fastened to it. The post was fixed in the ice close to the shore, where in summer-time the land and sea were wont to meet, and from which point tracks in the snow gave clear indication that the Eskimos had taken their departure. This post with its piece of bark was neither more nor less than a letter, such as unlettered men in all ages have used for holding intercourse with absent friends.

Knowing her father's love for her, and suspecting that, sooner or later, he would organise a search-party—though it never occurred to her that he would be so wild as to undertake the search alone—Adolay had erected the post when the tribe set out for winter quarters, and had fixed the bark-letter to it for his guidance.

The writing on the letter, we need hardly say, was figurative, brief, and easily read. It did not give the intelligent father much trouble in the decipherment. At the top was the picture of a hand fairly, if not elegantly, drawn, with one finger pointing. Below it were several figures, the last of which was a girl in unmistakable Indian costume. The figure in front of her was meant to represent Cheenbuk; in advance of him was an Eskimo woman with her tail flowing gracefully behind, while before her was a hazy group of men, women, and children, which represented the tribe on the march. Adolay had obviously the artistic gift in embryo, for there was a decided effort to indicate form and motion, as well as to suggest an idea of perspective, for the woman and the tribal group were drawn much smaller than the foreground figures, and were placed on higher planes. The sketchiness of the group, too, also told of just ideas as to relative degrees of interest in the legend, while the undue prominence of the leading facial feature was an attempt to give that advice which is so forcibly expressed in the well-known phrase, "Follow your nose." Ten dots underneath, with a group of snow-huts at the end of them, were not so clear at first, but in the end Nazinred made out a sentence, of which the following may be given as a free-and-easy translation:—

"My hand points the direction in which we have gone. Your loving daughter is following the man who ran away with her. The Eskimo women and men, and dogs, and all the rest of them, are marching before us. Follow me for ten days, and you will come to the snow-huts where we are to winter."

Could anything be plainer? The happy father thought not. He took an extra meal. His team gave themselves an extra feed of bits of old blubber picked up in the camp, and while daylight was still engaged in its brave though hopeless struggle with the Arctic night, he tied up his sledge, thrust the old moccasin into his bosom, gave Attim the order to advance, and set off with revived strength and hope on his now hopeful journey.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SURPRISE AND A CATASTROPHE.

THE trail of the Eskimos as they traversed the frozen sea, although not always very distinct on the hard snow, was as plain as a highway to one so skilled in tracking as the Indian chief Nazinred. The weather having been clear and calm ever since he left home, the marks had not been obliterated, and he pursued his way without halt or hesitation.

But on the fourth day out there came symptoms of a change. The chief had adopted the plan of travelling during every hour of the short day, or twilight, in order to make more sure of not missing the trail, and the stars with frequent aurora borealis had made each night so brilliant that he advanced almost as easily as during the day-time. The fourth day, however, on awaking, his ears were greeted with sounds that caused him to rise in haste and force out the door of his sleeping hut, when to his dismay he found that a furious gale was blowing, that the sky was black, and that he could hardly see the poor dogs, whom

he found crouching as close as possible on the sheltered side of the hut. In these circumstances, to advance without losing his way was impossible, so that he was compelled to make the most of his time by sleeping as much as he could.

To do him justice he possessed a wonderful capacity in that way. Having put the sledge outside in order to make room, he called all the dogs in, resolving that the poor things should not be exposed to the pitiless storm. Then, having fed himself and them, he lay down with them and was soon in happy oblivion.

Of course he had no artificial means of measuring time, and, the sky being overclouded, darkness visible pervaded the region. But a healthy stomach helped in some degree to furnish a natural chronometer, and its condition when he awoke suggested that he must have slept till near daylight of the following day. Rousing the dogs, he gave them a feed, ate heartily himself, and then went out to look at the weather.

The sight which the grey dawn rendered barely visible was one which caused him to return to the hut with extreme promptitude for his gun, for, about fifty yards off, were two white polar bears of, apparently, colossal size, frolicking about in a curious manner, and evidently amusing themselves with something. The something turned out to be the chief's sledge, which the bears had unpacked;

eating whatever they had a fancy for, scattering about what they did not want, smashing the sledge itself to pieces, and twisting the leathern wraps and cordage into unimaginable knots.

Nazinred did not discover all this at once, being too much excited by the unexpected visit to note trifling details. Besides, prompt action was necessary, for the four dogs, on becoming aware of what was transacting outside, made a united and clamorous dash at the foe. Two of them, being too valorous, ran close up to the bears, who seemed to regard them with haughty surprise. Another movement and the two dogs rose into the air with a yell in unison, and fell back upon the snow, where they lay motionless. The other two, learning wisdom from experience, kept back and barked furiously.

Nazinred, although taken by surprise, was used to sudden alarms and not easily frightened. Knowing that the two dogs were very courageous, and therefore all the more likely to run into danger, he sprang forward towards the nearer of the two bears. It rose on its hind-legs to receive him, and in this position appeared to stand at least eight feet high. Without a moment's hesitation the Indian pointed his gun when the muzzle was not more that a foot from the creature's breast, and fired. The bear fell dead on the instant, shot through the heart.

The loud report and flash frightened the other bear away. It was closely followed, however, by the dogs, and the chief availed himself of the opportunity to re-load. While he was thus engaged a peculiarly loud yell told only too plainly that one of the remaining dogs was injured, if not killed. He called to the remaining one to come back. Obedient to the call it returned, and, to its master's great relief, proved to be his favourite Attim, a good deal cut about the shoulders and much crestfallen, but not seriously injured.

"Down, Attim," said his master.

The poor creature obeyed at once, and his master hurried forward, but the bear had retired.

The result of this encounter was that three of the dogs were killed, many of his things destroyed, and his provisions rendered almost useless, while the sledge was irreparably broken to pieces. There was daylight enough to render the extent of his misfortune visible, and to show him that the trail which he had been following so long was drifted over and entirely obliterated.

To a man of weak resolution this might have been overwhelming, but Nazinred was very much the reverse of weak, and his utter recklessness of life in his endeavour to recover his lost child would have rendered him a hero for the time being, even if he had not been one by nature.

After collecting the remains of his property, and ascertaining that the sledge was hopelessly destroyed, he made up his mind to carry the provisions on his back and push forward in the direction pointed out by Adolay until he found her. If he did not succeed, the failure of his food would soon end the struggle.

It was some consolation to the unfortunate man that his favourite dog had been spared. The amount of "company" afforded even by an ordinary dog is well known, but the civilised world can but feebly understand the value of a more than usually affectionate creature in the forlorn circumstances in which our Indian was now placed. Like many other people, he had got into the habit of talking to the dog about himself and his affairs, as if it were human. Whether he held the opinion we have heard so often expressed that "he understands every word I say," we cannot tell, but the gravity of his expression and the solemnity of his tone when conversing with it, encouraged that belief, and the very earnest attention of the dog almost justified it.

But the friendly feelings existing between them did not relax the chief's notions of discipline. Attim was not permitted to follow his master as an idle companion. He was made to carry, or rather to drag, his own food, by means of a collar with two pieces of stick attached, the ends of

which trailed on the ice, thus forming as it were a pair of trams without wheels. This is a simple contrivance, largely used by the prairie Indians with their horses as well as dogs. The two sticks or poles, being long, project a good way behind the animal, thus leaving space for a load. As the poles are suited to their size, each horse or little dog is loaded with an appropriate bundle, and it is to be presumed does not feel overburdened.

When all was arranged, Nazinred started off with a large pack on his broad shoulders, and Attim, with a small bundle, followed close at his heels.

Of course the Indian shouldered his gun, and he slung upon it his snow-shoes, for the hard-driven snow rendered these unnecessary at the time. He also carried with him a bow and quiver of arrows, with the ornamented fire-bag—made for him by Adolay—which contained his flint, steel, and tinder as well as his beloved pipe and tobacco.

Things went well with him for the first few days, and although the trail was now lost, he guided himself easily by the stars, of which he had been careful to take note and make comparison with the hand in the letter before disturbing its position. But one night the sky became overcast, and he would have been compelled to halt had he not previously laid his course by several

huge icebergs which towered up in the far distance.

When he had passed the last of these bergs, however, he began to hesitate in his movements, and Attim, trotting quietly by his side, looked inquiringly up into his face once or twice with the obvious question, "What's the matter?" in his soft brown eyes—or some Dogrib idiom equivalent thereto.

"I'm afraid to go on," murmured the Indian gravely.

To this Attim replied with a reassuring wag of his tail.

"Without stars it won't be easy to keep the straight line," continued the chief, stopping altogether and looking up at the clouds.

Attim also looked up, but evidently could make nothing of it, for he turned his eyes again on his master and wagged his tail dubiously.

At the moment a rift in the clouds revealed some of the stars, and the Indian, regaining his direction again, hurried forward—all the more rapidly that a pretty stiff fair wind was blowing, to speak nautically, right astern of him.

By degrees the breeze increased to a gale, and then to a regular hurricane, which whirled among the bergs and hummocks, shrieked round the ice-pinnacles, and went howling over the plain of the solid sea as if all the Hyperborean fiends had

been let loose and told to do their worst. Its violence was so great that the Indian was forced to scud before it, and more than once Attim's little bundle caught the blast and whirled him round like a weathercock, while the drifting snow at last became so thick that it was impossible to see anything more than a few yards ahead. In these circumstances to advance was madness.

"It won't do, pup," cried Nazinred, turning suddenly to his right round a mass of ice, and taking shelter in the lee of a towering berg; "come, we will encamp here."

He had scarcely uttered the words when a tremendous rending sound was heard above the noise of the hurricane. The Indian looked up quickly, but nothing was to be seen anywhere save that wild confusion of whirling snow, which in more southerly lands is sometimes called a blizzard, and the back-whirl of which nearly suffocated man and dog. Suddenly there came a crash as if a mountain were being shattered near them. Then Nazinred saw, to his horror, that an ice-pinnacle as big as a church steeple was bowing forward, like some mighty giant, to its fall. To escape he saw was impossible. It was too near and too directly above his head for that. His only hope lay in crushing close to the side of the berg. He did so, on the instant, promptly followed by the dog, and happily

found that the ice-wall at the spot was slightly concave.

Another moment and the stupendous mass fell with an indescribable crash, which was prolonged into sounds that bore quaint resemblance to the smashing up of gigantic crockery, as the shivered atoms shot far away over the frozen plain. But the chief heard nothing of this save the first great crash, for the avalanche, although it passed harmlessly over his head, had buried him in what seemed to him a living tomb.

The chamber in which he and his dog were thus enclosed was of course absolutely dark—a darkness that might be felt; and the man would have been more than human if he had not experienced a sinking of the heart as he contemplated his awful position. Once again arose in his mind the question, Does the Maker of all care nothing about such things? The feeling deepened in him that such could not be true,—that the All-Father must certainly care *more* for His children than ordinary fathers for theirs, and with that thought came also the old feeling, "I will trust Him." The poor dog, too, had the consolation of trust, for it rubbed its head against its master with a touch that implied implicit belief in his power to deal effectively with any difficulty whatever.

Feeling his way carefully round the walls of his prison, the Indian ascertained that it was not much

more than about twelve feet long by three or four broad. On one side was the comparatively smooth wall of the berg, but for tne hollow in which he would have been crushed; in front was the rugged heap of confused masses which had thoroughly closed him in. There was no outlet anywhere; he felt assured of that after three careful examinations of the chamber, and how many thousand tons of ice lay between him and liberty of course he could not guess.

There was only one course open to him now, and that was to cut his way out with his hatchet. Before beginning to act he unstrapped his bundle and sat down to eat, having previously relieved Attim of his load and given him some food. Everything he did had to be done by feeling, for he could not see his hand even when held only an inch from his face.

Then he set to work. It was difficult at first, for he had to strike out at random, sometimes hitting a lump of ice unexpectedly, sometimes just tipping it, and occasionally missing it altogether, when the axe would swing round behind him, to the great danger of Attim, who insisted on keeping close to his master's heels wherever he went. By degrees, however, he learned to guess more correctly the position of the walls, especially after he had advanced a few feet and cut a tunnel, with the shape and dimensions of which he soon

became familiar. For hours he laboured with unflagging diligence, clearing back the ice débris into the cavern from which he had started. But no sign of open air rewarded him.

At last, when almost exhausted, he made preparations for passing the night where he was. Before lying down he ate a hearty meal and fed the dog, who indicated his satisfaction by an occasional whine and the usual wag of the tail, which could be faintly heard though not seen.

A pipe of course followed, and during the process of lighting it he and Attim obtained a fleeting glimpse of their abode. As his materials could not produce a flame—only a dull red glow—the glimpse was not cheering, or of much value.

Then Nazinred spread a deerskin on the ice, rolled himself in his blanket, pillowed his head on the dog, who seemed to be perfectly satisfied with the arrangement, and went to sleep till—we cannot say morning, for pitch darkness still prevailed, but till—that point of time when the stomachic chronometer awoke them.

After another feed the chief again set to work with indomitable perseverance, and extended the tunnel during many hours; yet when he had accomplished what appeared to him a long and severe day's work, it seemed as if he were as far off as ever from deliverance. Just as he was

giving way to weary disappointment, however, a rush of cold air came against his face, and with an irrepressible exclamation of satisfaction he found that his last blow with the axe had opened a way to the outer world. A few more strokes, delivered with unwonted vigour, set him free, to find that the gale was over, that a profound calm prevailed, and that the faint grey light of the Arctic noon was illuminating the ghostly scene.

He also discovered that during his imprisonment a heavy fall of snow had taken place, so that he sank a full foot into it—if not more—at every step. Congratulating himself on having brought his snow-shoes with him, he at once put on those useful implements, and, having secured the pack on his back, he once more set forth on his journey, beating a track as he went on which the dog followed him with ease, though without such a track the poor thing could not have travelled at all until the surface of the snow had hardened.

But although our Indian's heart was lighter after his deliverance, the toil which he had undergone, and the cold which he had experienced in the berg, had told somewhat severely even on his hardy frame, and when he built his hut that night it was with a feeling of despondency, for he became aware of a considerable

diminution of strength. An unusually keen frost on the following day increased this feeling, and when he was about to encamp at night, Nazinred said to himself, as well as to his dog, that he feared they would never complete their journey.

But "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." On looking round for a sheltered spot on which to build the snow-hut he observed three objects in the distance which bore a strong resemblance to Eskimo dwellings. Pushing forward eagerly, he soon reached them, and found that they were indeed huts of these children of the ice, but that they were deserted. The disappointment was very great, yet our chief bore up against it manfully. He made use of one of the huts as a resting-place for the night. Next morning he found that the prolonged strain had rendered him much weaker than he had believed to be possible. Diminishing provisions, also, had increased the evil, and a still further fall in the temperature induced a feeling of feebleness which the hitherto vigorous man had never before experienced.

The idea of giving in, however, had never once entered his mind. To persevere in the search until success or death should arrest him had been his fixed resolve from the beginning.

"Come on, pup," he said, patting the head of

his faithful friend, as he fastened on his snow-shoes and set forth.

To his surprise he found that he staggered a little at first, but as he warmed to the work his vigour increased and his powers of endurance seemed almost as strong as ever.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ESKIMOS AGAIN, AND A GREAT DISCOVERY AND RESCUE.

WHILE Nazinred, under the influence of strong affection, was thus fighting with the unfamiliar difficulties and dangers of the polar sea, Cheenbuk and his Eskimo friends were enjoying life in what may be called their native element.

"Will Adolay come for a drive?" said our gallant Eskimo one day when the sun had risen near enough to the eastern horizon to almost, but not quite, extinguish the stars. "We go to seek for walruses."

The Indian maiden was sitting at the time in the snow residence which belonged to Mangivik. Mrs. Mangivik was sitting opposite to her mending a sealskin boot, and Cowlik the easy-going was seated beside her, engaged with some other portion of native attire. Nootka was busy over the cooking-lamp, and old Mangivik himself was twirling his thumbs, awaiting the result of her labours. Oolalik was there too—he was frequently there—courting Nootka in the

usual way, by prolonged silent staring. The process might have been trying to some women, but Nootka did not mind. Like many young damsels, she was fond of admiration, and could stand a good deal of it, no matter how peculiar the mode in which it was expressed.

"I don't care to go," said Adolay, with a sigh.

Cheenbuk did not repeat the invitation or press for a reason. He was a considerate as well as a gallant youth. He knew that the poor girl was pining for her parents, and that she regretted having left them—even although remaining in her native village might have involved her being wed against her will to the hated Magadar, or subjected to his persecutions during her father's absence. Cheenbuk did his best to comfort her with the assurance that he would take her back to her home with the very first of the open water. But when Adolay began to realise what a very long time must elapse before the ice would reopen its portals and set the waters free, her heart sank and she began to mope.

"We may as well have some women with us," remarked Oolalik, with a pointed glance at Nootka, but Nootka took no notice of either the observation or the glance. Even Eskimo girls understand how to tease!

"Will Cowlik go?" asked Cheenbuk.

"Yes." Cowlik smiled, and was quite ready to go.

"No, she won't," said Mrs. Mangivik, with a positiveness almost European in its tone.

"Very well." Cowlik smiled, and was equally ready to remain.

Mangivik himself expressed no opinion on the subject, but twirled his thumbs faster as he expressed a hope that the cooking would be soon completed.

It was finally arranged that only young men should go, with sledges and teams of dogs to fetch the meat home.

The little town in which this scene was being enacted was composed of between twenty and thirty whity-brown bee-hives of snow, of the usual shape, ranged on the ice near the shore of a large island. The scene presented was a lively one, for while some of the inhabitants were creeping into the small tunnels which formed as it were porches before the doors, others were creeping out. Men and dogs were moving about—the former harnessing the latter to sledges in preparation for the approaching hunt, while hairy little balls of children were scampering about in play, or sitting on the tops of the snow bee-hives, watching the proceedings with interest.

The Eskimo sledge is a contrivance of wood

capable of accommodating five or six men, and usually drawn by a team of from six to ten dogs, each dog being fastened to it by means of a separate line of tough walrus hide. In a short time the long-lashed, short-handled, powerful whips cracked, the teams yelped, the men shouted, and away they all went with much noise over the frozen sea.

After a short run the parties separated and went in different directions. Cheenbuk and his men drove in a southerly direction. Soon they came to a place which had been kept open by walruses as a breathing-hole. Here they got out, hid the sledge and dogs behind a hummock, and, getting ready their spears and harpoons, prepared for an encounter. After waiting some time a walrus thrust its ungainly head up through the young ice that covered the hole, and began to disport itself in elephantine, or rather walrusian, gambols.

Tiring of this in a few minutes, it dived, and the natives ran to the edge of the hole to be ready when it should come up again. The animal was a female, and a small one. When it reappeared harpoons and lances were at once driven into it, and it was killed almost immediately. This is not always the result of such an encounter, for this elephant of the polar seas is naturally a ferocious brute, and when bulls are

attacked they are prone to show fight rather than take fright.

Leaving the young men to skin and cut up the meat, Cheenbuk went on, with only Anteek to keep him company, in search of another breathing-hole.

"You must harpoon the next one all alone, and kill him without help," said Cheenbuk to his companion soon after they had started.

"I 'll try," returned the boy, with the air of confidence befitting a knight who had already won his spurs, yet with the modesty of a youth who was aware of his fallibility.

But Anteek was not destined to distinguish himself that day, for, about three miles beyond the place where the walrus had been slain, they came across a track so singular that, on beholding it, they were stricken dumb with surprise.

Stopping the dogs, they gazed at it for a few moments in speechless wonder.

"I am not an old man," said Cheenbuk at length in a solemn tone, "but I have seen most of the wonderful things in this world, yet have I never seen a track like that!"

He pointed to the track in question, and turned a look of blazing inquiry on Anteek.

"And I am not an old boy," returned the other, "but I too have seen a good many of the wonderful things of this world, yet have I never even dreamed of the like of that!"

It will doubtless strike the reader here, as an evidence that Eskimos are under similar delusions to the rest of the human family, that these two referred to that world of theirs as equivalent to the world at large!

"What can it be?" murmured Cheenbuk.

"The very biggest bear that ever was, come to frighten the wisest people that ever lived out of their wits," suggested Anteek.

The face of the elder Eskimo underwent a sudden change, and an intelligent expression flitted over it as he said—

"I know now—I remember—I guess. You have often heard me talk of the Fire-spouters, Anteek? Well, the snow where they live is very deep and soft—not at all like the snow here, except when our snow is new-fallen—so that they cannot travel in the cold time without great things on their feet. That"—pointing downward—"must be the track of those great things, and there must be a Fire-spouter not far off."

"Perhaps a number of Fire-spouters—a war-party," suggested Anteek, becoming excited.

"I think not, for there is only one track."

"But they may have walked in a row—behind each other."

"That is true. You notice well, Anteek. You will be a good hunter soon."

He stooped as he spoke, to examine more care-

fully the track, which was indeed none other than that made by the snow-shoes of Nazinred on his weary and wellnigh hopeless journey over the frozen sea.

"Look here, Cheenbuk," cried the boy, whose excitement was increasing. "Is there not here also the track of a dog, with a strange mark on each side of it, as if it were drawing two lines as it went along?"

"You are right again, boy. There is here the track of a dog, but there is only one man. Come, we will follow it up."

Jumping on the sledge again, the Eskimo cracked his whip and set the dogs off at full gallop.

For some time they advanced, looking eagerly forward, as if expecting every minute to come in sight of the man and dog who had made the tracks, but nothing appeared for some hours. Then they arrived at the three huts where the Indian had received such a disappointment on finding them deserted. A close examination showed that the stranger had spent a night in one of them, and, from various indications, Cheenbuk came to the conclusion that he had been much exhausted, if not starving, while there.

Getting on the sledge again, he continued to follow up the trail with renewed diligence.

They had not gone far when an object was seen lying on the ice not far ahead of them.

Anteek was first to catch sight of it, and point it out to his companion, who did not speak, but let out his lash and urged the dogs on. As they approached, the object was seen to move, then there came towards them what sounded like a prolonged melancholy howl.

"The dog is alive," whispered Anteek.

"I hope the man is—but I fear," returned his comrade.

In a few moments more they were alongside, and the dog started up with a snarl as if to defend its master, who was lying motionless on the ice; but the snarl was feeble, and the poor beast was obviously in a state of exhaustion.

"He is not dead," said Cheenbuk, putting his hand over the Indian's heart, while Anteek caught poor Attim by the nose and held him gently back.

It turned out as the Eskimo had said. Nazinred was not dead, but he was very nearly so, and it is probable that another hour of exposure and inaction would have ended the career of both himself and his dog.

He had walked on persistently until that peculiar feeling of an irresistible desire to lie down and sleep overcame him. No one knew better than himself the danger of his condition, yet the fatal lethargy is such that no resolution is sufficient to overcome it. Lying, or rather falling, down, he had remained still for a few moments—then the

state of quiet, but deadly repose had supervened and he would never have risen again if succour had not been sent.

As it was, the Eskimos set to work with tremendous energy to chafe and resuscitate him, but it seemed at first that they were too late. By dint of untiring perseverance, however, they became successful. A slight effort to exert himself was observable in the Indian, and then, getting him on his feet, Cheenbuk on one side and Anteek on the other, they forced him to stagger about until vitality began to revive.

"Now, boy, we'll get him into the sledge, and away back to the igloes."

Without delay they led Nazinred to the sledge, rolled him in a large white bearskin, and tied him on. While thus engaged Anteek observed that Cheenbuk gazed for a few moments intently into the Indian's face, and then became much and strangely excited.

"Is he going to die?" asked the boy anxiously.

"No, it is not that—but—but, I have seen this Fire-spouter before. I know him! Quick, we *must* save his life!"

If the life of Nazinred had depended on the speed of the Eskimo dogs there would have been much hope of it, for Cheenbuk made them fly like the wind until he regained the three igloes. As for Attim, having, with prompt sagacity, perceived

that the strangers were friendly, he resigned himself to his fate. Indeed, his master had, in a dazed sort of way, adopted the same course, and willingly submitted to whatever was done to him.

Arrived at the deserted huts, the Indian was allowed to lie in his white bearskin until the Eskimo had kindled a lamp, cooked some food, warmed some water, and prepared a comfortable couch. Then he went out to unlash the sleeper.

"Now, Anteek, I'm going to send you away, and will expect you to be quick and act like a man. Drive the sledge back to where we killed the walrus. Let the men pack the meat on it and away back to our igloes. It is not far. You will soon get there if you make the dogs yelp. When you have arrived, and told your story, get a fresh team of dogs, and two men, and come back here with a little meat and some more bearskins—and do it all, boy, as fast as you can."

"I will," answered Anteek in a tone and with a look of decision that were quite satisfactory.

It was difficult to rouse the Indian at first so as to get him to stagger into the snow hut, and he was more than half asleep all the time, insomuch that when inside he fell down on the couch prepared for him and again sank into profound slumber.

Then Anteek started up, jumped on the sledge, and set off for home at full speed.

CHAPTER XX.

STRANGE CONVERSE AND DISCOVERIES.

RETURNING to the hut, Cheenbuk continued his culinary preparations with great diligence, gazing often and earnestly, as he did so, at the thin and careworn countenance of the sleeper.

Although Nazinred was considerably altered by fatigue and suffering, the Eskimo entertained not the smallest doubt that he was the same Indian with whom he had once struggled on the banks of the Whale, or Greygoose, River. Equally sure was he that the Indian, owing to his worn-out condition when discovered, had not recognised himself, and the fancy occurred to him that he would at first try to avoid recognition. To this end he pulled his hood a little more over his eyes, deepened the colour of his face by rubbing it with a little lamp-black and oil, and resolved to lower his voice a note or two when the time for speaking should arrive. That time was not long of coming; probably the increasing warmth of the hut, or the smell of the seal-steak in the nostrils of the half-starved man,

may have had something to do with it, but the meal was hardly ready when the Indian yawned, stretched himself, sat up and gazed solemnly around.

"You are feeling better?" said Cheenbuk in his deepened tone, and in broken Dogrib tongue.

The Indian fixed a steady gaze on him for nearly a minute before replying.

"Yes," he said, in a dreamy tone, "I'm better. If the Eskimo had not been sent to me I had now been with my ancestors."

"No one sent me to you," returned Cheenbuk; "I found you lying on the snow.

"The Great Manitou sent you," said the Indian gravely.

It was this touch of seriousness which had originally drawn those two men together, but the Eskimo remembered that he was acting a part at the moment, and that any expression of sympathy might betray him. He therefore made no rejoinder, but, placing the seal-steak on a flat stone, bade the hungry man eat.

Nazinred required no pressing; he began at once, and was ready for more almost before more was ready for him. By persevering industry, however, Cheenbuk kept his guest supplied, and when appetite began to fail he found time to attend to his own wants and keep the other company.

Silence reigned at first. When the Indian had finished eating he accepted a draught of warm water, and then had recourse to his fire-bag and pipe. Cheenbuk expected this, and smiled inwardly, though his outward visage would have done credit to an owl.

At last he looked up and asked the Indian how he came to be travelling thus alone and so far from his native land.

Nazinred puffed a voluminous cloud from his lips and two streaming cloudlets from his nose ere he replied.

"When my son," he said, "was on the banks of the Greygoose River his voice was not so deep!"

Cheenbuk burst into a laugh and threw back his hood.

"You know me, then, you man-of-the-woods," said he, holding out his hand in the white-trader fashion which the other had taught him.

"When the men-of-the-woods see a face once they never forget it," returned the Indian, grasping the proffered hand heartily, but without a sign of risibility on his countenance, for in this, as we know, he differed considerably from his companion; yet there was a something about the corners of his eyes which seemed to indicate that he was not quite devoid of humour.

"But how did you discover me?" resumed

Cheenbuk. "I not only spoke with a deeper voice, but I put black and oil on my face, and pulled my hood well forward."

"When the Eskimo wants to blind the man-of-the-woods," answered Nazinred, sententiously, "he must remember that he is a man, not a child. The cry of the grey geese is always the same, though some of them have deeper voices than others. A face does not change its shape because it is dirtied with oil and black. Men draw hoods over their faces when going out of a lodge, not when coming in. When smoking tobacco is seen for the *first* time, surprise is always created. —Waugh!"

"What you say is true, man-of-the-woods," returned Cheenbuk, smiling. "I am not equal to you at deceiving."

Whether the Indian took this for a compliment or otherwise there was no expression on his mahogany face to tell, as he sat there calmly smoking and staring at the lamp. Suddenly he removed the pipe from his lips and looked intently at the Eskimo, who in turn regarded him with evident expectation.

"My son," said Nazinred, "I have one or two questions to put to you. You and I agree about many things. Tell me, what would you think of the fawn that would forsake its dam?"

Cheenbuk was puzzled, but replied that he thought there must be something the matter with it—something wrong.

"I will tell you a story," continued the Indian, "and it is true. It did not come into my head. I did not dream it. There was a man-of-the-woods, and he had a squaw and one child, a girl. The parents were very fond of this girl. She was graceful like the swan. Her eyes were large, brown, and beautiful like the eyes of a young deer. She was active and playful like the young rabbit. When she was at home the wigwam was full of light. When she was absent it was dark. The girl loved her father and mother, and never disobeyed them or caused them to suffer for a moment. One day, when the father was far away from home, a number of bad Eskimos came and fought with the men-of-the woods, who went out and drove their enemies away. They took one prisoner, a strong fine-looking man. One night the prisoner escaped. It was discovered that the girl helped him and then went away with him."

He paused and frowned at this point, and the startled Cheenbuk at once recognised himself and Adolay as the hero and heroine of the story.

"Did the girl," he asked, "go away with the escaped prisoner of her own will, or did he force her to go?"

"She went of her own will," returned the Indian.

"One of the women of the tribe followed her and heard her speak. But the father loved his child. He could not hate her, although she forsook her home. At first he thought of taking all his young men and going on the war-path to follow the Eskimos, slay the whole tribe, and bring back his child. But Manitou had put it in the father's mind to think that it is wrong to kill the innocent because of the guilty. He therefore made up his mind to set off alone to search for his child."

Again Nazinred paused, and Cheenbuk felt very uncomfortable, for although he knew that it was impossible for the Indian to guess that the Eskimo with whom he had once had a personal conflict was the same man as he who had been taken prisoner and had escaped with his daughter, still he was not sure that the astute Red man might not have put the two things together and so have come to suspect the truth.

"So, then, man-of-the-woods," said Cheenbuk at last, "*you* are the father who has lost his daughter?"

"I am," returned the Indian, "and I know not to what tribe the young man belongs with whom she has gone away, but I am glad that I have met with you, because you perhaps may have heard if any strange girl has come to stay with any of the tribes around you, and can tell me how and where to find her. We named her Adolay, because she

reminds us of that bright season when the sun is hot and high."

Cheenbuk was silent for some time, as well he might be, for the sudden revelation that the Indian who had once been his antagonist, and for whom he had taken such a liking, was the father of the very girl who had run away with him against her inclination, quite took his breath away. It was not easy to determine how or when the true facts should be broken to the father, and yet it was evident that something must be said, for Cheenbuk could not make up his mind to lie or to act the part of a hypocrite.

"I have heard of the girl-of-the-woods you speak of," he said at last; "I have seen her."

For the first time since they met the characteristic reserve of the Indian broke down, and he became obviously excited, yet even then he curbed his tongue for a few moments, and when he again spoke it was with his habitual calmness.

"Does my son know the tribe to which she has been taken? And is it well with the girl?"

"He does. And it is well with Adolay."

"Do they dwell far from here?" asked Nazinred, anxiously in spite of himself.

"Not far. I can soon take you to their igloes. But tell me, man-of-the-woods, do you think your child had no reason for leaving home in this way except fondness for the young man?"

"I know not," returned the Indian, with a doubtful, almost a hopeful look. "What other reason could she have? Her mother and I loved her more than ourselves. All the young men loved her. One of them—a bad one—had sworn to his comrades that he would have her for a wife in spite of her father"—he smiled very slightly at this point, with a look of ineffable contempt—"but Magadar did not venture to say that in her father's ears!"

"May it not have been fear of this man, this Magadar, which drove her away?" suggested Cheenbuk. "You were not there to defend her. She may have been afraid of him, although you fear him not."

"That is true," returned the Indian, with a brighter look, "though I thought that Adolay feared nothing—but she is not her father."

This wise and obvious truism, or the words of the Eskimo, seemed to afford some comfort to the poor man, for he became more communicative and confidential after that.

"Do you think," asked Cheenbuk, "that your daughter has married this young man?"

"I know not."

"Don't you think it is likely?"

"I fear it is not unlikely."

"Why should you fear it? Are not the Eskimos as strong and brave as the men-of-the-woods?"

For a moment the Indian looked at his companion with high disdain, for the boastful question had aroused within him the boastful spirit; but the look quickly disappeared, and was replaced by the habitual air of calm gravity.

"It may be, as you say, that your nation is as brave and strong as ours—"

"I did not say that," remarked the free-and-easy Eskimo, interrupting his companion in a way that would have been deemed very bad manners in an Indian, "I asked you the question."

With a look of deeper gravity than usual the Indian replied:

"To your question no true answer can be given till all the men of both nations have tried their courage and their strength. But such matters should only be discussed by foolish boys, not by men. Yet I cannot help confessing that it is a very common thing among our young braves to boast. Is it so among the Eskimos?"

The Eskimo laughed outright at this.

"Yes," said he, "our young men sometimes do that—some of them; but not all. We have a few young men among us who know how to hold their tongues and when to speak."

"That is useful knowledge. Will my son speak now, and tell me what he knows about Adolay?"

"He knows that she is well spoken of, and much loved by the tribe with which she lives."

"That is natural," said the Indian, with a pleased look. "No one who sees Adolay can help loving her. Does the young man who took her away treat her kindly?"

"No one can tell that but herself. What if he treated her ill?"

"I would hope never to meet with him face to face," replied Nazinred, with a frown and a nervous clenching of the fist that spoke volumes.

"I have heard," continued Cheenbuk in a quiet way, "that the girl is very sad. She thinks much about her old home, and blames herself for having left it."

"Good," said the Indian emphatically. "That is like the child, to be sorry when she has done wrong."

"And I have heard that the young man who took her away is very fond of her—so fond that he will do whatever she likes to please her. His name is Cheenbuk. She asked him to take her home again, and he has promised to do so when the hot sun and the open water come back."

"Good. The young man must be a good man. Will he keep his promise?"

"Yes. I know him well. He loves truth, and he will do what he says."

"It is a long time till the open water comes. Will the young Eskimo's mind not change?"

"Cheenbuk's mind will not change. He loves Adolay better than himself."

Nazinred pondered this statement for some time in silence, caressing the sleek head of Attim as he did so.

"Will this young man, this Cheenbuk, be willing, do you think, to leave her in the lodges of her people and give her up altogether?" he asked, with a somewhat doubtful look.

"If Adolay wishes to be given up, he will," replied the Eskimo confidently.

"And you know him well?"

"Very well. No one knows him better."

Again the Indian was silent for some time. Then he spoke in a low tone:

"My son has made glad the heart of the man-of-the-woods. When we met by the river and strove together, we were drawn by a cord that anger could not snap. It is strange that you should now be chosen by Manitou to bring me such good news."

"Manitou can do stranger things than this, my father."

No more was said at that time, for, as both were thoughtful men, a considerable space of time was allowed to elapse between each question and answer. Before it could be resumed the crack of a whip and loud yelping were heard in the distance, and in a few minutes Anteek and two men drove

up to the igloe with the sledge and fresh team of dogs.

"I sent for them," explained Cheenbuk. "My father is tired, he will lie down on the sledge with a bearskin round him, while I take him to the igloes of my people. After that I will take him to Adolay."

"Nazinred will not lie down. He is no longer tired, for his heart is glad."

CHAPTER XXI.

KICK-BALL AND AN IMPORTANT MEETING.

We beg the reader now to accompany us to the Eskimo village, where the men and boys are having a game at kick-ball, a favourite game with those men-of-the-ice, which goes far to prove their kinship with ourselves.

But the details of the game are dissimilar in many ways—only the spirit is the same; namely, an effort to rouse the bodily system to as near the bursting-point as possible without an absolute explosion.

It was a lovely northern night. There was a clearness in the still frosty air which gave to the starry host a vivid luminosity, and seemed to reveal an infinite variety of deep distances instead of the usual aspect of bright spots on a black surface. Besides the light they shed, the aurora was shooting up into the zenith with a brilliancy that almost equalled that of moonlight, and with a vigour that made the beholder think there was a rustling sound. Indeed, some of the natives stoutly asserted that these lights did rustle—but

among Eskimos, as among ourselves, there are highly imaginative people.

Oolalik was there of course. No game was thought complete without the co-operation of that robust Eskimo. So was Raventik, for the game of kick-ball suited his bold reckless nature to perfection, and there were none of the other players except himself capable of opposing Oolalik with any hope of success. Aglootook the magician also took part. The dignity of his office did not forbid his condescending to the frivolities of re-creative amusement. Gartok was also there, but, alas! only as a spectator, for his wound was not sufficiently healed to permit of his engaging in any active or violent work. His fellow-sufferer Ondikik sat beside him. He, poor man, was in a worse case, for the bullet which was in him kept the wound open and drained away his strength. He was wrapped in a white bearskin, being unable to withstand the cold.

The whole male population, except the old men and the wounded, took part in the game, for the ball frequently bounded to the outskirts of the ice-field, where the boys of every shape and size had as good a chance of a kick as the men. As the women stood about in all directions looking on, and sending back the ball when it chanced to be kicked out of bounds, it may be said to have been an exceedingly sociable game.

Old Mangivik took great interest, though no part, in it, and Mrs. M. was not a whit behind him in enthusiastic applause whenever a good kick was given. Of course the fair Nootka was beside them, for—was not Oolalik one of the players? She would have scorned the insinuation that that was the reason. Nevertheless there is reason to believe that that had something to do with her presence.

Our friend Adolay, however, was not there. The absence of Cheenbuk may have had something to do with her absence, but, as she was seated in Mangivik's igloe moping over the lamp, it is more charitable to suppose that a longing for home—sweet home—was weighing down her spirits.

Old and young Uleeta were looking on with great delight, so was Cowlik the easy-going, and Rinka the sympathetic; and it was noticeable that, every now and then, the latter distracted her mind from the play in order to see that the bearskin did not slip off the shoulders of Ondikik, and to replace it if it did. Not that Rinka had any special regard for Ondikik, but it afforded her intense pleasure merely to relieve suffering in any way—so strong was the weakness for which she got credit!

The game had lasted for a considerable time, and the players were beginning to blow hard, when

the ball, kicked by a surprisingly small boy in disproportionately big sealskin boots, chanced to fall between Raventik and Oolalik.

"Oh!" exclaimed Nootka to herself, with a gasp of hope.

"Ho!" exclaimed Oolalik, with a shout of determination.

Raventik exclaimed nothing, but both young men rushed at the ball with furious vigour. The active Oolalik reached it first.

"Ah!" sighed Nootka with satisfaction.

"Hoh!" cried Oolalik, with a kick so full of energy that it would have sent the ball far over a neighbouring iceberg, if it had not been stopped dead by the broad face of Raventik, who went flat on his back in consequence—either from the tremendous force of the concussion, or because of a slip of the foot, or both.

This incident was received with shouts of laughter and great applause, while Raventik sprang to his feet. Instead of taking it in good part, however, the reckless man allowed his temper to get the better of him, and made a rush at Oolalik, who, being naturally peaceful in temperament, dodged his adversary, and, with a laugh, ran away from him; but the other was not to be baulked in this way. A fight he was bent on, so he gave chase at the top of his speed. The man of peace, however, was too fleet

for him. He kept just out of his reach, thereby stimulating his rage and inducing many a "spurt" which proved abortive. At last, being desirous of putting an end to the chase—or himself losing patience, who knows?—Oolalik suddenly dropped on his hands and knees, and Raventik, plunging headlong over him, fell flat on his breast and went scooting over the ice for about ten or fifteen yards before he could stop himself. What would have happened after that no one can tell, for just then the attention of the whole party was diverted by a shout in the distance, accompanied by the cracking of a whip and the usual sounds that announced an arrival.

A few seconds later and Cheenbuk drove his team into the village.

He had warned Anteek to say nothing about the finding of the Indian, and the boy had been faithful to his trust, so that the whole population was thrown into a state of wide-eyed amazement, not to mention excitement, when the tall form of the Fire-spouter was seen to rise from the sledge and turn his grave countenance upon them with the calm dignity characteristic of his race. The dogs of the village showed not only surprise, but also their teeth, on observing Attim among the new comers, and they made for him, but a well-directed and sweeping cut from the

whip of the watchful Anteek scattered them right and left, and rebuked their inhospitality.

Thereafter Cheenbuk began to tell how he had discovered the Indian on the ice, and introduced the subject with some prolixity, like not a few white men when they have a good story to tell. Moreover, the wily man had an eye to dramatic effect, and, observing that Adolay was not among the women, he made up his mind to what is called "prolong the agony" as far as possible.

Unfortunately for his purpose, there happened to be blowing at the time a gentle nor'-west breeze, which, in its direct course towards them, had to pass over the igloe that belonged to Mangivik, and the humble-minded Attim, keen of scent, recognised something there that caused him suddenly to cock his ears and tail, open his eyes, and give vent to a sharp interrogative yelp!

Next moment he charged through the canine throng—scattering them in abject terror—dashed into the tunnel of Mangivik's dwelling, and disappeared from view. Another moment and there issued from the igloe—not a scream: Indian girls seldom or never scream—but a female ebullition of some sort, which was immediately followed by the sudden appearance of Adolay, with the dog waltzing around her, wriggling his tail as if he



"SHE BOUNDED TOWARDS HIM."—Page 247.

wished to shake off that member, and otherwise behaving himself like a quadrupedal lunatic.

Eager inquiry was intensified in every line of her expressive face, and, withal, a half-scared look, as if she expected to see a ghost. If she had really seen one the effect could scarcely have been more impressive when her eyes encountered those of her father. She stood for a few moments gazing, and utterly unable to move, then, with a wild cry of joy, she bounded towards him. In like manner the Indian stood at first as if thunderstruck, for Cheenbuk's information had not led him to expect this. Then his wonted dignity utterly forsook him; for the first time in his life, perhaps, he expressed his feelings of affection with a shout, and, meeting the girl half way, enfolded her in an embrace that lifted her completely off her legs.

The Eskimos, as may well be imagined, were not only surprised but profoundly interested in the scene, and Cheenbuk was constrained to draw his narrative to an abrupt conclusion by informing them hurriedly that the Fire-spouter was the father of Adolay; that he had left home alone and on foot to search for her; that he was also the very man with whom, on the banks of the Whale River, he had fought and fraternised, and that therefore it behoved them to receive him hospitably as his particular friend.

Cheenbuk spoke the concluding sentence with a look and tone that was meant to convey a warning to any one who should dare to feel or act otherwise; but there was little need of the warning, for, with the exception of Aglootook the medicine-man, the chief leaders of the fire-eating portion of the tribe, Gartok and Ondikik, were at the time helpless.

While this irrepressible display of Dogrib affection was enacting, Attim was performing a special war-dance, or rather love-dance, of his own round the re-united pair. He was an unusually wise dog, and seemed to know that he could expect no attention just then; he therefore contented himself with a variety of hind-legged pirouettes, and a little half-suppressed yelping, knowing that his turn would surely come in time.

Meanwhile an incident occurred which seemed further to enhance the dramatic character of the meeting. There burst suddenly and without warning upon the amazed and horrified multitude a miniature thunder-clap, which, being absolutely new to their experience, shook them to their spinal marrow. Several boys of unusually inquisitive disposition, taking advantage of the pre-occupation of the tribe, ventured to poke about the sledge which had just arrived, and discovered the fire-spouter of the Indian. With awe-stricken countenances they proceeded to

examine it. Of course, when they came to the trigger it went off. So did the boys—excepting the one who had touched the trigger. He, having the butt against his chest at the moment, received a lesson which he never forgot, and was laid flat on his back—as much with fright as violence. Fortunately there was nothing in front of the gun at the time save the tip of a dog's tail. Into this one lead-drop entered. It was enough! The owner of the tail sprang into space, howling. Every one else, including dogs and bairns, with the exception of Mrs. Mangivik—who, being as it were petrified with consternation, remained absolutely immovable—fled for shelter behind the igloes, leaving Nazinred, Adolay, Cheenbuk and Anteek in possession of the field.

By degrees their fears were calmed, and according to their courage the rest of the population returned to the scene of the explosion, some half ashamed of having run away, others more than half ready to run again.

"Do they sometimes do like that by themselves?" asked Cheenbuk, referring to the gun.

"Never," said the Indian. "Some one must have touched it."

"The boys," remarked Anteek; "I know them!"

Adolay laughed. "Yes," she said, "I know them too, and they meddle with everything."

"Come, man-of-the-woods," said Cheenbuk, "and see my father's igloe. He is hiding inside of it since the spouter made its noise. This is my sister, Nootka, and that," he added, pointing to Mrs. Mangivik, who was gradually becoming untransfixed, "is my mother."

"Have you told my father all, Cheenbuk?" asked Adolay as they went towards the hut.

The Indian stopped abruptly and looked with a piercing glance at the Eskimo.

"Cheenbuk!" he exclaimed, in a low voice.

"Yes, that is my name," said the young man, with a smile, and yet with a something in his face which implied that he was not ashamed to own it.

For a moment the Indian frowned as if he were displeased, at the same time drawing his daughter close to him. The prejudices of race were at work within him then, and that very human weakness which shows itself in esteeming all nations inferior to one's own strove with his better feelings; but as he looked on the handsome face and brave bearing of the young man-of-the ice, and remembered his sentiments and sympathy, he suddenly stepped up to him and held out his hand.

"The white trader has taught me," he said, "that the difference in men is only skin-deep. The same Manitou made us all. Cheenbuk,

my son, I am grateful to you for your care of my child."

"My father," said the Eskimo, returning his grasp, "your mind is in a good state. So is mine! You must be tired and hungry. Let us go and feed."

CHAPTER XXII.

TELLS OF HUNTING EXTRAORDINARY.

THIS advent of a male Fire-spouter into the little community was a source of much interest and delight to old and young—all the more that he had brought the mysterious spouter with him.

Not less interesting to Nazinred was the community in the midst of which he found himself, for, as we have more than once indicated, our Indian was intellectually far in advance of his fellows, and the opportunity he now had of observing closely the life of the men-of-the-ice in all its details could not be otherwise than full of interest to an inquiring and large-minded man.

On the day, or rather the night, of his arrival he was allowed quietly to eat his supper in the igloe of Mangivik, and go to sleep in peace, but next morning there was a crowding of relatives and friends into the hut, which rendered the meal of breakfast not quite so pleasant as it might have been, for the Indian, having been accustomed all his life to the comparatively open wigwam, did not

relish the stifling atmosphere of the densely crowded snow-hut. However, he belonged to a race of Stoics, and, restraining his feelings, ate his meal with moderate appetite and becoming gravity.

There is reason to believe that he rather liked the earnest attention with which all his movements were closely and openly scrutinised; at all events he proceeded with his meal as calmly as if he had been alone, and in his own wigwam with none but the faithful Isquay and amiable Adolay to observe him.

Staring, as we have already said, is not considered rude among the Eskimos; they therefore sat open-mouthed and eyed, taking mental notes in silence, till breakfast was over, when Nazinred, according to custom, opened his fire-bag, took out his pipe, and began to fill it.

This created a sensation which was expressed by hard breathing and eloquent looks. They had been waiting for this. Of course Cheenbuk had often descanted to them on the subject of smoking, besides showing them how the thing was done, but now they were going to see the amazing thing done, in the right way, by the real Simon Pure—a live Fire-spouter!

"My father," said Cheenbuk at this point, "the igloe is hot, and there are many more who wish to see you do that thing. Will you come outside?"

With a condescending smile the Indian rose.

It was somewhat destructive of his dignity that he was obliged to go down on hands and knees, and creep out through the short snow tunnel, but as there was no other mode of egress he had to submit, and did it with the best grace possible, making up for the brief humiliation by raising himself when outside with ineffable dignity, and throwing his deerskin robe over one shoulder *à la* Roman toga.

He was greeted with something like a British cheer by the entire community of men, women, children, and even dogs, who were waiting outside for him.

Sitting down on a snow-clad rock he went through the process of filling the pipe, striking a light and beginning to smoke, to the unutterable delight of the natives. This delight became not only utterable but obstreperous when Cheenbuk gravely took out the pipe which Adolay had given him and began to keep him company, at the same time bestowing a look—a wink not yet being known to him—on Anteek, who forthwith went off into uncontrollable laughter and was promptly hustled out of the crowd.

The interest aroused by the pipe, however, was as nothing compared with that bestowed on the fire-spouter. For there was a mystery, noise, and deadliness about the latter which tended to evoke feelings of awe rather than amusement.

"I don't like to trouble your father too much, Adolay," whispered Cheenbuk; "would you say to him that we wish very much to see him use the spouter?"

Nazinred was an amiable man. He at once consented, and went back to the hut for his gun, which, remembering the tendency of the boys to meddle, he had kept close beside him all night.

Loading it inside, he re-appeared with it ready. Taking up a lump of ice about the size of one's hand, he set it up on a hummock, and retired to a distance of about thirty yards.

"Tell them all to keep back, out of the way of that, Cheenbuk," said Nazinred.

The excitement and nervous expectation of the Eskimos had been worked up considerably by these preparations, so that they not only retired to a safe distance, but some of them even took refuge behind the igloes, and all held their breath while their guest took aim.

He had loaded with shot, and when the explosion took place the piece of ice vanished, having been blown to atoms. Of course a yell of admiration greeted the result, and all the dogs of the tribe fled on the wings—or paws—of terror, while Attim sat quietly looking on with somewhat of his master's dignity.

But the curiosity of the Eskimos was only whetted by this. They immediately began to

clamour for explanations, so that the Indian found himself at last obliged to undertake a lecture on gunnery, as far as he understood it.

"My father," said Cheenbuk, whose respect for the Indian was rapidly deepening, "some of my people want to know if you can kill bears with the spouter."

"Yes, it will kill bears. I killed a white one not long before you found me."

"And will it kill the walrus too?"

"Yes; it will kill the walrus. It kills anything that has life."

There was an expression of great astonishment at this. Some even ventured to doubt it. Then there was a noisy consultation for a few minutes, after which Cheenbuk was told to ask if their guest would go with them then and there to hunt for a walrus.

"Oh yes;" the Indian was quite ready to go, whereupon the men scattered to harness the dogs and make preparation for an immediate hunt.

"Go and get my sledge ready," said Cheenbuk to Anteek.

The boy was only too glad to obey, for the mission implied that he should have a place on the sledge along with the Fire-spouter.

In a very short time several sledges were ready. Nazinred seated himself on one. Cheenbuk and the others jumped in, the whips cracked, and

away they went amid the shouting of the drivers and the yells of children and women left behind.

It did not take long to find one of those giants of the frozen seas. Some miles out on the ice they came to a place which the walruses had kept open as a breathing-hole. At the time of their arrival it had not been disturbed for some hours, for the water was covered by a coat of young ice, which was quite able to bear the weight of the men singly, though scarcely sufficiently strong for the sledges.

Just as they arrived a walrus took it into its very thick head to crash up through the young ice and have a gambol. The party retired behind a hummock and prepared for action.

"Will the man-of-the-woods go first and try the spouter?" asked Cheenbuk.

"No," replied Nazinred; "the man-of-the-woods prefers to watch how the men-of-the-ice do their work. After that he will use the spouter, which *we* call *pasgissegan*. The white traders call it *gun*."

Harpoons and lances were at once got ready.

"Come, Anteek, with me; bring a harpoon and a coil with you. We will show the man-of-the-woods what we can do."

He said this with a look of self-confidence, for Cheenbuk, being a noted hunter among his fellows, was naturally rather proud of his powers.

Waiting until the walrus dived, the Eskimo and his companion ran towards the hole of open water and then suddenly lay down, for they knew the habits of the brute, and that he would soon reappear. This, in fact, happened before they had lain more than a few minutes. After another gambol the ungainly animal dived again. Up got the two Eskimos and ran at full speed to the very edge of the hole. On rising the third time the walrus found Cheenbuk standing with the harpoon raised. One look of huge astonishment it gave at the man, who instantly drove the harpoon deep into its side, and then ran from the hole as fast as he could, uncoiling the long line of hide until he was some distance off. Then he struck a piece of bone, sharp-pointed, into the ice, and put the loop at the end of the line over it. This checked the dive of the walrus, which in furious rage came up and smashed another hole in the ice, looking fiercely around as if in search of its persecutor. Anteek's opportunity had now come. He ran towards the creature, which, so far from being afraid, smashed up the ice in vain attempts to get upon it. Another harpoon was deftly driven into it, and the boy, running back, fixed his line as the man had done.

These two now began to "play" the walrus, easing off and tightening their lines as required.

Meanwhile the other Eskimos ran forward,

and, taking advantage of the creature's combative disposition, fixed several more harpoons in it, besides giving it many severe thrusts with their lances. But the hide of a walrus is nearly an inch thick, and it was not easy to pierce it with an effective thrust. At last, however, they succeeded in killing it after a battle of over three hours.

"That is hard work," observed Nazinred to Cheenbuk, as they stood watching the cutting up and packing of their prize on the sledges, "and takes a long time."

"Come, now, let my father show us what the—the pass—pass—gi— spouter-gun can do," said Cheenbuk, pointing to his sledge, which Anteek had got ready. "There are more walruses yonder."

He pointed to another hole, not far off, where several were seen rolling about in the water. The Indian stepped on the sledge, the others followed, and in a short time the whole party was concealed behind a hummock close to the hole.

Nazinred now loaded his gun with ball.

"You must first throw a harpoon for fear it should sink," he said, when ready to start.

Without a word Cheenbuk grasped his harpoon and coil and ran forward, for the walrus had dived at that moment. Anteek followed, and Nazinred kept close to both. Once they lay down to let

the animal come up and dive again. The moment it did so they ran at full speed as before to the edge of the hole and waited.

"Send it deep in," muttered the Indian.

"I will," replied the Eskimo.

"So will I," thought the boy, but he was too modest to say so.

The thought had barely passed when the walrus came up with a puff and snort that might have been heard a mile off. Cheenbuk's weapon was successfully launched in a moment. So was that of Anteek, though he missed the animal's side, but hit in the neck. Nazinred took quick but sure aim at one of its glaring eyes, and before the smoke of the shot had cleared away the walrus fell over dead with a bullet in its brain.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A BEAR-HUNT AND A SAD END.

THE Indian chief was after this an object of almost veneration to the Eskimo men, of admiration to the women, and of delight to the boys and girls, who highly appreciated his kindly disposition as well as his skill with the spouter.

He was taken out on all their hunting expeditions, and fully initiated into all the mysteries of seal, walrus, deer, and musk-ox killing. Of course the wonderful gun was brought into frequent requisition, but its owner was obliged to have regard to his powder and shot, and had to explain that without these the spouter would refuse to spout, and all its powers would vanish. When this was thoroughly understood, his hosts ceased to persecute him with regard to displays of his skill.

One day, in the dead of the long winter, Cheenbuk proposed to Nazinred to go on a hunt after bears. The latter declined, on the ground that he had already arranged to go with Mangivik to

watch at a seal-hole. Cheenbuk therefore resolved to take Anteek with him instead. Gartok was present when the expedition was projected, and offered to accompany it.

"I fear you are not yet strong enough," said Cheenbuk, whose objection, however, was delivered in pleasant tones,—for a change for the better had been gradually taking place in Gartok since the date of his wound, and his old opponent not only felt nothing of his ancient enmity towards him, but experienced a growing sensation of pity,—for the once fire-eating Eskimo did not seem to recover health after the injury he had received from the Fire-spouter's bullet.

"I am not yet stout enough to fight the bears," he said with a half-sad look, "but I am stout enough to look on, and perhaps the sight of it might stir up my blood and make me feel stronger."

Old Mangivik, who was sitting close by, heaved a deep sigh at this point. Doubtless the poor man was thinking of his own strength in other days—days of vigour which had departed for ever—at least in this life; yet the old man's hopes in regard to the life to come were pretty strong, though not well defined.

"Well, you may come," said Cheenbuk, as he rose and went out with Anteek to harness the dogs.

In less than half an hour they were careering over the ice in the direction of a bay in the land where fresh bear-tracks had been seen the day before.

The bay was a deep one, extending four or five miles up into the interior of the island.

We have assumed that the land in question was an island because of its being in the neighbourhood of a large cluster of islands which varied very considerably in size; but there is no certainty as to this, for the region was then, and still is, very imperfectly known. Indeed, it is still a matter of dispute among geographers, we believe, whether continents or seas lie between that part of the coast of America and the North Pole.

As far as appearance went the land might have been the edge of a vast continent, for the valley up which the Eskimos were driving extended inwards and upwards until it was lost in a region where eternal glaciers mingled with the clouds, or reared their grey ridges against the dark winter sky. It was a scene of cold, wild magnificence and desolation, which might have produced awe in the hearts of civilised men, though of course it must have seemed commonplace and tame enough to natives who had never seen anything much softer or less imposing.

The party had travelled about four miles up the valley, and reached a steep part, which was

trying to the mettle of the dogs, when a track was observed a short distance to their right.

"Bear," said Gartok in a low voice, pointing towards it.

Cheenbuk made no reply, but at once ran the team under the shelter of a neighbouring cliff and pulled up. The dogs were only too glad to obey the order to halt, and immediately lay down, panting, with their tongues out.

Fastening the sledge to a rock, and leaving it in charge of a little boy who had been brought for the purpose, the other three set off to examine the track and reconnoitre; intending, if they had reason to believe the bear was near, to return for the dogs and attack it in force.

The track was found to be quite fresh. It led upwards in the direction of a neighbouring ridge, and towards this the party hastened. On reaching the summit they bent low and advanced after the manner of men who expected to see something on the other side. Then they dropped on hands and knees, and crawled cautiously, craning their necks every now and then to see what lay beyond.

Now, the little boy who had been left in charge of the sledge happened to be a presumptuous little boy. He was not a bad boy, by any means. He did not refuse to obey father, or mother, or anybody else that claimed a right to command, and he was not sly or double-tongued, but he was

afflicted with that very evil quality, presumption: he thought that he knew how to manage things better than anybody else, and, if not actually ordered to let things remain as they were, he was apt to go in for experimental changes on his own account.

When, therefore, he was left in charge of the dogs, with no particular direction to do or to refrain from doing anything, he found himself in the condition of being dissatisfied with the position in which the team was fastened, and at once resolved to change it only a few yards farther to the right, near to a sheltering cliff.

With this end in view he untied the cord that held the sledge, and made the usual request, in an authoritative voice, that the team would move on. The team began to obey, but, on feeling themselves free, and the sledge light, they proceeded to the left instead of the right, and, despite the agonising remonstrances of the little boy, began to trot. Then, appreciating doubtless the Eskimo version of "Home, sweet Home," they suddenly went off down-hill at full gallop.

The presumptuous one, puckering his face, was about to vent his dismay in a lamentable yell, when it suddenly occurred to him that he might thereby disturb the hunters and earn a severe flogging. He therefore restrained himself, and sat down to indulge in silent sorrow.

Meanwhile the explorers topped the ridge, and, peeping over, saw a large white bear not more than a hundred yards off, sitting on its haunches, engaged, apparently, in contemplation of the scenery.

At this critical moment they heard a noise behind them, and, glancing back, beheld their dogs careering homeward, with the empty sledge swinging wildly in the rear. Cheenbuk looked at Gartok, and then both looked at the bear. Apparently the ridge prevented the distant sound from reaching it, for it did not move.

"We must go at it alone—without dogs," said Gartok, grasping his spear, while a flash of the old fire gleamed in his eyes.

"You must not try," said Cheenbuk; "the drive here has already tired you out. Anteek will do it with me. This is not the first time that we have hunted together."

The boy said nothing, but regarded his friend with a look of gratified pride, while he grasped his spear more firmly.

"Good," returned Gartok, in a resigned tone; "I will stand by to help if there is need."

Nothing more was said, but Cheenbuk looked at Anteek and gave the brief order—"Go!"

The boy knew well what to do. Grasping his spear, he ran out alone towards the bear and flourished it aloft. Turning with apparent surprise,

the animal showed no sign of fear at the challenge of such an insignificant foe. It faced him, however, and seemed to await his onset. The boy moved towards the right side of the bear. At the same time Cheenbuk ran forward towards its left side, while Gartok went straight towards it at a slow walk, by way of further distracting its attention.

As the three hunters approached from different directions, their prey seemed a good deal disconcerted, and looked from one to the other as if undecided how to act. When they came close up the indecision became more pronounced, and it rose on its hind-legs ready to defend itself. Gartok now halted when within five or six yards of the animal, which was anxiously turning its head from side to side, while the other two ran close up.

The plan was that usually followed by Eskimos in similar circumstances. Anteek's duty was to run forward and prick the bear on its right side, so as to draw its undivided attention on himself, thereby leaving its left side unguarded for the deadly thrust of Cheenbuk. Of course this is never attempted by men who are not quite sure of their courage and powers. But Cheenbuk and Anteek knew each other well. The latter was not, perhaps, quite strong enough to give the death-dealing thrust, but he had plenty of courage,

and knew well how to administer the deceptive poke.

As for Gartok, besides being incapable of any great exertion, he would not on any account have robbed the boy of the honour of doing his work without help. He merely stood there as a spectator.

With active spring Anteek went close in and delivered his thrust.

The bear uttered a savage roar and at once turned on him. Just at the moment the boy's foot slipped and he fell close to the animal's feet. In the same instant the two men sprang forward. Cheenbuk's spear entered the bear's heart, and that of Gartok struck its breast. But the thrust of the latter was feeble. In his excitement and weakness Gartok fell, and the dying bear fell upon him. His action, however, saved Anteek, who rolled out of the way just as his preserver fell.

Cheenbuk and Anteek did not hesitate, but, regardless of the few death-struggles that followed, rushed in, and grasping its thick hair dragged the monster off the fallen man.

Gartok was insensible, and it was a considerable time before he fully recovered consciousness. Then it was found that he could not rise, and that the slightest motion gave him intolerable pain.

"He will die!" exclaimed Anteek, with a look of painful anxiety.

"Yes, he will die if we do not quickly get him home," said Cheenbuk. "He cannot walk, and he would freeze long before we could make an igloe. I must depend on you now, Anteek. Go back as fast as you can run, and send men with a sledge and skins and something to eat. The boy will remain with me. Away!"

Without a word Anteek leaped up, and, dropping his spear, ran as if his own life depended on his speed. The little boy, who had acted so foolishly, came up with anxious look on being hailed, but soon forgot himself in his anxiety to be of use to the injured man.

There was a mound of snow within three yards of the spot where the combat had taken place. To the lee side of this Cheenbuk carried Gartok. Being very strong, he was able to lift him tenderly, as if he had been a child, but, despite all his care, the poor man suffered terribly when moved.

It was well that this mound happened to be so close, for a dark cloud which had been overspreading the sky for some time began to send down snow-flakes, and frequent gusts of wind gave indications of an approaching storm. Having placed Gartok in such a position that he was quite sheltered from the wind, Cheenbuk took off his upper sealskin coat, laid it on the snow, and lifted the injured man on to it. He then wrapped it round him and folded the hood under his head for

a pillow, bidding the boy bank up the snow beside him in such a way as to increase the shelter. While thus engaged he saw with some anxiety that Gartok had become deadly pale, and his compressed lips gave the impression that he was suffering much.

"Come here," said Cheenbuk to the boy quickly; "rub his hands and make them warm."

The boy obeyed with alacrity, while the other, hastening his movements, began to skin the bear. Being an expert with the knife in such an operation, he was not long of removing the thick-skinned hairy covering from the carcass, and in this, while it was still warm, he wrapped his comrade—not a moment too soon, for, despite the boy's zealous efforts, the intense cold had taken such hold of the poor man that he was almost unconscious. The warmth of the bearskin, however, restored him a little, and Cheenbuk, sitting down beside him, took his head upon his lap and tried to shelter him from the storm, which had burst forth and was raging furiously by that time—fine snow filling the atmosphere, while the wind drove it in huge volumes up the valley.

Cheenbuk noted this, and congratulated himself on the fact the wind would favour the progress of the rescue sledge.

Sometimes the whirling snow became so suffocating that the little boy was compelled to cease

his labours on the sheltering wall and crouch close to it, while Cheenbuk buried his nose and mouth in the white fur of the bear until the violence of the blasts abated. By keeping the skin well over the face of the wounded man, he succeeded in guarding him from them effectually. But his mind misgave him when he tried to look through the whirling confusion around, and thought of the long tramp that Anteek would have ere he could commence his return journey with the sledge.

It turned out, however, that this was one of those short-lived squalls, not uncommon in the Arctic regions, which burst forth with unwonted fury, sweep madly over the plains of the frozen seas, rush up into the valleys of the land, and then suddenly stop, as though they felt that all this energy was being spent in vain. In a short time, which however seemed interminable to the watchers on the hillside, the wind began to abate and the wild gusts were less frequent. Then it calmed down; finally it ceased altogether; and the storm-cloud, passing away to the south-east, left the dark sky studded with the myriad constellations of the starry host.

Uncovering Gartok's face to see how it fared with him, and hoping that he slept, Cheenbuk found that he was wide awake, but in a condition that made him more anxious than ever. He looked up at the face of his protector with a faint but grateful smile.

"I have always been your enemy," he said, in a low voice, "but you have been my friend."

"That does not matter now," replied Cheenbuk. "I have never been *your* enemy. We will be friends from this time on."

Gartok closed his eyes for a few seconds, but did not speak. Then he looked up again earnestly.

"No," he said, with more of decision in his tone; "we shall neither be friends nor enemies. I am going to the country where all is dark; from which no sound has ever come back; where there is nothing."

"Our people do not talk in this way. They think that we shall all meet again in the spirit-land, to hunt the seal, the walrus, and the bear," returned Cheenbuk.

"Our people talk foolishness. They *think*, but they do not *know*," rejoined this Hyperborean agnostic, as positively and as ignorantly as if he had been a scientific Briton.

"How do you know that there is '*nothing*' in the place where you are going?" asked Cheenbuk, simply.

Gartok was silent. Probably his logical faculty told him that his own thinking and coming to a conclusion without knowing was as foolish in himself as in his comrades.

The subject of conversation happened to be very congenial to Cheenbuk's cast of mind. He re-

mained thinking and gazing upwards for a minute or two, then he said meditatively, as if he were trying to work out some mental problem—

"Did you ever make a sledge, or a spear, and then destroy it utterly while it was yet good and new?"

"Never. I have been bad, it may be, but I am not a fool."

"Is the great Maker of all a fool? He has made *you*, and if He lets you die now, utterly, He destroys you in your best days. Is it not more likely that He is calling you to some other land where there is work for you to do?"

"I don't understand. I do not know," replied Gartok, somewhat doggedly.

"But you do understand, and you do know, that He would be foolish to kill you now, *unless* He had some work and some pleasure for you in the unknown land from which no sound ever comes back. When a father gives his son a work to do, he does not destroy his son when the work is done. He gives him another piece of work; perhaps sends him on a long journey to another place. When the Maker of all sees that we have finished our work here, I ask again, is it not likely that He will send us to work elsewhere, or is it more likely that He will utterly destroy us—and so prove Himself to be more foolish than we are?"

I do not know," repeated Gartok, "but I do

know that if the Maker of all is good, as I have heard say, then I have not done *His* work here—for you know, everybody knows, I have been bad!"

Cheenbuk was much perplexed, for he knew not "how to minister to a mind diseased."

"I have often wondered," he said at last, "why it is that some things are wrong and some right. The Maker of all, being good and all-powerful, could have made things as He pleased—all right, nothing wrong. Perhaps men, like children, will understand things better when they are older—when they have reached the land from which no sound comes back. But I am not much troubled. The Maker of all must be all-good and all-wise. If He were not, He could not be the Maker of all. I can *trust* Him. He will throw light into our minds when the time comes. He has already thrown some light, for do we not know right from wrong?"

"True, but although I have known right I have always done wrong," returned Gartok moodily. "I am sorry now. If you had not been kind to me, your enemy, Cheenbuk, I should never have been sorry. Ever since I was hurt by the Fire-spouters you have been kind to me, and now you would save my life if you could. But it is too late. You have known right, and done it."

"You mistake," rejoined Cheenbuk gravely. "Like you, I have known right but I have not

always done it; only sometimes. It is not long since I began to think, and it is since I have been thinking that my spirit seems to have changed, so that I now hate wrong, and desire right. I think that the Maker of all must have caused the change, as He makes the ice-mountains melt, for it is not possible that I could change myself. I had no wish to change till I felt the change."

"I wish," said Gartok earnestly, "that—if He exists at all—He would change me."

At that moment Cheenbuk, who was gazing up into the brilliant sky, seemed to be moved by a sudden inspiration, for he gave utterance to the first audible prayer that had ever passed his lips.

"Maker of all," he said, "give to Gartok the spirit that loves right and hates wrong."

The dying Eskimo raised his eyes to Cheenbuk's face in astonishment; then he turned them to the starry host, as if he almost expected an immediate answer.

"Do you think He hears us?" he asked in a faint voice, for the strength of his feelings and the effort at conversation had exhausted him greatly.

"I will trust Him," answered Cheenbuk.

"I will trust Him," repeated Gartok.

For some time they sat in profound silence, and Gartok closed his eyes as if he were falling asleep. The silence was broken by a distant sound. It was the approach of Anteek with the sledge. He

had found the runaway dogs anchored fast between two masses of ice where the sledge had got jammed. Turning the team round he plied his whip with vigour, insomuch that they would have arrived much sooner if the storm had not caused delay.

Having arranged the sledge and its wraps so as to form a comfortable couch for the wounded man, they lifted him on to it, but when they removed the bearskin from his face it was found that he was beyond earthly care: he had passed over to the land from which no sound has ever come back.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE TRADERS AT WORK.

WHEREVER half a dozen average men are banded together and condemned to make the best of each other's society for a prolonged period, there is apt to be a stagnation of ideas as well as of aspirations, which tends more or less to develop the physical and to stunt the spiritual part of our nature.

So thought MacSweenie as he sat one fine spring morning on a rude chair of his own making in front of the outpost on Great Bear Lake which he had helped to build.

The Scottish Highlander possessed a comparatively intellectual type of mind. We cannot tell precisely the reach of his soul, but it was certainly "above buttons." The chopping of the firewood, the providing of food, the state of the weather, the prospects of the advancing spring, and the retrospect of the long dreary winter that was just vanishing from the scene, were not sufficient to appease his intellectual appetite. They sufficed,

indeed, for his square, solid, easy-going, matter-of-fact interpreter, Donald Mowat; and for his chief fisherman, guide, and bowman, Bartong, as well as for his other men, but they failed to satisfy himself, and he longed with a great longing for some congenial soul with whom he might hold sweet converse on something a little higher than buttons."

Besides being thus unfortunate in the matter of companionship, our Highlander was not well off as to literature. He had, indeed, his Bible, and, being a man of serious mind, he found it a great resource in what was really neither more nor less than banishment from the world; but as for light literature, his entire library consisted of a volume of the voyages of Sir John Franklin, a few very old numbers of *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, and one part of that pioneer of cheap literature, *The Penny Magazine*. But poor MacSweenie was not satisfied to merely imbibe knowledge; he wished also to discuss it; to philosophise and to ring the changes on it.

He occasionally tried his hand on Mowat, who was undoubtedly the most advanced of his staff intellectually, but the results were not encouraging. Donald was good-natured, amiable, ready to listen and to accord unquestioning belief, but, not having at that time risen above "buttons," he was scarcely more able to discuss than an average lamp-post.

Occupying the position of a sort of foreman, or confidential clerk, the interpreter had frequent occasion to consult his superior on the details of the establishment and trade.

"I 'm thinking, sir," said he, approaching his master on the spring morning in question, "that we may as well give the boat an overhaul, for if this weather lasts the open water will soon be upon us."

"You are right, Tonal'," answered the trader, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, and proceeding to refill it. "That iss just what wass in my own mind, for we must be thinkin' about makin' preparations for our trip to the Ukon Ruver. We will hev to start whenever my successor arrives here. Man, it will be a goot job when we are off, for I am seek-tired of this place. Wan hes nothin' in the world to think about but his stamik, an' that iss not intellectooal, whatever."

"Are we to use the inch or the inch-an'-a-half nails?" asked Mowat, after a moment's pause.

"Whichever you like, Tonal'. There iss plenty of both in the store, an' ye are as goot a judge o' these metters as I am myself. Just help yoursel', man; only see that the work is done well, for there iss a rough trup before us when we do git away. An' the load will be heavy moreover, for there will be a deal of stuff needed if we are to build an outpost fit to spend a winter in. Man, it iss

pleasant to think that we will break up new ground—open up a new country among savitches that scarce knows what like a white man iss. We will feel quite like what we felt as boys when we was readin' Robinson Crusoe."

"We will need two pit-saws," remarked the practical Orkneyman in a meditative tone.

"No doubt, no doubt," returned MacSweenie, "and a grindstone too. Do you remember what that man Nazinred said when he came here on his last trup,—that the Indians about his country would be fery pleased to see traders settle among them? He little thought—an' no more did I—that we would be so soon sent to carry out their wishes; but our Governor is an active-minded man, an' ye never know what he 'll be at next. He 's a man of enterprise and action, that won't let the gress grow under his feet—no, nor under the feet of anybody that he hes to do wi'. I am well pleased, whatever, that he hes ordered me on this service. An' no doubt ye are also well pleased to go, Tonal'. It will keep your mind from gettin' rusty."

"I am not ill-pleased," returned the interpreter gravely.—"I 'm thinkin' there won't be enough o' pitch to go over all the seams o' the boat. I was—"

"Hoot, man! never mind the putch, Tonal'. What there iss will do fery well, an' the boat that

comes with supplies for the new post will be sure to hev plenty. By the way, I wonder if that fine man Nazinred will hev come back when we get to the Ukon River. It wass a strange notion of his the last comers told us about, to go off to seek his daughter all by himself. I hev my doubts if he 'll ever come back. Poor man! it wass naitural too that he should make a desperate attempt to get back his only bairn, but it wass not naitural that a wise man like him should go off all his lone. I 'm afraid he wass a little off his head. Did they tell you what supplies he wass supposed to have taken?"

"Yes. The wife said he had a strong sled with him, an' the best team o' dogs in the camp.—Do you think the boat will need a new false keel? I was lookin' at it, an' it seemed to me rather far gone for a long trup."

"I will go an' hev a look at it, Tonal'. But I hev been wonderin' that Mozwa, who seemed so fond o' his frund, should hev let him start away all by his lone on such a trup."

"He couldn't help lettin' him," said Mowat, "for he didn't know he was goin' till he was gone."

"You did not tell me that," said the trader sharply.

"Well, perhaps I did not," returned the interpreter, with an amiable smile. "It is not easy to remember all that an Indian says, an' a good deal

of it is not worth rememberin'.—Would you like me to set-to an' clean up the store to-day, or let the men go on cuttin' firewood?"

"Let them do whatever you think best, Tonal'," replied MacSweenie, with a sigh, as he rose and re-entered his house, where he busied himself by planning and making elaborate designs for the new "fort," or outpost, which he had been instructed to establish on the Ukon River. Afterwards he solaced himself with another pipe and another dip into the well-worn pages of the *Penny Magazine*.

Not long after the conversation just narrated, the boat arrived with the gentleman appointed to relieve MacSweenie of his charge on Great Bear Lake, and with the supplies for the contemplated new post.

Action is not usually allowed to halt in those wild regions. A few days sufficed to make over the charge, pack up the necessary goods, and arrange the lading of the expedition boat; and, soon after, MacSweenie with Donald Mowat as steersman, Bartong as guide and bowman, and eight men—some Orkneymen, some half-breeds—were rowing swiftly towards the Arctic shore.

Passing over the voyage in silence, we raise the curtain again on a warm day in summer, when animal life in the wild nor'-west is very lively, especially that portion of the life which resides in

mosquitoes, sand-flies, and such-like tormentors of man and beast.

"We should arrive at the Ukon to-morrow, if my calculations are right—or nixt day, whatever," said MacSweenie to his interpreter and steersman, as he sat smoking his pipe beside him.

"Bartong is of the same opeenion," returned Mowat, "so between you we should come right. But Bartong is not quite sure about it himself, I think. At least he won't say much."

"In that respect the guide shows himself to be a wise man," returned MacSweenie sententiously. "It iss only geese that blab out all they think to everybody that asks them questions."

"Ay, that is true," rejoined Mowat, with a cynical smile, "an' some geese manage, by sayin' nothin' at all to anybody, and lookin' like owls, to pass themselves off as wise men—for a time."

Bartong, who was being thus freely discussed in the stern of the boat, sat in his place at the bow-oar, pulling a steady stroke and casting serious looks right and left at the banks of the river as they went along. He was a dark fine-looking stalwart man, of what may be called mixed nationality, for the blood of Scotchmen, French-Canadians, and Indians flowed in his veins—that of Indians predominating, if one were to judge from appearance. He was what is called in the parlance of the nor'-west a "good" man—that is

to say he was mentally and physically well adapted for the work he had to do, and the scenes in the midst of which his lot had been cast. He pulled a good oar; he laboured hard; could do almost any kind of work; and spoke English, French, and Indian almost equally well. He also had a natural talent for finding his way almost anywhere in the wilderness. Hence he had been sent as guide to the expedition, though he had never been at the Ukon River in his life. But he had been to other parts of the Arctic shore, and had heard by report of the character and position of the river in question.

"It iss gettin' late, Bartong; don't you think it would be as well to camp here?" asked Mac-Sweenie.

The bowman ceased rowing, and the crew followed his example, while he glanced inquiringly up at the sky and round his limited horizon, as guides and seamen are wont to do when asked for an opinion as to professional movements.

"There will yet be daylight for an hour, and there is a small lake ahead of us. If we cross it, we come to a place where one of the Indians said he would meet us if we came to his country."

"That is true, Tonal'," said the leader, turning quickly to his steersman, "I had almost forgot that, it wass so long ago since we met them. Both Nazinred and Mozwa said something about meetin'

us, if we came to settle, though I paid little attention at the time. But are ye sure, Bartong, that this is the lake?"

"I know not. It is not unlikely. If it is the lake, it is small, and we will soon come to the end of it. If it is not the lake, an' turns out to be big, we can camp on the shore. The night will be fine."

"Go ahead then, boys," cried the leader, "we will try."

The oars were dipped at once, and the men pulled with a will, encouraged by the conversation, which seemed to indicate the approaching end of their voyage.

The lake over the bosom of which they were soon sweeping proved to be a small one, as they had hoped, but whether it was the one referred to by the Indians remained to be seen. A sharp look-out was kept for the smoke of wigwams, but nothing of the kind was seen on either side, and the end of the lake was finally reached without any sign of the presence of natives being observed.

"No doubt Mozwa has forgotten, or it may be that he iss away to seek for his frund Nazinred among the Eskimos. No metter. We will camp here, whatever, for the night. I think on the other side o' that point will be a goot campin' ground."

He pointed in the direction indicated, and there

was just daylight enough left to enable Mowat to steer into a narrow creek.

There is something calming, if not almost solemnising, in the quietude with which a boat glides ashore, on a dark night, under the overhanging trees of a wilderness lake. The oars are necessarily stopped, and the voices hushed, while the bowman, standing erect, with a long pole in hand, tries to penetrate the thick mysterious darkness that seems to be the very gate of Erebus. Bartong stood ready to thrust the head of the boat off any rocks that might suddenly appear in their course, or give the order to "back all" should the water become too shallow. But no obstacles presented themselves, and the boat forged slowly ahead until it lay alongside a ledge of rock or natural jetty. Then the spell was broken as the men leaped ashore and began to unload the things that were required for the night's bivouac.

Still, the voices were moderated, for it is not easy to shake off the tranquillising effect of such a scene at such an hour, and it was not till the camp-fire was lighted, and the kettles were on, and the pipes going full blast, that the cheering effect of light chased the depressing influence of darkness away.

Then, indeed, MacSweenie, dropping the *rôle* of leader, assumed that of *bon camarade*; and Mowat, descending from the dignity of steersman, enlarged

upon his experiences in other days; and Bartong, still retaining his dignity however, relaxed his anxious frown and listened with an air of intelligent appreciation that charmed every speaker, and induced the belief that he could cap every anecdote and story if he only chose to open his mouth; while the men divided their sympathies between the narratives, the tobacco-pipes, and the music of the frying-pan and bubbling kettle.

Then, too, the darkness into which they had penetrated fled away,—not indeed entirely, but forsaking the bright spot thus created in the wilderness, it encircled the camp as with a wall of ebony.

It was not long, however, ere appetites were appeased, and the voyagers sought repose; for men who have to work hard all day at a healthy occupation are not addicted to late hours—at least not in the wildernesses of the nor'-west. Ere long every man was rolled in his blanket, stretched out with his feet to the fire and his head on his coat, while the blaze sank low, until at last the red embers alone remained to render darkness visible.

Among the last to seek repose were the leader of the expedition, the interpreter, and the bowman. Having the cares of state on their shoulders, these three naturally drew together for a little consultation after the others had retired.

"What iss your opeenion, Bartong?" asked Mac-

Sweenie, pushing down the tobacco in his pipe with the end of a very blunt and much charred forefinger; "do you think the savitches will come here at all?"

"Maybe they will, and maybe they won't," answered the guide, with a caution worthy of the Scottish portion of his blood. "We niver know what Injins is goin' to do till they do it."

"Umph!" ejaculated the Highlander; "if Solomon had been your grandfather you could scarcely hev made a wiser speech.—What think you, Tonal'?"

"Weel, as ye put it to me, I must say that I 'm strongly of Bartong's opeenion."

"Just so," remarked MacSweenie, with a thoughtful air; "so, as I agree wi' you both, I think it iss about time for us all to turn in."

He turned in accordingly, by lying back in his place and drawing his blanket over him.

The other statesmen immediately followed his example, and the camp subsided into silence.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OUTPOST, AND EFFECT OF A "FUDDLE."

Soon afterwards the expedition of the fur-traders reached the Ukon River, a comparatively insignificant stream, but, from its character and position with reference to the Indians of that region, well suited for the establishment of an outpost. At least so thought the natives who had reported upon it.

"There iss no doubt," remarked MacSweenie, as he surveyed the banks of the river, "that the place is no' that bad, but in my opeenion the summer will be short, whatever, an' the winter it will be long."

"Ye may be sure that you are not far wrong if it's like the rest o' this country," replied Mowat.

"There now, look at that," cried MacSweenie, who was a sketcher, and an enthusiast in regard to scenery; "did ever you see a prettier spot than that, Tonal'? Just the place for a fort—a wee burn dancin' doon the hull, wi' a bit fa' to turn a

grindstone, an' a long piece o' flat land for the houses, an' what a grand composeetion for a pictur',—wi' trees, gress, water, sky, an' such light and shade! Man, it's magneeficent!"

"I'm thinkin' that it'll be a bad job if that keg o' screw-nails we forgot at our last camp is lost—"

"Hoot, man, never mind the screw-nails. We can easy send back for it. But, wow! there's a far grander place we're comin' in sight of—an'—iss that an Indian tent I see?"

"Ay, an' there's more than wan tent," said Mowat, giving his steering oar a sweep that sent the boat farther out into the stream, and enabled them better to see what lay beyond the bend of the river in front of them.

"Hold on, lads; stop pullin'!"

The men lay on their oars and turned round to look ahead. The view presented there was indeed a pleasant and inspiring one, though it was scarcely entitled to the appellation "magneeficent," which MacSweenie applied to it.

The river at that place made a wide sweep on the right, round a low cliff which was crowned with luxuriant foliage. The stream opened out into something like a miniature lake, and the water was so calm that the cliff and its foliage made a clear dark reflection. The left bank was edged by a wide grass plateau some fifty yards wide, beyond

which was a background of bushes and trees, with another "wee burn," which doubtless suggested to MacSweenie the useful as well as the picturesque. The distance was closed by ground varied in form as well as in character, indicating that a stream of considerable size joined the Ukon at that point.

But that which interested the beholders most of all was a number of Indian wigwams, which were pitched on the grassy plateau above referred to.

"Yonder are our frunds, I make no doubt," said MacSweenie in high glee. "That man Mozwa iss as goot as his word; an' I do believe they have chosen the spot an' been waitin' for us. Gif way, boys; 'an', Tonal', make for that landin'-slup—it must either be a naitural wan, or the Redskins hev made it for us."

By that time the natives, having observed the boat, had launched several of their canoes. The first man who came alongside was Mozwa himself.

"What cheer? what cheer, Mozwa?" cried the trader as he reached over the side and shook the Indian heartily by the hand.

"Watchee! watchee!" repeated Mozwa, returning the shake with equal goodwill, though undisturbed solemnity.

The trader's surmise proved to be correct. Mindful of the prospect which had been held out to him and Nazinred, that an expedition might possibly be sent to establish an outpost and open

up the fur trade in their immediate neighbourhood on the Ukon River, Mozwa had made more than one trip to the contemplated scene of operations, after the disappearance of his friend Nazinred, with the view of making himself well acquainted with the land, and ascertaining the best site for the new fort. He did not of course suppose that the pale-faces would be guided entirely by his opinion, but he thought it not unlikely that they might weigh that opinion, and, if acted on at once, much time might be saved during the very brief summer season they had in which to place themselves comfortably in winter quarters before the hard weather should set in.

"You are a wise man, Mozwa," said MacSweenie, when the Indian had explained his views to him in the united smoke of their pipes and the camp-fire. "Your notion of a place for a fort iss not a bad one, an' efter I hev had a look round I hev no doubt that I will agree wi' you that this is the very best site in the neighbourhood. Tell him that, Tonal', an' say that I am fery much obleeged to him for all the forethought and trouble he hes taken."

Whether Donald translated all this as it was delivered we know not. From the peculiar cast of his mind, however, coupled with the moderate depth of his knowledge of the Indian tongue, it is probable that his translation was neither literal nor comprehensive. Indeed, it is not unlikely that

his subsequent remark to one of his comrades—"we told Mozwa it was very good of him to come to meet us, an' the place would do well enough"—was more like the sentence to which he had reduced it. But whatever he said Mozwa seemed to be quite pleased with it.

"By the way, Tonal', ask him about his friend Nazinred."

The serious way in which the Indian shook his head showed that he had no good news to tell. In a short time he had related all that was known about the sudden departure of his friend.

While Mozwa was thus engaged with the leader of the expedition, their guide Bartong was wandering among the wigwams and making himself agreeable to the natives, who, because of his mixed blood and linguistic powers, regarded him as a half-brother.

"Who is this man Nazinred that our leader is always talking about?" he asked of the old chief while seated in his tent.

"He is one of our chiefs, one of our boldest braves—"

"But not so brave as he looks," interrupted Magadar, who was present; "he is fonder of peace than of fighting."

"Foolish man!" exclaimed Bartong, with a smile so peculiar that Magadar did not feel quite sure that his remark was sincere. "But has he not left

your tribe? I heard our steersman say something about that."

"He left us in the winter to seek for his daughter, who was carried off by an Eskimo and has never come back since. We don't expect to see either of them again."

Magadar said this with a grave countenance, for, however little he cared for the loss of the father, that of the daughter distressed him a little—not much, however; for could he not console himself with another wife?

Having questioned the old chief a little more on this point, he wandered off into other subjects, and finally left—intending to visit the wife of Nazinred on his way back to camp.

Isquay was sitting beside her niece Idazoo, embroidering a moccasin, when Bartong entered, squatted on a deerskin unceremoniously, and began to fill his pipe,

"What kind of a man is your husband?" asked the guide.

"A good man," replied Isquay, who was tender-hearted, and could not speak of him without moist eyes. "He was a good hunter. None of the young men could equal him. And he was kind. He always had plenty of things to give me and Adolay."

"They say he did not love war," remarked Bartong.

"No; he hated it: but he was brave, and a good fighter—the best in the tribe. None of the young men dared to touch him."

"Was the young brave Alizay afraid to touch him?" asked the guide, with a sly glance at the younger woman.

At this Idazoo flushed and looked up angrily.

"No," she said sharply; "Alizay fears nothing."

Bartong took no notice of the remark, but continued gravely to question the other.

"Was Nazinred very fond of his daughter?" he asked.

"Yes, very."

"And was the girl fond of him and of you?"

"Yes," replied the poor woman, beginning to weep gently.

"And she seems to have been very fond of this Eskimo, who, they tell me, saved your life once."

"She was, but I did not think she would go away with him. It was not like her—she was always so good and bidable, and told me everything."

"Why did your husband go off alone?"

"I cannot tell. I suppose he knew that none of the young men would go with him, or feared they might lose heart and turn back. No doubt he thought it best to go by himself, for he was very brave; nothing would turn *him* back!"

A fresh though silent dropping of tears occurred

here, and a severe pang of remorse shot through the heart of Idazoo as she thought of her unkind report of what had taken place beside the dead tree under the cliff.

"Don't cry, Isquay; Nazinred will come back, you may be sure of that," said the guide, in a confident tone, "and he will bring your little girl along with him, for when a man is good and brave he *never* fails!"

The brevity of summer near the shores of the Arctic Sea rendered it advisable that no time should be wasted in looking about too particularly for a site for the new trading post; and as Mac-Sweenie was well pleased with Mozwa's selection he at once adopted it and set to work.

Deeming it important to open the campaign by putting a good taste in the mouths of his friends the Indians, he began by distributing a few gratuities to them—some coloured beads to the women, and a few lines, fish-hooks, and tobacco to the men. Then he marked out a site for the future dwelling-house and store, got out the tools and set to work to fell, saw, and shape suitable timber for the buildings. He constituted Magadar chief hunter to the establishment, supplied him with a new gun, powder and ball, and sent him off to the woods as proud as, and doubtless much happier than, a king. Mozwa he kept by him, as a counsellor to whom he could appeal in all matters

regarding the region and the people, as well as an overseer of those among his countrymen who were hired to render assistance. Alizay was sent off in a canoe—much to the satisfaction of Mowat—for that forgotten keg of screw-nails which had lain so heavy on his mind, and the old chief was supplied with unlimited tobacco, and allowed to wander about at will, under the agreeable impression that he was superintendent-general of the works. Isquay, Idazoo, and some of the other women were furnished with moose-deer skins and needles, and employed to make moccasins for the men, as well as to do all the needful repairs to garments.

Thus the plateau on the banks of the Ukon River presented, during the weeks that followed, a scene of lively bustle and unfamiliar noise to the furred and feathered inhabitants of those vast solitudes, and formed to the Red men a new and memorable era in their monotonous existence.

At last there came a day when the roof of the principal dwelling was completely covered, the doors were fixed up, and the glazed windows fitted in.

"Now, Tonal'," remarked MacSweenie, on the morning of that auspicious day, "it iss a house-warming that I will be giving to-night, for the Indians will be expectin' something o' the sort, so you will be telling the cook to make the biggest lump o' plum-duff he ever putt his hands to; an'

tell him not to spare the plums. It iss not every day we will be givin' thiss goot people a blow-out, an' it iss a matter of great importance, to my thinking, that first impressions should be good ones. It iss the duty of a new broom to sweep clean. If it continues, goot and well, but if it does not begin that way it iss not likely to come to it, whatever. There iss far more than people think in sentiment. If you fail to rouse a sentiment of goot-will, or confidence, or whatever it may be, at a first start-off, it iss not easy to rouse it afterwards. Hev ye not noticed that, Tonal'?"

"I can't say that I have," answered the interpreter, with a matter-of-fact frown at the ground, "but I have noticed that the pit-saw they was usin' yesterday has been allowed to saw into the holdin'-irons and damaged half o'—"

"Hoots, man! never mind the pit-saw!" exclaimed MacSweenie, with a touch of asperity. "All the planks we want are sawn, an' if they were not, surely we could mend—tut, man, I wonder ye can play the fuddle. It always seemed to me that a goot fuddler must be a man of sentiment, but ye are the exception, Tonal', that proves the rule. Away wi' you an' gie my orders to the cook, an' see that you have the fuddle in goot tune, for we will want it to-night. An' let him hev plenty of tea, for if we gain the women we're sure o' the men."

Mowat retired with a smile on his broad benignant face. He understood his leader, and was not offended by his plain speaking. Besides, it was not easy to make the interpreter take offence. His spirit was of that happy nature which hopeth all things and believeth all things. It flowed calm and deep like an untroubled river. Nothing short of a knock-down blow would have induced Donald Mowat to take offence, but that would certainly have stirred him, and as he possessed vast physical strength, and was something awful to behold when roused, and his comrades were aware of these facts, the serenity of his life was not often or deeply ruffled.

The cook, who was an enthusiast in his art, did his best, and was eminently successful. His plum-duff dumpling was bigger than any gun—at least of ancient type—could have swallowed, and the plums, as Mowat afterwards said, did not need to seek for each other. He made enough of delightfully greasy cakes to feed an army, and, according to his own statement, infused "lashin's o' tea."

Before the hour for the feast arrived that night, Mowat got out his violin and went into one of the rooms of the new house to put it in order. The window of the room looked towards the back of the house, where the forest was seen just beyond the plateau.

Drawing a bench to the window, he sat down

and opened the case. Of course he found the first string broken, but that did not break his heart, for he had a good supply of spare strings, and if these should fail—well, there were plenty of deer-sinews in the land. It was soon put to rights, and, leaning his back against the wall, he began to tickle the strings gently. Whatever he was at other times, there is no doubt that the interpreter was full of genuine sentiment the moment he got the violin under his chin.

Now at that moment three young Dogrib braves chanced to be passing under the window, which was about seven feet from the ground. Though equally young, and no doubt equally brave, as well as equally Dogribbed, those three youths were not equally matched, for one was tall and thin, another was short and thick, while the third was middle-sized and fat. They had been hunting—successfully—for the thick man carried a small deer on his lusty shoulders.

On hearing the first notes of the instrument the three youths started into three different attitudes as if of petrified surprise, and remained so, waiting for more.

They had not to wait long, for, after tickling the fiddle once or twice to get it in perfect tune, Mowat raised his eyes to the pine-plank ceiling and glided softly into one of those exquisite Scottish airs by means of which a first-rate per-

former on the violin can almost draw the soul out of a man's body. We think it was "The Flowers of the Forest."

Whatever it was the three Dogribs were ravished. They turned their heads slowly, as if afraid to break the spell, and looked at each other, showing the whites of their great eyes increasingly, while each raised a hand with spread fingers as if to keep the others from speaking. They had never heard anything approaching to it before. They had never even imagined anything like it. It was an utterly new sensation. What could it be? They had heard of something strange in the musical way from Nazinred and Mozwa, but with the carelessness of youth they had scarce listened to the comments of these men. Now it burst upon their awakened sense like sounds from some other planet. Their mouths opened slowly as well as their eyes, and there was an expression of awe in their faces which betokened a touch of superstitious fear.

Suddenly Mowat drew his bow across all the strings with a skirl that might have shamed the bagpipes, and burst into the Reel o' Tullochgorum.

The effect was electrical. The thick man dropped the deer; the thin man sloped forward; the fat man sprang into the air, and all three made for the woods as if all the spirits of evil were after them in full cry.

We need hardly say, after this, that those Dogrib Indians spent an excited and agreeable evening with the fur-traders. They appreciated the dancing, undoubtedly, though very few of them would condescend to join. They appreciated the plum-duff and the greasy cakes highly, and they more than appreciated the tea—especially the women—which MacSweenie took care to provide hot, strong, and sweet. But there is no doubt that the lion of the evening was—the "fuddle."

CHAPTER XXVI.

A MYSTERIOUS JOURNEY AND A GREAT DISCOVERY.

PUTTING on the wings of imagination, good reader, let us once more fly over the snow-fields of the lone Nor'-west and return to the regions of thick-ribbed ice. We have to apologise humbly for asking you also to fly back a little in time, and plunge once more into the dreary winter, from which, no doubt, you thought you had fairly escaped.

One morning toward the beginning of spring, referred to in last chapter, while yet the northern seas were covered with their solid garment, Cheenbuk announced to all whom it might concern that he intended to go off on a long journey to the eastward—he called it the place where the Great Light rises—for purposes which he did not see fit publicly to reveal.

At that time the Great Light to which he referred had begun to show symptoms of intention to return to the dark regions which it had forsaken for several months. The glimmer on the eastern

sky had been increasing perceptibly each day, and at last had reached the point of producing a somewhat rosy twilight for two or three hours before and after noon. King Frost, however, still reigned supreme, and the dog-sledge as yet was the only mode of travelling among the islands or on the sea.

"Why go you towards the rising sun?" asked Nazinred when Cheenbuk invited him to be one of the party.

"Because it is from my countrymen who dwell there that we get the hard stuff that is so good for our spear-heads, and lances, and arrows. We know not where they find the stuff, and they won't tell. I shall go and find out for myself, and take back plenty of it to our people."

The "hard stuff" referred to was hoop-iron, which, as well as nails and a few hatchets, the Eskimos of the eastern parts of the Arctic shores obtained from whale-ships and passed on to their friends in the more remote regions of the farther north.

"I can tell you how they get it," said the Indian. "White traders to whom our people go with their furs have spoken of such things, and my ears have been open. They say that there are white men who come over the great salt lake from far-off lands in big *big* canoes. They come to catch the great whales, and it is from them that the hard stuff comes."

For some minutes the Eskimo was silent. A new idea had entered his head and he was turning it over.

"Have you ever seen these white men or their *big* canoes?" asked Cheenbuk with great interest.

"Never. The salt lake where they kill the whale is too far from my people's hunting-grounds. But the white traders I have visited have seen them. Some traders have come from the same far-off lands in big canoes of the same sort."

"Is it very far from here to the seas to which these whale-killers come?"

"Very far from the hunting-grounds of the Dogribs, but it may not be far from here."

"I will go and see," said Cheenbuk, with much decision, and he went off forthwith to make preparations. The expedition consisted of one large sledge with a team of twelve dogs. Being resolved not to risk failure by taking too many companions, the Eskimo limited the number to seven, besides himself—namely, Nazinred, with his fire-spouter; Oolalik, whom he deemed the strongest and bravest among the young men; Anteek, the most plucky of the big boys; Aglootook, the medicine-man, whom he took "for luck;" and Nootka, as being the most vigorous and hard-working among the women. She could repair the boots, etc., and do what little cooking might be

required. Cowlik the easy-going was also taken to keep Nootka company.

It was high noon when the party set out on their mysterious journey, and a brighter glow than usual was suffusing the eastern sky, while a gleam of direct sunshine, the first seen that spring, was tipping the peaks of the higher bergs as if with burnished gold.

It was merely a whim that induced Cheenbuk to throw an air of mystery over the expedition. Having no definite idea himself of what he was going in search of, or how long he should be away, he thought it wisest to look solemn and keep his thoughts to himself; thereby impressing his kinsmen with the belief that he was one of the wisest men of the tribe, which in truth he was. Being, as we have said elsewhere, a man of humour and a good-natured fellow, he thought that the presence of the magician, whom he believed to be an arrant humbug, would add mystery as well as interest to the expedition.

Aglootook was himself thoroughly convinced on this point, and sought by every means to induce the leader to disclose his object and plans, but as Cheenbuk maintained inflexible reticence on this matter, the magician made a virtue of necessity, shook his head solemnly when spoken to about it, and gave it to be understood generally that in his and the leader's minds there were rolling

about thoughts and intentions that were far too deep for utterance.

Cheenbuk would have offered a seat to Adolay, but her father thought it better to decline for her. She was therefore left in the camp in care of old Mangivik and his amiable spouse.

Travelling by dog-sledge among the Eskimos is rapid and exhilarating when the ice is unbroken. When the explorers left the village and made for the far east, the plain of ice before them was level and smooth as far as the eye could reach. They therefore went along at a swinging pace, the team stretching out at full gallop, a crack from the whip resounding only now and then, when one of the dogs inclined to become refractory.

The short day soon vanished, and the long night with its galaxy of stars and shooting aurora still found them gliding swiftly over the white plain.

At last a line of hummocks and icebergs rose up before them, as if to bar their further progress, and the dogs reduced their speed to a trot, until, on reaching the broken ice, they stopped altogether.

"We will camp here," said Cheenbuk, jumping off and stretching himself. "Make the igloe here," he added, pointing to a convenient spot in the lee of a small berg.

The whole party went to work, and in a wonderfully short time had constructed one of their snow bee-hives large enough to contain them all.

Here they ate a hasty supper and spent several hours in a slumber so profound and motionless that it seemed as if they were all dead; not a sigh, not even a snore, broke the stillness of the night. Next morning they were up and off long before the first glimmer of dawn proclaimed the advent of a new day.

Fortunately a passage among the ridges of broken ice was found, through which the sledge was hauled with comparative ease, and before noon they had reached the open sea-ice beyond, over which they again set forth at full swing.

Little food had been brought, for they depended chiefly on their weapons to supply them, and as seals abounded everywhere, as well as walruses, they had no lack.

Thus they advanced for several days, sometimes being retarded a little by broken ice, but for the most part dashing at full speed over smooth surfaces.

One day they came to a long stretch of land, extending to the right and left as far as the eye could reach, which seemed to be a check to their progress, for it was extensively covered with willow bushes. Cheenbuk climbed a neighbouring berg with Nazinred to have a look at it. The Eskimo

looked rather glum, for the idea of land-travelling and struggling among willows was repugnant to him.

"I don't like the look of this," he said, turning to his companion; "there seems no end to it."

"Let not my son be cast down," returned the Indian; "men-of-the-woods understand the nature of land. This looks like a low flat, running out from the mainland. If so, it is not likely to be very wide, and we shall be sure to find the great salt lake on the other side of it. Besides, away to the left I see something like a small lake. If we go there we may find hard snow on which the dogs can run."

"There is bad fortune here," said Aglootook, endeavouring to look oracular, as he came up at that moment with Anteek. "We must go far away in *that* direction," he added, pointing to the right, and looking at his leader with the aspect as well as the wisdom of an owl.

The fact was that from the start the magician had been thirsting for some opportunity to display his profound sagacity, and in his opinion the time had arrived, for in other men's extremity he was wont to find his opportunity. True, he knew no more than the king of Ashantee which was the best one to take—right or left,—but much of the power he had acquired over his fellows was due to his excessive self-sufficiency, coupled with reckless

prompitude in taking action. If things went well he got the credit; if wrong—well, he was ingenious in devising explanations!

"Aglootook is wise," said Cheenbuk, with gravity and a glance at Anteek; "I will act on his advice, but first I must take just a little run to the *left*, to find out something that I see there."

Anteek was not naturally rude, but there was a sensation in him at that moment which induced him to turn his back on the magician and become absorbed in the contemplation of a neighbouring berg. When he turned round again his face was a little flushed.

Nazinred was right. There was not only a lake at the place which he pointed out, but a chain of small lakes, over which the dogs scampered as well as if they had been on the open sea. That night, however, they were obliged to encamp among the willows, but next night they reached the other side of what was evidently a large promontory, and finally swept out again on the familiar frozen sea.

The day following they arrived at an obstruction which it appeared as if neither the wisdom of Aglootook, the sagacity of Nazinred, nor the determination of Cheenbuk could enable them to surmount.

This was a mighty barrier of broken ice, which had probably been upheaved by the flow of cross

currents when the sea was setting fast in autumn, or the action of conflicting bergs, many of which were imbedded in the mass, thus giving to it the appearance of a small mountain range with higher peaks rising above the general elevation.

On beholding it Aglootook recovered some of his self-respect, and, with a look of wisdom quite inconceivable by those who have not seen it, expressed his solemn belief that they would have escaped this difficulty if they had only acted on his advice, and travelled to the *right*!

Cheenbuk admitted that he seemed to have been mistaken, in a tone which again set Anteek contemplating one of the neighbouring bergs with a countenance not altogether devoid of colour, and the leader drove the team towards the least forbidding part of the ridge.

"You will never get across," said Aglootook in a low voice.

"I will try," returned Cheenbuk.

"It is madness," said the magician.

"People have often called me mad," responded Cheenbuk, "so if they were right I am well fitted to do it."

It was an exceedingly difficult crossing. In some places the blocks and masses were heaped together in such confusion that it seemed as if the attempt to pass were useless, and the magician solaced himself by frequent undertoned references

to the advantage in general of travelling right instead of left. But always when things looked most hopeless the indefatigable Cheenbuk found a passage—often very narrow and crooked, it is true, —through which they managed to advance, and when the way was blocked altogether, as it was more than once, Cheenbuk and the Indian cleared a passage with their axes, while Anteek led the dogs over the obstruction, and Oolalik guided the sledge over it. Nootka usually stood on a convenient ice-mound and admired the proceedings, while Aglootook, who had no axe, stood beside her and gave invaluable advice, to which nobody paid the slightest attention.

At last, after many a fall and slip and tremendous slide, they reached the other side of the ridge, and once again went swiftly and smoothly over the level plain.

"We shall not find them," remarked Oolalik, becoming despondently prophetic as he surveyed the wide expanse of frozen sea, with nothing but bergs and hummocks here and there to break its uniformity.

"We *must* find them," replied Cheenbuk, with that energy of resolution which usually assails a man of vigorous physique and strong will when difficulties accumulate.

"But, my son, if we do not find them it will not matter much, for the white traders of the woods

have plenty of the hard stuff, and all other things also, and when we return to the Greygoose River at the opening of the waters, we may take the teeth of the walrus and the skins of the seal and begin a trade with them. I have much of their goods in my own wigwam, and Cheenbuk knows that I can guide him to the home of the trader on the great fresh lake."

Oolalik glanced at Nootka while the Indian spoke, as if he felt that a splendid prospect of decorative, ornamental, and other delights was opening up to her. Nootka returned the glance as if she felt that a splendid opportunity of securing such delights for her was opening up to *him*.

Cheenbuk did not reply, being engaged in the profound abysses of thought which had been opened up by his red friend's suggestion.

Before he could find words to reply, Nazinred, whose vision was keen and practised, pointed out something that appeared like a cloud on the horizon ahead of them, and which he declared to be land.

"I have noticed that the eyes of the man-of-the-woods are sharper than those of the Eskimo," said Cheenbuk.

The Indian received this compliment with a gaze of calm indifference, as though he heard it not.

Just then an exclamation from Anteek attracted

general attention. He pointed to a mound of snow on the ice a short way to the left of the track which had a peculiar shape.

"Something covered over with snow," said Cheenbuk, turning the dogs in that direction by the simple but significant expedient of sending his long whip with a resonant crack to the right of the team.

"It is a man," remarked Nazinred as they drew near.

He was right. On clearing away the snow they found the dead body of a man, some portions of whose costume resembled that of a sailor, though of course none of those who discovered it were aware of that fact.

"Kablunet!" exclaimed Cheenbuk, using the Eskimo term for white man.

How long the poor man had lain there it was not easy to guess, for the body was frozen stiff, so that decay was impossible, but the fact that it had not been discovered by bears argued that it could not have lain long. Its emaciated appearance and the empty sack slung across the shoulder showed that death must have been the result of starvation. There was a short loaded carbine lying beside the body, and in a pouch a flask of powder with a few bullets.

"I think," said Nazinred, after careful inspection of the remains, "that this is one of the white

men who come over the salt lake in their big canoes."

"If so," said Cheenbuk, "we will follow his track, and may come to the big canoe itself; perhaps some of the Kablunets may be yet alive."

The Indian shook his head.

"Men do not start off alone on a journey to nowhere," he replied. "The big canoe must have been crushed in the ice, and the men must have started off together to search for Eskimos. I think they must all have died on the way, and this one walked farthest."

"The man-of-the-woods is wise," said Oolalik. 'If we follow the track we shall soon find out."

"Yes," said Aglootook, putting on his most prophetic air. "Go on the track straight as we can go—that is *my* advice, and we shall be quite sure to come to *something*."

Cheenbuk acted on the advice. Having buried the body of the unfortunate sailor in a snow-grave, and taken possession of the carbine and other things, they leaped on the sledge again, and continued to advance along the track, which, though in some places almost obliterated, was easily followed. They had not advanced more than a mile when another mound was discovered, with another seaman below it, whom they buried in the same way, and close to it a third, whose

costume being in some parts a little finer, they correctly guessed to be a chief.

At last they came in sight of a large mound, and on uncovering it found a boat with four dead men lying near it. All seemed to have died of starvation, and the reason why some of them had forsaken the boat was obvious, for it was crushed out of shape by ice; the bottom having been cut completely away, so that all the provisions they had to depend on had no doubt been lost.

"This is not the big canoe," remarked the Indian, while they examined it. "The big one must have been sunk, and they had to try to escape in the little one."

The party spent a long time in examining the boat, and as there was a good deal of iron about it which might be useful, they resolved to re-visit it on the homeward journey.

Setting off again, they now made straight for the land discovered by Nazinred, which now lay like a dark blue line of hills in the far distance. From the abrupt termination of the land at either extremity of the range it was judged to be a large island.

As the night was clear and the ice level, the party travelled all that night, and arrived at the island about daybreak the following morning.

The shore was rocky and desolate, with high

cliffs behind it, so that further progress to the eastward was evidently impossible, unless by passing round the island to the north or south of it.

"I said you would come to *something*," said the magician, sententiously, as they drew near to the forbidding coast.

"You were right, Aglootook. Indeed, it would be impossible for you to be wrong," replied Cheenbuk, with one of those glances at Anteek which rendered it hard for the boy to preserve his gravity; yet he was constrained to make the effort, for the magician was very sensitive on the point, and suspected the boy.

They were by this time running between the headlands of a small bay, and suddenly came in sight of an object which caused them all to exclaim with surprise and excitement—for there, under the shelter of a high cliff, lay a three-masted ship, or, as the Indian termed it, the white man's big canoe.

CHAPTER XXVII.

INTERESTING, AMUSING, AND ASTOUNDING DISCOVERIES.

ALTHOUGH close under the cliffs, and apparently on the rocks, the vessel was by no means a wreck, neither had it the aspect of one. There were no broken masts or tattered sails or ropes dangling from the yards. On the contrary, the masts were straight and sound; such of the yards as had not been lowered were squared, and all the ropes were trim and taut.

The deck was covered over with a roof of canvas, and the snow banked up all round so as to meet the lower edges of it and form a protection from the wind. Up one side of this bank of snow a flight of stairs had been cut, leading to the port gangway, and the prints of many feet were seen all round the ship converging towards the stairs, the steps of which were worn as if by much use.

At first the natives approached the vessel with extreme caution, not being sure of what might be their reception if any man should be on board, and with a sense of awe at beholding a mysterious

object which had hitherto been utterly beyond the range of their experience, though not quite unknown to them by report. By degrees, however, they drew nearer and nearer, until they reached the bottom of the snow staircase. Still there was no sound to be heard in the white man's big canoe to indicate the presence of a human being.

At last Cheenbuk uttered a shout with the view of attracting attention, but there was no reply.

"Make the fire-spouter speak," he said, looking at his Indian friend.

Nazinred silently obeyed, pointed his gun at the clouds, and fired; then the whole party awaited the result, listening intently. They heard much more than had been expected, for the cliffs embraced several echoes, which, being thus rudely awakened, sent the shot crashing back with multiplied violence, to the no little surprise, as well as alarm, of the hearers.

Still all was silent on board of the ship, and at last, coming to the conclusion that there was no living soul there at all, the Indian, having reloaded his gun, began to ascend the staircase, closely followed by Cheenbuk, Oolalik, Anteek, and Aglootook—which last, being a cautious man, was careful to bring up the rear. Nootka and Cowlik remained on the ice to observe the end of it all—the former anxiously curious, the latter curiously easy. For some time these two stood in

silent expectancy. Then Oolalik appeared at the top of the staircase, and, looking down with a face in which solemn wonder had reached its utmost limit of expression, beckoned them to come up.

Nootka obeyed with alacrity; her companion, leisurely.

What the party saw on entering the vessel was well fitted to arouse wonder in their unsophisticated minds. Whether it was one of the numerous discovery ships that have invaded those regions in the present century, or a whaler which had been driven out of its course by stress of weather or power of ice, is uncertain, for although some relics of the expedition ultimately reached the outpost of the fur-traders, nothing was brought away by the Eskimos which bore name or date or writing of any kind. Although ignorant of the meaning as well as the uses of almost everything they saw, those natives were quite sufficiently intelligent to guess that the white man's big canoe had been set fast in the ice the previous autumn, and laid up for the winter in this place of safety to serve as a big igloe or hut.

Their examination of the ship was at first very slow, for they stepped about on tiptoe as if afraid of disturbing some of the ghosts of its former inhabitants. Then, a speculative gaze had to be turned on each object for a few moments, followed by an inquiring glance at each other. The deck

and its accompaniments of masts rising through the canvas roof, and ropes, and blocks, hatches, skylights, companions, etc., afforded them matter for unbounded astonishment; though what they afterwards discovered below was productive of unutterable amazement.

"Hoi!" exclaimed Cheenbuk, pointing at something with all his ten fingers expanded.

He had discovered the binnacle, and was gazing for the first time at the mariner's compass!

"Hi!" cried the responsive Anteek in a wide-eyed condition.

He had discovered the after-companion, which was partially open, and was gazing solemnly into the depths below.

The unwonted nature of their surroundings developed an unsuspected vein of curiosity in Cowlik, who pushed the companion-door open, and, seeing a flight of steps with some degree of light below, she began to descend. Whether Nootka's surprise at this sudden act of self-assertion, or her curiosity, was the stronger, it would be hard to say, but she immediately went after Cowlik. The men, seeing the way thus indicated, did not hesitate to follow.

Of course they all held tenaciously by the brass rail, being afraid to slip on the steep stair, and some of them, slewing round almost naturally, went down in true sailor fashion, backwards.

Reaching the bottom, the girls, probably by chance, turned to the left and entered the after-cabin. The men of the party turned to the right, and became absorbed in contemplation of the steward's pantry. It smelt deliciously, but that was all that remained of its native attractions, for of food or drink there was nothing left.

They had just made this discovery when a loud laugh and then a wild scream from the cabin horrified them. Cheenbuk and Oolalik drew their knives, Nazinred cocked his gun, Anteek grasped a rolling-pin that lay handy, and all four sprang to the rescue.

The scream came from Cowlik. She had suddenly faced a mirror that hung in the cabin, and beheld a perfect representation of her own fat face. It was by no means an unknown face, for she had often had an imperfect view of it in pools and in calm seas, but it quite took her aback when thus unexpectedly and clearly presented. The blaze of astonishment that followed the first glance caused the burst of laughter referred to, and the display of her wide mouth and white teeth in the changed expression induced the scream of alarm. It also made her start backward so quickly that she sent poor Nootka crashing against the starboard bulkhead.

"Look!" cried the frightened girls, pointing to the mirror.



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The three Eskimos sprang forward and received something like an electric shock on beholding their own faces.

Cheenbuk turned to Nazinred, but that usually grave Indian was indulging in a patronising smile instead of sharing their surprise.

"I know what it is," he said quietly. "I have seen it before, in the stores of the fur-traders, but never so big as that."

Familiarity, it is said, breeds contempt. After gazing at themselves in the miraculous mirror for some time, an idea occurred to Anteek. He suddenly shot out his tongue, which happened to be a very long one. Anteek's reflection did the same. Thereupon Oolalik opened his mouth wide and laughed. So did Oolalik's reflection, which had such an effect upon Cheenbuk that he also burst into a fit of laughter. The girls, pressing forward to see what it was, likewise presented grinning faces, which formed such a contrast to the grave countenance of Nazinred, as he stood there in all the dignity of superior knowledge, that the whole party went off into uncontrollable explosions, which fed upon what they created until the tears were running down the cheeks of the Eskimos, and the Indian himself was constrained at last to smile benignly.

But mirth gave place to solemnity again, not unmingled with pity, as they spent hour after hour

examining the various parts of the forsaken ship. Of course they could go over only a small part of it that day. When the short day came to a close they went to the shore and encamped in their usual way—not daring to sleep on board a big canoe, about which as yet they knew so little.

On shore they found more subjects of interest and perplexity, for here were several mounds marked by crosses, and a large mound surmounted by a pole on the top of which were fluttering a few remnants of red cloth. The shape of the smaller mounds naturally led them to infer that they were the graves of white men who had died there, but the large mound was inexplicable until Nazinred recollected having seen a flag hoisted on a pole at the fort on Great Bear Lake.

"I remember," he said to Cheenbuk, "that the traders used to hoist a piece of cloth to the top of a pole like this, at times, when something of importance happened. Perhaps the chief of the big canoe died and was buried here, and they hoisted the red cloth over him to mark the place."

"My father may be right," observed the Eskimo; "but why did they put such a heap of stones above him?"

"Perhaps to keep the bears from getting at him," returned the Indian thoughtfully, "or, it may be, to show him great respect."

Resting satisfied with these surmises, the two

men returned to their encampment without disturbing the mound, which was, in all probability, a cairn covering a record of the expedition which had come to such an untimely end.

Next day, the moment there was enough of light to enable them to resume the search, the Eskimos hurried on board the ship and began to ransack every hole and corner, and they found much that caused their eyes to glitter with the delight of men who have unexpectedly discovered a mine of gold. Among other things, they found in a small room which had been used as a blacksmith's forge, large quantities of hoop, bar, and rod-iron. While Cheenbuk and Oolalik were rejoicing over this find, Anteek rushed in upon them in a state of considerable excitement with something in his hand. It was a large watch of the double-cased "warming-pan" tribe.

"Listen!" exclaimed the boy, holding it up to Cheenbuk's ear, and giving it a shake; "it speaks."

"What is it?" murmured the Eskimo.

"I don't know, but it does not like shaking, for it only speaks a little when I shake it. I tried squeezing, but it does not care for that."

Here again Nazinred's superior knowledge came into play, though to a limited extent.

"I have seen a thing like that," he said. "The trader at the great fresh-water lake had one. He carried it in a small bag at his waist, and used

often to pull it out and look at it. He never told me what it was for, but once he let me hear it speak. It went on just like this one—*tik, tik, tik,* —but it did not require shaking or squeezing. I think it had a tongue like some of our squaws, who never stop speaking. One day when I went into the trader's house I saw it lying on the thing with four legs which the white men put their food on when they want to eat, and it was talking away to itself as fast as ever."

They were still engaged with this mystery when a cry of delight from Nootka drew them back to the cabin, where they found the girl clothed in a pilot-cloth coat, immensely too large for her. She was standing admiring herself in the mirror—so quickly had her feminine intelligence applied the thing to its proper use; and, from the energetic but abortive efforts she made to wriggle round so as to obtain a view of her back, it might have been supposed that she had been trained to the arts of civilisation from childhood.

With equal and earnest assiduity Cowlik was engaged in adorning her head with a black flannel-lined sou'-wester, but she had some trouble with it, owing to the height of her top-knot of hair.

Ridiculous though the two girls might have looked in our eyes, in those of their companions they only seemed peculiar and interesting, for

the step between the sublime and ridiculous is altogether relative, in Eskimo-land as elsewhere. There was no opportunity, however, to dwell long in contemplation of any new thing, for the discoveries came thick and fast. Cowlik had barely succeeded in pulling the ear-pieces of the sou'-wester well down, and tying the strings under her fat chin, when a tremendous clanking was heard, as of some heavy creature approaching the cabin door. Cheenbuk dropped forward the point of his spear, and Naziñred kept his gun handy. Not that they were actually alarmed, of course, but they felt that in such unusual circumstances the least they could do was to be ready for whatever might befall —or turn up.

A moment later and Aglootook stalked into the cabin, his legs encased in a pair of fishermen's sea-boots, so large that they seemed quite to diminish his natural proportions.

In all their discoveries, however, they did not find a single scrap of any kind of food. It was quite clear that the poor fellows had held by the ship as long as provisions lasted, in the hope, no doubt, that they might ultimately succeed in working their way out of the ice, and then, when inevitable starvation stared them in the face, they had tried to escape in their boats, but without success—at least in one case, though how many boats had thus left to undertake the forlorn hope

of storming the strongholds of the polar seas it was impossible to tell.

On the second night, as the Eskimos sat in their igloe at supper talking over the events of the day, Nazinred asked Cheenbuk what he intended to do,—

"For," said he, "it is not possible to take back with us on one sledge more than a small part of the many good things that we have found."

"The man-of-the-woods is right," interposed the magician; "he is wise. One sledge cannot carry much. I told you that we were sure to find *something*. Was I not right? Have we not found it? My advice now is that we go back with as much as we can carry, and return with four or five sledges —or even more,—and take home all that it is possible to collect."

"Aglootook is always full of knowledge and wisdom," remarked Cheenbuk, as he drove his powerful teeth into a tough bear-steak, and struggled with it for some moments before continuing his remarks; "but—but—ha! he does not quite see through an iceberg. I will—(Give me another, Nootka, with more fat on it),—I will go back, as he wisely advises, with as much as the sledge will carry, and will return not only with four or five sledges, but with all the sledges we have got, and all the dogs, and all the men and women and children—even to the smallest babe

that wears no clothes and lives in its mother's hood, and sucks blubber. The whole tribe shall come here and live here, and make use of the good things that have fallen in our way, till the time of open water draws near. Then we will drive to the place where we have left our kayaks and oomiaks, some of us will go to Waruskeek, and some to pay a visit to the Fire-spouters at Whale River.—Give me another lump, Nootka. The last was a little one, and I am hungry."

The grandeur of Cheenbuk's plan, as compared with Aglootook's suggestion, was so great that the poor magician collapsed.

Anteek looked at him. Then he covered his young face with his hands and bent his head forward upon his knees. It was too early for going to rest. The boy might have been sleeping, but there was a slight heaving of the young shoulders which was not suggestive of repose.

Later on in the evening, while Nazinred was enjoying his pipe, and the Eskimos were looking on in unspeakable admiration, Cheenbuk remembered that the last time he quitted the ship he had left his spear behind him.

"I'll go and fetch it," said Anteek, who possessed that amiable and utterly delightful nature which offers to oblige, or do a service, without waiting to be asked. In a few minutes he was out upon the ice on his errand. Soon he gained the

snow staircase, and, running up, made his way to the cabin where the spear had been left.

Now it chanced that a polar bear, attracted perhaps by the odour of cooked food, had wandered near to the ship and observed the young Eskimo ascend. Polar bears are not timid. On the contrary, they are usually full of courage. They are also full of curiosity. The night was clear, and when that bear saw the youth go up the stair, it immediately went to the place to inspect it. Courage and caution are not necessarily antagonistic. On arriving at the foot of the stair it paused to paw and otherwise examine it. Then it began to ascend slowly, as if doubtful of consequences.

Now, if it were not for coincidences a great many of the extraordinary events of this life would never have happened. For instance—but the instances are so numerous that it may be well not to begin them. It happened that just as the bear began to ascend the snow staircase Anteek with the spear in his hand began to ascend the companion-ladder. But the chief point of the coincidence lay here—that just as the bear reached the top of the stair the boy reached the very same spot, and next moment the two stood face to face within four feet of each other.

We will not go into the irrelevant question which was the more surprised. Anteek at once

uttered a yell, compounded of courage, despair, ferocity, horror, and other ingredients, which startled into wild confusion all the echoes of the cliffs. The bear opened its mouth as if to reply, and the boy instantly rammed the spear into it.

He could not have done anything worse, except run away, for a bear's mouth is tough. Happily, however, the monster was standing in a very upright position, and the violence of the thrust sent him off his balance. He fell backwards down the stair, and came on the ice with an astounding crash that doubled him up and crushed all the wind out of his lungs in a bursting roar.

Fortunately his great weight caused the destruction of five or six of the lower steps, so that when he rose and tried viciously to re-ascend, he was unable to do so.

Of course the uproar brought the men on shore to the rescue, and while the bear was making furious attempts to reconstruct the broken staircase, Nazinred went close up and put a bullet in its brain.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SHIP RE-VISITED AND RE-EXPLORED.

CHEENBUK'S plan was afterwards fully carried out. On the return of the party with all their wonderful news and wealth of old iron, the greatest excitement prevailed in the tribe, and the persons composing the expedition became heroes and heroines for the time being. Each member formed a centre of attraction and a subject of cross-examination to its own particular relatives and friends.

In the igloe of Aglootook was assembled, perhaps, one of the most surprised, if not one of the most credulous, of the gatherings—for the magician had a strong hold on the imagination of the greater number of his tribe, and a wonderful power of oratory. His wife in particular idolised him, which said much for his amiability, and his only sister worshipped him, which spoke volumes for her gullibility.

"Yes," he exclaimed, gazing round on the circle of his admirers; "I said from the first that this

would be a wonderful trip, and that we would be sure to find *something*. And did we not find it?"

(Vigorous assent by look and voice from the audience.)

"And," he continued, with a lowered voice and solemn look, "if Cheenbuk had not turned to the *left* when I told him, we never would have found it."

"But what was it like?" asked an elderly man with a squat nose, whose mind was not quite clear, although he had already listened to an elaborate description.

"Like? Ho! it was like—like—"

"Like a big kayak?" remarked some one.

"No, no. Far, far bigger," said the magician, making an imbecile attempt to indicate inconceivable size by waving arms and outspread fingers; "it was—as big—as—as—"

"A whale?" suggested Squat-nose.

"Bigger—BIGGER!" said Aglootook, with a lost look in his eyes. "You could stuff twenty igloes into it; and there were three great poles rising out of it as thick as—as *me*, with other poles across them, low down and high up, and walrus-lines hanging about in all directions, some as thick as my wrist, others as thin as my finger, and strange igloes inside of it—not of snow, but of wood—with all kinds of things you could think of in there; and things that—that—you could *not*

think of even if you were to try—that nobody ever thought of since the world began—*wonderful!*"

This seemed to fairly take away the breath of the audience, for they could only glare and remain dumb. For a few moments they breathed hard, then Squat-nose said in a deep whisper—

"Go on."

Aglootook did go on, and kept going on so long that his audience were forced to go off and assuage the pangs of hunger which prolonged abstinence and mental excitement at last rendered unendurable. But no sooner was appetite appeased than the magician and his hearers returned to the subject with redoubled energy.

"Is it very, *very* far away?" asked Aglootook's wife, with a sigh, when he explained to her the wonders of the mirror.

"Yes, a long, long way, and some of the ice is very rough for the dogs."

"Not too far for some of us to go and return before the open water?" Squat-nose ventured to hope.

"Plenty of time," returned Aglootook, with a patronising smile. "In fact I advised Cheenbuk to start away back as fast as possible with many sledges, so that my woman will see it with her own eyes."

"And me too?" exclaimed the sister, bringing her palms together with a smack.

"And you too. I advised Cheenbuk to take the whole tribe there to stay till the time of open water, and he agreed. Cheenbuk is a wise young man: he always takes my advice."

The subject of this eulogium was meanwhile giving a graphic and much more truthful account of the expedition to Adolay, Mangivik, his mother, and a select circle of friends; yet, although he did his best, like Aglootook, to convey an adequate impression of what they had seen, we make bold to say that the utmost power of language in the one and of imagination in the other failed to fill the minds of those unsophisticated natives with a just conception of the truth.

But they did succeed in filling most of their hearts with an unconquerable desire to go and see for themselves, so that no difficulty was experienced in persuading the whole tribe—men, women, children, and dogs—to consent to a general migration.

Even Anteek held his court that night in the tent of old Uleeta.

Since the death of Gartok Anteek had shown much sympathy with that poor old woman. Ill-natured people (for there are such in Eskimo-land) said that sympathy with young Uleeta had something to do with his frequent visits to the tent. Well, and why not? The sympathy was not the less sincere that it was extended to both.

Anyhow, a large circle of juvenile admirers of both sexes assembled under the snow roof to hear the young lecturer, and we are inclined to think that his discourse was quite as instructive and interesting as the narratives of his seniors. He did not exaggerate anything, for Anteek was essentially truthful in spirit. Nothing would induce him to lie or to give a false impression if he could help it, but the vivid play of his fancy and the sparkling flow of his young imagination were such that he kept his audience in a constant ripple of amusement and fever of anticipation. He was particularly strong on Aglootook, and whatever that wily magician gained in the esteem of the adults, he certainly lost among the juveniles.

So eager were the Eskimos to see the wonderful sights that had been described to them, that they at once set about preparation for departure. On the second day after the return of the exploring party the entire village, having previously hidden away in a secure place the things already obtained from the ship, mounted their sledges and commenced their journey amid much noise and glee in the direction of what was to them the far east.

It is needless, and would be tedious, to carry the patient reader a second time over the same ground. Suffice it to say that when they reached the spot, and were introduced to the white man's "BIG"

kayak, they felt disposed to echo the words of the Queen of Sheba, and exclaim that half had not been told them—not even although that huge humbug Aglootook had told them a great deal too much!

New circumstances are apt to engender new conditions in savage as well as civilised life. It is scarcely credible what an amount of hitherto latent vanity was evoked by that mirror in the cabin, and that too in the most unlikely characters. Mangivik, for instance, spent much of his time the first few days in admiring his grey locks in the glass. And old Uleeta, although one of the plainest of the tribe, seemed never to tire of looking at herself. Squat-nose, also, was prone to stand in front of that mirror, making hideous faces at himself and laughing violently; but there is reason to believe that it was not vanity which influenced him so much as a philosophical desire to ascertain the cause of his own ugliness! Aglootook likewise wasted much of his valuable time before it.

A new sense of shame was by this means developed among these natives, as well as the power to blush; because after people had been interrupted frequently in this act of self-admiration, they were laughed at, and the constant recurrence of this laughter aroused a feeling of indignation, at the same time a tendency to hop away and pretend interest in other things! Squat-nose

never did this. All his actions were open as the day—of course we mean the *summer* day,—and he would sometimes invite an intruder to come and have a look at his reflection, as if it were a treat. Hence our opinion of his motive.

Not so the magician. The very way he stood, and moved about, and frowned at his double, betrayed his state of mind, while the sensitive way in which he started off to gaze out at the stern windows or have a look at the swinging barometer showed his feeling of guilt when caught in the act. Anteek soon found this out, and was wont to lie in wait so as to catch him in the act suddenly and with exasperating frequency.

After the first excitement of arrival was over, the Eskimos built igloes on the shore and settled down to dismantle the vessel and take possession of her stores, and of all that could be of use to them. They built an elongated oval igloe on the shore as a store to receive the lighter and, as they esteemed them, more valuable articles. Among these were included all the axes, hoop-iron, and other pieces of manageable metal that could be easily carried. There were also numbers of tin cans, iron pots, cups, glass tumblers, earthenware plates, and other things of the kind, which were esteemed a most valuable possession by people whose ordinary domestic furniture consisted chiefly of sealskin bowls and shallow stone dishes.

During the few days that followed, the whole colony of men, women, and children were busily occupied in running between the ship and the big store with loads proportioned to their strength, and with joviality out of all proportion to their size, for it must be borne in mind that these children of the ice had discovered not only a mine of inconceivable wealth, but a mine, so to speak, of inexhaustible and ever recurring astonishments, which elevated their eyebrows continually to the roots of their hair, and bade fair to fix them there for ever!

Perplexities were also among the variations of entertainment to which they were frequently treated. Sometimes these were more or less cleared up after the assembled wit and wisdom of the community had frowned and bitten their nails over them for several hours. Others were of a nature which it passed the wit of man—Eskimo man at least—to unravel. A few of these, like the watch, had some light thrown on them by Nazinred, who had either seen something like them in use among the fur-traders, or whose sagacity led him to make a shrewd occasional guess.

One object, however, defied the brain-power alike of Indian and Eskimo; and no wonder, for it was a wooden leg, discovered by Anteek in what must have been the doctor's cabin—or a cabin

which had been used for doctor's stuff and material. Like letters of the alphabet given in confusion for the purpose of being formed into words, this leg puzzled investigators because of their inevitable tendency to lead off on a wrong scent by assuming that the leg part was the handle of the instrument, and the part for the reception of the thigh a—a—something for—for—doing, they couldn't tell what!

Sitting round the stone lamp after supper, some of them passed the mysterious object from hand to hand, and commented on it freely. The leg was quite new, so that there were no marks of any kind about it to afford a clew to its use.

Probably it had been made by the ship's carpenter for some unfortunate member of the crew who had come by an accident, and died before he could avail himself of it.

Suddenly the magician exclaimed—"I know! I always knew that I would know, if I only thought hard enough. It is a club for fighting with. When the white men go to war they always use these things."

Grasping it in both hands, he swung it round his head, and made as though he would knock Oolalik down with it, causing that young Eskimo to shrink back in feigned alarm.

"That may be so," said Cheenbuk, with serious gravity. "I wonder we did not think of it before."

"But if so," objected Nazinred, who always took things seriously, "what is the use of the hollow in its head, and for what are these lines and ties fixed about it?"

"Don't you see?" said Cheenbuk, with increased seriousness, "after knocking your enemy down with it you pour his blood into the hollow till it is full, let it freeze, and then tie it up to keep it safe, so that you can carry it home to let your wife see what you have done."

The usual quiet glance at Anteek had such an effect on that youth that he would have certainly exploded had he not been struck by an idea which displaced all tendency to laugh.

"*I* know," he cried eagerly. "You 're all wrong; it is a *hat*!"

So saying, he seized the leg out of the magician's hand and thrust it on his head with the toe pointing upwards.

There was a tendency to approve of this solution, and the boy, tying two of the straps under his chin, sprang up, in the pride of his discovery. But his pride had a fall, for the leap thrust the leg through the snow roof of the hut, and the novel head-dress was wrenched off as he staggered back into Cheenbuk's arms.

Despite this mishap, it was received by most of those present as a probable explanation of the difficulty, and afterwards Anteek went proudly

about wearing the wooden leg on his head. The style of cap proved rather troublesome, however, when he was engaged in his researches between decks, for more than once, forgetting to stoop low, he was brought up with an unpleasant jerk.

In a forest, as Nazinred suggested, the high crest might have been inconvenient, but out on the floes the unencumbered immensity of the Arctic sky afforded the boy room to swagger to his heart's content.

Another discovery of great interest was the carpenter's cabin. Unlike most of the other cabins, the door of this one was locked, and the key gone, though if it had been there no one would have guessed its use. Peeping in through a crack, however, Cheenbuk saw so many desirable things that he made short work of the obstruction by plunging his weight against it. The door went down with a crash, and the Eskimo on the top of it. The sight that met his gaze amply repaid him, however, for there were collected in symmetrical array on the walls, saws, chisels, gimlets, gouges, bradawls, etc., while on a shelf lay planes, mallets, hammers, nails, augers—in short, every variety of boring, hammering, and cutting implement that can be imagined.

An hour after the discovery of that cabin, there was not a man or boy in the tribe who was not going about with cut fingers, more or less.

Experience, however, very soon taught them caution.

And here again the superior knowledge of Nazinred came in usefully. Like most Indians, he was a man of observation. He had seen the fur-traders in their workshops, and had noted their tools. Taking up a hand-saw he seized a piece of stick, and, although not an expert, sawed a lump off the end of it in a few seconds. As this would probably have cost an Eskimo full half an hour to accomplish with his blunt knives, they were suitably impressed, and Cheenbuk, seizing the saw, forthwith attempted to cut off the end of a rod of iron—with what effect it is scarcely necessary to explain.

In the course of a few days the quantity of material brought on shore was so great that it was found necessary to begin a second storehouse. While most of the natives were engaged on this, Cheenbuk and the Indian continued their researches in the ship, for a vast part of its deep hold still remained unexplored, owing partly to the slowness of the investigation in consequence of the frequent bursts of amazement and admiration, as well as the numerous discussions that ensued—all of which required time.

While going more minutely into the contents of the cabin, they came, among other things, on a variety of charts and books.

"Have you ever seen things like these?" asked Cheenbuk in a tone of veneration, based on the belief that the Indian had seen nearly everything the world contained.

"Never—except that," he replied, pointing to a log-book; "the traders use things like that. They open them and make marks in them."

Cheenbuk immediately opened the book in question and found marks—plenty of them; but of course could make nothing of them, even after turning them sideways and upside-down. As the Indian was equally incapable, they returned the whole into the locker in which they had found them, intending to carry them on shore when the new store should be ready for the reception of goods.

This was unfortunate, in some respects, as the next chapter will show.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CURIOSITY AND PRESUMPTION FOLLOWED BY CATASTROPHE.

Most of the able-bodied men and a few of the youngsters set off next day to obtain a supply of walrus, seal, and musk-ox flesh—or anything else that happened to be procurable.

Mrs. Mangivik and other ladies were left to look after the camp and prepare for the return of the men, strict orders being left that no one should go on board the ship on any pretext whatever.

But strict orders are not always obeyed. There was one little boy in that community—not a bad boy, but a precocious and very ambitious boy—who chanced not to hear the orders given. Whether he was partially deaf, or purposely did not hear the orders, we cannot say. This little boy's chief weakness was a desire to mimic. Having admired the wooden leg on Anteek's head, and having observed where Anteek had stowed the leg away before setting off with the hunters, he possessed himself of it, put it on his head, and strutted about the camp to the admiration

and envy of all his compeers; for he was a very daring and domineering boy, although small. His name was Doocheek.

Another of Doocheek's weaknesses was a desire to ape the men, and think himself a man in consequence. This, coupled with a consuming curiosity in regard to Nazinred's tobacco-pipe, caused him to observe—for he was remarkably observant—that the Indian had, for the first time since he resided among them, gone off on an expedition and left his pipe behind him—accidentally, no doubt. Doocheek watched his opportunity and secured the fire-bag which contained the smoking implements. Stolen waters are sweet, even in cold climates where all the waters freeze, and the boy cast about for a secluded place in which he might enjoy the sweetness of his pipe to the full without fear of interruption. A blue cavern in an iceberg might do, but the atmosphere in such caves was rather cold. Under the cliffs there were many sheltered places, but the juvenile members of the community were playing there, and would certainly intrude. Out on the floes was an exposed place—to vision as well as to wind and drift. What was left to him, then, but the ship?

Hurrying through the village in order to carry out his plans, the boy encountered Mrs. Mangivik at the entrance to her hut.

"Where are you going, Doocheek?" demanded the woman, with a look of suspicion born of frequent experience.

With that spirit of ambiguous contradiction which would seem to prevail among the youth of all nations, Doocheek replied, "Nowhere."

It is interesting to observe how that remarkable answer seems to satisfy inquirers, in nine cases out of ten, everywhere! At all events Mrs. Mangivik smiled as if she were satisfied, and re-entered her hut, where Nootka was engaged in conversation with Adolay, while she taught her how to make Eskimo boots.

"Did not Cheenbuk forbid every one to go near the big kayak while the men were away?" demanded the woman.

"Yes he did," answered Nootka, without raising her eyes.—"Now look here, Ad—dolay. You turn the toe up this way, and the heel down that way, and shove your needle in so, and then—"

"I am very sure," interrupted Mrs. Mangivik, "that little Doocheek has gone down there. There's not another little boy in the tribe but himself would dare to do it."

"He will lose some of his skin if he does," said Nootka quietly—referring not to any habit of the Eskimos to flay bad boys alive, but to their tendency to punish the refractory in a way that was apt to ruffle the cuticle.

Quite indifferent to all such prospects in store for him, the boy hurried on until he reached the foot of the snow staircase. It had been repaired by that time, and the deck was easily gained. Descending to a part of the interior which was rather dark—for the boy was aware that his deeds were evil—he sat down on a locker and opened his fire-bag.

Eskimos are not quite free from superstition. Doocheek had plenty of natural courage, but he was apt to quail before the supernatural. Apart from the conscience, which even in Arctic bosoms tends to produce cowardice, the strange surroundings of the place—the deep shadows, merging into absolute obscurity, and the feeling of mystery that attached to everything connected with the vessel—all had the effect of rendering Doocheek's enjoyment somewhat mixed. To look at him as he sat there, glaring nervously on all sides, one would have been tempted to say that his was what might be called a fearful joy. If a rat or a mouse had scurried past him at that moment he would have fled precipitately, but no rat or mouse moved. Probably they were all frozen, and he had the place entirely to himself—too much to himself. He began at that point to wish that he had brought another little boy, or even a girl, with him, to keep up his courage and share in his triumphant wickedness.

However, as nothing happened, his courage began to return, and he emptied the contents of the bag on the locker. He knew exactly what to do, for many a time had he watched the Indian fill his pipe and produce fire with flint, steel, and tinder. Beginning with the pipe, he filled it, and then proceeded to strike a light. Of course he found this much more difficult than he had expected. It seemed so easy in the Indian's hands —it was so very difficult in his! After skinning his knuckles, however, chipping his thumb-nail, and knocking the flint out of his hand several times, he succeeded in making the right stroke, and a shower of sparks rewarded his perseverance.

This was charming. The place was so dark that the sparks seemed as large and bright as stars, while the darkness that followed was deeper by contrast. Forgetting the pipe and tobacco in this new-found joy, Doocheek kept pelting away at the flint, sending showers of sparks past his knees, and some of them were so large that they even fell upon the deck before going out.

But an abrupt stop was put to his amusement. Whether it was that something or other in the sides of the ship had given way, or the energetic action of the boy had shaken some fastening loose, we cannot say, but just as he was in the act of raising his hand for another *feu-de-joie*, a shelf over his

head gave way, and a perfect avalanche of pots pans, and noisy tin articles came down with a hideous crash on the deck!

To leap from the locker like a bomb-shell, and go straight up the hatchway like a rocket, was only natural. Doocheek did that as far as was compatible with flesh and blood. He could not remember afterwards by what process he reached the ice and found himself on the skirts of the village. But at that point his self-control returned, and he sauntered home—flushed, it is true, and a little winded, yet with the *nonchalant* air of a man who had just stepped out to "have a look at the weather." His conscience was rather troubled, it is true, when he thought of the fire-bag and the pipe, etc., left behind, but nothing would have induced him to return for these at that time.

Towards evening the walrus hunters returned. They had been very successful. The sledges were loaded up with the meat of several large animals, so that there was a prospect of unlimited feasting for more than a week to come.

"Now, old woman," said Cheenbuk with cheery irreverence to his mother, and with that good-natured familiarity which is often engendered by good fortune, "stir up the lamps and get ready the marrow-bones!"

Regardless of lamps and marrow-bones, all the children of the community, even to the smallest

babes, were sucking raw blubber as children in less favoured lands suck lollipops.

"Had you to go far?" asked Adolay.

"Not far. We found them all close by, and would have been back sooner, but some of them fought hard and took up much time," answered Cheenbuk, who awaited the cooking process; for since he had discovered the Indian girl's disgust at raw meat, he had become a total abstainer on the point.

"And," he added, beginning to pull off his boots, "if your father had not been there with the spouter we should have been out on the floes fighting still, for some of the walruses were savage, and hard to kill."

After supper, as a matter of course, Nazinred looked round with an air of benign satisfaction on his fine face.

"Is my fire-bag behind you, Adolay?" he asked in a low voice.

Doocheek was present and heard the question, but of course did not understand it, as it was put in the Dogrib tongue. The search, however, which immediately began induced him to retire promptly and absent himself from home for the time being.

"It is not here, father."

A more careful search was made, then a most careful one, but no fire-bag was to be found.

"Perhaps Nootka took it to her sleeping-place to keep it safe," suggested old Mangivik.

No; Nootka had seen nothing of it, and Nootka was not a little annoyed when, in spite of her assertion, a search was made in her boudoir, and not a little triumphant when the search proved fruitless.

"Surely no one has taken it away," said Cheenbuk, looking round with an expression that would have sunk Doocheek through the snow into the earth if he had been there.

"*If* any one has taken it away," said Aglootook, with a profundity of meaning in his tone that was meant to paralyse the guilty, and serve as a permanent caution to the innocent, "*something* awful will happen. I don't say what, but *something*; so it will be as well to confess, for I'm sure to find it out—if not soon, then in a long time."

For some moments after this there was dead silence, but nobody confessed, and they all looked at each other as if they expected some one to go off like a cannon shot through the roof suddenly, and were somewhat disappointed that no one did.

By degrees they began to breathe more freely, and at last some went out to seek repose in their own huts, while the inmates of Mangivik's dwelling began to turn in for the night. Nootka and Adolay retired to the boudoir, and the men, drawing bear or seal skins over them, lay down, each where he had feasted.

Nazinred alone remained sitting up, the victim

of unsatisfied craving. North American Indians are noted for their power to conceal their feelings, and Nazinred was not an exception to the rule, for no sign did he betray of the longing desire for a pipe that consumed him. Only a tendency to silence, and a deeper solemnity than usual, seemed to indicate that all was not as he would wish.

At last he lay down. About an hour afterwards, finding that he could not sleep, he arose, cast an envious glance at the peaceful slumberers around him, crept through the entrance tunnel, and stood erect outside, with a gaze of subdued inquiry at the starry host overhead. Bringing his eyes slowly down to the things of earth, his gaze changed suddenly into one of wild alarm.

The cause was obvious enough. When Doocheek fled from the avalanche of pots and tins, as before mentioned, he failed to observe that one of the sparks, which had filled him with delight, had remained nestling and alive in a mass of cotton-waste, or some such rubbish, lying on the lower deck. With the tendency of sparks to increase and propagate their species, this particular one soon had a large and vigorous family of little sparks around it. A gentle puff of wind made these little ones lively, and induced them, after the manner of little ones everywhere, to scatter on exploring rambles. Like juveniles, too, their food at first was simple,—a few more mouthfuls of

waste and a bit of rope here and there; hence their progress was slow and quiet. But time and increasing strength soon made them impatient of such light food. Ere long they created a draught of their own, and were blown into a flame. Then some of them laid hold of some bedding, while others seized upon a bulkhead, and, gathering courage from success, they finally enveloped the 'tween-decks in a mass of flame.

It was at this point in the business that the eyes of Nazinred beheld a column of smoke rising from the after-companion hatch which threw his own smoking powers entirely into the shade, and induced him to utter an unreasoning war-whoop that roused the Eskimo tribe as if by a shock of electricity.

The entire population rushed out like one man. They saw the smoke, with a lurid flame licking out here and there amid the blackness, and seeing the Indian flying down the beach as if he were witch-possessed—as indeed he was—they uttered a united howl, and made off in the same direction.

Fire brigades, of course, are unknown among the Eskimos, but the way in which Cheenbuk improvised and organised an Arctic brigade might have roused the envy even of the London force!

Great men are always with us, though not always recognised. It requires specially great occasions to draw them forth, and make them

visible even to themselves. Many a time in former years had Cheenbuk spilt water on the cooking lamp and put it out. Water at once occurred to his mind in connection with the tremendous lamp that was now fairly alight. But water was at that time locked up seven or eight feet under the solid ice. The active mind of the Eskimo naturally reverted to snow ere yet he had covered the distance between ship and shore. We say naturally, because he was quite aware that snow also extinguished lamps.

Cutting a huge block of snow with his bone knife from the beaten plain, he shouted in a voice of thunder: "Hi! every one. Look at me! Do as I do!"

He shouldered the mass, sprang up the snow stair, and plunged down the smoking hatchway.

Cheenbuk and Oolalik, who were as quick to obey as to command—perhaps quicker—followed their leader's example. Others followed suit according to their respective natures and capacities. Anteek, bearing a mass nearly as big as himself, also dashed below in wild excitement. Some of the young men tumbled their burdens of snow down the smoking hole and went back for more. Even old Mangivik did that as fast as his rheumatic limbs would let him. Raventik, reckless as usual, sprang down with a mighty lump, but finding the atmosphere below uncongenial, hurled it towards

his predecessors, and sprang up again for a fresh supply, watering at the eyes and choking. The poor invalid Ondikik walked as hard as his fast-failing strength would permit. The women even, led by the thoroughly roused Cowlik, bore their share in the work. The children took prompt advantage of the occasion to enjoy by far the wildest game that had ever yet been suggested to their imaginations, and Aglootook the magician, seeing that *something* had come at last to verify his predictions, stood by the capstan and appointed himself to the command of the upper deck brigade, while the others were battling with the flames below.

The battle was indeed a tough one; for the fire had got a firm hold, not only of the materials already mentioned, but also of a mass of canvas and cordage in what must have been the sail-maker's department, and the smoke was growing so dense that it was becoming difficult for the firemen to breathe.

"Here! Nazinred, Oolalik, throw the biggest lumps you can lift over *there*."

Cheenbuk pointed to what seemed a red-hot spot in the dense smoke before them, and set them the example by heaving a gigantic mass at the same place.

A tremendous hiss came forth as the snow was converted into steam, but there was no abatement

in the roar of the devouring element as it licked up everything around it, making the iron bolts red, and, though not themselves combustible, assistants to combustion.

"More snow, Anteek! more snow!" gasped Cheenbuk.

The boy, with a mass of half-melted snow still in his hand, sprang up the ladder, scarce knowing what he did, and appeared on deck, blackened and wildly dishevelled. Aglootook was close to the opening at the moment, giving sententious directions to some little boys. Anteek hurled the snow-mass full at his face with the force of an ardent nature intensified by contempt, and sent him sprawling among the children as he leaped over the side to carry out his orders.

But no energy on the part of Cheenbuk and his comrades, no efforts on the part of their assistants, strong or feeble, could avert that ship's doom. Ere long the smoke and heat between decks became unbearable, and drove the gallant leaders back, inch by inch, foot by foot, until they were compelled to take refuge on the upper deck, when nothing more could be done to arrest the progress of the flames. They retired therefore to the quarter-deck, where the whole of the Eskimos —men, women, and children—assembled to look on at the destruction which they could not now prevent.

"This is a great loss," observed Cheenbuk regretfully, as he sat on the after-rail, mopping the perspiration off his blackened face with his sleeve.

"It might have been a greater loss," said Nazinred, glancing towards the well-filled store-houses on shore.

"That is true; but just think of what a supply of wood for spears and sledges! It would have been enough to last the lives of our children's children, if not longer."

"Did I not tell you that *something* would happen?" said Aglootook, coming forward at that moment.

"Yes, and something did happen," said old Mangivik, "though I could not see how it happened, for the smoke. Did not a lump of snow fly in your face and knock you over among the children?"

The magician ignored the question altogether, and, turning to Cheenbuk, asked if he thought there was yet any chance of saving the ship.

"Not unless you manage to send some of your magic down and stop the fire."

"That is not possible," returned the other, with a wisely grave look. "I can do much, but I cannot do that."

As he spoke, a fresh roar of the fire up the hatchway attracted attention. Gathering strength,

it burst up in a bright flame, showing that the quarter-deck could not long remain a place of security.

Suddenly Nazinred showed signs of excitement which were very unusual in him. Fighting the walrus or bear, or battling with the fire, had never produced such an expression as crossed his face, while he cast a hasty glance round on the women and children, whose forms were by that time lit up by the dull red glow that issued from the column of smoke.

"Cheenbuk," he said in a low voice, "the black stuff that I put in my spouter is kept by traders in round things—I forget the name. If there is one of these round things here, and it catches fire, we shall, every one of us, with the ship, be sent up to the stars!"

The remark was meant to reach the ear of the leader alone, but several of those around heard it, and a wild rush was instantly made for the snow stair, amid feminine and juvenile shrieks. Aglootook incontinently hurled himself over the side, and fell on his hands and knees on the ice, where an opportune snow-drift saved him. Most of the party ran or leaped out of the threatened danger.

"Does not my father think that we should go?" asked Cheenbuk, who began to feel uneasy as a fresh burst of flame set fire to the canvas awning, and made the place they stood on unpleasantly hot.

"Yes, my son, he does," replied Nazinred; "but it does not become men to *run* from danger."

So saying he began to move as if in a funeral procession, closely followed by Cheenbuk, Oolalik, and old Mangivik.

As they reached the head of the staircase something like an explosion occurred, for the deck was partially burst up by the heat. The three Eskimos, who did not think their dignity affected by haste, leaped down the stair in two bounds, but Nazinred did not alter his walk in the least. Step by step he descended deliberately, and walked in stolid solemnity to the spot on which the community had assembled as a place of safety.

They did not speak much after that, for the sight was too thrilling and too novel to admit of conversation. Shouts and exclamations alone broke forth at intervals.

The danger to which they had been exposed while on the quarter-deck became more apparent when a clear bright flame at length shot upwards, and, catching some of the ropes, ran along and aloft in all directions.

Hitherto the fire had been much smothered by its own smoke and the want of air below, but now that it had fairly burst its bonds and got headway, it showed itself in its true character as a fierce and insatiable devourer of all that came in its way.

Catching hold of the awning over the deck, it

swept fore and aft like a billow, creating such heat that the spectators were forced to retreat to a still safer distance. From the awning it licked round the masts, climbed them, caught the ropes and flew up them, sweeping out upon the yards to their extreme ends, so that, in a few minutes, the ship was ablaze from hold to truck, and stem to stern.

Then the event which Nazinred had referred to occurred. The flames reached the powder magazine. It exploded, and the terrified natives yelled their feelings, while the entire structure went up into the heavens with a roar to which the loudest thunder could not compare, and a sheet of intense light that almost blinded them.

The explosion blew out every fork of flame, great and small, and left an appalling blackness by contrast, while myriads of red-hot fragments fell in a shower on the ice, and rebounded from it, like evil spirits dancing around the tremendous wreck that they had caused.

Fortunately the Eskimos were beyond the range of the fiery shower. When they ventured, with awe-stricken looks, to approach the scene of the catastrophe, only a yawning cavern in the floe remained to tell of the stately vessel that had thus ended her final voyage.

CHAPTER XXX.

A DECLARATION, AN INTERRUPTION, AND A GREAT FIGHT.

THE loss which the Eskimos sustained in the destruction of the ship was in one sense considerable, for the woodwork about her would have been of immense value to them; nevertheless their gains in what had already been stored were very great, so that they were able to regard their losses with philosophic composure.

The weeks that followed—weeks of ever increasing light and warmth—were spent in examining and sorting their material into packages suitable for transport on sledges to their summer quarters at Waruskeek.

And here again the knowledge possessed by Nazinred of the habits and implements of the white men was of great service. Adolay also helped to instruct, for when among the sailmaker's tools they found a number of the finer sort of needles and threads, as well as a few feminine thimbles, so to speak, she was able to show the women at once how to use them, and thus saved them from

the trouble of puzzling out the matter for themselves.

"What is this?" asked Anteek of Nazinred one day, presenting a file which he had just picked up.

"That is a thing," replied the Indian, who, being ignorant of the names of most tools, got over the difficulty by calling all objects "things"—"that is a thing made for cutting iron with; rubbing it down and cutting it short. It cuts things that are too hard for a knife."

"I think," returned the boy, regarding it attentively, "we might try it on Aglootook's nose. That wants cutting short, and rubbing down too, for it seems very hard to look at it."

Nazinred did not smile. He was slow to understand a joke. Perhaps he thought it a poor one, but Cheenbuk appreciated it, and met it with the suggestion that an axe might be more effective.

They were gravely debating this point in front of the snow stores, when Ondikik came up and asked when it was likely that a start would be made for home, as he styled their old winter village.

"Go and ask Mangivik. When he gives the order I'm ready," said Cheenbuk.

"Don't say a word to Aglootook," said Anteek, as the young man turned to go; "he will be sure to say that *something* will happen if you do."

"Yes, and as something always does happen"

remarked Cheenbuk, "he's sure to be right, the moosquat."

"Moo-squat" seemed to be used as a term of extreme contempt; it may not therefore be incorrect to translate it—"humbug!"

On being consulted, old Mangivik, who was generally credited with being weather-wise and intelligent, gave it as his opinion that, as the things from the white man's kayak were all ready packed on the sledges, and the weather was very warm, and the days were growing long, and the ice and snow were melting fast, the sooner they set out the better.

Aglootook coincided with that opinion, because he had been led to the same conclusion some days before, chiefly in consequence of profound thought during the dark hours of night. "And if we don't start off now," he added at the end of a portentous oration, "no one can tell what will happen—something fearful, I know, though of course it is not possible to say what."

As no one felt disposed to object, the preparations were hurried forward, and, soon after, the whole tribe went off on the return journey, leaving behind them a black and yawning gulf in the Arctic solitude where so lately a noble ship had been.

Arrived at the old village, these lively and energetic nomads occupied themselves during the brief remainder of winter and the early spring in

securely hiding the goods of which they had become possessed, excepting such light portions as they meant to carry along with them to their summer retreat. Among these were a number of bows, spears, and arrows made from the wood of the burnt vessel, with cleverly adapted iron heads, filed to fine sharp points, and burnished until they glittered in the light. Of knives and axes there were also sufficient to equip most of the young men, and those for whom there were none made to themselves pretty good knives out of pieces of hoop-iron.

When at last the ocean currents and summer heat broke up the solid floes and set the icebergs free to resume their majestic southward course, our Eskimos put their sledges *en cache*, got out kayaks and oomiaks, and, wielding both the short and the long paddle, started off towards the south-west, in the direction of Waruskeek—some of the tribe, however, with a few of the old people, remaining behind.

"Now, Adolay, we are going to take you home," said Cheenbuk, the day they started, while walking with her towards the oomiak in which she was to take her seat and a paddle. "Will the Indian girl be glad to leave us?"

The faintest possible tinge of red suffused her cheek, as she dropped her eyes and replied—"She will be glad to get home."

"When you have got home, and stayed for a time with your people," returned Cheenbuk, who was usually blunt and to-the-point in his conversation, "will you come away with me and be my woman—my squaw?" he added, accommodating his words to the Indian vocabulary.

"I cannot leave my mother," answered the maiden in a low voice.

"That is good," returned the gallant Eskimo, "but Cheenbuk can leave *his* mother and his father too. If I go and live with the men-of-the-woods, will you be my squaw?"

Adolay with downcast eyes gave no answer.

It is said that silence gives consent. We are ignorant as to Arctic opinion on this point, but before light could be thrown on the subject, Anteek came rushing round the corner of a stranded berg with the exclamation—

"Hoi! Cheenbuk—here you are! We thought you must have got into the teeth of a walrus or the arms of a bear!"

Cheenbuk frowned savagely, caught Anteek by his nether garments and the nape of his neck, and, lifting him high above his head, seemed about to dash him on the ground. But, instead, he replaced him gently on his feet, and, with a benignant smile, told him to run down to the shore and put his kayak in the water so as to be ready for him.

Anteek, who was obedience personified, hastened away at once, rubbing his nether garments, and sorely perplexed as to the strange spirit which seemed so suddenly to have taken possession of the friend he so ardently idolised.

It was arranged that Nazinred, being unaccustomed to the Eskimo kayak, should voyage with the women in one of the oomiaks. To a younger brave this might have been regarded as an undignified position, but to a man of his years and tried experience it was only a subject for a passing smile. But the Indian did not accept the position of an idle passenger. Although inexpert in the use of the two-bladed paddle and the light kayak, he was thoroughly capable of using the women's paddle with the single blade, as it bore much resemblance in shape and size to that used in his native canoe. He therefore quietly assumed the post of steersman in the oomiak, which contained Madam Mangivik, Nootka, the easy-going Cowlik, the gentle Rinka, Adolay, and a variety of children and babies. The young man Oolalik, in defiance of immemorial custom, also took a seat and a paddle in that oomiak—out of pure hospitality of course, and for the sole purpose of keeping their guest company. Nootka said nothing, but she seemed amused as well as pleased at the innovation. So were the children, for Oolalik was a prime favourite with young as well as old.

Old Uleeta was the captain of another of the oomiaks, and it was observed that Aglootook cast longing and frequent glances in her direction, believing, no doubt, that a place by her side would be an easier berth than in his own kayak, with nothing but the strength of his own lazy arm to urge it on; but as there was no guest in this case to justify the breach of ancient custom on the ground of hospitality, he felt that manhood required him to stay where he was.

It was a pretty sight the starting of the little flotilla on a brilliant spring morning, with the sea as calm as a millpond, fantastic masses of white ice floating about in all directions, and mountainous bergs here and there giving dignity as well as variety, by their size and light-green sides and deep blue caverns, to a scene which might otherwise have been too suggestive of wedding-cake.

Seals, walruses, sea-birds, and numerous denizens of the deep and air, were sporting about in fearless indifference to the presence of their great enemy, man, but these were unheeded until hunger began to affect the Eskimo. Then the war began, with its usual result—"the survival of the fittest."

One day, however, there was a battle in which it came about that the tables were almost turned, and the survival, as regards the animals, very nearly reversed.

It happened thus:—

We have already referred to the ferocity of the walrus when attacked. As a rule, man is the assailant. Sometimes, however, the monster of the Arctic deep assumes the offensive. On the occasion we are about to describe the attack was made in force.

The day had been brilliantly fine. The bergs had absolutely duplicated and inverted themselves by reflection, so that the sunlit pinnacles became submarine fires, and refraction stepped in to reverse, and as it were shatter, the floes on the horizon, while three mock suns glowed in the heavens at the same time—thus making the beautiful confusion still more exquisitely confounded.

"Walrus!" said Cheenbuk, pointing with the end of his long paddle in the direction of a large berg just ahead of them.

Nazinred, who was close alongside of him, ceased to paddle, and shaded his eyes with his hand. So did his crew. The whole flotilla ceased to paddle, and skimmed slowly along for some moments in dead silence.

Then Aglootook, in virtue of his office and presumption, spoke in a low voice—

"Let us pull softly, and speak not at all. There are plenty of beasts. Wonders shall be done to-day if you attend to what I say."

They all acted on his advice, whether they heard

it or not, for Eskimos need no caution to be wary and silent when approaching a herd of walruses.

There appeared to be at least a hundred animals lying sunning themselves on the various ice-lumps into which the floes were broken up. On one mass about half a mile off there were some twenty rolling about and grunting comfortably to each other. Towards these the flotilla slowly drifted, for the dipping of the paddles could scarcely be seen, and was quite noiseless. By slow degrees they drew near, and then the oomiaks hung back, with the exception of that steered by Nazinred, who had got his fire-spouter ready, while Oolalik stood in the bow, harpoon in hand, and lance ready by his side. The women were not expected to take part in the action—only to look on,—but all the men in kayaks advanced. While these last went on towards the main herd, our Indian steered straight for the ice-cake on which the largest number lay, and as they drew near, the extreme ugliness of the creatures' faces and black heads became very apparent.

There was an old bull with tusks not far short of three feet long among the herd. Beside him was a young bull, which seemed from his wicked expression to be screwing up his courage to assault the old one. The rest were females and young ones of various ages, down to what seemed the

very last walrus baby. Those that were grown up had bristling moustaches like porcupine quills on their flat lips, and the young ones had tusks in different degrees of development—except the baby, whose head resembled an ill-shaped foot-ball.

They did not seem in the least afraid of the approaching oomiak. Perhaps they thought it a very dirty piece of ice covered with rather grotesque seals. At all events, although they looked at it, they went on with their mooing and rolling about, quite regardless of it, until Oolalik sent his harpoon deep into the side of one of the cows. Then indeed there was tremendous roaring and confusion, as the whole herd tumbled off the ice raft into the sea. The splash sent a cataract of spray over the Eskimos; and no wonder, for the old bull was full sixteen feet long, with barrel-bulk equal to a hogshead. Some of the others were not much smaller.

The harpoon thrown was attached to a short line, to the end of which an inflated sealskin was fastened for the purpose of forming a drag on the animal harpooned, and, by coming to the surface, showing its whereabouts. But on this occasion the creatures required no such contrivance to bring them up, for no sooner were the two bulls in their native element than they uttered a horrible succession of roars, and made straight for the

oomiak. A rip in the side of the skin boat would have been fatal, or, if one of the animals were to hook on to it with his tusks, an upset would be certain. Oolalik therefore grasped his long lance, while Nazinred steered so as to keep the bow end-on to the assailants. Another moment and Oolalik dealt the oldest bull a thrust in the neck that sent it back roaring. The cry seemed to be a summons, for answering cries were heard all round, and the walruses were seen to be converging towards their savage old chief. Meanwhile the young bull had reached the right side of the oomiak, where Cowlik sat with an easy-going look on her placid face, admiring the scene. Nazinred was so intent on keeping the craft right that he failed to notice it until its ugly head and ponderous tusks rose above the gunwale. But Cowlik proved equal to the occasion. The easy-going look vanished, and the end of her paddle went into the throat of the brute with a thrust so vigorous that the boat was driven to one side and the tusks missed their mark. At the same moment Adolay, who sat close to her, grasped her paddle like a double-handed sword, and brought it down with surprising force on the creature's left eye. A shot from the fire-spouter followed; the ball entered the same eye, reached the brain, and the young bull sank to rise no more.

The Indian reloaded as fast as he could, but

not in time for another charge from the old bull, which Oolalik met with a stab in the side that again turned him off bellowing. A still younger bull, anxious, perchance, to win its spurs, took advantage of the situation, and made a dash at the opposite side, but Nootka sent about two feet of her paddle down its throat, which induced it to reconsider its intentions.

Just then a loud report told that the spouter was again to the front. This time the ball took effect on the old bull's forehead, and remained there. It neither killed nor stunned, though it probably surprised it, for it sheered off permanently, and all the rest of the herd went away to sea along with it.

After this unexpected and dangerous encounter was over, it was found that several other animals were splashing about in a dying state, or fast to sealskin buoys which the men in the kayaks had managed to affix to them. One of these was closely followed up by Anteek, who had very cleverly launched his harpoon.

Aglootook was also seen to be struggling with a buoy, which he was trying to haul in.

"Keep off!" he cried in great excitement when old Mangivik paddled to his assistance; "I have lanced it twice. I need no help. See, the water is full of blood!"

"That is my beast you are fighting," remarked

Oolalik, as the oomiak came up. "Look at the float: it is mine."

The magician looked crestfallen. He had hoped, probably, to kill the wounded animal, secure it to his kayak, and cast loose the buoy, so that no one could claim it. He made the most of the situation, however, by asserting stoutly that if he had not lanced it well it would certainly have broken loose from the buoy.

When the whole party was assembled on a large floe, cutting up and stowing away the meat, some of the younger men began to comment on the success of the hunt, and to congratulate themselves on the large supply of fresh provisions which they had secured.

"Did I not tell you," said Aglootook, who appeared to be superintending the workers, "that wonders would be done to-day?"

"You did," replied Cheenbuk gravely, "and one of the greatest wonders was that you managed to lance a walrus!"

"It was indeed a great wonder," returned the magician, with a smile of supreme satisfaction, "for I was not hunting at all at the time—only looking on by way of encouraging the young men. It just came in my way and I killed it, easily, in passing. If I had been really hunting, then indeed," he added, with solemn emphasis, "you would have seen something to astonish you."

"I have no doubt of that!" remarked Cheenbuk. At the same moment Anteek went off into an explosion of laughter, which he accounted for by pointing at a baby-walrus which had just put its head out of the water with an expression of surprise on its innocent face that clearly indicated its inability to understand what was going on.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN EXPEDITION AND A DISAPPOINTMENT.

A FEW days later the whole tribe arrived at their summer quarters, and no civilised family of boys and girls ever arrived at their seaside home with a more genuine expression of noisy delight than that with which those Eskimos took possession of the turf-mud-and-stone-built huts of Waruskeek.

It was not only the children who thus let loose their glee. The young men and maidens also began to romp round the old dwellings in the pure enjoyment of ancient memories and present sunshine, while the elders expressed their satisfaction by looking on with approving nods and occasional laughter. Even old Mangivik so far forgot the dignity of his advanced age as to extend his right toe, when Anteek was rushing past, and trip up that volatile youth, causing him to plunge headlong into a bush which happened to grow handy for his reception.

Nazinred alone maintained his dignity, but so

far condescended to harmonise with the prevailing spirit as to smile now and then. As for Adolay, she utterly ignored the traditions of her people, and romped and laughed with the best of them, to the great delight of Nootka, who sometimes felt inclined to resent her stately ways. Cheenbuk adopted an intermediate course, sometimes playing a practical joke on the young men, at other times entering into grave converse with his Indian guest. Aglootook of course stuck to his own *rôle*. He stood on a bank of sand which overlooked the whole, and smiled gracious approval, as though he were the benignant father of a large family, whom he was charmed to see in the enjoyment of innocent mirth.

Cheenbuk soon formed his plans for the future, and laid them before the elders of the tribe the same evening after supper—at that period when poor Nazinred would have been enjoying his pipe, if that implement had not been blown with all his tobacco and tinder into the Arctic sky.

It is but just to the Indian to add that he took his heavy loss in a philosophical spirit, and had by that time quite got over the craving—insomuch that he began to wonder why he had ever come under the sway of such a taste.

"Now," said Cheenbuk, with an air of decision, "listen to my plans."

"Hoi! ho!" exclaimed every one, especially

Aglootook, who added "hay!" in a peculiar tone, thus giving him leave, as it were, to talk as much as he pleased.

"You all know that I have promised to take Adolay back to her own home, and you know that I never break my promises. It is therefore my intention to set off to the Whale River after two suns have gone round the sky."

"Hoi!" exclaimed some of the young men, with looks of surprise at such promptitude.

We may observe here that in those regions the sun in summer describes nearly an unbroken circle in the sky, and that Cheenbuk's reference was to the next two days.

"I will take with me as many men and women as choose to go, but no children. We will take our spears and bows to procure food, but not to fight, for I go to make friends with the Fire-spouters and the white traders. So, if any one wants to fight"—he looked at Raventik here, but that fire-eater happened to be absent-minded at the moment, and sat with downcast eyes,—"*to fight*," he repeated with emphasis, "he will have to remain at home and fight the walrus—or the women!"

A faint "ho!" here indicated a desire for more.

"Nazinred says he is sure his people will be glad to meet us. I am sure we shall be glad to

meet his people. What will happen after that, I cannot tell."

"*Something* will certainly happen," murmured Aglootook, as if holding converse with his own spirit, or with his familiar. "I know it; I am sure of it. I tell you all beforehand."

"And you will accompany us," said Cheenbuk, turning to the magician with a nod of approval. "When we go on an errand of peace we need our wisest men with us, men whose knowledge and experience will make the Fire-spouters think much of us, and men who don't like fighting."

"Now, then," continued the Eskimo, turning again to the young men, "who will go? I shall not allow any to go who are not quite willing."

There was no lack of volunteers. The party was then and there arranged, and two days later they set out on their mission, a goodly band, in kayaks and oomiaks.

The weather continued fine; the days were long; islets for camping-places were numerous, and in process of time the party reached the mouth of the Whale—otherwise Greygoose—River, which they began to ascend.

"Oh!" exclaimed Adolay, with glistening eyes, as she looked from bank to bank; "I know it so well—almost every bush and tree.

"And you love it?" said Nootka.

"Yes, yes; is it not my own country?"

Nootka sighed. "I wish I could love my country like you; but your country sticks. Mine melts away—most of it—every hot sun-time; and it is not easy to care much for things that melt."

"But Waruskeek does not melt," said Adolay sympathetically.

"That is true," returned Nootka, as if pleased to think of something solid, round which her affections might entwine; "but we stay such a short time there—only while the hot sun-time lasts, and I have not time to get very fond of it—not so as to make my eyes open and my cheeks grow red like yours."

"Then you must come and live with me and love *my* country," said the Indian girl in a patronising tone.

"What! and forsake Oolalik?" exclaimed the Eskimo maiden, with heightened colour and flashing eyes. "No, never. *He* will not melt, whatever else does."

"Right, Nootka," exclaimed Adolay, with a laugh. "It would take a very hot sun indeed to melt Oolalik. But perhaps the whole tribe will stay in my country. I think that Cheenbuk will get us over this difficulty. It is wonderful what can be done by a man with a determined mind like Cheenbuk."

"Yes, some of us Eskimos have very determined minds," said Nootka, complacently.

Adolay laughed lightly. "And don't you think that some of the Fire-spouters have also a good deal of determination—especially one of them who left the lodges of his people and wandered over the great salt lake all alone in search of his child?"

"You speak truth," returned Nootka, with a pleasant nod. "I'll tell you what I think: both our nations are very determined—*very*."

Having come to this satisfactory conclusion, the maidens relapsed into general conversation.

But a disappointment was in store which none of the party had counted on.

When the village of the Fire-spouters was reached, not a soul was to be seen. The tent-poles remained, and the ashes of the hearths were still there; but the ashes were cold, and not a man, woman, or child remained—not even a dog.

Nazinred and Adolay hurried at once along the well-known foot-path which led to the spot where their own wigwam had stood, but the place was deserted. As in the case of all the other lodges, only the bare poles, according to custom, were left—the coverings having been carried away.

Father and child looked at each other for some time in silent dismay. It was a terrible home-coming—so different from what each had been fondly anticipating!

The anxious father had strode on in advance of the Eskimo party, but Cheenbuk had followed.

He hung back a little from feelings of delicacy as they neared the old home, and was much moved when he saw irrepressible tears flowing from the eyes of Adolay.

"Have enemies been in the camp?" he asked, when they had contemplated the scene for some minutes in silence.

"No; enemies have not been here," answered the Indian. "There is no blood on the ground; no sign of a struggle. The tent-poles are not thrown down; the ashes of the fires have not been scattered. This would not have been so if there had been a fight. Keep up heart, Adolay!" he added, turning to the weeping girl; "no evil can have come to our people, for they have left of their own will for a new camp; but I am perplexed, for this is the best place in all the Dogrib lands for a village, and we had lived long here in contentment."

"But if that be so, there must be good reason for their having left," suggested Cheenbuk.

"Good reason—yes, the men-of-the-woods never act without good reason."

"My father may be perplexed about reasons," continued the Eskimo, "but surely he will have no difficulty in finding his people, for are not the men-of-the-woods good at following up a trail?"

"Truly you say what is true. It will be easy to find and follow the trail of a whole tribe,"

returned Nazinred, with a smile. "But it is disappointing to find that they have forsaken the old place, and it may be many days before we find them."

"Father!" exclaimed Adolay at this point, a bright look overspreading her features, "mother must have left some sign on a piece of bark, as I did at Waruskeek."

"I had expected as much," said the Indian, looking round the camp, "and I had thought to find it here."

"Not here," returned the girl, with a soft laugh; "you don't know mother as well as I do! There is a tree, under the shade of which she and I used to work when the days were long. If there is a message anywhere, it is there."

She bounded away as she spoke, like a fawn, and in a few minutes returned with a piece of bark in her hand.

"Here it is, father. I knew it would be there. Let us sit down now and make it out."

Sitting down beside the cold hearth of the old home, father and child began to spell out Isquay's letter, while Cheenbuk looked on in admiring silence and listened.

The letter bore a strong family likeness to that which had formerly been written—or drawn—by Adolay at Waruskeek, showing clearly whence the girl had derived her talent.

"The hand at the top points the way clear enough," said the Indian, "but were you careful to observe the direction before you moved it?"

"Of course I was, father. I'm not a baby now," returned the girl, with a laugh and a glance at Cheenbuk.

"That you certainly are not!" thought the Eskimo, with a look of open admiration.

"It pointed *there*," she continued, extending her hand in a north-westerly direction.

"The Ukon River flows there," returned Nazinred thoughtfully, as he traced the various parts of the letter with his forefinger.

"Is that river better than the Greygoose one?" asked Cheenbuk.

"No. It is as good—not better," replied the Indian, in an absent mood. "Adolay, this piece of bark carries some strange news. Here we have the whole tribe starting off for the Ukon with all their tents, provisions, and everything in sledges. So they left in the cold season—"

"Yes, father," interrupted Adolay, knitting her pretty brows as she earnestly scanned the letter, "but don't you see the line of geese flying over the tree-tops? That shows that it was at the beginning of the warm time."

"Adolay is the worthy daughter of a Dogrib chief!" said Nazinred, patting the girl's shoulder.

"I hope she'll be the worthy wife of an Eskimo

youth some day," thought Cheenbuk, but, as usual, he said nothing.

"And look here, father," continued Adolay, —"what do they mean by having all their snow-shoes slung on their guns instead of on their feet?"

"It means that the snow was very soft, beginning to melt, and it was easier to tramp through it without snow-shoes than with them. I hope they have been careful, for there is great danger in crossing lakes and rivers at such a time of the year."

"No fear of danger," said Adolay, with a laugh, "when Magadar leads the way. Don't you see him there in front? Mother knows how to draw faces—only his nose is too long."

"That is to show that he is the guide," observed Nazinred. "Did you not do the very same thing yourself when you made Cheenbuk's nose far too long—for the same purpose?"

Adolay laughed heartily at this, and Cheenbuk joined her, feeling his nose at the same time, as if to make sure that its handsome proportions were not changed.

"And look—look, father!" resumed the girl, growing excited over the letter; "that is your friend Mozwa! I feel sure of it by the shape of his legs. Who could mistake his legs? Nobody is like mother. She does legs as well as

faces. But what is that on his wife's back—not a new baby, surely?"

"Why not, my child?"

"Poor man!" sighed Adolay. "He had enough to provide for before."

"Poor woman!" thought Cheenbuk, but he maintained a discreet silence.

Of course it was decided to follow up the trail of the tribe without delay. As Nazinred had surmised, it was easily found and not difficult to follow. That night, however, the party encamped round the hearths of the deserted village.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

THE brief summer had fled, and autumn, with its bright sunshine and invigorating frosts, had returned to the Far North, when one day, during that short delightful period styled the Indian summer, our friend MacSweenie and his inseparable henchman Mowat sauntered down to the beach in front of the new fort.

"Iss it here the canoe wass lyin', Tonal'?"

"Ay, yonder it is, just beyond the palin', bottom up."

"Man, this iss fine weather—whatever."

"It is that," replied Mowat, who could hardly have replied otherwise, for the fact did not admit of a doubt.

There was an intense brilliancy yet a hazy softness in the air, which was particularly exhilarating. Trumpeting wild-geese, piping plover, the whistling wings of wild-ducks, and the notes of other innumerable feathered tribes, large and small, were filling the woods and swamps with the music

of autumnal revelry, as they winged their way to southern lands. Every view was beautiful; all the sounds were cheerful. An absolute calm prevailed, so that the lake-like expanse in front of the fort formed a perfect mirror in which the cliffs and brilliant foliage of the opposite banks were clearly reflected.

"We will go down to the bend o' the ruver," said MacSweenie, as they launched their canoe, "an' hide in the bushes there. It iss a grand spote for birds to fly over, an' there 's plenty o' ducks an' geese, so we may count on soon gettin' enough to fill the larder to overflow."

"Ay, there 's plenty o' birds," remarked Mowat, with the absent air of a man whose mind is running on some other theme.

MacSweenie was a keen sportsman, and dearly loved a day with his gun. As a boy, on his own Highland hills, he had been addicted to sporting a good deal without the formality of a licence, and the absolute freedom from conventional trammels in the wild North was a source of much gratulation to him. Perhaps he enjoyed his outings all the more that he was a stern disciplinarian—so deeply impressed with a sense of duty that he would neither allow himself nor his men to indulge in sport of any kind until business had been thoroughly disposed of.

"It hes often seemed to me," he said, steering

towards the bend of the river above referred to, "that ceevilisation was a sort o' mistake. Did ye ever think o' that, Tonal'?"

"I can't say that I ever did. But if it is a mistake, it's a very successful one—to judge from the way it has spread."

"That iss true, Tonal', an' more 's the peety. I cannot but think that man was meant to be a huntin' animal, and to get his victuals in that way. What for wass he gifted wi' the power to hunt, if it wass not so? An' think what enjoyment he hes in the chase until ceevilisation takes all the speerit out o' him. H'm! It never took the speerit out o' me, whatever."

"Maybe there wasn't enough o' ceevilisation in the place where you was brought up," suggested the interpreter.

"Ha! ye hev me there, Tonal'," returned the trader, with a short laugh. "Weel, I must admit that ye're not far wrong. The muddle o' the Grampians iss but a wildish place, an' it wass there my father had his sheep-farm an' that I first made the acquaintance o' the muir-cock an' the grouse. O man! but there 's no place like the Heeland hills after a', though the wild woods here iss not that bad. Tonal', man, catch hold o' that bush an' draw close in to the bank. There 's a flock comin', an' they 're fleein' low."

The last words were spoken in a hoarse whisper,

for they had just turned the bend of the river, and MacSweenie had caught sight of a flock of wild-geese, flying low, as he said, and crossing over the land, which at that place jutted out into the stream.

Mowat, though naturally sluggish, was quick in action when circumstances required him to be so. The canoe was drawn close under an overhanging bush, and quite concealed by it. The two men, laying down the paddles, took up their guns and examined the priming to see that it was dry, long before the flock drew near. Then they sat motionless and silent, crouching a little and looking upwards.

The unsuspicious flock of wild-geese came over the point in that curious angular formation in which they usually travel—an old grey gander, as usual, leading. A deep trumpet-note now and then told of their approach. Then the soft stroke of their great wings was heard. Next moment the flock appeared over the edge of the bush that concealed their human foes. At the same instant sportsmen and geese beheld each other. The guns flew to the shoulders of the former; the angle was thrown into dire confusion, and the woods and cliffs reverberated with two shots, which crashed forth at the same moment.

Trumpeting and screaming, the scattered flock passed on, and the hunters pushed out from the

bank to pick up two plump birds which lay dead upon the water.

But those two shots did more than carry death and confusion into the ranks of the grey geese. They caused surprise and something like wild excitement in the hearts of a number of Eskimos who, in their kayaks, happened to be at that moment pushing up the Ukon River, pioneered by a birch-bark canoe, which was propelled by an Indian man and woman.

Submitting to authority while among the ice-floes of the polar seas, Nazinred had, as we have seen, consented to take his place humbly among the women and children in one of the oomiaks. Anteek and one of his companions were permitted to paddle the birch-bark canoe, to their very great satisfaction, until Whale River was reached. But the moment the party entered on the lakes and rivers of the land, Nazinred ordered Adolay to take the bow paddle of his native craft, himself took the steering paddle, and from that moment he had quietly assumed the office of guide to the expedition.

"Fire-spouters!" exclaimed Cheenbuk, on hearing the shots of the traders' guns.

"Yes—my countrymen," replied Nazinred.

The kayak of Cheenbuk was about half a length behind the canoe, else the Eskimo would have seen that though the Indian's voice was

low and calm, his black eyes glittered with excitement.

"It is not like the gun of the Dogribs," remarked Adolay, glancing back at her father.

"Why does Adolay think so?"

"Because there is too much noise. You have yourself told me, father, that the Indian uses a smaller charge both of powder and shot than the white trader, as he cannot afford to waste it. I never heard the guns of our men speak so loud. Perhaps we are going to meet white men."

The chief regarded his daughter with a pleased smile and a look of pride.

"Adolay observes well," he said; "she is like her mother. The sound was loud because the charges were big—also because two guns were fired at once."

"I heard only one," returned the girl.

"That is because you have not heard much firing of guns. Adolay is not yet as old as her father. The traders from the great fresh lake must have come to our land, and that is the reason why our people have forsaken the old home."

As he spoke the flotilla rounded a point on the river, and came in sight of MacSweenie's canoe making for the land after having picked up the geese.

An impartial observer would not have found it

easy to determine which party expressed more surprise.

"Fire-spouters!" shouted the new arrivals.

"Eskimos!" exclaimed Mowat.

"Savitches — whatever!" said MacSweenie. "Wow! but this *iss* goot luck! Gif way, my boy, an' we will meet them more than half-way."

Suddenly the trader ceased to paddle, and raised a hand to shade his eyes from the sun.

"Tonal', man!" he growled with a Gaelic expletive which it is impossible to spell, "iss that a birch-bark canoe that I am seein'?"

"It is that," answered the interpreter, "an' I do believe that—that—"

"Man! Tonal'," interrupted the trader, as he dipped his paddle violently into the water. "It's wishin' I am that I may never see the Grampians again in this world if yon iss not Nazinred himself wi' his daater in the bow! It iss my belief there will be rechoicing in the Dogrib camp this night—though wi' such a band o' Eskimos there will be no small risk o' fechtin' also!"

By this time the canoe and flotilla were so near that Nazinred recognised the trader, and threw up a hand in salutation, whereupon MacSweenie and Mowat, taking off their caps, treated the party to a rousing British cheer, which was so congenial to the lively Eskimos that they burst into a sympathetic howl, mingled with laughter and some

fair attempts to imitate the cheer, while they splashed up the water with their paddles, and otherwise conducted themselves jovially.

Of course Nazinred would not condescend to conduct so undignified, but in his way he expressed great satisfaction at the happy meeting.

Then all the paddles were dipped again with vigour and the whole party made for the fort—the two canoes leading.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE LAST.

"I WILL be thinkin'," said MacSweenie to Mowat, "that it will be safer for our two canoes to go first to the fort an' leave the Eskimos behind the point till we warn the Indians o' their arrival; for there iss no knowin' what these fiery savitches may do if their old enemies come on them all of a sudden. Tell Nazinred that."

The interpreter obeyed, and as the chief was of the same opinion, a halt was called; Cheenbuk was consulted, and ultimately the Eskimos in their kayaks were left concealed behind the nearest point below the fort, while the two canoes advanced side by side.

"We will take them by surprise, Tonal'. I'm fond o' givin' people a surprise," said MacSweenie in an undertone as they drew near to the little wharf that had been run out from the land in front of the main building. A few Indians were watching the arrival with some curiosity.

But there was one passenger in Nazinred's canoe

who cared little for interfering with human plans —namely, Attim, whose shaggy head rested on the gunwale as he gazed and snuffed anxiously.

The moment the canoes came within a few yards of the shore, the excited dog plunged over the side with a huge bound. He was a magnificent swimmer, and reached the land in a few seconds. Springing up the bank, he shook a shower from his sides and bounded into the bushes, with the certain knowledge, no doubt, that he had reached home at last, and that his faithful nose would not fail to guide him to the tent of Isquay.

"O ye rascal!" growled MacSweenie, "you've let the cat out o' the bag—for I make no doubt that every man an' wummin o' the tribe knows you by sight."

And the Highlander was right, for in a few minutes the whole camp was roused, and the sight of the dog told them that Nazinred had come back. But had he found his daughter? That was a point which every one who could walk, run, or hobble, hurried to the wharf to ascertain.

But the point was cleared up sooner than they expected, for, before they reached the wharf, a graceful figure was seen to be bounding through the bushes, apparently in hot pursuit of the dog.

Immediately after that a treble scream was heard to issue from a coppice behind the fort. It

was followed by an equally treble squeal, with a bass accompaniment of barking. No one took the trouble to inquire the cause of this, for they knew, somehow, intuitively.

As we have said more than once, it is unusual for North American Indians to demonstrate, but Isquay and Adolay were, like Nazinred, in advance of their times, and were in the habit of snapping their fingers in the hideous face of the Red Indian Mrs. Grundy!

Meanwhile, MacSweenie and his man were informing the Indians at the wharf that a band of their old foes, the eaters-of-raw-flesh, were at that moment lying on the other side of the point in their kayaks.

The news was received with surprise, not unmingled with frowns. Every one looked at Nazinred inquiringly, but that astute Red man was engaged in profound contemplation of the clouds.

"Moreover," said the trader, "your old prisoner who gave you the slip and ran away with Adolay is among them."

"Then," cried Magadar, starting forward, "we will get our guns and go after them. The young men have long wished for a chance of revenge."

"The young men hev wished for nothing o' the sort," cried MacSweenie, with a fierce expression in his blue eyes that was very impressive. "There

iss no wan here wants to fecht but yourself, Magadar; but I will not disappoint ye. If you must fecht wi' some wan, ye shall fecht wi' me. But it iss jokin' ye are.—Come now, men; these Eskimos hev come here on a veesit, an' full well do I know that there 's not an Indian tribe in all the land equal to the Dogribs for hospitality; so you 'll go and get ready a feast for our veesitors, an' I 'll gie you some goot things out o' the store to help it."

Whatever Magadar thought about this address he shrouded his feelings behind an air of impenetrable and stern reserve; for he saw that the young men sympathised with the trader. Nazinred also, in a few words, helped to confirm their sympathy by telling them that the eaters-of-raw-flesh were not a war-party, but had brought some of their women and old people along with them. The end of it was that a shot was fired as a preconcerted signal for the Eskimos to advance. In a few minutes the kayaks and oomiaks came sweeping round the point and made straight for the landing-place.

The reception of the men-of-the-ice by the traders was of course hearty and sincere, but the hereditary ill-will of the Indians was not quite overcome at the first. It was not until there had been several meetings, and a feast in the fort, and Donald Mowat's violin had exercised its soothing

influence on the savage breasts, that harmony was produced in some degree between the two parties.

At length MacSweenie began to see his way to the establishment of a permanent peace, and he made arrangements to have a great palaver, a solemn treaty, and a grand feast in connection with it.

"You must know, Tonal'," he said one evening when in consultation with his interpreter in the privacy of his own room, "I hev got a plan in my head which iss calcoolated to make things go smooth, if anything will."

He paused rather a long time, and as Mowat looked at him in expectation of hearing more, it struck him that the deepened bronze on his chief's face, and the slight motion of his shoulders, indicated suppressed laughter. But the Orkney-man was much too sedate a character to express undue curiosity. He waited patiently.

"Yes, Tonal'," said the trader, taking a few whiffs of the long clay pipe which was his usual evening comforter; "I hev a plan, and, strange as it may seem to an unsentimental man like you, love is at the bottom of it."

"Well, you might have a worse foundation," returned Mowat, with something of good-natured cynicism on his rugged face.

"Yes," continued MacSweenie, "that iss at the

bottom of it—at least weemen are, an' that's the same thing."

Mowat shook his head doubtfully. "I 'm not so sure o' that," he said; "no doubt women have a good deal to do wi' love—but they're hardly the same thing."

"Weel, Tonal', we will not fall out on that point to-night, for I hev got no leisure to dispute. Another time we may tackle it, but I hev other fish to fry just now, an' we must begin this very night wi' a grand palaver."

After a few more vigorous whiffs, and a frown indicative of intense thought, the trader continued—

"I hev no doubt, Tonal', that you hev observed the curious and, if I may say so, extensive variety of love-makin' that has broken out in the camp since the arrival o' these Eskimos?"

"I can't say that I have," returned Mowat, gravely.

"Wow, man! for a fuddler ye exhibit a most extraordinary want o' perception in the more delicate affairs o' human life. Well, well, it is strange. But I hev observed it, an' I 'm goin' to turn it to account, if I can.

"You must know that I hev been troubled in my thoughts about that warlike fellow Magadar, for, as you know, he was sweet upon the girl Adolay before she was carried off by the Eskimo; an' Cheenbuk is such a strong and bold lad that

I felt sure there would be mischief between the two about her; but to my surprise an' satisfaction Magadar hes gone over head an' ears wi' that little Eskimo girl Cowlik, who must, I think, hev been born in an easy-going frame of mind, which seems to hev stuck to her ever since, and to hev gone on increasing with her years. Then, as we all know, our Indian Alizay has for long been efter the girl Idazoo. There 's no accountin' for taste, Tonal'. I would sooner be married to a ship's figure-head myself, but that 's his look-out, whatever. I hev also observed—'deed it would be difficult not to observe—that the man Oolalik iss castin' sheep's-eyes at that girl Nootka. All this hes impressed me so much that I hev set myself to observe more closely than I 'm used to do in such matters, and I hev discovered two more cases —namely, that poor young Eskimo that was wounded in the last fecht, but seems to be slowly recovering. They call him Ondikik, and he would hev kicked altogether if it had not been for the nursin'—so they say—o' that nice little craitur they call Rinka, or something like that. The other case is that lively stripling Anteek. He 's scarcely more than a boy yet, but young Uleeta, as they call the girl, seems to think that no great objection.

"Now, Tonal', my plan iss to marry them all off-hand on the same day! You know that by

virtue of my poseetion in the Service I am empowered to perform the marriage ceremony. Of course, as a Christian man, I would not fail to impress them with the fact that no real marriage can take place without the blessin' o' their Manitou, but I think that the readin' o' the marriage service over them may impress them favourably, an' help in the caause of peace and goot-will. It shall be tried, whatever, so you had better go an' get your fuddle in order, an' send the cook to me."

That night MacSweenie had the central hall of his fort lighted up, and called together a united council of the Indians and Eskimos.

"My fruends," he said, after passing the pipe of peace round among the former, and offering it to the latter, who each took a whiff out of courtesy, "this is a great night, for we hev met to join ourselves together in a bond of friendship which I trust will not soon be broken.—Tell them that, Tonal'."

When the interpreter had done his duty, Cheenbuk was asked to translate it into the Eskimo tongue. The process was rather slow, but as natives and traders alike had plenty of time on their hands, and the proceedings were a great novelty, no one felt impatient.

Then MacSweenie continued:

"We pale-faces, as you call us, believe that our

God, our Manitou, takes a great interest in all our affairs, from the least to the greatest, and in the book in which some of us hev written down our prayers, we ask, among many other things, that 'there may be peace in our time.' (For myself, I may give my opeenion that the prayer would hev seemed less selfish if it had run 'peace in *all* time'—but that iss by the way, whatever).—Now, Tonal', go ahead."

Donald went ahead, but he took the liberty of omitting what he deemed the irrelevant commentary.

"Peace, then, iss the thing that I am drivin' at,—peace and goot-will between the pale-faces and the men o' the woods and the men-of-the-ice also. There are many things that make for peace. The first an' most important thing iss goot feelin'. Another thing is trade—commerce, barter, or exchange. (I don't see how the Eskimo will translate these words, Tonal', but he will hev to do his best.) Then there iss common sense; and, lastly, there is marriage. Now, I hev said my say, for the time, whatever, and Nazinred will continoo the discourse."

Thus directly appealed to, our Indian rose, and, looking calmly round on the assembly, said—

"Every word that our white father has said is true; and a great many more words that he has not said are also true."

"Waugh!" from the Red men, who evidently regarded the last remark as a self-evident proposition.

Dispensing with the services of Mowat, Nazinred turned to the Eskimos and acted the part of his own interpreter. They received his words with an emphatic "Hoi!" as if they were equally clear on the subject of the last words being indisputable.

"Our white father has said," continued the chief, "that the first and most important thing in producing peace is good feeling. That is true. It was good-feeling in my child that led her to save the life of Cheenbuk. It was good feeling in Cheenbuk that made him care for my child, and treat her well, and bring her back here to her mother and her tribe. It was good feeling in the Eskimos that made them kind to the Indian chief, and receive him hospitably, when they might have taken his scalp and kept his daughter. It is good feeling, very strong good feeling, that makes the young Eskimo wish to make Adolay his squaw, and it is the same good feeling that now makes Nazinred willing that he should have her."

"Hoi!" exclaimed the Eskimos at this point, with evident satisfaction, and "Ho!" exclaimed the Indians, with equally evident surprise, for it was contrary to all their notions of propriety that

an Indian chief's daughter should wed an eater-of-raw-flesh! However, they said nothing more, and after gazing a few moments at each other in silent solemnity, they turned their eyes again on Nazinred.

Changing his tone somewhat, that wily Red man went on in a persuasive manner to expatiate on the advantages of peace in general, and of peace with the Eskimos in particular. He also enlarged on the great comforts to be derived from trade—which could be carried on with the white traders on the one hand and the Eskimos on the other, so that, between the two, the men-of-the-woods could not fail to obtain a double benefit. As to common sense being favourable to peace, he did not quite understand what his white father meant by that, for there was only one kind of sense among the Dogribs—though perhaps there might be two or three kinds where the traders came from! But in regard to marriage, there could be no doubt of his opinion on that point, seeing that he was going to give his daughter to Cheenbuk. Having finished what he had to say, Nazinred sat down, after expressing a desire to hear the opinions of his people on these matters.

For some time nothing was said, and it seemed as if the Indians were not quite sure of their own minds, when Magadar arose suddenly.

"Braves," he began, in his brusque manner, "I

like fair-play. If Cheenbuk is going to carry off one of our maidens, it seems to me reasonable that an Eskimo maid should be left in her place. There is one of their girls who is named Cowlik. I am willing to take Cowlik and make her my squaw. Waugh!"

Magadar sat down with the prompt air of a man who has conferred a favour at great personal sacrifice.

Then Mozwa rose and delivered himself of an oration full of wise remarks and poetical allusions, in which he backed his friend Nazinred. After him came Cheenbuk, who said that he was much gratified by the speeches of Mozwa and Nazinred; that from the latter he had learned his first lesson of good-feeling towards the men-of-the-woods, on the day when he strove with him on the banks of the Greygoose River; that his second lesson was taught him by Adolay—a lesson that he would never forget and could never repay, for she had not only saved his life but made him happy.

At this point MacSweenie broke in with, "Yes, my fruends, an' there iss a goot many more people here besides Cheenbuk that wants to be made happy. For instance, there's the young brave Alizay an' that pleasant craitur Idazoo that's thinkin' about marriage just now; an' there's Magadar and Cowlik, and Oolalik and Nootka, and Ondikik and Rinka, and Anteek and young

Uleeta; an' I 'm not sure that there may not be some more of you in the same case. If so, all right; the more the merrier. Ay, ye may look surprised, my friends, but I 've got a way o' findin' out these things that is not known to every wan. —Now, Tonal', gif them that as best ye can, and look sherp, for there iss more to come.

"Now, my fruends, I want to explain to ye that when white people get married they go through a kind of ceremony, an' put gold rings on the weemen's fingers—by way o' makin' it all ship-shape an' secure, you know. Now, I understand how to go about this matter, an' we hev plenty o' brass curtain-rings in the store that 's as goot as gold any day—in this country, whatever. So if it iss agreeable to the chiefs and the braves around me, I 'm quite willin' to marry ye all off at the same time, and will gif ye as much baccy as ye can smoke in wan night; an' we 'll hev a glorious feast on the back o't, an' a dance that 'll keep my fuddler's fingers goin' as long as they can wag.—Now, Tonal', if ye tell them all that, ye 're a cliverer man than I take ye for."

Whether Mowat told them all that as faithfully as might be desired we cannot tell, but he addressed himself to the task with a genial fluency that at all events had the desired effect, for after Nazinred had translated it to the Eskimos, it was found that they, as well as

the Indians, were quite disposed to fall in with the eccentric trader's views. Arrangements were accordingly made without delay for carrying them into execution.

Of course the ladies concerned had no objections to offer; and it is generally believed to this day, in those regions, that the interest aroused by the promised ceremonial, not to mention the brass curtain-rings, as well as the tobacco, and the feast and fiddle, had much to do with the ready assent of all parties to this somewhat violent innovation on ancient custom.

Be this as it may, the wholesale wedding eventually took place; the feast came off; Tonal' Mowat charmed the souls of the Eskimos with his violin, even more powerfully than he had charmed those of the Indians; and Aglootook, almost carried out of himself with delight, volunteered an oration in which he reminded his hearers that he had told them that *something* would certainly happen.

They all heartily admitted the fact, and solemnly proclaimed him the most wonderful magician in the land.

From that day to this, as far as we know, nothing has occurred to interrupt the flow of kindly intercourse that was at this time established. The Eskimos returned to their icy fastnesses laden with some of the wealth of the white traders.

But every spring they came back to barter for more of it, as well as for the purpose of seeing the friends whom they had left behind them.

For Cheenbuk, being unable to tear himself away from Nazinred, took up his permanent abode at the fort as one of the hunters to the establishment. He did not however forsake his people, but frequently visited old Mangivik and his mother at Waruskeek, and the old folk sometimes returned the visit by spending a few months on the banks of the Ukon River. Anteek also elected to stay with the men-of-the-woods, being unable to forsake Cheenbuk, and of course young Uleeta remained with him. Every year Nootka found it quite impossible to exist without seeing her brother Cheenbuk in his own home, and having a satisfactory gossip with her dear friend Adolay. As Oolalik agreed with Nootka in all things, there was no difficulty in arranging the matter. In the course of time Cheenbuk's youngsters and Nootka's progeny insisted on keeping up the intercourse that had been so auspiciously begun, and even the easy-going Cowlik became uneasy unless the fire-eating Magadar went with her occasionally to Waruskeek.

As for the unselfish and tender-hearted Rinka, she of course returned with Ondikik to the realms of ice, and made that fortunate savage happy. Indeed, she made every one happy who came

within her benign influence, and if the truth had been spoken out by every one, we suspect it would have been found that to her attractive powers was due much of the enthusiasm for intercommunication that existed between the Red men and the walrus-hunters, for the principle still holds good, in savage not less than in civilised lands, that "love is the fulfilling of the law."

THE END.