

**BORN TO WANDER
VOLUME.III
BY
WILLIAM GORDON
STABLES**

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Chapter One Adventures in the Rocky Mountains.

“Far in the west there lies a desert land, where the mountains
Lift through perpetual snows their lofty and luminous summits;
Billowy bays of grass, ever rolling in shadow and sunshine;
Over them wander the buffalo herds and the elk and the roebuck;
Over them wander the wolves, and herds of riderless horses;
Over them wander the scattered tribes of Ishmael’s children,
Staining the desert with blood: and above their terrible war trails,
Circles and sails aloft, on pinions majestic, the vulture,
Like the implacable soul of a chieftain slaughtered in battle.”

Longfellow.

Scene: A green sea tempest-tossed, the waves houses high. White clouds massed along the windward horizon, giving the appearance not only of ice-clad rocks and towers, but of a great mountainous snow-land. And above this a broad lift of deepest blue, and higher still—like the top scene on a stage—a curtain-cloud of driving hail. One ship visible, staggering along with but little sail on her.

It was near sunset when Captain Blunt came below to the cabin of the Gloaming Star. “It is a bitter night, Leonard,” he said, rubbing his hand and chafing his ears. “The wind is as cold as ever we felt it in Greenland.”

“Blowing right off the ice, isn’t it?”

“Yes, with a bit of west in it, and I do think somehow that the wind of the Antarctic is keener, rawer, and colder than any that ever blows across the pack at the other Pole.”

Soon after this Leonard himself went on deck. Here was his friend Douglas, muffled up in a monkey-jacket with a sou’-wester on his head, and great woollen gloves on his hands, tramping up and down the deck as if for a wager.

“How do you like it, Doug?”

“Ha!” said Douglas, “you’re laughing, are you? Well, your watch comes on at four in the morning. There won’t be much laughing then, lad. How delightful the warm bed will seem when—”

“There, there, Douglas, pray don’t bring your imagination to bear on it. It will be bad enough without that.”

The two now walked up and down together, only stopping occasionally to gaze at the sky.

There was little pleasure in looking weatherward, however, only a clear sky there now, with the jagged waves for an uneven shifting horizon, but where the sun had gone down the view was inexpressibly lovely. The background beneath was saturnine red, shading into a yellow-green, and higher up into a dark blue, and yonder shone a solitary star, one glance at which never failed to carry our sailors’ thoughts homeward.

Now something over three years had elapsed since the *Gloaming Star* sailed away from the Clyde, since the wild Arran hills were last seen in the sunset’s rays, and the rocky coast of this romantic island had grown hazy and faint, and faded at last from view.

Years of wandering and adventure they had been, too—years during which many a gale had been weathered, here and there in many lands, and many a difficulty boldly faced and overcome.

As our two heroes, Leonard and Douglas, walk up and down the deck, and the wind blows loud and keen from off the Antarctic ice, I will try to recount a few of those adventures, though to tell them all would be impossible. I will but dip into their logs, and read you off the entries on a few of the leaves thereof.

Opening the Log at Random.

I open the log at random, as it were, and first and foremost I find the wanderers—where? Why, among the Rocky Mountains. The *Gloaming Star* is safe and sound in New York harbour, under the charge of no less a personage than Rory O’Reilly himself, who is second mate of her.

To cross the vast stretch of country that lies between the Atlantic Ocean and this wild mountain range was in those days a daring deed in itself. As long as they were in the midst of comparative civilisation they were safe, but this once left behind, with only the rolling prairie in front of them, hills, glens, woods, and forests, and a network of streams, the danger was such that many a brave man would have shrunk therefrom.

There were friendly tribes of Indians, it is true, but there were others who hated the white man with an implacable hatred. And this hatred, it is only right to add, was returned with interest. It is terrible to think that the red man was looked upon in those days as if the brand of Cain were carved on his brow, so that whoever should meet him should kill him; that he was hunted down even as the wild beasts were hunted, and that the war declared against him was one of extermination, one to the bitter end.

On the other hand, the cruelties practised by the Indians on their white brethren of the outlying districts, when they succeeded in capturing a station or fort, were such as one cannot read of without a shudder of horror and a feeling of anger as well.

But our heroes and their party, including Captain Blunt, five friendly Indians, and a trapper—a Yankee of the real old school and a thorough backwoodsman—had made the long journey in safety. The mules that had carried their packs were even now quietly feeding in a rude enclosure, near the log hut which had been a home to the party for months.

But although these wanderers did not fear danger, they knew it existed, and no sooner had they arrived in the woodland glen close by a beautiful river, than they proceeded to make their encampment as like a fort as they could. Strong were their arms to work, and willing were their hearts. To Leonard and Douglas there was something quite delightful in this new free, wild life of independence; fishing by lonely streams, wandering through the still, quiet forests, or bearding the wild beasts in their favourite haunts. The very knowledge that hostile Indians might be encountered at any time only added a zest to their adventures.

But before they entered into their sports with earnestness, they fortified the site they had chosen as a camp. The trees were cut down all round, and a complete rampart, with ditch and drawbridge, was erected.

When all was complete the sport began in earnest; but it was not sport for the simple sake of killing. No, for they slew and fished but to fill their larder, and lay up a wealth of skins, which would help to pay for this pleasant outing when they returned to the great city of New York. Thereupon bears and beavers became their especial prey, to say nothing of innumerable furry denizens of forest, hill, and river bank.

Life in the Rockies.

They had arrived at the Rockies in early summer, and long before the hot season was at its hottest, long before the time came when at midday hardly would you have heard a

sound in the woods, except the singing of the river that went rippling over its pebbly bed, or tumbling in miniature cataracts over rocks, and falling into deep dark pools beneath, where dwelt the largest trout, and near which, mayhap, the beaver had his haunt—long before midsummer, they were so perfectly at home that they felt no wish to leave the lovely glen. Both Leonard and Douglas were of those who dearly love—

”—The haunts of Nature;
Love the sunshine of the meadow,
Love the shadow of the forest,
Love the wind among the branches.

“And the rain-shower and the snowstorm,
And the rushing of great rivers,
Through their palisades of pine trees,
And the thunder in the mountains.”

They loved Nature, and Nature seemed to love them, for even the wild birds appeared to sing to them,—

“In the moorlands and the fenlands,
In the melancholy marshes,—”

While the wild flowers told their tales in a language that only poets understand, whispered to them of their loves and sorrows,—

“In green and silent valleys,
By pleasant water-courses.”

Among the deep, dark forest glens, in the canons, and in caves among the bush that clad the mountain sides, lived in those days bears—chiefly the grizzly and cinnamon bear—far more fierce than any that are now found in the same quarter. It has been said, and with a good deal of truth, that bears seldom attack a man. There are exceptions to all rules, as the following adventure will prove. It was a lovely day in August. Our wanderers had gone out in two parties, Captain Blunt, Douglas, and a few Indians being together, and Leonard with the Yankee trapper and one Indian by themselves. The sport for a time was nil. It was the hottest hour of the day, and every creature was sheltering from the fierce sunlight. Hardly knowing or caring what he did or where he went,

Leonard went straggling up a mountain side, studying the flowers and the strange pieces of ore that lay here and there in all directions.

He was in the act of picking up one of these last when a coughing noise in the bush close by made him start and stand at once to arms. There, not twenty yards from him, and rapidly advancing, was a huge grizzly. Hardly had he time to bring his gun to the shoulder ere the monster prepared to spring. By Heaven's own mercy Leonard fired in time. The roar changed to a choking one, and the bear spat blood; he turned to fly, Leonard following fast behind him. He managed to fire again ere the brute headed away for a canon at some distance—fired, but in his hurry missed. All along down the hill, after reloading, he tracked the bear by his blood. And all along the grassy canon bottom till halfway up, where it was evident the grizzly had climbed to his cave.

It was foolhardy of him to follow, but he was excited, and in a minute more he was at the cave mouth. In the darkness he could see the angry gleam of the monster's eyes; and at these he took aim, and fired. He remembered the roar the bear gave, then all was a mist. He was found by the Yankee trapper lying insensible at the cliff foot, the bear dead beside him.

Leonard got small praise for this exploit.

"It ain't sport," the Yankee told him, "it's idiocy; there ain't another name for it. You've done it once, but I guess it isn't in you to do it again and live."

One other adventure is worth relating, but in this instance it was Douglas who had a narrow escape. The dogs, of which they had several, had chased and treed an immense cougar or puma. This is but another name for the American lion, now I fear all but extinct. Why he had run from the dogs is a mystery, but there he was standing almost erect on a branch, and looking proudly and defiantly down. Douglas's approach, gun in hand, however, was the signal for resistance. The brute crouched down and prepared to spring. Douglas knelt and prepared to fire. Bang went the gun. Down sprang the fierce and wounded puma. It would have been death indeed for Douglas had not the dogs tackled the animal. It was death for one of these faithful creatures, and others were terribly wounded. But the sportsman had time to load and fire again, and this time he made sure.

There were panthers in the woods as well, but none so large or fierce as the puma.

Killing antelopes, and various kinds of deer and elks, following the wild buffalo on the plains, hunting up the silent haunts of the turkeys, fishing and grouse shooting—all helped to make the time fly fast away, and the summer seemed to pass all too quickly by.

Not that it was always fine weather in these vast solitudes. No, far from it. Out on the plains, more than once they were overtaken by terrible sandstorms, while often and often a thunderstorm broke over the mountains of such awful sublimity, that even Captain Blunt was forced to own he had never heard such sounds before, never witnessed such blinding lightning.

Anon a wind of hurricane force would arise suddenly and go tearing through the woods, breaking off branches and hurling them high in air, and snapping the largest trees off in their centres, or rending them up by the roots; and if this storm was accompanied, as it often was, by rains, then the torrents that came roaring down from the mountain sides, bringing boulders and broken wood with them, would have appalled the stoutest heart to look upon them.

Then came on the sweet, soft Indian summer, the woods arrayed in all the glorious tints of the autumn, the sunsets mysterious in their very beauty, the air soft and balmy and bracing.

It was on one of these delightful days that the whole party, with the exception of Leonard—who was busy curing bird-skins—set out for a hunt for wild sheep across the plains.

The Blizzard. A Race for Life.

Towards evening they were quietly returning after a successful day, and were still on the plains, when, with an alarming suddenness, the sun and sky became obscured, and a cold, cutting wind began to blow. Both the trapper and Indians knew what was coming. The buffalo meat was cast away, left on the plain to feed the wolves, and on they dashed to reach the shelter of the canon ere the blizzard came down on them in all its terrible and blinding force. It got rapidly darker, and the snow was driven and whirled around them with the force of a hurricane. Both Douglas and Blunt fell many times, and but for the Indians could never have reached the shelter. They got to the cañon at last, however, and by good luck into the very cave where Leonard had killed the bear. Meanwhile all was darkness, and storm, and chaos without. Here they were, and here they must remain till morning.

Indians.

But how fared it with Leonard? His work being finished, towards evening he took his gun, and accompanied by a dog set out to meet his friends. As usual with this student of nature, he was looking more at the ground than around him, till the quick, sharp ringing bark of his dog fell on his ear. Then he glanced upwards, and found himself face to face

with Indians in their war-paint. They were Ojibbeways. On levelling his gun they retreated to a bush, and he made his way back towards the fort, a shower of arrows falling around him, and some piercing his clothes as he did so.

He speedily got up the drawbridge, and none too soon, for on came the savages.

But on came the blizzard. Down swept the storm, and the boldest Indian that ever trod could not face that fearful snow-gale.

All that night the storm raged. All that night Captain Blunt and his party shivered in their cave, while at the fort Leonard waited and watched.

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Chapter Two. Fighting with Indians.

“But yonder comes the powerful king of day
Rejoicing in the east. The lessening cloud,
The kindling azure, and the mountain’s brow
Illumed with gold, his near approach
Betoken glad.”

Thomson.

Scene: The fort in the Rocky Mountains. Morning breaking in the east. Wind hushed. Captain Blunt and party making their way along the bottom of the cañon, which in many places is deep in drifted snow.

Who can paint in words the beauty, the glory of a sunrise among the mountains? Why wish to be a poet—even a Longfellow?

Why wish to be even a Turner? for what artist that ever lived could sketch in colour the deep blue of yonder sky, or the great grey clouds that, even as we look change slowly to yellow and gold; or that strip of crimson, or the darkness of those pine trees outshining from the blue uncertain horizon’s haze?

Some such thoughts as these rushed through Leonard’s mind as he stood on the ramparts of the little fort that had been to him and his friends a quiet romantic home for so many months. For those friends, though still absent, he somehow felt no anxiety. They were well armed, and if they met the hostile Indians, they could no doubt give a good account of them, if indeed the enemy should be brave enough to come to close quarters. But despite the tales of Cooper—who has managed to encircle the Red Man with a halo of romance—Leonard had been long enough in the woods to find out that just as the American novelist depended upon imagination for the facts embodied in his delightful stories, so the American Indian depends upon numbers for his courage. He is bold and daring enough when he is in strong force, and when sure of victory. Then he will fight. I am not belying him.

When the party did arrive at the fort, they were much astonished at what Leonard had to tell them.

“And the blizzard sent them adrift, eh?” said Captain Blunt. “Well, it’s an ill wind that blows nobody good.”

“But they’ll come back,” said the trapper. “Gentlemen, they’ll return, that’s as certain as sunrise.”

The Indian guides thought the same.

So the drawbridge was kept up all day.

But night after night passed by, and still there was no sign of the Ojibbeways. Our party got bolder, and went hunting as usual.

But one day a scout found an unmistakable trail, and they followed it up and up for many miles, till it led them to the top of a high hill. They did not show themselves over this, for far away in a green valley beneath they beheld an encampment; Indians on the warpath undoubtedly, with fleet, wild-looking horses hobbled near them, and a cooking fire smoking in their midst. There could not be less than fifty at the least. Well, the fort was well stocked to stand a siege. But a siege was the one thing the party wanted to avoid. Pleasant as was this land in summer and autumn, no one of them wished to winter here. It was determined, therefore, to dispatch one of the Indian scouts for assistance to his tribe. It would be a terrible adventure, to journey all alone over hill and dale and prairie land in an enemy’s country, but the promise of a reward was sufficient to make several volunteer.

Another went out every night to watch the enemy. They had come nearer, and were now only three miles from the fort.

Now, there is nothing that Britons will not dare; and when one evening Leonard said,—

“I say, Douglas, some of those Indian horses would come in handy to assist in our journey homeward.”

“That they would,” replied Douglas. “I was thinking the same.”

“Hurrah!” then said Leonard; “let us have them.”

So it was agreed to make the attempt.

And this is how it was accomplished. Four of the friendly Indians made a détour, and attacked the camp of the foe in the rear. It was a lovely moonlight night, and this ruse was completely successful. The enemy sprang to their bows and arrows, and prepared to repel the attack. A shot or two was fired, then the friendlies ran pursued by the foe. The white men had it all their own way now; they speedily picked out eight of the best horses, and were soon galloping off camp-wards as quickly as the nature of the ground would permit.

In this case, at all events, fortune favoured the brave, and all got safe inside the fort, only one Indian being wounded slightly.

But the Ojibbeways determined on revenge, and the very next night quite a cloud of arrows was poured into the fort, and then an attempt made to scale the rampart, the savages making night hideous with their howlings and wild cries. They had to retire worsted, however, and it was nearly a week before they again made an attack. But meanwhile they had been greatly reinforced, and the fight was now a terrible one. It began while it still was dark, but soon the moon rose, then the Indians suffered severely for their rashness.

For many days, and night after night, these attacks were made. None of the white men were wounded, but one friendly was killed, and another put hors de combat. Things began to look very serious, and if assistance came not soon Captain Blunt feared the very worst.

“Surely,” thought Leonard and Douglas, “the worst has come,” when one night the poor trapper fell at their feet, pierced through the heart with an arrow. This night’s attack was a fearful one. The savages, regardless of their lives, leapt on top of the rampart, though only to fall dead within the enclosure.

But more took their place, and the fighting went on with redoubled fury.

“I fear all is up,” said Captain Blunt in a moment’s lull; “let us sell our lives dearly.”

But hark! what was that wild, unearthly yell in the rear of the foe?

All listened. The savages who had been coming on again towards the fort fell back. The cries and yells were redoubled, and the din was horrible, awful!

“Hurrah!” cried Blunt, “we are saved! The friendlies have come!”

And so it was. The battle in the bush raged for fully an hour, then up rushed the scout who had so bravely done his duty. The drawbridge was lowered, and in he dashed, and after him fully a hundred of his own tribe, all in their war-paint, all fully armed, and, ghastly sight! nearly all had scalps hanging to their girdles.

The very next day the fort was deserted, and the march eastward was commenced. It was a very long and a very toilsome one. But they reached civilisation safely at last. The friendly Indians thought themselves well rewarded by being presented with the horses. And considering that Captain Blunt and party had obtained the animals cheaply enough, it was no wonder that satisfaction was expressed on both sides.

They found the Gloaming Star ready for sea, and after selling their skins and curios they embarked, and made all sail for the sunny south. All the winter and spring was spent in cruising around the West Indian Islands. They even stretched across to lonely Bermuda, encountering a hurricane on the passage, which well-nigh dismantled the ship, and necessitated a longer stay at the islands than they desired. Then southwards and west, touching at Rio Janeiro, the most romantic and lovely harbour in the world.

Monte Video, however, which they reached at last, did not afterwards shine in their memories as Janeiro did. Its low flat lands, its shallow seas and fogs, were not impressive in a pleasant way. But they found the inhabitants—even then a strange mixture of nationalities—kind and hospitable, and Leonard, Douglas, and Captain Blunt accepted an invitation to go for sport into the interior.

The roads were terribly rough; there were no railways here in those days. The roads were rough and the roads were long, but they found themselves at last on the very confines of civilisation. And here they spent some months, most pleasantly, too, though their adventures were not without danger. They found the new settlers at war with the Indians, the latter being a most treacherous race, possessing all the cunning, though hardly so much of the extreme cruelty, which forms so marked a characteristic of the Red men of the American wilderness.

Both Douglas and Leonard soon became adepts in riding the half-wild horses over the plains, and in hunting the emu and llama, in throwing the lasso and the bolas.

“It seems to me,” said Douglas, one day, “that I would like to live in this wild land for ever and a day.”

“It seems to me,” replied Leonard, “that I have been here all my life.”

Everything was so new in this country, and as they happened to be favoured with fine weather, some brief but terrible storms excepted, everything was so lovely. They were the guests of a rich Spaniard, whose house was a kind of shooting-box in the midst of most charming and wild scenery. It was a house of logs, but most artistically designed and built, with terraces around it, and porticoes and verandahs, over which trailed flowers of most beautiful colour, shape, and perfume. It was well surrounded—as indeed it needed to be—by a rampart and a ditch, and more than once it had to stand a siege. Sometimes the Indians made a raid down that way and drove away the horses. But Señor Cabelas had many well-armed servants, and they took a delight in following up and fighting Los Indianos, and returning triumphantly, which they invariably did, with the re-captured animals, or most of them.

Our heroes were always on the hunting path very early in the morning. They went prepared to shoot or fight anything. Wolves there were in plenty, but they gave the horsemen a wide berth, nor were they really worth powder and shot. But far away among the wild hills, those long-haired wolves are really a source of very great danger.

But there were panthers or pumas, and a few jaguars, and although none of these attacked, still once or twice, when at bay, they made a terrible resistance. In a case like this, if a man does not keep cool, or if he allows any nervousness to interfere with his aim, it is ten to one that the jaguar will have the best of the battle, and the huntsman be left dead or terribly wounded.

When the day's sport or hunting in the pampas was over and done, when the dinner in Señor Cabelas' tall-ceiled room had been discussed, how pleasant it was to get out and sit under the verandah in the cool of a summer's evening, and tell tales, and think and talk of home.

How pleasantly tired and drowsy Leonard and Douglas used to be by bedtime, and how soon they were wrapped in dreamless slumber when their limbs were stretched in bed, their heads upon the downy pillows!

How loud the great frogs croaked and snored around the lodge, ay, and even in it; but their croaking and snoring never once wakened our pampas sportsmen!

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Chapter Three.

Here and There in Many Climes.

“Heaven speed the canvas gallantly unfurled,
To furnish and accommodate a world,
To give the pole the produce of the sun,
And knit unsocial climates into one.”

“The luxuries of seas and woods,
The airy joys of social solitude,
Famed each rude wanderer.”

Scenes: The shores of South America. The lonely isles of the Pacific, Antarctic Ocean, and Antarctic ice.

If my young reader took an ordinary sized map or chart of the world he could follow with eye or finger the route, en voyage, taken by our wanderers for the next few months, till we find them amid the lovely scenery briefly depicted above. Southwards along the eastern shore of South America, but keeping well to sea, and only seeing the wild romantic coast, now and then lying like a blue-grey storm-cloud on the horizon, sailed the Gloaming Star. Leaving the Falkland Islands on the port beam, they passed the Straits of Magellan, not venturing in them now; and reaching farther southward, after encountering a terrific gale of wind which tried the timbers of the bonny barque and the mettle of her gallant tars, after having narrowly escaped being crushed during a dismal fog by heavy ice, they succeeded in weathering the Cape, and stretched away north now, once more along a wild coast—its mountains towering to the moon—and after many, many dreary weeks at sea, they landed at the wonderful isle of Juan Fernandez, celebrated, as all know, for having been the prison isle of Alexander Selkirk, the hero of that best of boys' books—“Robinson Crusoe.”

The hut was still there, and many another curious memento of the sailor hermit, and strange thoughts passed through the wanderers' minds as they walked on the very beach where, according to Defoe, his hero had seen the footstep in the sands.

North and west they went now, and in a few weeks fell in with the trade-winds, although they were not of too great force to prevent stunsails being carried aloft and aloft.

Bounding over that lovely sea, the *Gloaming Star* looked like some beautiful sea-bird.

Whatever might come of it, our heroes were determined to see something of the Sandwich Islands. But there was danger in their doing so. For but few white men ever ventured there in those days.

About Savages.

There are, according to my own experience, very great differences, not only in physique, but in mental qualities, betwixt the savages—as they are called—of different parts of the world, and even between different tribes who live in the same vicinity, or within a few hundred miles of each other. Look, for example, at the good-natured simplicity of the Eskimo Indians, and compare it with the wild, cruel nature of the Red men of the Rockies, or forest lands of the Far West. Or witness the innocent, harmless nature of the tribes who dwell south of the Equator on the eastern shores of Africa, as compared with the treacherous ferocity of the Somali Africans, who live but a little way north.

Yet there is a right way and a wrong way of dealing with even the wildest tribes of what I may call fighting savages. There are certain peculiarities of character which are common to all, and at which, seeing the manner of life they lead, we cannot wonder. They are all suspicious, especially as regards the intentions of white men—or “white demons” as we are sometimes called—landing on their coast. They are all greedy, all superstitious in a high degree, and all lawless, and easily inclined to give vent to unbridled passions of any kind. All these traits of character must be borne in mind by any one going amongst them. Nor must it be forgotten that they are most observant. They cannot perhaps speak or understand a word of your language, but they can read your face and eye, and almost know your thoughts therefrom. To show fear among them is fatal to all success of intercommunication; even to feel fear is bad enough, for you can hardly hide it from their scrutiny. You must be cool, determined, and kindly withal, but bear yourself as if it were a matter of the greatest indifference to you whether you have their friendship or not. You must not so much woo them as conduct yourself in a manner that will cause them to woo you and seek your good will. It is all, you see, a matter of fact. And I have landed among savages with my hands in my pockets, when, had I carried arms, even a stick, I should have been speared to death in a very short time.

Captain Blunt was wise as regards savages, and he imparted his wisdom to Our heroes, Douglas and Leonard, at dinner one beautiful evening—just the night before they reached the Sandwich Islands.

At New York they had bought large quantities of beads, also knives and hatchets, and these, or rather a portion of them, came in handy in their intercourse with the natives.

They had already passed, on the wings of a favouring breeze, very many little islands, some mere coral reefs green-fringed with trees, looking as if they were afloat in the sea or in the sky's blue. But although they had seen natives both in canoes and on the beach they had made no attempt to communicate with the Gloaming Star.

Men were kept constantly in the chains, and when the water became too shallow, or breakers ahead were seen frothing on a shallow green reef, her way was stopped and the course altered. By night they often cast anchor.

I wish I had the power to describe in words a thousandth part of all the beauty they saw about and around them in this enchanting ocean, in sky, on shore, and in the water itself. The marine gardens, with their many-coloured corals, their waving wealth of tinted seaweed, the strange-shaped and curious fishes, the lovely medusae and marvellous shell-fish, some beautiful as a dream, others more hideous than a nightmare; the bright inexpressible blue sky above, the azure ocean beneath, patched here and there with sheets of green or grey, where cloud shadows fell or where the banks shone through, and last, but not least, the thousand isles, each more delightful to behold than another, all formed a scene, or series of scenes, that to cast eyes on but once is to look back to with pleasure ever after.

I have it not on record at which of these islands our wanderers first landed. It was a large one, however, and, to commence with, they had but a cool reception.

For days they ventured no farther than the beach, so threatening was the aspect of the natives. But by degrees their confidence was won, then all was hospitality, all was safety on the island, far into its very interior. Having once made friends with the white men, these poor savages thought they had dropped from the sky, and vied with each other in their kindness towards them. They brought them kids and fowl and fruit and flowers, and escorted them through the forests, to glorious glens, across streams and little lovely lakes embowered in trees, festooned and hung with wild climbing flowers, and to cataracts whose waters as they tumbled over the rocks made drowsy music in the summer sunshine.

“Was nought around but images of rest,
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between,
And flowery beds, that slumbrous influence cast

From poppies breathed; and beds of pleasant green.
Meanwhile unnumbered glittering streamlets played,
And hurled everywhere their waters' sheen;
That as they bickered through the sunny glade,
Though restless still themselves, a lulling murmur made."

They stayed for months at the Sandwich Islands, and their residence among the wild natives exemplifies in a remarkable way two facts—first, that the influence of the white man over the savage is very great and very potent; and secondly, that almost anything can be done by means of kindness and sincerity. Our heroes were sincere, and these poor black folks were quick to perceive it.

It is but fair to Captain Blunt and his party to state that they did not leave the islands without telling its inhabitants the beautiful Biblical story of the world, of the creation, the fall, and of Redemption through a Saviour's love. And one never knows what good fruits may not be borne of a few seeds thus let fall even among darkened savages.

And now we return to the scene of the first chapter of this book, where we left Leonard and Douglas pacing the storm-swept decks of the *Gloaming Star*, night falling, and the wind blowing high and cold from off the Antarctic ice.

They had sojourned and had many adventures among the snows of the far, far north, where in summer "Daylight never shuts its eye," and they were now to have a peep at the other pole.

For days and days they cruised along the edge of the great icefields here, and very different they found them from anything they had ever seen before. The edge of the main body was one vast indented glacier of glittering crystal, rising sheer up from the ocean beneath it. From the top of this enormous icy cliff an immense field of snow stretched away southwards, rising, in some places, mountains high, so that they could not be certain that it was not actually land they were looking on. The ice-rocks shimmered in the sun's rays in all the colours of the rainbow, with a beauty that at times was dazzling to behold.

The detached icebergs that floated off this strange weird-looking coast were less jagged than those of the North Pole. Very often they were immense square snow-clad blocks. They were nearly all very large. Here comes floating along, slowly moving up and down, a good representation of a cathedral without a spire. Behind, a library of books piled one above the other, truly a Titanic collection, for every volume is as large as a church, yet the representation is faithful. But what comes behind? A giant's head upreared above the black water; eyes and nose and all are perfect, and it is bigger than the Egyptian

Sphinx, while in the rear of this pyramids innumerable, and lo! as they pass these they come upon—what? They may well ask what. A soldiers' camp, sure enough, larger than any at Aldershot. But there are no soldiers about, only the white and shapely tents all afloat on the deep dark sea.

A Strange Change.

Yet in one week's time a wondrous change came over the spirit of the scene.

The great whales, the mighty sharks, and the huge sea-elephants, that for days they had seen tumbling and wallowing in the waters round the vessel, suddenly disappeared, and even the birds ceased to go whirling and screaming through the air, and one evening they seemed sailing into the blackness of darkness. There was a good breeze behind them, but as night fell—and it came on before its time—so did the wind. And so the ship lay becalmed, or nearly so. No one went to bed that night. The darkness was a darkness that could be felt; the air was close, sulphurous, oppressive, and at midnight the stillness was broken by explosions of thunder so terrific as to appal the boldest heart on board. Then the darkness was illuminated by one vast sheet of flame, that shot upwards from the horizon some miles inland among the ice, carrying with it smoke and steam and great boulders that burst in the air with a noise like the loudest artillery.

They were undoubtedly witnessing a volcanic eruption on a terribly grand scale.

All that night it continued, while the noise of the thunder and the explosions grew louder and louder, and the flames and lightning increased in vividness. When at last the clock hands pointed to the hour of daybreak it still was dark, as far as sunlight was concerned; the sea was perfectly calm, though every now and then strangely moved, so that the ship was shaken from stem to stern.

Ashes, too, began to fall till they lay inches deep on the deck, and it was almost impossible to breathe. At the same time stones fell around them, hissing and spurting and throwing up volumes of steam as they reached the water.

It was an awful scene, a never-to-be-forgotten time.

But despite the want of wind, Captain Blunt determined not to be idle. Boats were got out, and the ship was slowly towed northwards direct. All that dark and fearful day, and even by the glare of volcanic fires on the dismal night that succeeded, the men rowed and rowed as for dear life, and about nine o'clock next morning they saw the sun. It was gleaming like a great crimson ball through the ash-laden air, but there it was—the sun;

and not a heart of all the crew was there that did not rejoice, not a soul, I'm sure, that did not breathe its thanks to Him Who rules on earth and sea.

Once More in Summer Seas.

This is a chapter of changes, the reader may say. From the dreary scene I have just tried—in all too feeble language—to describe, wafted on the wings of a favourable breeze, the *Gloaming Star* sailed northward and west, and ere many weeks had elapsed the good ship was once more sailing over summer seas, with the dangers they had escaped in the Antarctic regions dwelling in their minds only like dreams of yesterday.

Ah! but soft, sweet, and balmy was the breeze that now filled the sails, and wondrous were the curious creatures they saw day after day. Some may think that when a ship is far away at sea, with no land nor sail in sight, there can be little to look at and admire. But there is, for nature is everywhere in this bright world of ours, and real solitude nowhere.

Not a day now passed without strange birds coming about the ship. Sometimes these were evidently winged wanderers from some far-off land, that had been blown to sea by a gale, for they were sadly tired, and looked woebegone as they alighted on the yards. Others were curious, dark birds of the swallow tribe. They alighted on the ship quite as a matter of business, and chirped little songs to the crew as they perched aloft, as if thankful and joyous because of the rest. Then away they went again, south or north as the case might be.

There were Cape pigeons, and great cormorants, and wild gannet-like birds, that it was pleasant to watch as they descended from the clouds, swift almost as a thunderbolt, and disappeared beneath the waves, presently, perhaps, to emerge with their prey. Then there were fulmar petrels, that went darting about the waves, and were said by the sailors to catch the flying-fish, and to forebode the coming of storms, the lovely, pearly-white bird, which once seen can never be forgotten, the molly hawk, and the great dusky albatross itself, of which—built upon the superstition of sailors—Coleridge writes so charming a tale, and which the ancient mariner shot so cruelly, causing such dire and terrible sorrow to the vessel and all on board; albeit, it had brought them the best of good fortune, for it saved them from the ice, and—

“A good south wind sprung up behind,
The albatross did follow.
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

“In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine,
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moonshine.”

The albatross is a stately and noble bird, and the stretch of its wings has been known to be fully twelve feet from tip to tip. The creature, they tell me, will devour the dead, but never touch a living man.

The fish and marine monsters they saw on this sunny voyage were sometimes most lovely, sometimes hideous in the extreme. Giant rays, the skins of which would have been big enough to have carpeted a schoolroom; great whales and sharks innumerable,—the blue shark, the white shark, and the large basking shark, which really seems to go asleep on the warm surface of the water.

Land ho! was the hail from the masthead one beautiful morning, and they had all been so long at sea that they certainly were not sorry to hear it.

But what land was it? And could they find water, fruit, and fresh provisions on it?

Born to Wander Volume.III by William Gordon Stables

Chapter Four.

The Unknown Land.

“After the sea-ship, after the whistling winds,
After the white-grey sails, taut to their spars and ropes,
Below a myriad, myriad waves hastening, lifting up their necks,
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship,
A motley procession with many a fleck of foam and many fragments,
Following the stately and rapid ship, in the wake following.”

Whitman’s Leaves of Grass.

Scene: The Gloaming Star standing in towards the land, which looks like a long low greenish cloud on the horizon. The sky is a burning blue, the day is hot and sultry, and the pitch boils in the seams of the deck. Land birds, some very pretty, and hosts of butterflies as large as small fans, and surpassingly radiant in colour, are hovering about the vessel. Medusae, like open umbrellas, and whose limbs seem studded with gems, float around the ship, while now and then huge turtles can be seen, each one as big and as broad as a blacksmith’s bellows.

The log before me is so water-stained, so yellow with age, and so worn, that I cannot make out—do what I may—the latitude and longitude of the Gloaming Star at this particular time. But from all I have read and from all I know of these oceans and islands, I think the land now in sight must have been either Tasmania itself or some of the isles not far off. Seeing, on a nearer approach, no signs of a harbour, nor any deep water, only the white foaming breakers booming on a low sandy beach; and the green woods beyond, and the wind coming on to blow higher and higher from the west, they put to sea again, and stood away still farther north.

In the morning, land was in sight again, and not far off, and the coast was rocky and wild; the wind, too, had gone down considerably, so sail was made, and seeing a wide gap in the rocks they made for it, and found themselves in an hour’s time in a lovely wood-girt bay. But wood is too tame a term to apply to it. Primeval forest is surely better. Never before had any one on board beheld such wondrous trees, nor such a

wealth of vegetation. The ferns, which were of gigantic size, were a special feature in this tree-scape, while immense climbing plants, with gorgeous hanging flowers, made an intricate wildery of this forest land. Great flocks of pigeons sometimes rose into the air, which they almost darkened. Ibises grey and red sat and nodded on the rocks, looking like rows of soldiers and riflemen, while the woods resounded with the cries of strange birds and the chattering of innumerable monkeys.

Boats landed about noon, and came off laden with fruit, but they could find no water that was not brackish.

An expedition was accordingly got up to go farther inland and search for it. Both Leonard and Douglas went with it. They were fortunate enough to find a running stream. The casks were filled, and after a rest, they were preparing to return, when a wild war-whoop rent the air, and they found themselves suddenly confronted by a dozen nearly naked savages, armed with club, and spear, and shield. The march shore-wards, however, was commenced, and carried out in perfect order, the natives following slowly on after them, and threatening their rear. They grew bolder when they noticed the intention of the men to embark with their casks. Spears were thrown, and more than one man was wounded. Then Leonard and Douglas lost their patience and fired. Two savages bit the dust. The others stood as if petrified. They had evidently never heard of or seen such a thing as a gun before. Then recovering themselves, with one unearthly shriek they turned and fled away into the darkness of the forest.

Nothing was to be gained by stopping here and fighting those dusky sons of the woods, so anchor was got up that evening, and the Gloaming Star resumed her voyage. Although the ship was still, to some extent, scarce of water, they trusted to future good fortune, as brave sailors were in the habit of doing in those days.

After coasting about for nearly a fortnight, with variable winds, land breezes, sea breezes, and even half-gales, they found themselves one forenoon once more approaching the land. The wind was fair, the day was fine, and men were kept constantly in the chains lest, the water suddenly shoaling, the vessel might get stranded.

There was plenty of dash and “go” about Captain Blunt, but no such thing as rashness, a quality which in a commander is oftentimes fatal, and involves the loss of many a gallant ship and thousands of lives annually.

Strange birds such as they had never seen before kept constantly wheeling and screaming around the vessel, and there were stranger creatures still in the water. They had all heard of sea-serpents or of the sea-serpent, but here they were on this particular bank in scores and in hundreds, gliding along in the water or floating in knots—ugly-

looking flat-tailed creatures, though of no great size. I have heard of a lieutenant having been killed by the bite of one of these strange snakes; at the same time I can hardly believe it. The story, briefly told, is as follows:—

Bitten by a Sea-Snake.

It was in the gun-boat B— some few hundred miles south of Bombay in the Indian Ocean. Lieutenant Archer was asleep in his cabin in the afternoon, just after luncheon, and the day being fine and the weather fair when he lay down, he had opened his little port for fresh air; in other words, he had pulled the scuttle out. One of those sudden squalls, however—so common in this lovely sea—came down on the ship just as she was about to cross a coral bank infested with these serpents.

The tramping noise on deck, the rattle of ropes overhead, and the flapping of sails and shouting of orders might have failed to waken Archer—he was used to it—but something else did. No, not a snake; the snake comes in afterwards. But he shipped a sea through the scuttle which deluged the bed. The officer sprang out, put in and fastened the scuttle, shook the rug, and then himself as a big dog might have done, and quietly turned in again. He got up to keep the first dog-watch, and on putting his hand down to take up his jacket the terrible sea-viper struck him. It is said he was almost instantly paralysed with terror and pain. The doctor found him, pale, perspiring, with starting eye-balls, and almost bloodless, and nothing could rally him, for he sank and died.

Now I give the story as I got it. It may be true. It may be like some of Rory O'Reilly's yarns, worthy of credence as far as one half goes, the other half being left for the storyteller himself to make the best of.

It was strange now that, although far away among the woods they had seen the smoke of fires, on landing with men to dig wells and search for water, not a sight of a human being could be seen. They dug well after well, but all were brackish.

So this island had to be deserted.

The next place they came to swarmed with natives, and very fine-looking fellows they were, armed to the teeth, however. They obstinately refused to hold any palaver with the officers or crew of the *Gloaming Star*. Even the display of beads did not tempt them, and although here were streams of fresh water, it was ultimately decided to sail away and seek for it on other and probably more hospitable shores.

It is impossible to chronicle all the wanderings of our heroes in those lovely islands, and their cruises round their coasts, but all summer long off and on they voyaged in their

midst. Then came the autumn—which is contemporaneous with our spring—and higher winds began to blow, and the weather got sensibly cooler and more pleasant.

There was no dearth of fresh provisions anywhere, there was fish in the sea and game on shore, and although the dangers they had to incur in search of water were sometimes great, they succeeded in getting it nevertheless.

One day about the middle of February they found themselves approaching a beautiful though small island, which, as it was well-wooded and hilly, gave promise not only of water, but of a supply of good things for the larder as well. The weather was not quite so clear, however, as usual. As the wind seemed freshening and blowing towards the land, the *Gloaming Star* altered her course, and towards evening found herself at the lee side of this terra incognita, when she dropped anchors, being sheltered on one side by the rocks, and on another by a long spit of land, covered with shingle, that jutted out into the sea.

There was no smoke to be seen among the trees, no huts near the shore, never a sign of human life anywhere. The island was as much their own as Robinson Crusoe's was.

Leonard and Douglas with a boat's crew of five men landed in the afternoon, and after making their boat fast to the trunks of some mangrove trees, that grew near the spit of land, they went away into the interior on a prospecting expedition.

They found the island far more lovely than they could have imagined in their wildest dreams. It was indeed a garden of nature—hills and glens, woods and waters, and even inland lakes, foaming cataracts, wondrous trees, and climbing flowers of every shape and colour. Birds and strange beasts, but nothing apparently hurtful or venomous. And yet all was in the smallest compass.

No wonder that the sun was almost setting before—laden with delicious fruit—they began to make their way back to the beach.

A Fearful Gale.

As long as they were in the shelter of the trees and hills, they had no idea how high it was blowing, but as soon as they gained the beach things appeared in their true light. The sea, even with the wind blowing off the land, was houses high, and like a snow-field with the froth and spume that covered it. The *Gloaming Star* could hardly be seen in the midst of the spray and even green seas that dashed over her.

As they gazed despairingly towards her, the gale suddenly increased to tenfold its former violence. The waves now made a clean breach over the spot of land that sheltered the ship, if shelter it could be called. Gravel, sand, earth, and dead branches were torn off the ground and hurled into the air; it got darker and darker; the lightning played quick, vivid, and bright everywhere about them; and high over the roaring of wind and water rose the deafening rattle of thunder. While trees were being uprooted in the woods, or snapped like twigs, and the whole island was shaken to its very foundation, Leonard and his party were creeping on all fours to the shelter of a rock, and night fell just as they found themselves safe inside a cave on the sea-beach.

All that night the wind howled and roared, and the rain came down in torrents. Sleep was out of the question, for the thunder was constant, and by the glimmer of the lightning's flash they could see each other's blue, pale faces as they crouched on the sandy floor of the cave.

Morning broke at last, and the wind went down, the sun rose and shone luridly over the heaving waters, and they stood together on the sea-beach—alone!

The Gloaming Star was nowhere to be seen, but whether she broke her moorings, and drifted out to sea to founder, or whether Captain Blunt had thought it would be safer to run before the fearful gale, they could not guess.

The wind still blew stiff, but the force of the hurricane was spent. They went to the place where the boat had been left. It had been smashed to pieces, hardly a timber was left, and the keel stuck up out of a sandbank, beside the tree to which the painter had been attached.

Leonard looked at Douglas, and Douglas at Leonard, and both smiled, though somewhat sadly. The same thoughts were evidently passing through the minds of each.

“Well,” said Douglas, “if the ship is safe, and I believe she is, she is sure to come back for us.”

“And a few days or even weeks in so beautiful a place won't hurt,” said Leonard.

“This is like being marooned, isn't it, gentlemen?” one of the sailors remarked.

“Well, it is being marooned by fortune, but we must make the best of it.”

In the bright lexicon of youth there is no such word as “fail.” There should not be, at all events; and so these deserted sailors at once set about making the best of a bad job.

They had hope in their hearts—which were stout ones all of them—and after a bit they quite enjoyed their Crusoe life.

They had axes, and spades, and knives, and guns, and plenty of ammunition; but even had they possessed none of these tools, they could have lived on the fruit that grew so abundantly everywhere, on bushes on the hills, and on trees in every glade and glen.

As gales of wind or hurricanes might come again and level the strongest hut they could build, they determined to become for a time cave-dwellers. They searched for, and found farther inland, and up on a terrace in the side of a woody hill, just the place that would suit—a large, dry, lofty cave in sight of the sea. They at once set about fitting it up for a dwelling. The floor was covered deep in silvery sand. Nothing could be better, whether to squat in by day, or sleep on by night. The entrance to the cave was built up with felled trees, leaving only a small entrance for light, and a doorway. Thus the dwelling-house was speedily completed.

“Why not,” said Leonard, “fortify this terrace?”

“Good,” replied Douglas; “we have nothing else to do, and I can’t forget that footstep in the sand of Crusoe’s Isle.”

“And as we never know what may happen,” continued Douglas, “I propose that we store our guns and ammunition, and trap game for our food.”

This proposal was carried unanimously.

Some of the men were clever trappers, and others were good fishermen, so there was no want of food, and water was abundant.

On the sea-beach a fire was kindled, and day and night this was kept up, sentries being always posted here, armed.

The rampart was soon completed round the terrace, and a strong one it was.

A whole week had gone, and as yet nothing had been seen of the Gloaming Star, and the hopes of our heroes began to get very low indeed.

A whole week, then another and another. Their hearts sank with each recurring day. They got tired even of the beauty of the island, and tired and sick of gazing always out to the sea, which looked to them now so void and merciless. They envied even the sea-birds, that seemed so happy and joyous, and whom nothing could imprison.

“It would be a good idea,” said Douglas one day, “to build a boat and sail away somewhere.”

“Yes, but whither?”

“Yes, whither?” repeated Douglas sadly.

One day, while roaming together on the other side of the island, suddenly there sprang up in front of Leonard and Douglas, as if from the very earth, a naked savage. He stood but for a moment, then waving a club aloft with a wild shout of fear and wonder, he fled far away into the woods.

They returned to the cave, and reported what they had seen, and all agreed that though danger might accrue from the visit of natives to the island, still it might end in their being set free.

It was determined, however, to be now doubly vigilant. The sentry was no longer placed on the beach but inside the rampart, and never less than four men went to the woods together.

Days and days went past, a sad time of doubt and uncertainty, and still no signs of savages. They came at last, however.

And one morning, looking down over the ramparts, they could see a group of tall, armed, and painted natives, standing on the sand spit examining the broken keel of the boat.

Then they disappeared in the bush.

Arms were got out now; the one little gate that led through the rampart was doubly barricaded; the little garrison waited and watched.

The forenoon wore on, birds sang in the trees, the low wind sighed through the woods, and the lovely flowers opened their petals to bask in the sweet sunshine. There were joy and gladness everywhere except in the hearts of those anxious mariners.

The day wore on, and the sun began to decline in the west. Our heroes had just finished dinner when the sentry lifted his finger, and beckoned to them. Through an opening in the rampart they could perceive fully a score of club- and spear-armed savages creeping stealthily up the hill.

As soon, however, as they were boldly hailed from the fort—for fort it might now be considered—they cast all attempts at concealment aside, and with a yell that was re-echoed back from every rock around they dashed onwards to the attack.

“Steady, men. Take good aim, and don’t throw away a shot.”

A volley completely staggered the enemy. They fell back quicker than they had come, going helter-skelter down the hill, and leaving several dead and wounded behind them.

Not for long though. Savages may be beaten, but if there is the slightest chance to overcome by numbers they invariably return.

The day passed, however, and eke the long, dreary night, during which no one closed an eye till the sun once more rose over the sea in the morning. Most of the men slept all the forenoon. Luckily they did, for in the afternoon the savages returned in redoubled numbers, and this time many of them actually swarmed over the ramparts, but only to be felled inside.

It was a terrible mêlée, but ended once more in victory for our side.

A whole week now wore away without further molestation, but the worst was to come, for the garrison was reduced to five defenders, two having been wounded in the last fight, one of whom had succumbed to his wounds.

It was early in the morning, and the stars were still shining bright and clearly over the sea, when one of the sentries reported the woods on fire to windward. The flames spread with alarming rapidity, and by daybreak were close at hand; the fort was enveloped in smoke, while sparks as thick as falling snowflakes in a winter’s storm were showered around them.

In the midst of smoke and fire the savages intended making their final attempt to carry the fort, and our heroes determined to sell their lives dearly, and fight to the end.

Already they could hear the yells of the approaching spearmen, though they were invisible.

But why come they not on? Why does the yelling continue and go farther and farther back and away? Hark! it is the ring of firearms.

Oh, joy! the Gloaming Star must have returned. But was this really so? No, for the white men now engaged in a hand-to-hand combat with those daring savages are men of a different class from the honest crew of the Gloaming Star.

The sound of the battle grows fainter and fainter, till it ceases entirely.

Leonard and Douglas wait and watch, trying to peer through the smoke, and unravel, if possible, some of the mystery that has been taking place below.

Dimly through the haze at last they can notice figures dressed in white clambering up the hill.

“Come out at once, you white fellows,” cries a bold English voice. “Come forth, if you don’t want to be roasted alive. The fire is close on you.”

The rampart gates were opened, and the besieged bade speedy farewell for ever to their cave and fort. Sturdy, bare, brown-armed sailors, armed with cutlasses and pistols, were their rescuers, but presently they found themselves on the beach, and standing in front of the ringleader or captain of the band. A tall handsome man he was, dressed in white, with a turban of silk around his head, and a sword by his side. He was smoking a cheroot.

“Happy to see you, anyhow,” he said. “Squat yourselves down on the sand there; I guess you’re tired.”

“And I, Captain Bland, am glad to see you once again.”

“What! you know me then?”

“Yes, though you can hardly be expected to remember the lad you kidnapped.”

Bland jumped up and seized Leonard by the hand, while tears filled his eyes.

“Oh!” he said, “this is a greater joy than ever I could have dreamt of, greater than ever I deserved. I care little now how soon my wanderings are ended, or how soon I leave the world itself.”

“Do not speak in this sad tone, Captain Bland; believe me, it is a pleasure to me to meet you. I never believed you the hardened criminal that some would have you.”

“Criminal!” cried Bland, flushing excitedly, “who dare call me criminal? And yet,” he added, in a tone of great sadness, and even pathos, “perhaps I have been a criminal, a smuggler, yea, even to some extent a pirate. I have never yet, however, done one cruel action; but had I my life to begin over again, how different it would all be!”

“And that barque lying out there is yours?”

“Yes; and my trade you would ask? I deal in slaves and gold. I have found gold. But what good is it all? I live a life of constant excitement; were this to fail me I should die. But you saved my worthless life, lad.”

“And now you have saved ours.”

“Yes, and I’ll do more. I’ll restore you to your ship and your captain. He it was who sent me here in search of you, but he mentioned no name, and little did he know the pleasure he was giving me.”

“And the Gloaming Star?”

“Is in the hands of my merry men. Do not be alarmed. It was a bloodless victory. And now she shall be restored to you safe and sound.

“Come, my boats are here to take you off, and your ship lies safe at anchor not sixty miles away. Come.”

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Chapter Five.

The Old Folks at Home.

“Gloomy winter’s noo awa,
Soft the westlin’ breezes blow,
Amang the birks o’ Stanley Shaw
The mavis sings hoo cheery O?”

Burns.

“I asked a glad mother, just come from the post,
With a letter she kissed, from a far-away coast,
What heart-thrilling news had rejoiced her the most,
And—gladness for mourning! Her boy was returning
To love her—at home.”

Tupper.

Scene: The wildery round Grayling House in early spring. Everything in gardens and on lawns looks fresh and joyful. Spring flowers peeping through the brown earth, merle and mavis making music in the spruce and fir thickets, and louder than all the clear-throated chaffinch. Effie walking alone with book in hand, a great deerhound, the son of faithful Ossian, following step by step behind.

Effie is not reading, though she holds that book in her hand, and albeit her eyes seem glued to the page. For Effie is thinking, only thinking the same thoughts she thinks so very often, only making the same calculations she makes every day of her somewhat lonely life, and which often cause her pillow at night to be bedewed with tears.

Thinking, wondering, calculating.

Thinking of the past, thinking what a long, long time has elapsed since Leonard and Douglas—her brother’s friend—went last away to sea; wondering where they might be at that very moment, and calculating the weeks and days that had yet to elapse before the

time they had promised to return should arrive. She finished by breathing a little prayer for them. What a joyful thing it is for us poor mortals, that He, Who sticketh closer than a brother, is ever and always by our side, and ever and always ready to lend a willing ear to our silent supplications!

Effie ended with a sigh that was half a sob, a sigh that made great Orla the deerhound thrust his muzzle right under her elbow, and so throw her arm around his neck.

What would Effie have thought or done, I wonder, had she known that at this very moment Leonard's ship lay safe at Leith, and that not only he, but Douglas and Captain Blunt, were making all the haste that could be made in a chaise and pair towards Glen Lyle?

On the arrival of the *Gloaming Star*, our heroes first and foremost did something which may not accord with my readers' idea of romance. A most useful and most needful something it was. They paid a visit to a West End tailor. Before doing so, however, they went to Captain Lyle's lawyer.

The old man—he was very old—did not at first know Leonard, but as soon as he did, he shook hands with him over and over again. He was almost childlike in his joy to see him again.

“What will your father say?” he cried, “and all of them, all of them?”

Of course Leonard had a dozen questions to ask, and what a big sigh of relief he got rid of, when told that not only were all of them well, including Peter and Peter's pike, which by some means or another—considered supernatural by Peter—was once more all alive and plunging, but that the estate of Glen Lyle was free again, and that Captain Fitzroy had rented one of the farms, thus figuratively, if not literally, turning his sword into a ploughshare.

Leonard had stood all the time he was getting this news, but now that the hysterical ball of doubt and anxiety had left his throat, he flung his hat to the other end of the room, and took a chair. Douglas and Blunt did the same, and the whole four glided right away into a right jolly, right merry whole hour's conversation, what the Scotch folks would call “a foursome crack.” The old lawyer's clerk—and he was old, too—came on tiptoe to the door and listened, for he had not heard such laughing and joking and merriment for many and many a long year.

The wanderers rose at last to say good-bye for the present.

“Now don’t write and tell them we’ve come,” said Leonard. “We want to go and surprise them.”

“But, my dear young squire—”

“Bother the squire!” cried Leonard, laughing.

“Well, my dear Leonard, then—”

“Yes, that’s better.”

“Aren’t you going right away down at once? Do you mean to say you’ll let the grass grow beneath your shoes for an hour?”

And now Douglas put in his oar.

“Why, Mr Fraser,” he said, “look at us. Run your eagle eye over us from stem to stern. Rough and unkempt. Covered with salt. Barnacles growing on us. Could you, Mr Fraser, suggest our putting in an appearance before ladies in such a plight? No, sir, the tailor must first and foremost come upon the scene.”

Mr Fraser laughed heartily.

“Well, well,” he said, “young men will be young men, but I’ll warrant you, gentlemen, the ladies would be right glad to see you, barnacles and all.”

And the old gentleman laughed and rubbed his hands, as if he had said something very clever indeed.

Once upon a time, as the fairy stories begin, my good ship M— had arrived at Portsmouth after a long commission of cruising along the shores of Eastern Africa and round India.

At luncheon the day after we came in, our chief engineer said, in his quiet, stoical manner,—

“My wife is coming to-day by the three train.”

“What!” cried somebody. “And you are not going to meet her at the station, after so long an absence?”

“No, I’m not,” was the answer. “The fact is, I’ve a very great horror of anything approaching what people call a scene. Now if I had gone to meet my wife, the poor thing, overcome by her feelings, would be sure to faint in my arms or something. So I’ve sent my assistant to meet her. She isn’t likely to faint in little Jones’s arms.”

On the same principle, the reader must excuse me if I omit describing the scene of the meeting and reunion at Grayling House. I will not even tell of the tears that were shed, tears of joy and anxiety long pent up, of the hearty handshakes, of the whispered words and half-spoken sentences of welcome, for all this can be better imagined than told.

It was three days, at least, before the old house settled down again to anything like solid order, and conversation became less spasmodic in character.

Old Peter, who, of course, was quite one of the family, was probably the last to settle down, owing perhaps to the fact that he listened with wonder and astonishment to the conversation at table, and to the tales the wanderers had to tell, about the wonders they had seen, and the adventures they had come through. More than once, indeed, he had let fall a plate, and he had actually filled up Effie’s cup on the second morning from the water-bottle instead of the teapot. That same day, when he found Leonard and Douglas in the garden by themselves, he treated them to the following morsel of edification.

“Oh, laddies!” he said, “it’s a wondrous warld we live in, whether we dwell upo’ the dry lan’ or gang doon to the sea in ships. But few, unco few, hae come through what ye’ve come through. And what brocht ye back, think ye? What else but prayer, prayer, prayer? Your father prayed, and your lady mither prayed, and Miss Effie prayed, and poor auld Peter prayed, and—and thare ye are. And yonder is Grayling Ha’, and all aroond us is the bonnie estate o’ Glen Lyle, its hills and dells, and moors and fields, and woods and waters, a’ oor ain again. And the muckle pike ploupin’ aboot (ploupin’, Scottice—plunging) as if naething had ever ailed him. Verily, verily, we’ve a lot to be thankfu’ for!”

“Well, bless you, Peter, dear old friend, for your prayers, and long may you live to pray. But tell me, Peter, for I forgot to ask mother, what has become of Zella the gipsy girl?”

“Oh! hae they no tauld you? It’s a year ago come Whitsunday since they cam’ for her.”

“Who?”

“Who? who but the Faas of her ain tribe, and bonnily they decked her, in a muslin gown o’ gowden-spangled white, and they put roses and ferns in her dark hair, and a croon upon her head, and it’s wondrous beautiful she looked. Ay, ye may stare, but Zella is queen o’ the gipsies, and no doubt ye’ll see her ere lang.”

He turned sharp round towards Douglas as he spoke.

“I dinna doubt, sir,” he said, “but that the gipsy queen will come to your weddin’.”

Now Douglas’s face was, from exposure to sun and weather, of a sort of dignified brick-dust hue. One would have thought it impossible for such a face to blush, but deeper in colour it really got as he laughingly replied to the garrulous old Peter.

“My wedding, Peter! Why, my dear old friend, you’ve been dreaming.”

“Och, mon!” said Peter, with a sly wink. “I can see as far through a millstone as the miller himself. But I’m off, there’s the bell. It’s that auld limmer of a cook, she keeps ring, ring, ringing for me a’ day lang, with ‘Peter, do this’ and ‘Peter, do that.’ Sorrow tak’ her! Ring, ring, ring; there it goes again. Comin’, comin’, comin’.”

“Strange old man!” said Douglas.

“That he is,” said Leonard, “but yet how leal and true he has been to our family.”

A day or two after this the old family carriage was had out—and a stately and ancient-looking affair it was, hung on monster leather straps, which permitted it to swing about like a hammock, while inside it was as snug and soft as a feather bed—the carriage was got out, and accompanied by a phaeton, in which rode the younger folks, a visit was made to the gipsy camp in a far-off forest.

A horseman had been sent the day before with a note to her gracious majesty Queen Zella to apprise her of their coming, so that after a delightful drive on this lovely spring day they arrived at the encampment, safe and merry, and were received in state.

The gipsies were arrayed in their very best, and the queen was a sight to see, and indeed she really did look charming.

“Oh!” she said to Mr Lyle, “I was pleased to be with you in your cottage by the sea, and pleased to be at bonnie Glen Lyle, but the brown blood is strong within me. I was born to wander, and here I am wild and free as the birds that sing so sweetly on the trees to-day.

“Oh!” she continued, turning to our heroes, “it is not altogether because the sun is shining so brightly that their notes are so joyous. They sing thus madly because you have returned.”

Verily the queen knew how to pay a pretty compliment.

“And,” she added, “you have been happy. Oh! you must have been happy. Every one must be happy at sea. I dreamt you had met Captain Bland.”

“Your majesty has dreamt a strange dream, and a true one, for we did. He saved our lives. But, alas! he is no more. For just two days after he left us we saw a fire at sea. We bore down towards the burning ship. It was Bland’s barque. There was no sign of life on board. All was silent except for the rush of the flames and the crackling of the burning wood. And I fear no one was saved.”

The conversation was somewhat saddened for a time by Leonard’s recital, but what hearts could long remain sad in the fair, fresh scene, amid the greenery of trees, the wild melody of birds, and the soft spring sunshine?

“Man was made to mourn.” No, great poet, no; I will not have it. Man was made to be glad and to rejoice with everything that is glad and rejoiceth around him on this fair earth of ours.

“Tell me not in mournful numbers
Life is but an empty dream,
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

“Life is real; life is earnest,
And the grave is not its goal.
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.”

If there be anything in this world more lovely than a ship under full sail on a summer’s sea, I have yet to learn what it is. Look at the Gloaming Star yonder as she goes proudly bowing and curtsying westward over the Atlantic waves. A thing of beauty, a thing of life almost. Let us glance on board for a moment. How white the decks! almost as white as the beard of her commander Captain Blunt. Her woodworks are polished, her brass shines like yellow gold, the men are neat and tidy, and every rope is coiled and in its place on deck. Yonder on the quarter-deck sits Effie beside her brother’s friend. Her brother’s friend? Yes, but Effie’s husband now!

And Leonard himself is at the wheel.
Let us quietly drop the curtain then, while—

“The western sea is all aglow,
And the day is well-nigh done,
And almost on the western wave
Now rests the broad bright sun.”

Freeeditorial 