Red Rooney
Vol.I

By
R. M. Ballantyne

Red Rooney

Chapter One.
The Last of the Crew.
Lost and Found.

There is a particular spot in those wild regions which lie somewhere near the northern parts of Baffin’s Bay, where Nature seems to have set up her workshop for the manufacture of icebergs, where Polar bears, in company with seals and Greenland whales, are wont to gambol, and where the family of Jack Frost may be said to have taken permanent possession of the land.

One winter day, in the early part of the eighteenth century, a solitary man might have been seen in that neighbourhood, travelling on foot over the frozen sea in a staggering, stumbling, hurried manner, as if his powers, though not his will, were exhausted.

The man’s hairy garb of grey sealskin might have suggested that he was a denizen of those northern wilds, had not the colour of his face, his brown locks, and his bushy beard, betokened him a native of a very different region.

Although possessing a broad and stalwart frame, his movements indicated, as we have said, excessive weakness. A morsel of ice in his path, that would have been no impediment even to a child, caused him to stumble. Recovering himself, with an evidently painful effort, he continued to advance with quick, yet wavering steps. There was, however, a strange mixture of determination with his feebleness. Energy and despair seemed to be conjoined in his look

and actionand no wonder, for Red Rooney, although brave and resolute by nature, was alone in that Arctic wilderness, and reduced to nearly the last extremity by fatigue and famine. For some dayshow many he scarcely rememberedhe had maintained life by chewing a bit of raw sealskin as he travelled over the frozen waste; but this source of strength had at last been consumed, and he was now sinking from absolute want.

The indomitable spirit of the man, however, kept his weakened body moving, even after the mind had begun to sink into that dreamy, lethargic state which is said to indicate the immediate approach of death, and there was still a red spot in each of his pale and hollow cheeks, as well as an eager gleam of hope in his sunken eyes; for the purpose that Red Rooney had in view was to reach the land.

It was indeed a miserably faint hope that urged the poor fellow on, for the desolate shore of Western Greenland offered little better prospect of shelter than did the ice-clad sea; but, as in the case of the drowning man, he clutched at this miserable straw of hope, and held on for life. There was the bare possibility that some of the migratory Eskimos might be there, or, if not, that some scraps of their foodsome bits of refuse, even a few bonesmight be found. Death, he felt, was quickly closing with him on the sea. The great enemy might, perhaps, be fought with and kept at bay for a time if he could only reach the land.

Encouraging himself with such thoughts, he pushed on, but again stumbled and fellthis time at full length. He lay quiet for a few seconds. It was so inexpressibly sweet to rest, and feel the worn-out senses floating away, as it were, into dreamland! But the strong will burst the tightening bands of death, and, rising once more, with the exclamation, “God help me!” he resumed his weary march.

All around him the great ocean was covered with its coat of solid, unbroken ice; for although winter was past, and the sun of early spring was at the time gleaming on bergs that raised their battlements and pinnacles into a bright blue sky, the hoary king of the far north refused as yet to resign his sceptre and submit to the interregnum of the genial sun.

A large hummock or ridge of ice lay in front of the man, blocking his view of the horizon in that direction. It had probably been heaved up by one of the convulsions of the previous autumn, and was broken into a chaotic mass. Here he stopped and looked up, with a sigh. But the sinking of the heart was momentary. Deep snow had so filled up the crevices of the shattered blocks that it was possible to advance slowly by winding in and out among them. As the ascent grew steeper the forlorn man dropped on all-fours and crawled

upwards until he reached the top.

The view that burst upon him would have roused enthusiasm if his situation had been less critical. Even as it was, an exclamation of surprise broke from him, for there, not five miles distant, was the coast of Greenland; desolate, indeed, and ice-boundhe had expected thatbut inexpressibly grand even in its desolation. A mighty tongue of a great glacier protruded itself into the frozen sea. The tip of this tongue had been broken off, and the edge presented a gigantic wall of crystal several hundred feet high, on which the sun glittered in blinding rays.

This tonguea mere offshoot of the great glacier itselffilled a valley full ten miles in length, measuring from its tip in the ocean to its root on the mountain brow, where the snow-line was seen to cut sharply against the sky.

For some minutes Red Rooney sat on one of the ice-blocks, gazing with intense eagerness along the shore, in the hope of discerning smoke or some other evidence of man's presence. But nothing met his disappointed gaze save the same uniform, interminable waste of white and grey, with here and there a few dark frowning patches where the cliffs were too precipitous to sustain the snow.

Another despairing sigh rose to the man's lips, but these refused to give it passage. With stern resolve he arose and stumbled hurriedly forward. The strain, however, proved too great. On reaching the level ice on the other side of the ridge he fell, apparently for the last time, and lay perfectly still. Ah! how many must have fallen thus, to rise no more, since men first began to search out the secrets of that grand mysterious region!

But Red Rooney was not doomed to be among those who have perished there. Not far from the spot where he fell, one of the short but muscular and hairy-robed denizens of that country was busily engaged in removing the skin from a Polar bear which he had just succeeded in spearing, after a combat which very nearly cost him his life. During the heat of the battle the brave little man's foot had slipped, and the desperately wounded monster, making a rush at the moment, overturned him into a crevice between two ice-blocks, fortunately the impetus of the rush caused the animal to shoot into another crevice beyond, and the man, proving more active than the bear, sprang out of his hole in time to meet his foe with a spear-thrust so deadly that it killed him on the spot. Immediately he began to skin the animal, intending to go home with the skin, and return with a team of dogs for the meat and the carcass of a recently-caught seal.

Meanwhile, having removed and packed up the bear-skin, he swung it on his

broad shoulders, and made for the shore as fast as his short legs would carry him. On the way he came to the spot where the fallen traveller lay.

His first act was to open his eyes to the uttermost, and, considering the small, twinkling appearance of those eyes just a minute before, the change was marvellous.

“Hoi!” then burst from him with tremendous emphasis, after which he dropped his bundle, turned poor Rooney over on his back, and looked at his face with an expression of awe.

“Dead!” said the Eskimo, under his breathin his own tongue, of course, not in English, of which, we need scarcely add, he knew nothing.

After feeling the man’s breast, under his coat, for a few seconds, he murmured the word “Kablunet” (foreigner), and shook his head mournfully.

It was not so much grief for the man’s fate that agitated this child of the northern wilderness, as regret at his own bad fortune. Marvellous were the reports which from the south of Greenland had reached him, in his far northern home, of the strange Kablunets or foreigners who had arrived there to trade with the Eskimosmen who, so the reports went, wore smooth coats without hair, little round things on their heads instead of hoods, and flapping things on their legs instead of sealskin bootsmen who had come in monster kayaks (canoes), as big as icebergs; men who seemed to possess everything, had the power to do anything, and feared nothing. No fabrications in the Arabian Nights, or Gulliver, or Baron Munchausen, ever transcended the stories about those Kablunets which had reached this broad, short, sturdy Eskimostories which no doubt began in the south of Greenland with a substratum of truth, but which, in travelling several hundreds of miles northward, had grown, as a snowball might have grown if rolled the same distance over the Arctic wastes; with this differencethat whereas the snowball would have retained its original shape, though not its size, the tales lost not only their pristine form and size, but became so amazingly distorted that the original reporters would probably have failed to recognise them. And now, at last, here was actually a Kabluneta real foreigner in the body; but not alive! It was extremely disappointing!

Our sturdy Eskimo, however, was not a good judge of Kablunet vitality. He was yet rubbing the man’s broad chest, with a sort of pathetic pity, when a flutter of the heart startled him. He rubbed with more vigour. He became excited, and, seizing Red Rooney by the arms, shook him with considerable violence, the result being that the foreigner opened his eyes and looked at him inquiringly.

“Hallo, my lad,” said Rooney, in a faint voice; “not quite so hard. I’m all right.

Just help me up, like a good fellow."

He spoke in English, which was, of course, a waste of breath in the circumstances. In proof of his being "all right," he fell back again, and fainted away.

The Eskimo leaped up. He was one of those energetic beings who seem to know in all emergencies what is best to be done, and do it promptly. Unrolling the bear-skin, which yet retained a little of its first owner's warmth, he wrapped the Kablunet in it from head to foot, leaving an opening in front of his mouth for breathing purposes. With his knifea stone onehe cut off a little lump of blubber from the seal, and placed that in the opening, so that the stranger might eat on reviving, if so inclined, or let it alone, if so disposed. Then, turning his face towards the land, he scurried away over the ice like a hunted partridge, or a hairy ball driven before an Arctic breeze.

He made such good use of his short legs that in less than an hour he reached a little hut, which seemed to nestle under the wing of a great cliff in order to avoid destruction by the glittering walls of an impending glacier. The hut had no proper doorway, but a tunnel-shaped entrance, about three feet high and several feet long. Falling on his knees, the Eskimo crept into the tunnel and disappeared. Gaining the inner end of it, he stood up and glared, speechless, at his astonished wife.

She had cause for surprise, for never since their wedding-day had Nuna beheld such an expression on the fat face of her amiable husband.

"Okiok," she said, "have you seen an evil spirit?"

"No," he replied.

"Why, then, do you glare?"

Of course Nuna spoke in choice Eskimo, which we render into English with as much fidelity to the native idiom as seems consistent with the agreeable narration of our tale.

"Hoi!" exclaimed Okiok, in reply to her question, but without ceasing to glare and breathe hard.

"Has my husband become a walrus, that he can only shout and snort?" inquired Nuna, with the slightest possible twinkle in her eyes, as she raised herself out of the lamp-smoke, and laid down the stick with which she had been stirring the contents of a stone pot.

Instead of answering the question, Okiok turned to two chubby and staring

youths, of about fifteen and sixteen respectively, who were mending spears, and said sharply, “Norrak, Ermigit, go, harness the dogs.”

Norrak rose with a bound, and dived into the tunnel. Ermigit, although willing enough, was not quite so sharp. As he crawled into the tunnel and was disappearing, his father sent his foot in the same direction, and, having thus intimated the necessity for urgent haste, he turned again to his wife with a somewhat softened expression.

“Give me food, Nuna. Little food has passed into me since yesterday at sunrise. I starve. When I have eaten, you shall hear words that will make you dream for a moon. I have seen,”he became solemn at this point, and lowered his voice to a whisper as he advanced his head and glared again“I have seen aaKablunet!”

He drew back and gazed at his wife as connoisseurs are wont to do when examining a picture. And truly Nuna’s countenance was a picture-round, fat, comely, oily, also open-mouthed and eyed, with unbounded astonishment depicted thereon; for she thoroughly believed her husband, knowing that he was upright and never told lies.

Her mental condition did not, however, interfere with her duties. A wooden slab or plate, laden with a mess of broiled meat, soon smoked before her lord. He quickly seated himself on a raised platform, and had done some justice to it before Nuna recovered the use of her tongue.

“A Kablunet!” she exclaimed, almost solemnly. “Is he dead?”

Okiok paused, with a lump of blubber in his fingers close to his mouth.

“No; he is alive. At least he was alive when I left him. If he has not died since, he is alive still.”

Having uttered this truism, he thrust the blubber well home, and continued his meal.

Nuna’s curiosity, having been aroused, was not easily allayed. She sat down beside her spouse, and plied him with numerous questions, to which Okiok gave her brief and very tantalising replies until he was gorged, when, throwing down the platter, he turned abruptly to his wife, and said impressively

“Open your ears, Nuna. Okiok is no longer what he was. He has been born only to-day. He has at last seen with his two eyesa Kablunet!”

He paused to restrain his excitement. His wife clasped her hands and looked at him excitedly, waiting for more.

“This Kablunet,” he continued, “is very white, and not so ruddy as we have been told they are. His hair is brown, and twists in little circles. He wears it on the top of his head, and on the bottom of his head alsoall round. He is not small or short. No; he is long and broad,but he is thin, very thin, like the young ice at the beginning of winter. His eyes are the colour of the summer sky. His nose is like the eagle’s beak, but not so long. His mouthI know not what his mouth is like; it is hid in a nest of hair. His words I understand not. They seem to me nonsense, but his voice is soft and deep.”

“And his dresshow does he dress?” asked Nuna, with natural feminine curiosity.

“Like ourselves,” replied Okiok, with a touch of disappointment in his tone. “The men who said the Kablunets wear strange things on their heads and long flapping things on their legs told lies.”

“Why did you not bring him here?” asked Nuna, after a few moments’ meditation on these marvels.

“Because he is too heavy to lift, and too weak to walk. He has been starving. I wrapped him in the skin of a bear, and left him with a piece of blubber at his nose. When he wakes up he will smell; then he will eat. Perhaps he will live; perhaps he will die. Who can tell? I go to fetch him.”

As the Eskimo spoke, the yelping of dogs outside told that his sons had obeyed his commands, and got ready the sledge. Without another word he crept out of the hut and jumped on the sledge, which was covered with two or three warm bearskins. Ermigit restrained the dogs, of which there were about eight, each fastened to the vehicle by a single line. Norrak handed his father the short-handled but heavy, long-lashed whip.

Okiok looked at Norrak as he grasped the instrument of punishment.

“Jump on,” he said.

Norrak did so with evident good-will. The whip flashed in the air with a serpentine swing, and went off like a pistol. The dogs yelled in alarm, and, springing away at full speed, were soon lost among the hummocks of the Arctic sea.

Chapter Two.
Describes a Rescue and a Happy Family.

While the Eskimos were thus rushing to his rescue, poor Red Rooneywhose

shipmates, we may explain at once, had thus contracted his Christian name of Reginaldbegan to recover from his swoon, and to wonder in a listless fashion where he was. Feeling comparatively comfortable in his bear-skin, he did not at first care to press the inquiry; but, as Okiok had anticipated, the peculiar smell near his nose tended to arouse him. Drawing his hand gently up, he touched the object in front of his mouth. It felt very like blubber, with which substance he was familiar. Extending his tongue, he found that it also tasted like blubber. To a starving man this was enough. He pulled the end of the raw morsel into his mouth and began to chew.

Ah, reader, turn not up your refined nose! When you have been for several months on short allowance, when you have scraped every shred of meat off the very last bones of your provisions, and sucked out the last drop of marrow, and then roasted and eaten your spare boots, you may perhaps be in a position to estimate and enjoy a morsel of raw blubber.

Regardless of time, place, and circumstance, our poor wanderer continued to chew until in his great weakness he fell into a sort of half slumber, and dreameddreamed of feasting on viands more delightful than the waking imagination of man has ever conceived.

From this state of bliss he was rudely awakened by a roughish poke in the back. The poke was accompanied by a snuffing sound which caused the blood of the poor man to curdle. Could it be a bear?

He was not left long in doubt. After giving him another poke on the shoulder, the creature walked round him, snuffing as it went, and, on reaching the air-hole already referred to, thrust its snout in and snorted. Rooney turned his face aside to avoid the blast, but otherwise lay quite still, knowing well that whatever animal his visitor might be, his only hope lay in absolute inaction. Venturing in a few seconds to turn his face round and peep through the opening, he found that the animal was in very deed a large white bear, which, having found and abstracted the remains of the blubber he had been chewing, was at that moment licking its lips after swallowing it. Of course, finding the morsel satisfactory, the bear returned to the hole for more.

It is easier to conceive than to describe the poor man’s feelings at that moment, therefore we leave the reader to conceive them. The natural and desperate tendency to spring up and defend himself had to be combated by the certain knowledge that, encased as he was, he could not spring up, and had nothing wherewith to defend himself except his fingers, which were no match for the claws of a Polar bear.

The blood which a moment before had begun apparently to curdle, now

seemed turned into liquid fire; and when the snout again entered and touched his own, he could contain himself no longer, but gave vent to a yell, which caused the startled bear to draw sharply back in alarm. Probably it had never heard a yell through the medium of its nose before, and every one must know how strong is the influence of a new sensation. For some minutes the monster stood in silent contemplation of the mysterious hole. Rooney of course lay perfectly still. The success of his involuntary explosion encouraged hope.

What the bear might have done next we cannot tell, for at that moment a shout was heard. It was followed by what seemed a succession of pistol shots and the howling of dogs. It was the arrival of Okiok on the scene with his sledge and team.

Never was an arrival more opportune. The bear looked round with a distinct expression of indignation on his countenance. Possibly the voice of Okiok was familiar to him. It may be that relations or friends of that bear had mysteriously disappeared after the sounding of that voice. Perhaps the animal in whose skin Rooney was encased had been a brother. At all events, the increasing hullabaloo of the approaching Eskimo had the effect of intimidating the animal, for it retired quickly, though with evident sulkiness, from the scene.

A few seconds more, and Okiok dashed up, leaped from his vehicle, left the panting team to the control of Norrak, and ran eagerly to the prostrate figure. Unwrapping the head so as to set it free, the Eskimo saw with intense satisfaction that the Kablunet was still alive. He called at once to Norrak, who fetched from the sledge a platter made of a seal’s shoulder-blade, on which was a mass of cooked food. This he presented to the starving man, who, with a look of intense gratitude, but with no words, eagerly ate it up. The Eskimo and his son meanwhile stood looking at him with an expression of mingled interest, awe, and surprise on their round faces.

When the meal was ended, Red Rooney, heaving a deep sigh of satisfaction, said, “Thank God, and thank you, my friends!”

There was reason for the increase of surprise with which this was received by the two natives, for this time the foreigner spoke to them in their own language.

“Is the Kablunet a messenger from heaven,” asked Okiok, with increased solemnity, “that he speaks with the tongue of the Innuit?”

“No, my friend,” replied Rooney, with a faint smile; “I bring no message either from heaven or anywhere else. I’m only a wrecked seaman. But, after a fashion, you are messengers from heaven to me, and the message you bring is

that I’m not to die just yet. If it had not been for you, my friends, it strikes me I should have been dead by this time. As to my speaking your lingo, it’s no mystery. I’ve learned it by livin’ a long time wi’ the traders in the south of Greenland, and I suppose I’ve got a sort o’ talent that way; d’ye see?”

Red Rooney delivered these remarks fluently in a curious sort of Eskimo language; but we have rendered it into that kind of English which the wrecked seaman was in the habit of usingchiefly because by so doing we shall give the reader a more correct idea of the character of the man.

“We are very glad to see you,” returned Okiok. “We have heard of you for many moons. We have wished for you very hard. Now you have come, we will treat you well.”

“Are your huts far off?” asked the seaman anxiously.

“Not far. They are close to the ice-mountainon the land.”

“Take me to them, then, like a good fellow, for I’m dead-beat, and stand much in need of rest.”

The poor man was so helpless that he could not walk to the sledge when they unrolled him. It seemed as if his power of will and energy had collapsed at the very moment of his rescue. Up to that time the fear of death had urged him on, but now, feeling that he was, comparatively speaking, safe, he gave way to the languor which had so long oppressed him, and thus, the impulse of the will being removed, he suddenly became as helpless as an infant.

Seeing his condition, the father and son lifted him on the sledge, wrapped him in skins, and drove back to the huts at full speed.

Nuna was awaiting them outside, with eager eyes and beating heart, for the discovery of a real live Kablunet was to her an object of as solemn and anxious curiosity as the finding of a veritable living ghost might be to a civilised man. But Nuna was not alone. There were two other members of the household present, who had been absent when Okiok first arrived, and whom we will now introduce to the reader.

One was Nuna’s only daughter, an exceedingly pretty girlaccording to Eskimo notions of female beauty. She was seventeen years of age, black-eyed, healthily-complexioned, round-faced, sweet-expressioned, comfortably stout, and unusually gracefulfor an Eskimo. Among her other charms, modesty and good-nature shone conspicuous. She was in all respects a superior counterpart of her mother, and her name was Nunaga. Nuna was small, Nunaga was smaller. Nuna was comparatively young, Nunaga was necessarily younger.

The former was kind, the latter was kinder. The mother was graceful and pretty, the daughter was more graceful and prettier. Nuna wore her hair gathered on the top of her head into a high top-knot, Nunaga wore a higher top-knot. In regard to costume, Nuna wore sealskin boots the whole length of her legswhich were not longand a frock or skirt reaching nearly to her knees, with a short tail in front and a long tail behind; Nunaga, being similarly clothed, had a shorter tail in front and a longer tail behind.

It may be interesting to note here that Eskimos are sometimes named because of qualities possessed, or appearance, or peculiar circumstances connected with them. The word Nuna signifies “land” in Eskimo. We cannot tell why this particular lady was named Land, unless it were that she was born on the land, and not on the ice; or perhaps because she was so nice that when any man came into her company he might have thought that he had reached the land of his hopes, and was disposed to settle down there and remain. Certainly many of the Eskimo young men seemed to be of that mind until Okiok carried her off in triumph. And let us tell you, reader, that a good and pretty woman is as much esteemed among the Eskimos as among ourselves. We do not say that she is better treated; neither do we hint that she is sometimes treated worse.

The Eskimo word Nunaga signifies “my land,” and was bestowed by Okiok on his eldest-born in a flood of tenderness at her birth.

Apologising for this philological digression, we proceed. Besides Nuna and Nunaga there was a baby boya fat, oily, contented boywithout a name at that time, and without a particle of clothing of any sort, his proper condition of heat being maintained when out of doors chiefly by being carried between his mother’s dress and her shoulders; also by being stuffed to repletion with blubber.

The whole family cried out vigorously with delight, in various keys, when the team came yelping home with the Kablunet. Even the baby gave a joyous crowin Eskimo.

But the exclamations were changed to pity when the Kablunet was assisted to rise, and staggered feebly towards the hut, even when supported by Okiok and his sons. The sailor was not ignorant of Eskimo ways. His residence in South Greenland had taught him many things. He dropped, therefore, quite naturallyindeed gladlyon his hands and knees on coming to the mouth of the tunnel, and crept slowly into the hut, followed by the whole family, except Ermigit, who was left to unfasten the dogs.

The weather at the time was by no means cold, for spring was rapidly advancing; nevertheless, to one who had been so reduced in strength, the

warmth of the Eskimo hut was inexpressibly grateful. With a great sigh of relief the rescued man flung himself on the raised part of the floor on which Eskimos are wont to sit and sleep.

“Thank God, and again I thank you, my friends!” he said, repeating the phrase which he had already used, for the sudden change from despair to hope, from all but death to restored life, had filled his heart with gratitude.

“You are weary?” said Okiok.

“Ay, ayvery weary; well-nigh to death,” he replied.

“Will the Kablunet sleep?” asked Nuna, pointing to a couch of skins close behind the seaman.

Rooney looked round.

“Thankee; yes, I will.”

He crept to the couch, and dropped upon it, with his head resting on an eider-down pillow. Like a tired infant, his eyes closed, and he was asleep almost instantaneously.

Seeing this, the Eskimos began to move about with care, and to speak in whispers, though it was needless caution, for in his condition the man would probably have continued to sleep through the wildest thunderstorm. Even when baby, tumbling headlong off the elevated floor, narrowly missed spiking himself on a walrus spear, and set up a yell that might have startled the stone deaf, the wearied Kablunet did not move. Okiok did, however. He moved smartly towards the infant, caught him by the throat, and almost strangled him in a fierce attempt to keep him quiet.

“Stupid tumbler!” he growledreferring to the child’s general and awkward habit of falling“Can’t you shut your mouth?”

Curious similarity between the thoughts and words of civilised and savage man in similar circumstances! And it is interesting to note the truth of what the song says:

“We little know what great things from little things may rise.”

From that slight incident the Eskimo child derived his future name of “Tumbler”! We forget what the precise Eskimo term is, but the English equivalent will do as well.

When supper-time arrived that night, Okiok and Nuna consulted as to whether

they should waken their guest, or let him lie stillfor, from the instant he lay down, he had remained without the slightest motion, save the slow, regular heaving of his broad chest.

“Let him sleep. He is tired,” said Okiok.

“But he must be hungry, and he is weak,” said Nuna.

“He can feed when he wakens,” returned the man, admiring his guest as a collector might admire a foreign curiosity which he had just found.

“Kablunets sleep sounder than Eskimos,” remarked the woman.

“Stupid one! Your head is thick, like the skull of the walrus,” said the man. “Don’t you see that it is because he is worn-out?”

Eskimos are singularly simple and straightforward in their speech. They express their opinions with the utmost candour, and without the slightest intention of hurting each other’s feelings. Nuna took no offence at her husband’s plain speaking, but continued to gaze with a gratified expression at the stranger.

And sooth to say Reginald Rooney was a pleasant object for contemplation, as well as a striking contrast to the men with whom Nuna had been hitherto associated. His brow was broad; the nose, which had been compared to the eagle’s beak, was in reality a fine aquiline; the mouth, although partially concealed by a brown drooping moustache, was well formed, large, and firm; the beard bushy, and the hair voluminous as well as curly. Altogether, this poor castaway was as fine a specimen of a British tar as one could wish to see, despite his wasted condition and his un-British garb.

It was finally decided to leave him undisturbed, and the Eskimo family took care while supping to eat their food in comparative silence. Usually the evening meal was a noisy, hilarious festival, at which Okiok and Norrak and Ermigit were wont to relate the various incidents of the day’s hunt, with more or less of exaggeration, not unmingled with fun, and only a little of that shameless boasting which is too strong a characteristic of the North American Indian. The women of the household were excellent listeners; also splendid laughers, and Tumbler was unrivalled in the matter of crowing, so that noise as well as feasting was usually the order of the night. But on this great occasion that was all changed. The feasting was done in dead silence; and another very striking peculiarity of the occasion was that, while the six pairs of jaws kept moving with unflagging pertinacity, the twelve wide-open eyes kept glaring with unwinking intensity at the sleeping man.

Indeed this unwavering glare continued long after supper was over, for each member of the family lay down to rest with his or her face towards the stranger, and kept up the glare until irresistible Nature closed the lids and thus put out the eyes, like the stars of morning, one by one; perhaps it would be more strictly correct to say two by two.

Okiok and his wife were the last to succumb. Long after the others were buried in slumber, these two sat up by the lamp-light, solacing themselves with little scraps and tit-bits of walrus during the intervals of whispered conversation.

“What shall we do with him?” asked Okiok, after a brief silence.

“Keep him,” replied Nuna, with decision.

“But we cannot force him to stay.”

“He cannot travel alone,” said Nuna, “and we will not help him to go.”

“We are not the only Innuits in all the land. Others will help him if we refuse.”

This was so obvious that the woman could not reply, but gazed for some time in perplexity at the lamp-smoke. And really there was much inspiration to be derived from the lamp-smoke, for the wick being a mass of moss steeped in an open cup of seal-oil, the smoke of it rose in varied convolutions that afforded almost as much scope for suggestive contemplation as our familiar coal-fires.

Suddenly the little woman glanced at her slumbering household, cast a meaning look at her husband, and laughedsilently of course.

“Has Nuna become a fool that she laughs at nothing?” demanded Okiok simply.

Instead of replying to the well-meant though impolite question, Nuna laughed again, and looked into the dark corner where the pretty little round face of Nunaga was dimly visible, with the eyes shut, and the little mouth wide-open.

“We will marry him to Nunaga,” she said, suddenly becoming grave.

“Pooh!” exclaimed Okiokor some expression equivalent to that“Marry Nunaga to a Kablunet? Never! Do you not know that Angut wants her?”

It was evident from the look of surprise with which Nuna received this piece of information that she was not aware of Angut’s aspirations, and it was equally evident from the perplexed expression that followed that her hastily-conceived little matrimonial speculation had been knocked on the head.

After this their thoughts either strayed into other channels, or became too deep for utterance, for they conversed no more, but soon joined the rest of the family in the realms of oblivion.

Chapter Three.
Our Hero and his Friends become Familiar.

It was a fine balmy brilliant morning when Red Rooney awoke from the most refreshing sleep he had enjoyed for many a day, gazed thoughtfully up at the blackened roof of the Eskimo hut, and wondered where he was.

There was nothing that met his eyes to recall his scattered senses, for all the members of the family had gone out to their various avocations, and one of them having thrust a sealskin into the hole in the wall which served for a window the sun found admittance only through crevices, and but faintly illumined the interior.

The poor man felt intensely weak, yet delightfully restfulso much so that mere curiosity seemed to have died within him, and he was content to lie still and think of whatever his wayward mind chose to fasten on, or not to think at all, if his mind saw fit to adopt that course in its vagaries. In short, he felt as if he had no more control over his thoughts than a man in a dream, and was quite satisfied that it should be so.

As his eyes became accustomed to the dim light, however, he began slowly to perceive that the walls around him were made of rough unhewn stone, that the rafters were of drift timber, and the roof of moss, or something like it; but the whole was so thickly coated with soot as to present a uniform appearance of blackness. He also saw, from the position in which he lay, a stone vessel, like a primitive classical lamp, with a wick projecting from its lip, but no flame. Several skulls of large animals lay on the floor within the range of his vision, and some sealskin and other garments hung on pegs of bone driven into the wall. Just opposite to him was the entrance to the tunnel, which formed the passage or corridor of the mansion, and within it gleamed a subdued light which entered from the outer end.

Rooney knew that he saw these things, and took note of them, yet if you had asked him what he had seen it is probable that he would have been unable to tellso near had he approached to the confines of that land from which no traveller returns.

Heaving a deep sigh, the man uttered the words, “Thank God!” for the third time within the last four-and-twenty hours. It was an appropriate prelude to his sinking into that mysterious region of oblivion in which the mind of worn-out

man finds rest, and out of which it can be so familiarly yet mysteriously summonedsometimes by his own pre-determination, but more frequently by a fellow-mortal.

He had not lain long thus when the tunnel was suddenly darkened by an advancing body, which proved to be the mistress of the mansion.

Nuna, on thrusting her head into the interior, looked inquiringly up before venturing to rise. After a good stare at the slumbering Kablunet, she went cautiously towards the window and removed the obstruction. A flood of light was let in, which illumined, but did not awaken, the sleeper.

Cautiously and on tip-toe the considerate little woman went about her household duties, but with her eyes fixed, as if in fascination, on her interesting guest.

It is at all times an awkward as well as a dangerous mode of proceeding, to walk in one direction and look in another. In crossing the hut, Nuna fell over a walrus skull, upset the lamp, and sent several other articles of furniture against the opposite wall with a startling crash. The poor creature did not rise. She was too much overwhelmed with shame. She merely turned her head as she lay, and cast a horrified gaze at the sleeper.

To her great joy she saw that Red Rooney had not been disturbed. He slept through it all with the placidity of an infant. Much relieved, the little woman got up, and moved about more freely. She replenished the lamp with oil, and kindled it. Then she proceeded to roast and fry and grill bear ribs, seal chops, and walrus steaks with a dexterity that was quite marvellous, considering the rude culinary implements with which she had to deal. In a short time breakfast was prepared, and Nuna went out to announce the fact. Slowly and with the utmost caution each member of the family crept in, and, before rising, cast the same admiring, inquiring, partially awe-stricken gaze at the unconscious Kablunet. Okiok, Nunaga, Norrak, Ermigit, and Tumbler all filed in, and sat down in solemn silence.

Okiok took Tumbler on his knee, so as to be ready to throttle him on the shortest notice if he should venture to cry, or even crow.

But as the best of human arrangements often fail through unforeseen circumstances, so the quietude was broken a second time that morning unexpectedly. One of the hungry dogs outside, rendered desperate by the delicious fumes that issued from the hut, took heart, dashed in, caught up a mass of blubber, and attempted to make off. A walrus rib, however, from Norrak’s unerring hand, caught him on the haunch as he entered the tunnel, and caused him to utter such a piercing howl that Red Rooney not only awoke,

but sat bolt upright, and gazed at the horrified Eskimos inquiringly.

Evidently the seaman was touched with a sense of the ludicrous, for he merely smiled and lay down again. But he did not try to sleep. Having been by that time thoroughly refreshed, he began to sniff the scent of savoury food as the war-horse is said to scent the battle from afarthat is, with an intense longing to "go at it." Okiok, guessing the state of his feelings, brought him a walrus rib.

Red Rooney accepted it, and began to eat at once without the use of knife or fork.

"Thankee, friend. It's the same I'll do for yourself if you ever come to starvation point when I've got a crust to spare."

Charmed beyond measure at hearing their native tongue from the mouth of a foreigner, the stare of the whole party became more intense, and for a few moments they actually ceased to chewa sure sign that they were, so to speak, transfixed with interest.

"My man," said Rooney, after a few minutes' intense application to the rib, "what is your name?"

"Okiok," replied the Eskimo.

"Okiok," muttered the seaman to himself in English; "why, that's the Eskimo word for winter." Then, after a few minutes' further attention to the rib, "Why did they name you after the cold season o' the year?"

"I know not," said Okiok. "When my father named me I was very small, and could not ask his reason. He never told any one. Before I was old enough to ask, a bear killed him. My mother thought it was because the winter when I was born was very cold and long."

Again the hungry man applied himself to the rib, and nothing more was said till it was finished. Feeling still somewhat fatigued, Rooney settled himself among his furs in a more upright position, and gave his attention to the natives, who instantly removed their eyes from him, and resumed eating with a will. Of course they could not restrain furtive glances, but they had ceased to stare.

In a few minutes Okiok paused, and in turn became the questioner.

"No Kablunet ever came here before," he said. "We are glad to see you; but why do you come, and why alone, and why starving?"

"Not very easy to answer these questions off-hand to the likes of you," said

Rooney. “However, I’ll try. You’ve heard of the settlementsthe tradersno doubt, in the far-off land over there?”

Rooney pointed to the southward, the direction of which he knew from the position of the sun and the time of day, which latter he guessed roughly.

The Eskimo nodded. From the special character of the nod it was evident that he meant it to express intelligence. And it did!

“Well,” continued Rooney, “you may have heard that big, bigtremendous bigkayaks, or rather oomiaks, have come to that country, an’ landed men and women, who have built housesigloosand have settled there to trade?”

At this his host nodded with such decision, and so frequently, as to show that he not only knew of the Kablunet settlements, but was deeply interested in them, and would be glad to know something more.

“Well, then,” continued the sailor, “I came out from a great and rich country, called England, in one o’ these big tradin’ canoes, which was wrecked close to the settlements, and there I stayed with my mates, waiting for another big kayak to come an’ take us off; but no kayak came for two wintersso that’s the way I came to understand an’ speak the Eskimo”

At this point, as if it could endure the stranger’s voice no longer, Tumbler set up a sudden and tremendous howl. He was instantly seized, half strangled, metaphorically sat upon, and reduced to sobbing silence, when the sailor resumed his narrative.

“All that time I was workin’ off and on for the”

He stopped abruptly, not having any words in the native language by which to name the Moravian Missionaries. The Eskimos waited with eager looks for the next word.

“Well, well,” resumed Rooney, with a pathetic smile, “it is a pity the whole world don’t speak one language. I was workin’ for, forthese Kablunets who have come to Greenland, (that’s the name we’ve given to your country, you must know)who have come to Greenland, not to trade, but to teach men about Godabout Torngarsuk, the Good Spiritwho made all the world, and men, and beasts.”

At this point the interest of Okiok became, if possible, more intense.

“Do the Kablunets know God, the Good Spirit? Have they seen him?” he asked.

“They haven’t exactly seen Him,” replied the sailor; “but they have got a book, a writing, which tells about Him, and they know something of His nature and His wishes.”

Of course this reference to a book and a writingwhich Rooney had learned to speak of from the Moravianswas quite incomprehensible to the Eskimo. He understood enough of what was said, however, to see the drift of his visitor’s meaning.

“Huk!” he exclaimed, with a look of satisfaction; “Angut will be glad to hear this.”

“Who is Angut?” asked the sailor.

The whole party looked peculiarly solemn at this question.

“Angut is a great angekok,” answered Okiok, in a low voice.

“Oh! he is one of your wise men, is he?” returned Rooney, with an involuntary shrug of his shoulders, for he had heard and seen enough during his residence at the settlements to convince him that the angekoks, or sorcerers, or wise men of the Eskimos, were mostly a set of clever charlatans, like the medicine-men of the North American Indians, who practised on the credulity and superstition of their fellow-men in order to gain their own ends. Some of these angekoks, no doubt, were partly self-deceivers, believing to some extent the deceptions which they practised, and desiring more or less the welfare of their dupes; but others were thorough, as well as clever, rogues, whose sole object was self-interest.

“Well, then,” continued Rooney, “after I’d been two winters with these Kablunets, another big kayak came to the settlement, not to trade, nor to teach about God, but to go as far as they could into the ice, and try to discover new lands.”

“Poor men!” remarked Okiok pitifully; “had they no lands of their own?”

“O, yes; they had lands at home,” replied the sailor, laughing.

“Huk!” exclaimed several of the natives, glancing at each other with quite a pleased expression. It was evident that they were relieved as well as glad to find that their visitor could laugh, for his worn and woe-begone expression, which was just beginning to disappear under the influence of rest and food, had induced the belief that he could only go the length of smiling.

“Yes,” continued the sailor; “they had lands, more or lesssome of them, at leastand some of them had money; but you must know, Okiok, that however

much a Kablunet may have, he always wants more."

"Is he never content?" asked the Eskimo.

"Never; at least not often."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Okiok; "when I am stuffed with seal-blubber as full as I can hold, I want nothing more."

Again the sailor laughed, and there was something so hearty and jovial in the sound that it became infectious, and the natives joined him, though quite ignorant of the exciting cause. Even Tumbler took advantage of the occasion to give vent to another howl, which, having something of the risible in it, was tolerated. When silence was restored, the visitor resumed

"I joined these searchers, as they wanted an interpreter, and we came away north here. Nothing particular happened at first. We had a deal of squeezing an' bumping in the ice of course, but got little damage, till about six days back I think, or thereabouts, when we got a nip that seemed to me to cut the bottom clean out o' the big kayak, for when the ice eased off again it went straight to the bottom. We had only time to throw some provisions on the ice and jump out before it went down. As our provisions were not sufficient to last more than a few days, I was sent off with some men over the floe to hunt for seals. We only saw one, asleep near its hole. Bein' afraid that the sailors might waken it, I told them to wait, and I would go after it alone. They agreed, but I failed. The seal was lively. He saw me before I got near enough, and dived into his hole. On returnin' to where I had left the men I found a great split in the ice, which cut me off from them. The space widened. I had no small kayak to take me across. It was too cold to swim. The floe on which my comrades stood was driftin', along wi' the big floe, where the rest of them were. The ice on which I stood was fast. A breeze was blowin' at the time, which soon carried the pack away. In an hour they were out of sight, and I saw them no more. I knew that it was land-ice on which I stood, and also that the coast could not be far off; but the hummocks and the snow-drift prevented me from seein' far in any direction. I knew also that death would be my portion if I remained where I was, so I set off straight for land as fast as I could go. How long I've been on the way I can't tell, for I don't feel quite sure, and latterly my brain has got into a confused state. I had a small piece of seal meat in my pouch when I started. When it was done I cut a strip off my sealskin coat an' sucked that. It just kept body and soul together. At last I saw the land, but fell, and should have died there if the Good Spirit had not sent you to save me, Okiokso give us a shake of your hand, old boy!"

To this narrative the natives listened with breathless attention, but at the

conclusion Okiok looked at the extended hand in surprise, not knowing what was expected of him. Seeing this, Rooney leaned forward, grasped the man's right hand, shook it warmly, patted it on the back, then, raising it to his lips, kissed it.

Stupid indeed would the man have been, and unusually savage, who could have failed to understand that friendship and good-will lay in these actions. But Okiok was not stupid. On the contrary, he was brightly intelligent, and, being somewhat humorous in addition, he seized Rooney's hand instantly after, and repeated the operation, with a broad smile on his beaming face. Then, turning suddenly to Tumbler, he grasped and shook that naked infant's hand, as it sat on the floor in a pool of oil from a lamp which it had overturned.

An explosion of laughter from everybody showed that the little joke was appreciated; but Okiok became suddenly grave, and sobered his family instantly, as he turned to Rooney and said

"I wish that Angut had been there. He would have saved your big oomiak and all the men."

"Indeed. Is he then such a powerful angekok?"

"Yes; very, very powerful. There never was an angekok like him."

"I suppose not," returned Rooney, with a feeling of doubt, which, however, he took care to hide. "What like is this great wise manvery big, I suppose?"

"No, he is not big, but he is not small. He is middling, and very strong, like the bear; very active and supple, like the seal or the white fox; and very swift, like the deerand very different from other angekoks."

"He must be a fine man," said the sailor, becoming interested in this angekok; "tell me wherein he differs from others."

"He is not only strong and wise, but he is good; and he cares nothing for our customs, or for the ways of other angekoks. He says that they are all lies and nonsense. Yes, he even says that he is not an angekok at all; but we know better, for he is. Everybody can see that he is. He knows everything; he can do anything. Do I not speak what is true?"

He turned to his wife and daughter as he spoke. Thus appealed to, Nuna said it was all true, and Nunaga said it was all very true, and blushedand, really, for an Eskimo, she looked quite pretty.

Don't laugh, good reader, at the idea of an Eskimo blushing. Depend upon it,

that that is one of those touches of nature which prove the kinship of the world everywhere.

While they were talking a step was heard outside, and the Eskimos looked intelligently at each other. They knew that the comer must be a friend, because, had he been a stranger, the dogs would have given notice of his approach. Besides, these animals were heard fawning round him as he spoke to them.

“Ujarak!” exclaimed Okiok, in a low voice.

“Is Ujarak a friend?” asked the sailor.

“He is an angekok,” said the Eskimo evasively“a great angekok, but not so great as Angut.”

Another moment, and a man was seen to creep into the tunnel. Standing up when inside, he proved to be a tall, powerful Eskimo, with a not unhandsome but stern countenance, which was somewhat marred by a deep scar over the left eye.

Chapter Four.
Okiok becomes Simple but Deep, and the Wizard tries to make Capital out of Events.

Of course Ujarak, wise man though he was esteemed to be, could not help being struck dumb by the unexpected sight of the gaunt foreigner. Indeed, having so long held supposed intercourse with familiar spirits, it is not improbable that he imagined that one of them had at last come, without waiting for a summons, to punish him because of his deceptive practices, for he turned paleor rather faintly greenand breathed hard.

Perceiving his state, it suddenly occurred to the sailor to say“Don’t be afraid. I won’t hurt you.” He inadvertently said it in English, however, so that Ujarak was none the wiser.

“Who is he?” demanded the angekokperhaps it were more correct to call him wizard.

Okiok, expecting Rooney to reply, looked at him, but a spirit of silence seemed to have come over the stranger, for he made no reply, but shut his eyes, as if he had dropped asleep.

“He is a Kablunet,” said Okiok.

“I could see that, even if I had not the double sight of the angekok,” replied the other, with a touch of sarcasm, for Eskimos, although by no means addicted to quarrelling, are very fond of satire. They are also prone to go straight to the point in conversation, and although fond of similes and figurative language, they seldom indulge in bombast.

With much solemnity Okiok rejoined that he had no doubt of Ujarak’s being aware that the man was a Kablunet.

“And I am glad you have come,” he added, “for of course you can also tell me where the Kablunet has come from, and whither he is going?”

The angekok glanced at his host quickly, for he knewat least he strongly suspectedthat he was one of that uncomfortable class of sceptics who refuse to swallow without question all that self-constituted “wise men” choose to tell them. Okiok was gazing at him, however, with an air of the most infantine simplicity and deference.

“I cannot tell you that,” replied the wizard, “because I have not consulted my torngak about him.”

It must be explained here that each angekok has a private spirit, or familiar, whose business it is to enlighten him on all points, and conduct him on his occasional visits to the land of spirits. This familiar is styled his “torngak.”

“Did your torngak tell you that he was a Kablunet?” asked Okiok simplyso simply that there was no room for Ujarak to take offence.

“No; my eyes told me that.”

“I did not know that you had ever seen a Kablunet,” returned the other, with a look of surprise.

“Nor have I. But have I not often heard them described by the men of the south? and has not my torngak showed them to me in dreams?”

The wizard said this somewhat tartly, and Okiok, feeling that he had gone far enough, turned away his sharp little eyes, and gazed at the lamp-smoke with an air of profound humility.

“You have got seal-flesh?” said Ujarak, glad to change the subject.

“Yes; I killed it yesterday. You are hungry? Nuna will give you some.”

“No; I am not hungry. Nevertheless I will eat. It is good to eat at all times.”

“Except when we are stuffed quite full,” murmured Okiok, casting at Nunaga

a sly glance, which threw that Eskimo maiden into what strongly resembled a suppressed giggle. It was catching, for her brothers Norrak and Ermigit were thrown into a similar condition, and even the baby crowed out of sympathy. Indeed Red Rooney himself, who only simulated sleep, found it difficult to restrain his feelings, for he began to understand Okiok's character, and to perceive that he was more than a match for the wizard with all his wisdom.

Whatever Ujarak may have felt, he revealed nothing, for he possessed that well-known quality of the Eskimothe power to restrain and conceal his feelingsin a high degree. With a quiet patronising smile, he bent down in quite a lover-like way, and asked Nunaga if the seal-flesh was good.

"Yes, it is good; very good," answered the maiden, looking modestly down, and toying with the end of her tail. You see she had no scent-bottle or fan to toy with. To be sure she had glovesthick sealskin mittensbut these were not available at the moment.

"I knew you had a seal," said the angekok, pausing between bites, after the edge of his appetite had been taken off; "my torngak told me you had found one at last."

"Did he tell you that I had also found a bear?" asked Okiok, with deeper simplicity than ever.

The wizard, without raising his head, and stuffing his mouth full to prevent the power of speech, glanced keenly about the floor. Observing the fresh skin in a corner, and one or two ribs, he bolted the bite, and said

"O yes. My torngak is kind; he tells me many things without being asked. He said to me two days ago, 'Okiok is a clever man. Though all the people are starving just now, he has killed a seal and a bear.'"

"Can torngaks make mistakes?" asked Okiok, with a puzzled look. "It was yesterday that I killed the seal and the bear."

"Torngaks never make mistakes," was the wizard's prompt and solemn reply; "but they see and know the future as well as the past, and they sometimes speak of both as the present."

"How puzzling!" returned the other meekly. "He meant you, then, to understand that I was going to kill a seal and a bear. Glad am I that I am not an angekok, for it would be very difficult work for a stupid man,enough almost to kill him!"

“You are right. It is difficult and hard work. So you see the torngak told me go feast with Okiok, and at his bidding of course I have come, on purpose to do so.”

“That’s a lie. You came to see my Nunaga, and you hope to get her; but you never will!” said Okiok. He said it only to himself, however, being far too polite to say it to his guest, to whom he replied deferentially

“If they are starving at your village, why did you not bring your mother and your father? They would have been welcome, for a seal and a bear would be enough to stuff us all quite full, and leave something to send to the rest.”

For some minutes the wizard did not reply. Perhaps he was meditating, perchance inventing.

“I brought no one,” he said at last, “because I want you and your family to return with me to the village. You know it is only two days distant, and we can take the seal and the bear with us. We are going to have a great feast and games.”

“Did you not say the people were starving?” asked Okiok, with a look of gentle surprise.

“They were starving,” returned Ujarak quickly; “but two walruses and four seals were brought in yesterday and my torngak has told me that he will point out where many more are to be found if I consult him on the night of the feast. Will you come back with me?”

Okiok glanced at the Kablunet.

“I cannot leave my guest,” he said.

“True, but we can take him with us.”

“Impossible. Do you not see he is only bones in a bag of skin? He must rest and feed.”

“That will be no difficulty,” returned the wizard, “for the feast is not to be held for twice seven days. By that time the Kablunet will be well, and getting strong. Of course he must rest and be well stuffed just now. So I will go back, and say that you are coming, and tell them also what you have founda Kablunet. Huk!”

“Yes; and he speaks our language,” said Okiok.

“That was not our language which he spoke when I came in.”

“No; yet he speaks it.”

“I should like to hear him speak.”

“You must not wake him,” said Okiok, with an assumed look of horror. “He would be sure to kill you with a look or a breath if you did. See; he moves!”

Rooney certainly did move at the moment, for the conversation had tickled him a good deal, and the last remark was almost too much for him. Not wishing, however, to let the angekok go without some conversation, he conveniently awoke, yawned, and stretched himself. In the act he displayed an amount of bone and sinew, if not flesh, which made a very favourable impression on the Eskimos, for physical strength and capacity is always, and naturally, rated highly among savages.

Our shipwrecked hero had now heard and seen enough to understand something of the character of the men with whom he had to deal. He went therefore direct to the point, without introduction or ceremony, by asking the angekok who he was and where he came from. After catechising him closely, he then sought to establish a kind of superiority over him by voluntarily relating his own story, as we have already given it, and thus preventing his being questioned in return by the wizard.

“Now,” said Red Rooney in conclusion, “when you go home to your village, tell the people that the Kablunet, having been nearly starved, must have some days to get well. He will stay with his friend Okiok, and rest till he is strong. Then he will go to your village with his friends, and join in the feast and games.”

There was a quiet matter-of-course tone of command about the seaman, which completely overawed the poor angekok, inducing him to submit at once to the implied superiority, though hitherto accustomed to carry matters with a high hand among his compatriots. His self-esteem, however, was somewhat compensated by the fact that he should be the bearer of such wonderful news to his people, and by the consideration that he could say his torngak had told him of the arrival of the Kablunetan assertion which they would believe all the more readily that he had left home with some mysterious statements that something wonderful was likely to be discovered. In truth, this astute wizard never failed to leave some such prediction behind him every time he quitted home, so as to prepare the people for whatever might occur; and, should nothing occur, he could generally manage to colour some event or incident with sufficient importance to make it fulfil the prediction, at least in some degree.

When at last he rose to depart, Ujarak turned to Nunaga. As her father had

rightly guessed, the wizard, who was quite a young man, had come there on matrimonial views intent; and he was not the man to leave the main purpose of his journey unattempted.

“Nunaga,” he said, in a comparatively low yet sufficiently audible voice, “my sledge is large. It is too large for one”

He was interrupted suddenly at this point by Rooney, who saw at once what was coming.

“Okiok,” he said, “I want Nunaga to mend and patch my torn garments for the next few days. Her mother has enough to do with cooking and looking after the house. Can you spare her for that work?”

Yes, Okiok could spare her; and was very glad to do all that he could to accommodate the foreigner.

“Will Ujarak carry a message from the Kablunet to his village?” asked Rooney, turning to the wizard.

“He will,” replied the latter somewhat sulkily.

“Does he know the angekok named Angut?”

It is doubtful whether anger or surprise was most strongly expressed in the countenance of the Eskimo as he replied sternly, “Yes.”

“Then tell him that the Kablunet will stay in his hut when he visits your village.”

Having delivered this message, he turned his face to the wall, and, without awaiting a reply, coolly went to sleep, or appeared to do so, while Ujarak went off, with a storm of very mingled feelings harrowing his savage breast.

When he was gone Red Rooney raised himself on one elbow, and looked over his shoulder at Okiok with a broad grin. Okiok, who felt grave enough at the moment, and somewhat perplexed, opened his eyes gradually, and reciprocated the smile with interest. By degrees he closed the eyes, and allowed the smile to develop into a high falsetto chuckle which convulsed his broad hairy shoulders for full five minutes.

From that hour Okiok and the Kablunet were united! They understood each other. The chords of sympathetic humour had vibrated within them in harmony. They were thenceforward en rapport, and felt towards each other like brothers, or rather like father and son, for Okiok was forty-five years of age at least, while Rooney was not yet thirty.

“He’s a very bad man, is he not?” asked the seaman, when the heaving of the shoulders had subsided.

“Ho! yes. Bad, bad! very bad! He lies, and steals, and cheats, and talks nonsense, and wants Nunaga for a wife.”

“And you don’t want him for a son?”

“No!”very decidedly.

Rooney laughed, and, turning away with a wink and a nod, lay down to sleepthis time in earnest. Okiok responded with a falsetto chuckle, after which he proceeded to solace himself with a mass of half-cooked blubber. Observing that Tumbler was regarding him with longing looks, he good-naturedly cut off part of the savoury morsel, and handed it to the child. It is well-known that the force of example is strongstronger than that of precept. In a few minutes the entire family set to work again on the viands with as much gusto as though they had eaten little or nothing for a week.

Leaving them thus pleasantly and profitably occupied, let us follow Ujarak to his village.

Every man and woman of superior intelligence in this world has probably one blind worshipper, if not moresome weak brother who admires, believes in, perhaps envies, but always bows to the demigod. Such a worshipper had Ujarak in Ippegoo, a tall young man, of weak physical frame, and still weaker mental capacity.

Ippegoo was not malevolent, like his master, but he was sufficiently wicked to laugh at his evil doings, and to assist him in his various plans, in the implicit belief that he was aiding a great and wise man. He did so all the more readily that he himself aimed at the high and dignified office of an angekok, an aspiration which had at first been planted in him, and afterwards been carefully encouraged by his deceiver, because it made his dupe, if possible, a blinder and more willing tool.

“Ippegoo,” said Ujarak, on drawing near to the outskirts of his village, and coming unexpectedly on his satellite, who was in the act of dragging home a seal which he had just killed, “I meet you in the nick of timebut that is no wonder, for did not my torngak tell me he would cause you to meet me near the village? I want your assistance just now.”

“I am glad, then, that we have met,” said Ippegoo, with a cringing motion not unlike a bowthough of the ceremonial bow the Eskimos have no knowledge.

“Yes, strange things have happened,” continued the angekok, rolling his eyes impressively. “Did I not tell you before I started to visit Okiok that strange things would happen?”

Ippegoo, who had a good deal of straightforward simplicity in his nature, looked puzzled, and tried hard to recollect what Ujarak had told him.

“You will never make an angekok,” said Ujarak, with a look of displeasure, “if you do not rouse up your memory more. Do you not remember when I whispered to you in a dream last night that strange things were going to happen?”

“O ye–e–es,in a dream; yes, I remember now,” returned the satellite in some confusion, yet with a good deal of faith, for he was a heavy feeder, and subject to nightmares, so that it was not difficult to imagine the “whisper” which had been suggested to him.

“Yes, you remember now, stupid walrus! Well, then, what was the strange thing like?” Ujarak looked awfully solemn while he put this question.

“What was it like?” repeated the poor youth with hesitation, and an uneasy glance at the sky, as if for inspiration. “Whatwasitoh, I remember; it was bigbig; very bigso high,” (holding his hand up about seven feet from the ice).

“No, Ippegoo, not so big. He was about my size. Don’t you remember? and he was pale, with hair twisted into little rings all over his head, and”

“Yes, yes; and a nose as long as my leg,” interrupted the eager pupil.

“Not at all, stupid puffin! A nose no longer than your own, and much better-shaped.”

The angekok said this so sternly that the too willing Ippegoo collapsed, and looked, as he felt, superlatively humble.

“Now go,” resumed Ujarak, with an unrelaxed brow; “go tell your story to the people assembled in the big hut. They feast there to-night, I know. Tell them what your dream has revealed. Tell them how I spoke to you before I left the villagebut don’t be too particular in your description. Let that belike your own mindconfused, and then it will be true to nature. Tell them also that you expect me soon, but say not that you have met me to-day, for that might displease my torngak, whom I go to consult.”

Without giving his pupil time to reply, the wizard strode off, and disappeared among the ice hummocks, as a bad actor might strut behind the side scenes.

Deeply impressed with the solemnity of the whole affair, and with the importance of his mission, the young Eskimo went off to the village, dragging his seal behind him, and wondering what new discovery had been made by his mysterious patron.

That something of unusual import had occurred he never doubted, for although he had often seen Ujarak, with unbounded admiration, wriggle out of unfulfilled prophecy like an eel, he had never seen him give way to demonstrations such as we have described without something real and surprising turning up ere long.

Strong in this faith, he ran into the large hut where a considerable party of his tribe were feasting on a recently captured walrus, and told them that something tremendous, something marrow-thrilling, had occurred to the great angekok Ujarak, who, before leaving the village, had told him that he was going off to find aasomethinghe knew not exactly whatwith rings of hair all over its body, pale as the ice-floe, more wonderful than the streaming lightsincomprehensible!immense!

At this point he glared, and became dumb. Not knowing well what to say next, he judiciously remained silent, then sat down and gasped, while the united company exclaimed “Huk!” with unusual emphasis.

The consultation which Ujarak had with his torngak was somewhat peculiar. It consisted chiefly in a wild run at full speed out upon the floes. Having pretty well exhausted himself by this device, and brought on profuse perspiration, he turned homewards. Drawing near to the village, he flung back his hood, ran his fingers through his long black hair until it was wildly dishevelled, then, springing suddenly into the midst of the festive party, he overturned feasters right and left, as he made his way to the part of the edifice furthest from the door.

A close observer might have noted, however, that there was method in his madness, for he overturned only women and children, and kept carefully clear of menat least of such men as he knew would resent his roughness.

Wheeling suddenly round, and facing the solemnised assembly, he addressed it, as if with difficulty, in a low-toned, awesome voice.

Chapter Five.
Plots and Counter-Plots already.

It is not necessary, neither would it be profitable, to give in full detail what Ujarak said to the gaping crowd. Enough to know that, like other statesmen, he

made the most of his subject, and fully impressed his audience with the belief that this first of Kablunets who had ever visited these ice-bound regions had been mysteriously, yet irresistibly, drawn there through his, Ujarak's, influence, with the assistance of his torngak or familiar spirit.

One man there was in that assembly, however, who seemed to be not very deeply touched by the wizard's eloquence. Yet he did not express unbelief by his looks, but received all that was said with profound gravity. This was Angut, the reputed angekok, to whom reference has been made in a previous chapter.

Although a thorough Eskimo in dress and in cast of feature, there was a refinement, a gravity, a kindliness, and a something quite indescribable about this man, which marked him out as an exceptional character among his fellows. As we have said elsewhere, he was not unusually large, though he was unusually strong, for his power lay rather in a well-knit and splendidly proportioned than a bulky frame. Ujarak was taller and broader, yet did not possess half his muscular strength. Ujarak knew this, and had hitherto avoided coming into collision with him. But there was also a moral strength and enthusiasm in Angut, which placed him on a platform high above not only Ujarak, but all the other men of his time and country. In short, he was one of those far-seeing and thoughtful characters, who exist in all countries, in all ranks and conditions of life, civilised and savage, and who are sometimes styled "Nature's gentlemen."

Despite his surroundings, temptations, examples, trials, and worries, Angut was at all times unvaryingly urbane, kind, sedate, equable, obliging, honest, and self-sacrificing. It mattered not that other men spoke freelysometimes even a little boastfullyof their exploits. Angut never did so of his, although no other man could hold a candleperhaps we should say a lampto him in the matter of daring. It signified not that Eskimos in general were in the habit of treating friendless widows and orphans ill, even robbing as well as neglecting them, Angut always treated well those with whom he had to do. Other men might neglect people in distress, but he helped and defended them; and it was a matter of absolute indifference to him what "people" thought of his conduct. There is a modified "Mrs Grundy" even in Eskimo land, but Angut despised her. Indeed she was the only creature or thing in his limited world that this good man did despise. He puzzled his countrymen very much, for they could not understand him. Other men they could put to shame, or laugh out of their ideas and plans, or frighten into submissionat least into conformity. Not so Angut. He was immovable, like an ancient iceberg; proof against threats, wheedling, cajoling, terrifying, sarcasmproof against everything but kindness. He could not stand before that. He went down before it as bergs go down

before the summer sun.

Angut was shrewd also and profound of thought, insomuch that, mentally, he stood high above his kinsfolk. He seemed to see through his fellows as if their bosoms and brains had been made of glass, and all their thoughts visible. Ujarak knew this also, and did not like it. But no one suffered because of Angut's superior penetration, for he was too amiable to hurt the feelings of a mosquito.

After all that we have said, the reader will perhaps be prepared to expect that Angut never opened his mouth save to drop words of love and wisdom. Not so. Angut was modest to excess. He doubted his own wisdom; he suspected his own feelings; he felt a strong tendency to defer to the opinion of others, and was prone rather to listen than to speak. He was fond of a joke too, but seldom perpetrated one, and was seldom severe.

While Ujarak was speaking, Angut listened with that look of unmoved gravity with which he always met a new thing or idea, and which effectually concealed his real feelings, though the concealment was unintentional. But when at last the wizard came to the most distasteful part of his discourse, namely the message from Reginald Rooney, that, on the occasion of his visit to the camp, he would take up his abode with Angut, that hero's countenance lighted up with surprise, not unmingled with pleasure.

"Is Ujarak sure that the Kablunet said this?" asked Angut.

"Quite sure," replied the wizard.

"Huk!" exclaimed Angut, by which exclamation you may be sure that he meant to express much satisfaction.

"But," continued the wizard, "the Kablunet is ill. He is thin; he is weak. He wants rest. I have consulted with my torngak, who tells me he will get better soon if we do not trouble him."

At this point Ujarak glanced at Angut, but that worthy's countenance had resumed its look of impenetrable gravity.

"We must not worry him or go near him for some days," continued the wizard. "We must let him alone. And this will not try our patience, for my torngak tells me that seals have come. Yesterday I went to the house of the great Fury under the sea, and wrestled with her; and my torngak and I overcame her, and set many of the seals and other animals free."

"Huk!" exclaimed the assembly, in gratified surprise.

Lest the reader should feel some surprise also, we may as well explain what the Greenlanders believed in former times. They held, (perhaps they still hold), that there were two great spiritsthe one was good, named Torngarsuk; the other was bad, and a femalea Furywithout a name. This malevolent woman was supposed to live in a great house under the ocean, in which by the power of her spells she enthralled and imprisoned many of the sea monsters and birds, thus causing scarcity of food among the Eskimos. The angekoks claimed to have the power of remedying this state of things by paying a visit to the abode of the Fury.

When an angekok has sufficient courage to undertake this journey, his torngak, after giving him minute instructions how to act, conducts him under the earth or sea, passing on the way through the kingdom of those good souls who spend their lives in felicity and ease. Soon they come to a frightful vacuitya sort of vasty deepover which is suspended a narrow wheel, which whirls round with great rapidity. This awful abyss is bridged by a rope, and guarded by seal sentinels. Taking the angekok by the hand, his torngak leads him on the rope over the chasm and past the sentinels into the palace of the Fury.

No sooner does the wicked creature spy the unwelcome visitors than, trembling and foaming with rage, she immediately sets on fire the wing of a sea-fowl, with the stench of which she hopes to suffocate angekok and torngak together, and make both of them captives. The heroes, however, are prepared for this. They seize the Fury before she has succeeded in setting fire to the wing, pull her down, and strip her of those amulets by the occult powers of which she has enslaved the inhabitants of ocean. Thus the spell is broken, for the time at least, and the creatures, being set free, ascend to their proper abodes at the surface of the sea!

After this explanation the reader will easily understand the flutter of excitement that passed through the assembly, for, although feasting at that moment on a walrus, they had suffered much during the latter part of that winter from the scarcity of animals of all kinds.

But Angut did not flutter. That peculiar man was an incorrigible sceptic. He merely smiled, and, chucking a rotund little boy beside him under the chin, said, “What think ye of that, my little ball of fat?” or some Eskimo equivalent for that question. Our intelligent wizard had not, however, ventured on these statements without some ground to go on. The fact is, that, being a close observer and good judge of the weather, he had perceived a change of some sort coming on. While on his way to the hut of Okiok he had also observed that a few seals were playing about on the margin of some ice-floes, and from other symptoms, recognisable only by angekoks, he had come to the conclusion that it would be safe as well as wise at that time to prophesy a

period of plenty.

“Now I would advise,” he said, in concluding his discourse, “that we should send off a hunting party to the south, for I can tell you that seals will be found thereif the young men do not put off time on the way.”

This last proviso was a judicious back-door of escape. Slight delays, he knew, were almost inevitable, so that, if the hunt should prove a failure, he would have little difficulty in accounting for it, and saving his credit. The most of his credulous and simple-minded hearers did not reflect on the significance of the back-door remark, but Angut did, and grinned a peculiar grin at the little fat boy, whom he chucked a second time under the chin. Ujarak noted the grin, and did not like it.

Among the people there who gave strongest expression to their joy at the prospect of the good living in store for them, were several young and middle-aged females who sat in a corner grouped together, and conveyed their approval of what was said to each other by sundry smirks and smiles and nods of the head, which went far to prove that they constituted a little coterie or clique.

One of these was the wife of Simek, the best hunter of the tribe. Her name was Pussimek. She was round and short, comely and young, and given to giggling. She had a babya female babynamed after her, but more briefly, Pussi, which resembled her in all respects except size. Beside her sat the mother of Ippegoo. We know not her maiden name, but as her dead husband had been called by the same name as the son, we will style her Mrs Ippegoo. There was also the mother of Arbalik, a youth who was celebrated as a wonderful killer of birds on the winga sort of Eskimo Robin Hoodwith the small spear or dart. The mother of Arbalik was elderly, and sternfor an Eskimo. She was sister to the great hunter Simek. Kannoa, a very old dried-up but lively woman with sparkling black eyes, also formed one of the group.

“Won’t we be happy!” whispered Pussimek, when Ujarak spoke in glowing terms of the abundance that was in prospect. She followed up the whisper by hugging the baby.

“Yes, a good time is coming,” said the mother of Ippegoo, with a pleasant nod. “We will keep the cooking-lamps blazing night and”

“And stuff,” rejoined Pussimek, with a giggle, “till we can hold no more.”

“Do you want to grow fatter?” asked the mother of Arbalik in a sharp tone, which drew forth a smothered laugh all round, for Pussimek had reached that condition of embonpoint which rendered an increase undesirable.

“I would not object to be fatter,” replied the wife of Simek, with perfect good-humour, for Eskimos, as a rule, do not take offence easily.

“Stuff, stuff,” murmured Kannoa, nodding her old head contemplatively; “that’s what I’m fond of; stuffstuffstuff.”

“All your stuffing will never make you fat,” said the stern and rather cynical mother of Arbalik.

She paid no attention to Kannoa’s replywhich, to do her justice, was very mildfor, at the moment, Arbalik himself rose to address the assembly. He was a fine specimen of an Eskimoa good-looking young savage; slim and wiry, with a nose not too flat, and only a little turned up; a mouth that was well shaped and pleasant to look at, though very large, and absolutely cavernous when in the act of yawning; and his eyes looked sharp and eager, as if always on the outlook for some passing bird, with a view to transfixion.

“The words of Ujarak are wise,” he said. “I was down at the high bluffs yesterday, and saw that what he says is true, for many seals are coming up already, and birds too. Let us go out to the hunt.”

“We would like much to see this wonderful Kablunet,” remarked the jovial big hunter Simek, with a bland look at the company, “but Ujarak knows best. If the Kablunet needs rest, he must have it. If he needs sleep, he must have it. If he wants food, he must have it. By all means let him have it. We will not disturb him. What the torngak of Ujarak advises we will do.”

Several of the other leading men also spoke on this occasionsome inclining to accept the wizard’s advice; others, who were intolerably anxious to see the Kablunet, rather inclining to the opinion that they should remain where they were till he recovered strength enough to be able to pay his contemplated visit.

Ippegoo spoke last. Indeed, it was not usual for him to raise his voice in council, but as he had been the first to carry the important news, and was known to be an ardent admirer and pupil of Ujarak, he felt that he was bound to back his patron; and his arguments, though not cogent, prevailed.

“Let us not doubt the wisdom of the angekok,” he said. “His torngak speaks. It is our business to obey. We have starved much for some moons; let us now feast, and grow fat and strong.”

“Huk!” exclaimed the auditors, who had been touched on their weakest point.

“But Angut has not yet uttered his mind,” said the jovial Simek, turning with a bland expression to the man in question; “he is an angekok, though he will not

admit it. Has not his familiar spirit said anything to him?”

Angut looked gravely at the speaker for a moment or two, and shook his head. Dead silence prevailed. Then in a voice that was unusually soft and deep he said: “I am no angekok. No torngak ever speaks to me. The winds that whistle round the icebergs and rush among the hummocks on the frozen sea speak to me sometimes; the crashing ice-cliffs that thunder down the glens speak to me; the noisy rivulets, the rising sun and moon and winking stars all speak to me, though it is difficult to understand what they say; but no familiar spirit ever speaks to me.”

The man said this quietly, and in a tone of regret, but without the slightest intention of expressing poetical ideas, or laying claim to originality of thought. Yet his distinct denial of being an angekok or wise man, and his sentiments regarding the voices of Nature, only confirmed his countrymen in their belief that he was the greatest angekok they had ever seen or heard of.

“But surely,” urged Simek, “if so many spirits speak to you, they must tell you something?”

“They tell me much,” replied Angut in a contemplative tone, “but nothing about hunting.”

“Have you no opinion, then, on that subject?”

“Yes, I have an opinion, and it is strong. Let all the hunters go south after seals without delay; but I will not go. I shall go among the icebergsalone.”

“He will go to hold converse with his numerous torngaks,” whispered old Kannoa to Pussimek.

“He will go to visit Okiok, and see the Kablunet, and court Nunaga,” thought the jealous and suspicious Ujarak.

And Ujarak was right; yet he dared not follow, for he feared the grave, thoughtful man, in spite of his determination to regard and treat him with lofty disdain.

Utterly ignorant of the wizard’s feelings towards himfor he was slow to observe or believe in ill-will towards himself when he felt none to any one elseAngut set off alone next morning in the direction that led to the great glacier, while his countrymen harnessed their dogs, loaded their sledges with lines and weapons, and went away southward on a hunting expedition. Wishing the latter all success, we will follow the fortunes of Angut, the eccentric angekok.

Had you and I, reader, been obliged to follow him in the body, we should soon have been left far behind; fortunately, spirit is more powerful and fleet than matter!

Without rest or halt, the stalwart Eskimo journeyed over the ice until he reached the residence of Okiok.

The dogs knew his step well, and gave no noisy sign of his approach, though they rose to welcome him with wagging tails, and rubbed their noses against his fur coat as he patted their heads.

Creeping into the hut, he presented himself unexpectedly. Okiok bade him silent welcome, with a broad grin of satisfaction. Nunaga did the same, with a pleased smile and a decided blush. The other inmates of the hut showed similar friendship, and Tumbler, trying to look up, fell over into an oil-puddle, with a loud crow of joy. They all then gazed suddenly and simultaneously, with mysterious meaning, at Red Rooney, who lay coiled up, and apparently sound asleep, in the innermost corner.

Angut also gazed with intense interest, though nothing of the sleeping man was visible save the point of his nose and a mass of curling brown hair protruding from his deerskin coverings.

Seating himself quietly between Nunaga and Nuna, and taking the oily Tumbler on his knee, the visitor entered into a low-toned conversation respecting this great event of their livesthe arrival of a real live Kablunet! They also talked of Kablunets in general, and their reported ways and manners. It is to be noted here that they did not talk in whispers. Okiok and Nuna had indeed begun the conversation thus, but had been immediately checked by Angut, whose intelligence had long ago taught him that no sound is so apt to awaken a sleeper as the hiss of a whisper; and that a steady, low-toned hum of conversation is more fitted to deepen than interrupt slumber.

“Is he very thin?” asked Angut, who had been somewhat impressed by Ujarak’s description of the stranger, and his evident desire that no one should go near him.

“He is not fat,” answered Okiok, “but he has not been starving long; sleeping and stuffing will soon make him strong. Don’t you think so, Norrak? You saw him at his worst, when we found him on the ice.”

Thus appealed to, Okiok’s eldest son laid down the piece of blubber with which he had been engaged, nodded his head several times, and said, “Yes, he will be able to run, and jump soon.”

“And he speaks our language well,” said Okiok, with a look of great interest.

“I know it,” returned his friend; “Ujarak told us about that. It is because of that, that I have come at once to see him.” Nunaga winced here, for she had timidly hoped that Angut had come to see her! “I would not,” continued the visitor, “that Ujarak should be the first to speak to him, for he will poison his ears.”

“Yes, Ujarak is a dreadful liar,” said Okiok solemnly, but without the slightest touch of ill feeling.

“An awful liar,” remarked Nuna softly.

Nunaga smiled, as though acquiescing in the sentiment, but said nothing.

Just as they gave utterance to this decided opinion as to the character of the wizard, Red Rooney turned round, stretched himself, yawned, and sat up.

Chapter Six.
Angut and Rooney hold Converse on many Things.

At first Rooney did not observe that there was a visitor in the hut, but, when his eyes alighted on him, he rose at once, for he felt that he was in the presence of a man possessed of intelligence vastly superior to that of the ordinary natives. It was not so much that Angut’s presence was commanding or noble, as that his grave expression, broad forehead, and earnest gaze suggested the idea of a man of profound thought.

The angekok who had been so graphically described to him by Okiok at once recurred to Rooney’s mind. Turning to his host, he said, with a bland expression

“I suppose this is your friend Angut, the angekok?”

“Yes,” replied Okiok.

While the mysterious foreigner was speaking, Angut gazed at him with looks and feelings of awe, but when he stepped forward, and frankly held out his hand, the Eskimo looked puzzled. A whispered word from his host, however, sufficed to explain. Falling in at once with the idea, he grasped the offered hand, and gave it a squeeze of good-will that almost caused the seaman to wince.

“I am glad to meet you,” said Rooney.

“I am more than glad,” exclaimed the Eskimo with enthusiasm; “I have not

language to tell of what is in my mind. I have heard of Kablunets, dreamed of them, thought of them. Now my longings are gratifiedI behold one! I have been told that Kablunets know nearly everything; I know next to nothing. We will talk much. It seems to me as if I had been born only to-day. Come; let us begin!”

“My friend, you expect too much,” replied Rooney, with a laugh, as he sat down to devote himself to the bear-steak which Nunaga had placed before him. “I am but an average sort of sailor, and can’t boast of very much education, though I have a smattering; but we have men in my country who do seem to know ’most everythingwise men they are. We call them philosophers; you call ’em angekoks. Here, won’t you go in for a steak or a rib? If you were as hungry as I am, you’d be only too glad and thankful to have the chance.”

Angut accepted a rib, evidently under the impression that the Kablunet would think it impolite were he to refuse. He began to eat, however, in a languid manner, being far too deeply engaged with mental food just then to care for grosser forms of nourishment.

“Tell me,” said the Eskimo, who was impatient to begin his catechising, “do your countrymen all dress like this?” He touched the sealskin coat worn by the sailor.

“O no,” said Rooney, laughing; “I only dress this way because I am in Eskimo land, and it is well suited to the country; but the men in my landIreland we call itdress in all sorts of fine cloth, made from the hair of small animals Why, what do you stare at, Angut? Oh, I seemy knife! I forgot that you are not used to such things, though you have knivesstone ones, at least. This one, you see, is made of steel, or ironthe stuff, you know, that the southern Eskimos bring sometimes to barter with you northern men for the horns of the narwhal an’ other things.”

“Yes, I have seen iron, but never had any,” said Angut, with a little sigh; “they bring very little of it here. The Innuits of the South catch nearly the whole of it on its journey north, and they keep it.”

“Greedy fellows!” said Rooney. “Well, this knife is called a clasp-knife, because it shuts and opens, as you see, and it has three bladesa big one for cuttin’ up your victuals with, as you see me doin’; and two little ones for parin’ your nails and pickin’ your teeth, an’ mendin’ pens an’ pencilsthough of course you don’t know what that means. Then here, you see, there are two little things stuck into the handle. One is called tweezers, an’ is of no earthly use that I know of except to pull the hairs out o’ your nose, which no man in his senses ever wants to do; and the other thing is, I suppose, for borin’ small

holes in thingsit's almost as useless. This thing on the back is for pickin' stones out of horses' hoofsbut I forgot you never saw horses or hoofs! Well, no matter; it's for pickin' things out of things, whenwhen you want to pick 'em out! But below this is an uncommon useful thinga screwa thing for drawin' corks out of bottlesthere, again, I'm forgettin'. You never saw corks or bottles. Happy peopleas the people who don't drink spirits would call youand, to say truth, I think they are right. Indeed, I've been one of them myself ever since I came to this region. Give us another steak, Nunaga, my dearno, not a bear one; I like the walrus better. It's like yourselftender."

The fair Nunaga fell into a tremendous giggle at this joke, for although our hero's Eskimo was not very perfect, he possessed all an Irishman's capacity for making his meaning understood, more or less; and truly it was a sight to behold the varied expressions of facethe childlike surprise, admiration, curiosity, and something approaching to awewith which those unsophisticated natives received the explanation of the different parts of that clasp-knife!

"But what did we begin our talk about?" he continued, as he tackled the walrus. "O yes; it was about our garments. Well, besides using different kinds of cloths, our coats are of many different shapes: we have short coats called jackets, and long coats, and coats with tails behind"

"Do your men wear tails behind?" asked Angut, in surprise.

"Yes; two tails," replied Rooney, "and two buttons above them."

"Strange," remarked Angut; "it is only our women who have tails; and they have only one tail each, with one button in frontnot behindto fasten the end of the tail to when on a journey."

"Women with tails look very well," remarked Okiok, "especially when they swing them about in a neat way that I know well but cannot describe. But men with tails must look very funny."

Here Mrs Okiok ventured to ask how the Kablunet women dressed.

"Well, it's not easy to describe that to folk who have never seen them," said the sailor, with a slight grin. "In the first place, they don't wear boots the whole length of their legs like you, Nuna."

"Surely, then," remarked the hostess, "their legs must be cold?"

"By no means, for they cover 'em well up with loose flapping garments, extending from the waist all the way down to the feet. Then they don't wear hoods like you, but stick queer things on their heads, of all shapes and

sizessometimes of no shape at all and very small sizewhich they cover over with feathers, an’ flowers, an’ fluttering things of all colours, besides lots of other gimcracks.”

How Rooney rendered “gimcracks” into Eskimo we are not prepared to say, but the whole description sent Nunaga and her mother into fits of giggling, for those simple-minded creatures of the icy northunlike sedate Europeansare easily made to laugh.

At this point Angut struck in again, for he felt that the conversation was becoming frivolous.

“Tell me, Kablunet,” he began; but Rooney interrupted him.

“Don’t call me Kablunet. Call me Red Rooney. It will be more friendly-like, and will remind me of my poor shipmates.”

“Then tell me, Ridroonee,” said Angut, “is it true what I have heard, that your countrymen can make marks on flat white stuff, like the thin skin of the duck, which will tell men far away what they are thinking about?”

“Ay, that’s true enough,” replied the sailor, with an easy smile of patronage; “we call it writing.”

A look of grave perplexity rested on the visage of the Eskimo.

“It’s quite easy when you understand it, and know how to do it,” continued Rooney; “nothing easier.”

A humorous look chased away the Eskimo’s perplexity as he replied

“Everything is easy when you understand it.”

“Ha! you have me there, Angut,” laughed the sailor; “you’re a ’cute fellow, as the Yankees say. But come, I’ll try to show you how easy it is. See here.” He pulled a small note-book from his pocket, and drew thereon the picture of a walrus. “Now, you understand that, don’t you?”

“Yes; we draw like that, and understand each other.”

“Well, then, we put down for that w-a-l-r-u-s; and there you have itwalrus; nothing simpler!”

The perplexed look returned, and Angut said

“That is not very easy to understand. Yet I see somethingalways the same marks for the same beast; other marks for other beasts?”

“Just so. You’ve hit it!” exclaimed Rooney, quite pleased with the intelligence of his pupil.

“But how if it is not a beast?” asked the Eskimo. “How if you cannot see him at all, yet want to tell of him ininwhat did you saywriting? I want to send marks to my mother to say that I have talked with my torngak. How do you mark torngak? I never saw him. No man ever saw a torngak. And how do you make marks for cold, for wind, for all our thoughts, and for the light?”

It was now Red Rooney’s turn to look perplexed. He knew that writing was easy enough to him who understands it, and he felt that there must be some method of explaining the matter, but how to go about the explanation to one so utterly ignorant did not at once occur to him. We have seen, however, that Rooney was a resolute man, not to be easily baffled. After a few moments’ thought he said

“Look here now, Angut. Your people can count?”

“Yes; they can go up to twenty. I can go a little further, but most of the Innuits get confused in mind beyond twenty, because they have only ten fingers and ten toes to look at.”

“Well now,” continued Rooney, holding up his left hand, with the fingers extended, “that’s five.”

Yes, Angut understood that well.

“Well, then,” resumed Rooney, jotting down the figure 5, “there you have itfive. Any boy at school could tell you what that is.”

The Eskimo pondered deeply and stared. The other Eskimos did the same.

“But what,” asked Okiok, “if a boy should say that it was six, and not five?”

“Why, then we’d whack him, and he’d never say that again.”

There was an explosion of laughter at this, for Eskimos are tender and indulgent to their children, and seldom or never whack them.

It would be tedious to go further into this subject, or to describe the ingenious methods by which the seaman sought to break up the fallow ground of Angut’s eminently receptive mind. Suffice it to say that Rooney made the discovery that the possession of knowledge is one thing, and the power to communicate it another and a very different thing. Angut also came to the conclusion that, ignorant as he had thought himself to be, his first talk with the Kablunet had

proved him to be immeasurably more ignorant than he had supposed.

The sailor marked the depression which was caused by this piece of knowledge, and set himself good-naturedly to counteract the evil by displaying his watch, at sight of which there was a wild exclamation of surprise and delight from all except Angut, who, however deep his feelings might be, always kept them bridled. The expansion of his nostrils and glitter of his eyes, however, told their tale, though no exclamation passed his lips.

Once or twice, when Rooney attempted to explain the use of the instrument, the inquisitive man was almost irresistibly led to put some leading questions as to the nature of Time; but whenever he observed this tendency, the sailor, thinking that he had given him quite enough of philosophy for one evening, adroitly turned him off the scent by drawing particular attention to some other portion of the timepiece.

The watch and the knife, to which they reverted later on, kept the lecturer and audience going till late in the evening, by which time our sailor had completely won the hearts of the Eskimos, and they had all become again so hungry that Okiok gave a hint to his wife to stir up the lamp and prepare supper. Then, with a sigh of relief, they all allowed their strained minds to relax, and the conversation took a more general turn. It is but fair to add that, as the sailor had won the hearts of the natives, so his heart had been effectually enthralled by them. For Angut, in particular, Rooney felt that powerful attraction which is the result of similar tastes, mutual sympathies, and diversity of character. Rooney had a strong tendency to explain and teach; Angut a stronger tendency to listen and learn. The former was impulsive and hasty; the latter meditative and patient. Rooney was humorously disposed and jovial, while his Eskimo friend, though by no means devoid of humour, was naturally grave and sedate. Thus their dispositions formed a pleasing contrast, and their tastes an agreeable harmony.

“What did you say was the name of your country?” asked Angut, during a brief pause in the consumption of the meal.

“England,” said Rooney.

“That was not the name you told me before.”

“True; I suppose I said Ireland before, but the fact is, I can scarcely claim it as my own, for you see my father was Irish and my mother was Scotch. I was born in Wales, an’ I’ve lived a good bit o’ my life in England. So you see I can’t claim to be anything in particular.”

As this was utterly incomprehensible to the Eskimo, he resumed his bit of

blubber without saying a word. After a brief silence, he looked at the Kablunet again, and said

“Have they houses in your land?”

“Houses? O yes; plenty of ’emmade of stone.”

“Like the summer-houses of the Innuit, I suppose?” said Angut. “Are they as big?”

Rooney laughed at this, and said, Yes; they were much biggeras big as the cliffs alongside.

“Huk!” exclaimed the Eskimos in various tones. Okiok’s tone, indeed, was one of doubt; but Angut did not doubt his new friend for a moment, though his credulity was severely tested when the seaman told him that one of the villages of his countrymen covered a space as big as they could seeaway to the very horizon, and beyond it.

“But, Angut,” said Rooney, growing somewhat weary at last, “you’ve asked me many questions; will you answer a few now?”

“I will answer.”

“I have heard it said,” began the sailor, “that Angut is a wise manan angekokamong his people, but that he denies the fact. Why does he deny it?”

The Eskimo exchanged solemn glances with his host, then looked round the circle, and said that some things could not be explained easily. He would think first, and afterwards he would talk.

“That is well said,” returned Rooney. “‘Think well before you speak’ is a saying among my own people.”

He remained silent for a few moments after that, and observed that Okiok made a signal to his two boys. They rose immediately, and left the hut.

“Now,” said Okiok, “Angut may speak. There are none but safe tongues here. My boys are good, but their tongues wag too freely.”

“Yes, they wag too freely,” echoed Mrs Okiok, with a nod.

Thus freed from the danger of being misreported, Angut turned to the seaman, and said

“I deny that I am an angekok, because angekoks are deceivers. They deceive foolish men and women. Some of them are wicked, and only people-deceivers.

They do not believe what they teach. Some of them are self-deceivers. They are good enough men, and believe what they teach, though it is false. These men puzzle me. I cannot understand them."

The Eskimo became meditative at this point, as if his mind were running on the abstract idea of self-delusion. Indeed he said as much. Rooney admitted that it was somewhat puzzling.

"I suppose," resumed the Eskimo, "that Kablunets never deceive themselves or others; they are too wise. Is it so?"

"Well, now you put the question," said Rooney, "I rather fear that some of us do, occasionally; an' there's not a few who have a decided tendency to deceive others. And so that is the reason you won't be an angekok, is it? Well, it does you credit. But what sort o' things do they believe, in these northern regions, that you can't go in with? Much the same, I fancy, that the southern Eskimos believe?"

"I know not what the southern Eskimos believe, for I have met them seldom. But our angekoks believe in torngaks, familiar spirits, which they say meet and talk with them. There is no torngak. It is a lie."

"But you believe in one great and good Spirit, don't you?" asked the seaman, with a serious look.

"Yes; I believe in One," returned the Eskimo in a low voice, "One who made me, and all things, and who must be good."

"There are people in my land who deny that there is One, because they never saw, or felt, or heard Himso they say they cannot know," said Rooney. Angut looked surprised.

"They must be fools," he said. "I see a sledge, and I know that some man made itfor who ever heard of a sledge making itself? I see a world, and I know that the Great Spirit made it, because a world cannot make itself. The greatest Spirit must be One, because two greatests are impossible, and He is goodbecause good is better than evil, and the Greatest includes the Best."

The seaman stared, as well he might, while the Eskimo spoke these words, gazing dreamily at the lamp-flame, as if he were communing with his own spirit rather than with his companion. Evidently Okiok had a glimmering of what he meant, for he looked pleased as well as solemn.

It might be tedious to continue the conversation. Leaving them therefore to their profound discussions, we will turn to another and very different social

group.

Chapter Seven.
Treats of Cross-Purposes and Difficulties.

Partially concealed in a cavern at the base of a stupendous, almost perpendicular, cliff, stood the wizard Ujarak and his pupil Ippegoo. The former silently watched the latter as he fitted a slender spear, or rather giant arrow, to a short handle, and prepared to discharge it at a flock of sea-birds which were flying about in front of them within what we would call easy gunshot.

The handle referred to acted as a short lever, by means of which the spear could be launched not only with more precision but with much greater force than if thrown simply by hand like a javelin.

“There, dart it now!” cried Ujarak, as a bird swept close to the cave’s mouth. “Boh! you are too slow. Here is another; quick! dart!”

Ippegoo let fly hastily, and missed.

“Poo! you are of no more use than the rotten ice of spring. There; try again,” said Ujarak, pointing to a flock of birds which came sweeping towards them.

The crestfallen youth fitted another spear to the handlefor he carried severaland launched it in desperation into the middle of the flock. It ruffled the wings of one bird, and sent it screaming up the cliffs, but brought down none.

“Boo!” exclaimed the wizard, varying the expression of his contempt. “It is well that your mother has only a small family.”

Ippegoo was accustomed to severe backhanders from his patron; he was not offended, but smiled in a pathetic manner as he went out in silence to pick up his weapons.

Just as he was returning, Arbalik, nephew to the jovial Simek, appeared upon the scene, and joined them. The wizard appeared to be slightly annoyed, but had completely dissembled his feelings when the young man walked up.

“Have the hunters found no seals?” asked Ujarak.

“Yes, plenty,” answered Arbalik cheerily, for he had a good deal of his old uncle’s spirit in him, “but you know variety is agreeable. Birds are good at a feast. They enable you to go on eating when you can hold no more seal or walrus blubber.”

“That is true,” returned the wizard, with a grave nod of appreciation. “Show Ippegoo how to dart the spear. He is yet a baby!”

Arbalik laughed lightly as he let fly a spear with a jaunty, almost careless, air, and transfixed a bird on the wing.

“Well done!” cried the wizard, with a burst of genuine admiration; “your wife will never know hunger.”

“Not after I get her,” returned the youth, with a laugh, as he flung another spear, and transfixed a second bird.

Ippegoo looked on with slightly envious but not malevolent feelings, for he was a harmless lad.

“Try again,” cried Arbalik, turning to him with a broad grin, as he offered him one of his own spears.

Ippegoo took the weapon, launched it, and, to his own great surprise and delight, sent it straight through the heart of a bird, which fell like a stone.

A shout of pleasure burst from Arbalik, who was far too good a shot to entertain mean feelings of jealousy at the success of others.

“It is the luck of the spear,” said Ujarak, “not the skill of the hunter.”

This would have been an unkind cut to ordinary mortals, but it fell as harmless on Ippegoo as water on the back of the eider-duck. A snub from the wizard he took almost as a compliment, and the mere success of his shot afforded him unbounded pleasure.

The good-natured Arbalik offered him another spear, but Ujarak interposed.

“No; Ippegoo must come with me,” he said. “I have work for him to do. One who would be an angekok must leave bird-spearing to boys.” Then turning to Arbalik“Did you not say that the hunters have found plenty of game?”

“Yes, plenty.”

“I told you so,” said the wizard, using a phrase not unfamiliar to civilised ears. “Remain here, and spear plenty of birds; or go where you will.”

Having thus graciously given the youth free permission to do as he pleasedwhich Arbalik received with inward scorn, though outward respecthe left the cave, followed meekly by his satellite.

After walking in silence till well out of earshot of the expert young hunter, the

wizard said in solemn tones

“Ippegoo, I have work of more importance for you to do than spearing birdswork that requires the wisdom of a young angekok.”

All Ujarak’s backhanders vanished before this confidential remark, and the poor tool began to feel as if he were growing taller and broader even as he walked.

“You know the hut of Okiok?” continued the wizard.

“Yes; under the ice-topped cliff.”

“Well, Angut is there. I hate Angut!”

“So do I,” said Ippegoo, with emphasis quite equal to that of his master.

“And Nunaga is there,” continued Ujarak. “II love Nunaga!”

“So do I,” exclaimed Ippegoo fervently, but seeing by the wizard’s majestic frown that he had been precipitate, he took refuge in the hasty explanation“Of course I mean thatthatI love her because you love her. I do not love her for herself. If you did not love her, I would hate her. To me she is not of so much value as the snout of a seal.”

The wizard seemed pacified, for his frown relaxed, and after a few moments’ thought he went on savagely

“Angut also loves Nunaga.”

“The madman! the insolent! the fool!” exclaimed Ippegoo; “what can he expect but death?”

“Nothing else, and nothing less,” growled the wizard, clenching his teeth“if he gets her! But he shall never get her! I will stop that; and that is why I ask you to listenfor you must be ready to act, and in haste.”

As Ippegoo began to entertain uncomfortable suspicions that the wizard was about to use him as an instrument of vengeance, he made no response whatever to the last remark.

“Now,” continued his master, “you will go to the hut of Okiok. Enter it hurriedly, and say to Nunaga that her father’s grandmother, Kannoa, is illill in her mindand will not rest till she comes to see her. Take a small sledge that will only hold her and yourself; and if Okiok or Angut offer to go with you, say that old Kannoa wants to see the girl alone, that there is a spell upon her, that she is bewitched, and will see no one else. They will trust you, for they

know that your mind is weak and your heart good."

"If my mind is weak," said Ippegoo somewhat sadly, "how can I ever become an angekok?"

With much affectation of confidence, the wizard replied that there were two kinds of men who were fit to be angekoksmen with weak minds and warm hearts, or men with strong minds and cold hearts.

"And have you the strong mind?" asked Ippegoo.

"Yes, of course, very strongand also the cold heart," replied Ujarak.

"But how can that be," returned the pupil, with a puzzled look, "when your heart is warmed by Nunaga?"

"Becausebecause," rejoined the wizard slowly, with some hesitation and a look of profound wisdom, "because men of strong mind do not love as other men. They are quite differentso different that you cannot understand them."

Ippegoo felt the reproof, and was silent.

"So, when you have got Nunaga on the sledge," resumed Ujarak, "you will drive her towards the village; but you will turn off at the Cliff of Seals, and drive at full speed to the spot where I speared the white bear last moon. You know it?"

"Yes; near Walrus Bay?"

"Just so. There you will find me with two sledges. On one I will drive Nunaga away to the far-south, where the Innuit who have much iron dwell. On the other you will follow. We will live there for ever. They will be glad to receive us."

"Butbut" said Ippegoo hesitatingly, and with some anxiety, for he did not like to differ on any point from his master "I cannot leave mymy mother!"

"Why not?"

"I suppose it is because I love her. You know you told me that the weak minds have warm heartsand my mind must be very, very weak indeed, for my heart is very warmquite hotfor my mother."

The wizard perceived that incipient rebellion was in the air, so, like a wise man, a true angekok, he trimmed his sails accordingly.

"Bring your mother with you," he said abruptly.

“But she won’t come.”

“Command her to come.”

“Command my mother!” exclaimed Ippegoo, in amazement.

Again the wizard was obliged to have recourse to his wisdom in order to subdue this weak mind.

“Yes, of course,” he replied; “tell your mother that your torngakno, you haven’t got one yetthat Ujarak’s torngaktold him in a vision that a visit to the lands of the far-south would do her good, would remove the pains that sometimes stiffen her joints, and the cough that has troubled her so much. So you will incline her to obey. Go, tell her to prepare for a journey; but say nothing more, except that I will call for her soon, and take her on my sledge. Away!”

The peremptory tone of the last word decided the poor youth’s wavering mind. Without a word more he ran to the place where his dogs were fastened, harnessed them to his sledge, and was soon driving furiously back to the Eskimo village over the frozen sea, while the wizard returned to the place where the hunters of his tribe were still busy hauling in the carcases of seals and other game, which they had succeeded in killing in considerable numbers.

Approaching one of the band of hunters, which was headed by the jovial Simek, and had halted for the purpose of refreshment, Ujarak accosted them with

“Have the young men become impatient women, that they cannot wait to have their food cooked?”

“Ha! ha!” laughed Simek, holding up a strip of raw and bloody seal’s flesh, with which he had already besmeared the region of his mouth and nose; “Yes, we have become like women; we know what is good for us, and take it when we need it, not caring much about the cooking. My young men are hungry. Must they wait till the lamps are lighted before they eat? Come, Ujarak, join us. Even an angekok may find a bit of good fat seal worth swallowing. Did you not set them free? You deserve a bit!”

There was a spice of chaff as well as jollity in the big Eskimo’s tone and manner; but he was such a gushing fellow, and withal so powerful, that the wizard deemed it wise not to take offence.

“It is not long since I fed,” he replied, with a grim smile; “I have other work on hand just now.”

“I also have workplenty of it; and I work best when stuffed full.”

So saying, Simek put a full stop, as it were, to the sentence with a mass of blubber, while the wizard went off, as he said, to consult his torngak as to state affairs of importance.

Meanwhile Ippegoo went careering over the ice, plying his long-lashed whip with the energy of a man who had pressing business on hand.

Arrived at the village, he sought his mother’s hut. Kunelik, as his mother was named, was seated therein, not exactly darning his socks, but engaged in the Eskimo equivalentmending his waterproof boots. These were made of undressed sealskin, with soles of walrus hide; and the pleasant-faced little woman was stitching together the sides of a rent in the upper leather, using a fine sharp fish-bone as a needle and a delicate shred of sinew as a thread, when her son entered.

“Mother,” he said in a somewhat excited tone, as he sat down beside his maternal parent, “I go to the hut of Okiok.”

Kunelik bestowed an inquiring glance upon her boy.

“Ippe,” she said, (for Eskimos sometimes use endearing abbreviations), “has Nunaga turned you upside down?”

The lad protested fervently that his head was yet in its proper position. “But,” he added, “the mother of Okino, the grandmother of Okiokis sickvery sickand I am to go and fetch the mother ofno, I mean the daughter ofof Okiok, to see her, becausebecause”

“Take time, Ippe,” interrupted Kunelik; “I see that your head is down, and your boots are in the air.”

Again Ippegoo protested earnestly that he was in the reverse position, and that Nunaga was no more to him than the snout of a seal; but he protested in vain, for his pleasant little mother believed that she understood the language of symptoms, and nodded her disbelief smilingly.

“But why do you say that Kannoa is very ill, Ippe?” she asked; “I have just come from her hut where she was seemingly quite well. Moreover, she has agreed to sup this very night with the mother of Arbalik, and she could not do that if she was ill, for that means much stuffing, because the mother of Arbalik has plenty of food and cooks it very fast.”

“Oh, but it is not Kannoa’s body that is ill,” said Ippegoo quickly; “it is her

mind that is illvery ill; and nothing will make it better but a sight of Nunaga. It was Ujarak that told me so; and you know, mother, that whatever he says must be true somehow, whether it be true or not."

"Ujarak is a fool," said Kunelik quietly; "and you are another, my son."

We must again remind the reader here that the Eskimos are a simple as well as straightforward folk. They say what they mean and mean what they say, without the smallest intention of hurting each other's feelings.

"And, mother," continued the son, scarce noticing her remark, "I want you to prepare for a journey."

Kunelik looked surprised.

"Where to, my son?"

"It matters not just now. You shall know in time. Will you get ready?"

"No, my son, I won't."

"But Ujarak says you are to get ready."

"Still, my son, I won't."

"Mother!" exclaimed Ippegoo, with that look and tone which usually follows the saying of something very wicked; but the pleasant little woman went on with her work with an air of such calm good-natured resolution that her son felt helpless.

"Then, mother, I know not what to do."

"What did he tell you to do?" asked Kunelik abruptly.

The youth gave as much of his conversation with the wizard as sufficed to utterly perplex his mother's mind without enlightening it much. When he had finished, or rather had come to an abrupt stop, she looked at him calmly, and said

"My son, whatever he told you to do, go and do it. Leave the rest to me."

From infancy Ippegoo had rejoiced in his wise little mother's decisions. To be saved the trouble of thinking; to have a straight and simple course clearly pointed out to him, so that he should have nothing to do but shut his eyes and walk thereinor, if need be, runwas the height of Ippegoo's ambitionnext to solid feeding. But be not hard on him, good reader. Remember that he was an ignorant savage, and that you could not expect him to be as absolutely and

entirely free from this low type of spirit as civilised people are!

Without another word, therefore, the youth leaped on to his sledge, cracked his whip, and set off on his delicate mission. Poor lad! disappointment was in store for him. But compensation was in store also.

While he was galloping along under the ice-cliffs on the east side of a great berg, not far from the end of his journey, Okiok, with his wife and daughter on a sledge, chanced to be galloping with equal speed in the opposite direction on the west side of the same berg. It was a mighty bergan ice-mountain of nearly half a mile in lengthso that no sound of cracking lash or yelping dogs passed from the one party to the other. Thus when Ippegoo arrived at his destination he found his fair bird flown. But he found a much more interesting personage in the Kablunet, who had been left under the care of Angut and Ermigit. This great sight effectually banished disappointment and every other feeling from his breast.

He first caught a glimpse of the wonderful man when half-way through the tunnel-lobby, and the sight rooted him to the spot, for Red Rooney had just finished making a full-dress suit of clothes for little Tumbler, and was in the act of fitting them on when the young Eskimo arrived.

That day Ermigit had managed to spear a huge raven. Rooney, being something of a naturalist, had skinned it, and it was while little Tumbler was gazing at him in open-eyed admiration that the thought struck himTumbler being very small and the raven very large.

“Come,” said he, seizing the childwith whom he was by that time on the most intimate terms of affection“Come, I’ll dress you up.”

Tumbler was naked at the moment, and willingly consented. A few stitches with needle and thread, which the sailor always carried in his pocket, soon converted the wings of the bird into sleeves, a button at the chest formed the skin into a rude cut-away coat, the head, with the beak in front, formed a convenient cap, and the tail hung most naturally down behind. A better full-dress coat was never more quickly manufactured.

Ermigit went into convulsions of laughter over it, and the sailor, charmed with his work, kept up a running commentary in mingled English and Eskimo.

“Splendid!” he cried; “the best slop-shop in Portsmouth couldn’t match it! Cap and coat all in one! The fit perfectand what a magnificent tail!”

At this point Ermigit caught sight of the gaping and glaring Ippegoo in the passage. With a bound he fell upon him, caught him by the hair, and dragged

him in.

Of course there followed a deal of questioning, which the hapless youth tried to answer; but the fascination of the Kablunet was too much for him. He could do nothing but give random replies and stare; seeing which, Rooney suggested that the best way to revive him would be to give him something to eat.

Chapter Eight.
Mrs Okiok's Little Evening Party.

In Eskimo land, as in England, power and industry result in the elevation and enrichment of individuals, though they have not yet resulted there, as here, in vast accumulations of wealth, or in class distinctions. The elevating tendency of superior power and practice is seen in the fact that while some hunters are nearly always pretty well off"well-to-do," as we would express itothers are often in a state of poverty and semi-starvation. A few of them possess two establishments, and some even go the length of possessing two wives. It is but just to add, however, that these last are rare. Most Eskimo men deem one wife quite as much as they can manage to feed.

Our friend Okiok was what we may style one of the aristocracy of the land. He did not, indeed, derive his position from inheritance, but from the circumstance of his being a successful hunter, a splendid canoe-man, and a tremendous fighter.

When it is added that his fights were often single-handed against the Polar bear, it may be understood that both his activity and courage were great. He was not an angekok, for, like his friend Angut, he did not believe in wizards; nevertheless he was very truly an angekok, in the sense of being an uncommonly wise man, and his countrymen, recognising the fact, paid him suitable respect.

Okiok possessed a town and a country mansion. That is to say, besides the solitary residence already mentioned, close to the great glacier, he owned the largest hut in the Eskimo village. It was indeed quite a palatial residence, capable of holding several families, and having several holes in itor windowswhich were glazed, if we may say so, with the scraped intestines of animals.

It was to this residence that Okiok drove on the afternoon of the day that he missed Ippegoo's visit.

On finding that most of the men had gone southward to hunt, he resolved to follow them, for his purpose was to consult about the Kablunet, who had so

recently fallen like a meteor from the sky into their midst.

“But you will stop here, Nuna, with Nunaga, and tell the women all about the Kablunet, while I go south alone. Make a feast; you have plenty to give them. Here, help me to carry the things inside.”

Okiok had brought quite a sledge-load of provisions with him, for it had been his intention to give a feast to as many of the community as could be got inside his hut. The carrying in of the supplies, therefore, involving as it did creeping on hands and knees through a low tunnel with each article, was not a trifling duty.

“Now,” said he, when at last ready to start, “be sure that you ask the liars and the stupid ones to the feast, as well as the wise; and make them sit near you, for if these don’t hear all about it from your own mouth they will be sure to carry away nonsense, and spread it. Don’t give them the chance to invent.”

While her husband was rattling away south over the hummocky sea in his empty sledge, Nuna lighted her lamps, opened her stores, and began to cook.

“Go now, Nunaga,” she said, “and tell the women who are to feed with us to-night.”

“Who shall I invite, mother?” asked pretty little Nunaga, preparing to set forth on her mission.

“Invite old Kannoa, of course. She is good.”

“Yes, mother, and she is also griggy.”

We may remark in passing that it is impossible to convey the exact meaning of the Eskimo word which we have rendered “griggy.” Enough to say, once for all, that in difficult words and phrases we give as nearly as possible our English equivalents.

“And Kunelik,” said Nuna, continuing to enumerate her guests; “I like the mother of Ippegoo. She is a pleasant little woman.”

“But father said we were to ask liars,” remarked Nunaga, with a sweet look.

“I’m coming to them, child,” said Mrs Okiok, with a touch of petulancethe result of a gulp of lamp-smoke; “yes, you may ask Pussimek also. The wife of Simek is always full of wise talk, and her baby does not squall, which is lucky, for she cannot be forced to leave Pussi behind.”

“But name the liars and stupid ones, mother,” urged Nunaga, who, being a

dutiful child, and anxious to carry out her father’s wishes to the letter, stuck to her point.

“Tell Issek, then, the mother of Arbalik, to come,” returned Nuna, making a wry face. “If she is not stupid, she is wicked enough, and dreadful at lies. And the sisters Kabelaw and Sigokow; they are the worst liars in all the village, besides being stupider than puffins. There, that will be enough for our first feed. When these have stuffed, we can have more. Too many at once makes much cooking and little talk. Go, my child.”

An hour later, and the gossips of the Eskimo village were assembled round Mrs Okiok’s hospitable lampshe had no “board,”the raised floor at the further end of the hut serving both for seat and table in the daytime and for bed at night. Of course they were all bursting with curiosity, and eager to talk.

But food at first claimed too much attention to permit of free conversation. Yet it must not be supposed that the company was gluttonous or greedy. Whatever Eskimos may feel at a feast, it is a point of etiquette that guests should not appear anxious about what is set before them. Indeed, they require a little pressing on the part of the host at first, but they always contrive to make amends for such self-restraint before the feast is over.

And it was by no means a simple feast to which that party sat down. There were dried herrings and dried seal’s flesh, and the same boiled; also boiled auks, dried salmon, dried reindeer venison, and a much-esteemed dish consisting of half raw and slightly putrid seal’s flesh, called mikiaksomething similar in these respects to our own game. But the principal dish was part of a whale’s tail in a high or gamey condition. Besides these delicacies, there was a pudding, or dessert, of preserved crowberries, mixed with “chyle” from the maw of the reindeer, with train oil for sauce.

(See note.)

Gradually, as appetite was satisfied, tongues were loosened, and information about the wonderful foreigner, which had been fragmentary at first, flowed in a copious stream. Then commentary and question began in right earnest.

“Have some more mikiak?” said Mrs Okiok to Pussimek.

“No,” replied Mrs P, with a sigh.

These northern Eskimos did not, at least at the time of which we write, say “thank you”not that there was any want of good feeling or civility among them, but simply because it was not customary to do so.

Mrs Okiok then offered some more of the delicacy mentioned to the mother of Ippegoo.

“No,” said Kunelik, leaning back with a contented air against the wall; “I am pleasantly stuffed already.”

“But tell me,” cried Issek, the stern mother of Arbalik, “what does the Kablunet say the people eat in his own land?”

“They eat no whales,” said Nuna; “they have no whales.”

“No whales!” exclaimed Pussimek, with a ‘huk’ of surprise!

“No; no whales,” said Nuna“and no bears,” she added impressively. “Ridroonee, (that’s his name), says they eat a thing called bread, which grows out of the ground like grass.”

“Eat grass!” exclaimed the mother of Arbalik.

“So he says, and also beasts that have horns”

“Reindeer?” suggested Kunelik.

“No; the horns are short, with only one point to each; and the beasts are much heavier than reindeer. They have also great beasts, with no name in our languagehurses or hosses he calls them,but they don’t eat these; they make them haul sledges on little round things called weels”

“I know,” cried Sigokow; “they must be big dogs!”

“Huk!” exclaimed old Kannoa, who confined her observations chiefly to that monosyllable and a quiet chuckle.

“No,” returned Nuna, becoming a little impatient under these frequent interruptions; “they are not dogs at all, but hurseshosseswith hard feet like stones, and iron boots on them.”

A general exclamation of incredulous surprise broke forth at this point, and the mother of Arbalik silently came to the conclusion that Nuna had at last joined the liars of the community, and was making the most of her opportunities, and coming out strong.

“Let there be no talk, and I will speak,” said Nuna somewhat indignantly; “if you interrupt me again, I will send you all away to your huts!”

This threat produced silence, and a sniff from Arbalik’s mother. Mrs Okiok went on:

“The land, Ridroonee says, is very rich. They have all that they wishand more!” (“Huk!” from the company)“except a great many people, called poo-oor, who have not all that they wishand who sometimes want a little more.” (A groan of remonstrative pity from the audience.) “But they have not many seals, and they never eat them.”

“Poo! I would not care to live there,” said Pussimek.

“And no walruses at all,” added Mrs Okiok.

“Boo! a miserable country!” exclaimed Ippegoo’s mother.

“Then they have villagesso big!oh!” Nuna paused from incapacity to describe, for Eskimos, being unable to comprehend large numbers, are often obliged to have recourse to illustration. “Listen,” continued Nuna, holding up a finger; “if all the whales we catch in a year were to be cooked, they would not feed the people of their largest village for one day!”

The mother of Arbalik now felt that she had sufficient ground for the belief that Mrs Okiok was utterly demoralised and lost, in the matter of veracity. Mrs Okiok, looking at her, perceived this in her countenance, and dropped that subject with a soft smile of conscious innocence.

Thereupon curiosity broke forth again with redoubled violence.

“But what is the Kablunet like?” cried Kabelaw, as eagerly as if it were the first time of asking.

“I have told you six times,” replied Nuna.

“Tell her again,” cried the mother of Arbalik, with a sniff; “she’s so used to lies that she finds it hard to take in the truth.”

There was a sort of double hit intended here, which immensely tickled the Eskimos, who laughed heartily, for they are fond of a touch of sarcastic humour.

“Yes, tell her again,” they cried unanimously“for,” added Pussimek, “we’re not tired of it yet. Are we, Pussi?”

The query was addressed to her stark naked baby, which broke from a tremendous stare into a benignant laugh, that had the effect of shutting up its eyes at the same time that it opened its little mouth.

It must be remarked here that although we have called Pussi a baby, she was not exactly an infant. She could walk, and understand, and even talk. She did

not, however, (desirable child!) use her tongue freely. In fact, Eskimo children seldom do so in the company of their elders. They are prone to listen, and gaze, and swallow, (mentally), and to reply only when questioned. But they seem to consider themselves free to laugh at willhence Pussi's explosion.

"Well, then," continued Mrs Okiok good-naturedly, "I will tell you again. The Kablunet is a fine man. He must be very much finer when he is fat, for he is broad and tall, and looks strong; but he is thin just nowoh, so thin!as thin almost as Ippegoo!"

Ippegoo's mother took this in good part, as, indeed, it was intended.

"But that will soon mend with stuffing," continued Nuna. "And his hair is brownnot blackand is in little rings; and there is nearly as much below his nose as above it, so that his mouth can only be seen when open. He carries needles and soft sinews, too, in his bag; but his needles are not fish-bonesthey are iron; and the sinews are not like our sinews. They areI know not what! He has a round thing also, made of white iron, in his pocket, and it is alive. He says, 'No, it is a dead thing,' but he lies, for one day when he was out I heard it speaking to itself in a low soft little voice, but I was afraid to touch it for fear it should bite."

("Lies again!" muttered Issek, the mother of Arbalik, to herself.)

"He says that it tells him about time," continued Nuna; "but how can it tell him about anything if it is dead? Alive and dead at the same time!"

"Impossible!" cried Pussimek.

"Ridiculous!" cried every one else.

"Huk!" ejaculated old Kannoa, wrinkling up her mild face and exposing her toothless gums in a stupendous chuckle.

"Yes, impossible! But I think he does not tell many lies," said Nuna apologetically. "I think he only does it a little. Then he goes on his knees every night before lying down, and every morning when he rises, and speaks to himself."

"Why?" cried every one in blazing astonishment.

"I know not," replied Nuna, "and he does not tell."

"He must be a fool," suggested Kunelik.

"I suppose so," returned Nuna, "yet he does not look like a fool."

At this point the description of Rooney's person and characteristics was interrupted by a tremendous splash. It was poor Pussi, who, having grown wearied of the conversation, had slipped from her mother's side, and while wandering in the background had tumbled into the oil-tub, from which she quickly emerged gasping, gazing, and glittering.

A mild remonstrance, with a good wipe down, soon put her to rights, and Nuna was about to resume her discourse, when the sound of rushing footsteps outside arrested her. Next moment a wild scrambling was heard in the tunnelas of a giant rat in a hurryand Ippegoo tumbled into the hut in a state of wild excitement, which irresistibly affected the women.

"What has happened?" demanded Nuna.

"Mother," gasped the youth, turning to the natural repository of all his cares and troubles, "he is coming!"

"Who is coming, my son?" asked Kunelik, in a quiet, soothing tone, for the pleasant little woman, unlike most of the others, was not easily thrown into a state of agitation.

"The Kablunet," cried Ippegoo.

"Where, when, who, how, which, what?" burst simultaneously from the gaping crowd.

But for some minutes the evidently exhausted youth could not answer. He could only glare and pant. By degrees, however, and with much patience, his mother extracted his news from him, piecemeal, to the following effect.

After having sat and gazed in mute surprise at the Kablunet for a considerable time, as already mentioned, and having devoured a good meal at the same time, Ippegoo had been closely questioned by Angut as to the reason of his unexpected visit. He had done his best to conceal matters, with which Angut, he said, had nothing to do; but somehow that wonderfully wise man had seen, as it were, into his brain, and at once became suspicious. Then he looked so fierce, and demanded the truth so sternly, that he, (Ippegoo), had fled in terror from the hut of Okiok, and did not stop till he had reached the top of a hummock, where he paused to recover breath. Looking back, he saw that Angut had already harnessed the dogs to his sledge, and was packing the Kablunet upon it"All lies," interrupted Arbalik's mother, Issek, at this point. "If this is true, how comes it that Ippegoo is here first? No doubt the legs of the simple one are the best part of him, but every one knows that they could not beat the dogs of Angut."

“Issek is wise,” said Kunelik pleasantly, “almost too wise!but no doubt the simple one can explain.”

“Speak, my son.”

“Yes, mother, I can explain. You must know that Angut was in such a fierce hurry that he made his whip crack like the splitting of an iceberg, and the dogs gave such a yell and bound that they dashed the sledge against a hummock, and broke some part of it. What part of it I did not stop to see. Only I saw that they had to unload, and the Kablunet helped to mend it. Then I turned and ran. So I am here first.”

There was a huk of approval at this explanation, which was given in a slightly exulting tone, and with a glance of mild defiance at Arbalik’s mother.

But Issek was not a woman to be put down easily by a simpleton. She at once returned to the charge.

“No doubt Ippegoo is right,” she said, with forced calmness, “but he has talked of a message to Okiok. I dare say the wife of Okiok would like to hear what that message is.”

“Huk! That is true,” said Nuna quickly.

“And,” continued Issek, “Ippegoo speaks of the suspicions of Angut. What does he suspect? We would all like to know that.”

“Huk! huk! That is also true,” exclaimed every one.

“My son,” whispered Kunelik, “silence is the only hope of a fool. Speak not at all.”

Ippegoo was so accustomed to render blind and willing obedience to his mother that he instantly brought his teeth together with a snap, and thereafter not one word, good, bad, or indifferent, was to be extracted from the simple one.

From what he had revealed, however, it was evident that a speedy visit from the wonderful foreigner was to be looked for. The little party therefore broke up in much excitement, each member of it going off in bursting importance to spread the news in her particular circle, with exaggerations suitable to her special nature and disposition.

While they are thus engaged, we will return to the object of all their interest.

When Ippegoo fled from Angut, as already told, the latter worthy turned

quickly to Rooney, and said

“There is danger somewhereI know not where or what; but I must leave you. Ermigit will take good care of Ridroonee till I come again.”

“Nay, if there is danger anywhere I will share it,” returned Rooney, rising and stretching himself; “I am already twice the man I was with all this resting and feeding.”

The Eskimo looked at the sailor doubtfully for a moment; but when action was necessary, he was a man of few words. Merely uttering the word “Come,” he went out and harnessed his dog-team in a few minutes. Then, after wrapping the Kablunet carefully up in furs, he leaped on the fore-part of the sledge, cracked his whip, and went off at full speed.

“What is the danger that threatens, think you?” asked Rooney; “you must have some notion about it.”

“I know not, but I guess,” answered Angut, with a sternness that surprised his companion. “Ippegoo is a poor tool in the hands of a bad man. He comes from Ujarak, and he asks too earnestly for Nunaga. Ujarak is fond of Nunaga.”

Rooney looked pointedly and gravely at Angut. That Eskimo returned the look even more pointedly and with deeper gravity. Then what we may term a grave smile flitted across the features of the Eskimo. A similar smile enlivened the features of the seaman. He spoke no word, but from that moment Rooney knew that Angut was also fond of Nunaga; and he made up his mind to aid him to the utmost of his capacity both in love and warfor sympathy is not confined to races, creeds, or classes, but gloriously permeates the whole human family.

It was at this point that the crash described by Ippegoo occurred. Fortunately no damage was done to the occupants of the sledge, though the vehicle itself had suffered fractures which it took them several hours to repair.

Having finished the repairs, they set off again at greater speed than ever in the direction of the Eskimo village, accompanied by Ermigit and Tumbler, who, not caring to be left behind, had followed on a smaller sledge, and overtaken them.

Note: For further light on this interesting subject see History of Greenland and the Moravian Brethren, volume one, page 159. Longman, 1820.

Chapter Nine.
Shows that the Wise are a Match for the Wicked, and exhibits Tumbler

and Pussi in Danger.

When Red Rooney and his friend reached the village, and found that most of the men had gone south to hunt, and that Nunaga was living in peace with her mother in her father's town mansion, their fears were greatly relieved, although Angut was still rendered somewhat anxious by the suspicion that mischief of some sort was brewing. Being resolved if possible to discover and counteract it, he told Rooney that he meant to continue his journey southward, and join the hunters.

"Good. I will rest here till you return," said the seaman, "for I feel that I'm not strong enough yet for much exertion."

"But Ridroonee promised to dwell with me," returned Angut, somewhat anxiously.

"So I did, and so I will, friend, when you come back. At present you tell me your hut is closed because you have no wifeno kinswoman."

"That is true," returned the Eskimo; "my mother is dead; my father was killed; I have no brothers, no sisters. But when I am at home old Kannoa cooks for me. She is a good woman, and can make us comfortable."

"Just so, Angut. I'll be content to have the old woman for a nurse as long as I need one. Good luck to you; and, I say, keep a sharp look-out on Ujarak. He's not to be trusted, if I am any judge of men's faces."

Angut said no word in reply, but he smiled a grim smile as he turned and went his way.

Being much fatigued with his recent exertions, Red Rooney turned into Okiok's hut, to the great sorrow of the women and children, who had gathered from all parts of the village to gaze at and admire him.

"He is realand alive!" remarked Kunelik in a low voice.

"And Nuna is not a liar," said the mother of Arbalik.

"Yes; he is tall," said one.

"And broad," observed another.

"But very thin," said Pussimek.

"No matter; he can stuff," said Kabelaw, with a nod to her sister Sigokow, who was remarkably stout, and doubtless understood the virtue of the process.

While this commentary was going on, the object of it was making himself comfortable on a couch of skins which Nuna had spread for him on the raised floor at the upper end of her hut. In a few minutes the wearied man was sound asleep, as was indicated by his nose.

No sooner did Mrs Okiok note the peculiar sound than she went out and said to her assembled friends“Now you may come in; butforget notno word is to be spoken. Use your eyes and bite your tongues. The one who speaks shall be put out.”

Under these conditions the multitude filed into the mansion, where they sat down in rows to gaze their fill in profound silence; and there they sat for more than an hour, rapt in contemplation of the wonderful sight.

“He snorts,” was on the lips of Pussimek, but a warning glance from Nuna checked the sentence in the bud.

“He dreams!” had almost slipped from the lips of Kunelik, but she caught it in time.

Certainly these primitive people availed themselves of the permission to use their eyes; nay, more, they also used their eyebrowsand indeed their entire faces, for, the lips being sealed, they not only drank in Rooney, so to speak, with their eyes, but tried to comment upon him with the same organs.

Finding them very imperfect in this respect, they ventured to use their lips without soundto speak, as it were, in dumb showand the contortions of visage thus produced were indescribable.

This state of things was at its height when Rooney chanced to awake. As he lay with his face to the foe, the tableau vivant met his gaze the instant he opened his eyes. Rooney was quick-witted, and had great power of self-command. He reclosed the eyes at once, and then, through the merest chink between the lids, continued to watch the scene. But the wink had been observed. It caused an abrupt stoppage of the pantomime, and an intense glare of expectancy.

This was too much for Rooney. He threw up his arms, and gave way to a violent explosion of loud and hearty laughter.

If a bomb-shell had burst among the spectators, it could scarcely have caused greater consternation. A panic ensued. Incontinently the mother of Ippegoo plunged head first into the tunnel. The mother of Arbalik followed, overtook her friend, tried to pass, and stuck fast. The others, dashing in, sought to force them through, but only rammed them tighter. Seeing that egress was

impossible, those in rear crouched against the furthest wall and turned looks of horror on the Kablunet, who they thought had suddenly gone mad. But observing that Nuna and her daughter did not share their alarm, they soon recovered, and when Rooney at last sat up and began to look grave, they evidently felt somewhat ashamed of themselves. Pussimek at last seized the mother of Ippegoo by the legs, and with a strong pull extracted her from the tunnel. Issek, being thus set free, quickly made her exit. The rest followed by degrees, until Rooney was left with Nuna and her daughter.

“Your friends have had a fright,” remarked the sailor.

“They are easily frightened. Are you hungry?”

“Yes; I feel as if I could eat a white bear raw.”

“So I expected,” returned the little woman, with a laugh, as she placed a platter of broiled meat before her guest, who at once set to work.

Let us now return to Ippegoo. Having borrowed a sledge, he had driven off to the appointed place of rendezvous, before the arrival of Rooney and Angut, as fast as the team could take him. Arrived there, he found Ujarak awaiting him.

“You have failed,” said the wizard gravely.

“Yes, because Nunaga had left with her father and mother, and is now in the village. So is the Kablunet.”

Whatever Ujarak might have felt, he took good care that his countenance should not betray him. Indeed this capacity to conceal his feelings under a calm exterior constituted a large element of the power which he had obtained over his fellows. Without deigning a reply of any kind to his humble and humbled follower, he stepped quietly into the sledge, and drove away to the southward, intending to rejoin the hunters.

Arrived at the ground, he set off on foot over the ice until he found a seal’s breathing-hole. Here he arranged his spears, erected a screen of snow-blocks, and sat down to watch.

“Ippegoo,” he said, at last breaking silence, “we must not be beaten.”

“No, that must not be,” replied his pupil firmly.

“This time we have failed,” continued the wizard, “because I did not think that Okiok would leave his guest.”

“I thought,” said Ippegoo, somewhat timidly, “that your torngak told you

everything.”

“You are a fool, Ippegoo.”

“I know it, master; but can you not make me more wise by teaching me?”

“Some people are hard to teach,” said Ujarak.

“That is also true,” returned the youth mournfully. “I know that you can never make me an angekok. Perhaps it would be better not to try.”

“No. You are mistaken,” said the wizard in a more cheerful tone, for he felt that he had gone too far. “You will make a good enough angekok in time, if you will only attend to what I say, and be obedient. Come, I will explain to you. Torngaks, you must understand, do not always tell all that they know. Sometimes they leave the angekok dark, for a purpose that is best known to themselves. But they always tell enough for the guidance of a wise man”

“ButbutI am not a wise man, you know,” Ippegoo ventured to remark.

“True; but when I have made you an angekok then you will become a wise mandon’t you see?”

As the word angekok signifies “wise man,” Ippegoo would have been a fool indeed had he failed to see the truism. The sight raised his spirits, and made him look hopeful.

“Well, then, stupid one, speak not, but listen. As I have before told you, I love Nunaga and Nunaga loves me”

“II thought she loved Angut,” said Ippegoo.

“O idiot,” exclaimed the wizard; “did I not tell you that you cannot understand? The loves of angekoks are not as the loves of ordinary men. Sometimes one’s torngak makes the girl seem uncertain which man she likes best”

“Ye–yes; but in this case there seems no uncertainty, for she and Angut”

“Silence! you worse than baby walrus!”

Ippegoo shut his mouth, and humbly drooped his eyelids.

After a few minutes, Ujarak, having swallowed his wrath, continued in a calm tone

“This time we have failed. Next time we will be sure to succeed, and”

“I suppose your torngak told”

“Silence! weak-minded puffin!” thundered the wizard, to the great astonishment of a seal which came up at that moment to breathe, and prudently retired in time to save its life.

Once again the angekok with a mighty effort restrained his wrath, and after a time resumed

“Now, Ippegoo, we dare not venture again to try till after the feast, for the suspicion which you have roused in Angut by the foolish wagging of your tongue must be allowed to die out. But in the meantimethough you cannot, must not, speakyou can listen, and you can get your mother to listen, and, when you hear anything that you think I ought to know, you will tell me.”

“But if,” said the pupil timidly, “I should only find out things that your torngak has already told you, what”

He stopped short, for Ujarak, springing up, walked smartly away, leaving his follower behind to finish the question, and gather up the spears.

“Yes; he is right. I am a fool,” murmured Ippegoo. “Yet his conduct does seem strange. But he is an angekok. That must be the reason.”

Consoling himself with this reflection, the puzzled youth, putting the spears and hunting tackle on his shoulders, followed after his irate master towards the bay where the other hunters were encamped.

We turn now to two other actors in our tale, who, although not very important characters, deserve passing notice.

When Nuna’s youngest son, little Tumbler, was brought to the Eskimo village, he made his appearance in the new black dress suit with which Rooney had clothed himmuch to the surprise and delight of the whole community. Not long after arriving, he waddled away through the village in search of some piece of amusing mischief to do. On his ramble he fell in with a companion of about his own size, whose costume was that of a woman in miniaturenamely, a short coat with a fully developed tail, which trailed on the ground with the approved fashionable swing. This was none other than Pussi, the little daughter of Simek, the great hunter. Now it chanced that there was a mutual likinga strong bond of sympathybetween Tumbler and Pussi, which induced them always to play together when possible.

No sooner, therefore, did Tumbler catch sight of his friend than he ran after her, grasped her greasy little hand, and waddled away to do, in company with

her, what mischief might chance to be possible at the time.

Immediately behind the village there stood a small iceberg, which had grounded there some years before, and was so little reduced in size or shape by the action of each brief summer's sun that it had become to the people almost as familiar a landmark as the solid rocks. In this berg there was a beautiful sea-green cavern whose depths had never yet been fathomed. It was supposed to be haunted, and was therefore visited only by the more daring and courageous among the children of the tribe. Tumbler and Pussi were unquestionably the most daring among thesepartly owing to native bravery in both, and partly to profound ignorance and inexperience of danger.

"Let's go to ze g'een cave," suggested Tumbler.

Pussi returned that most familiar of repliesa nod.

We cannot, of course, convey the slightest idea of the infantine Eskimo lisp. As before said, we must be content with the nearest English equivalent.

The green cave was not more than half a mile distant from the village. To reach it the children had to get upon the sea-ice, and this involved crossing what has been termed the ice-footnamely, that belt of broken up and shattered ice caused by the daily tidesat the point where the grounded ice meets that which is afloat. It is a chaotic belt, varying in character and width according to position and depth of water, and always more or less dangerous to the tender limbs of childhood.

Encountering thus an opportunity for mischievous daring at the very beginning of their ramble, our jovial hero and heroine proceeded to cross, with all the breathless, silent, and awesome delight that surrounds half-suspected wickednessfor they were quite old enough to know that they were on forbidden ground.

"Come, you's not frighted?" said Tumbler, holding out his hand, as he stood on the top of a block, encouraging his companion to advance.

"Nonot frifrightedbut"

She caught the extended hand, slipped her little foot, and slid violently downward, dragging the boy along with her.

Scrambling to their feet, Pussi looked inclined to whimper, but as Tumbler laughed heartily, she thought better of it, and joined him.

Few of the riven masses by which they were surrounded were much above five or six feet thick; but as the children were short of stature, the place

seemed to the poor creatures an illimitable world of icy confusion, and many were the slips, glissades, and semi-falls which they experienced before reaching the other side. Reach it they did, however, in a very panting and dishevelled condition, and it said much for Red Rooney's tailoring capacity that the black dress coat was not riven to pieces in the process.

"Look; help me. Shove me here," said Tumbler, as he laid hold of a block which formed the last difficulty.

Pussi helped and shoved to the best of her small ability, so that Tumbler soon found himself on a ledge which communicated with the sea-ice. Seizing Pussi by her top-knot of hair, he hauled while she scrambled, until he caught a hand, then an arm, then her tail, finally one of her legs, and at last deposited her, flushed and panting, at his side. After a few minutes' rest they began to runperhaps it were more correct to say waddlein the direction of "ze g'een cave."

Now it chanced that the said cave was haunted at that time, not by torngaks or other ghosts, but by two men, one of whom at least was filled with an evil spirit.

Ujarak, having ascertained that Okiok had joined the hunting party, and that the Kablunet had reached the village, resolved to make a daring attempt to carry off the fair Nunaga from the very midst of her female friends, and for this purpose sought and found his dupe Ippegoo, whom he sent off to the green cave to await his arrival.

"We must not go together," he said, "for we might be suspected; but you will go off to hunt seals to the south, and I will go out on the floes to consult my torngak."

"But, master, if I go to the south after seals, how can we ever meet at the green cave?"

"O stupid one! Do you not understand that you are only to pretend to go south? When you are well out of sight, then turn north, and make for the berg. You will find me there."

Without further remark the stupid one went off, and in process of time the master and pupil met at the appointed rendezvous.

The entrance to the cavern was light, owing to the transparency of the ice, and farther in it assumed that lovely bluish-green colour from which it derived its name; but the profound depths, which had never yet been fathomed, were as black as ebonyforming a splendid background, against which the icicles and

crystal edges of the entrance were beautifully and sharply defined.

Retiring sufficiently far within this natural grotto to be safe from observation in the event of any one chancing to pass by, the wizard looked earnestly into the anxious countenance of the young man.

“Ippegoo,” he said, with an air of unwonted solemnity, for, having made up his mind to a desperate venture, the wizard wished to subdue his tool entirely as well as promptly to his will; “Ippegoo, my torngak says the thing must be done to-night, if it is to be done at all. Putting off, he says, will perhaps produce failure.”

“‘Perhaps’!” echoed the youth, with that perplexed look which so frequently crossed his features when the wizard’s words puzzled him. “I thought that torngaks knew everything, and never needed to say ‘perhaps.’”

“You think too much,” said Ujarak testily.

“Was it not yesterday,” returned the pupil humbly, “that you told me to think well before speaking?”

“True, O simple one! but there are times to think and times not to think. Your misfortune is that you always do both at the wrong time, and never do either at the right time.”

“I wish,” returned Ippegoo, with a sigh, “that it were always the time not to think. How much pleasanter it would be!”

“Well, it is time to listen just now,” said the wizard, “so give me your attention. I shall this night harness my dogs, and carry off Nunaga by force. And you must harness your dogs in another sledge, and follow me.”

“Butbutmy mother!” murmured the youth.

“Must be left behind,” said the wizard, with tremendous decision and a dark frown; but he had under-estimated his tool, who replied with decision quite equal to his own

“That must not be.”

Although taken much by surprise, Ujarak managed to dissemble.

“Well, then,” he said, “you must carry her away by force.”

“That is impossible,” returned Ippegoo, with a faint smile and shake of the head.

For the first time in his life the wizard lost all patience with his poor worshipper, and was on the point of giving way to wrath, when the sound of approaching footsteps outside the cave arrested him. Not caring to be interrupted at that moment, and without waiting to see who approached, Ujarak suddenly gave vent to a fearful intermittent yell, which was well understood by all Eskimos to be the laughter of a torngak or fiend, and, therefore, calculated to scare away any one who approached.

In the present instance it did so most effectually, for poor little Pussi and Tumbler were already rather awed by the grandeur and mysterious appearance of the sea-green cave. Turning instantly, they fledor toddledon the wings of terror, and with so little regard to personal safety, that Pussi found herself suddenly on the edge of an ice-cliff, without the power to stop. Tumbler, however, had himself more under command. He pulled up in time, and caught hold of his companion by the tail, but she, being already on a steep gradient, dragged her champion on, and it is certain that both would have gone over the ice precipice and been killed, if Tumbler had not got both heels against an opportune lump of ice. Holding on to the tail with heroic resolution, while Pussi was already swinging in mid-air, the poor boy opened wide his eyes and mouth, and gave vent to a series of yells so tremendous that the hearts of Ujarak and Ippegoo leaped into their throats, as they rushed out of the cavern and hastened to the rescue.

But another ear had been assailed by those cries. Just as Ippegoowho was fleeter than his mastercaught Tumbler with one hand, and Pussi’s tail with the other, and lifted both children out of danger, Reginald Rooney, who chanced to be wandering in the vicinity, appeared, in a state of great anxiety, on the scene.

“Glad am I you were in time, Ippegoo,” said the seaman, shouldering the little girl, while the young Eskimo put the boy on his back, “but I thought that you and Ujarak were away south with the hunters. What has brought you back so soon? Nothing wrong, I trust?”

“No; all goes well,” returned Ippegoo, as they went towards the village. “We have only come back toto”

“To make preparation for the feast when they return,” said the wizard, coming quickly to the rescue of his unready follower.

“Then they will be back immediately, I suppose?” said Rooney, looking pointedly at the wizard.

“Yes, immediately,” answered Ujarak, without appearing to observe the pointed look, “unless something happens to detain them.”

Suspecting that there was something behind this reply, the sailor said no more. Ujarak, feeling that he was suspected, and that his plan, therefore, must be given up for the time being, determined to set himself to work to allay suspicion by making himself generally useful, and giving himself up entirely to the festivities that were about to take place on the return of the men from their successful hunt.

Chapter Ten.
Red Rooney becomes a Spectacle and then a President.

Late on the evening of the following day the fur-clad hunters arrived at their village with shouts of rejoicinghairy and happyfor they brought with them many a carcass of walrus and seal wherewith to replenish their wardrobes and larders, and banish hunger and care from their dwellings for a considerable time to come.

Be not too ready, most refined reader, to condemn those people for their somewhat gross and low ideas of enjoyment. Remember that they were “to the manner born.” Consider, also, that “things are not what they seem,” and that the difference between you and savages is, in some very important respects at least, not so great as would at first sight appear. You rejoice in literature, music, fine art, etcetera; but how about one or two o’clock? Would these afford you much satisfaction at such a time?

“Bah!” you exclaim, “what a question! The animal wants must of course be supplied.” True, most refined one, but a hunk of bread and a plate of soup would fully suffice for animal needs. Would your refined pleasures have as keen a relish for you if you had only to look forward to bread and water between six and nine? Answer, ye sportsmen, how would you get through your day’s work if there were not a glorious dinner at the end of it? Speak, ye ballroom frequenters, how would you skip, even with the light of brilliant eyes to encourage you, if there were not what you call a jolly good supper somewhere in the background? Be honest, all of you, and confesswhat you tacitly and obviously admit by your actions every daythat our mere animal wants are of vast importance, and that in our ministering to these the only difference between ourselves and the Eskimos is, a somewhat greater variety of viands, a little less of toil in obtaining them, a little more of refinement and cleanliness in the consumption of them, and, perchance, a little less of appetite.

We feel impelled thus to claim for our northern brothers some forbearance and a little genuine sympathy, because we have to record that their first act on arriving was to fly to the cooking-lamps, and commence a feast which

extended far into the night, and finally terminated in lethargic repose.

But this was not the feast to which we have more than once referred. It was merely a mild preliminary whet. The hunters were hungry and tired after their recent exertions, as might have been expected, and went in for refreshment with a will. They did not, however, forget the Kablunet. Eager expectation was on tip-toe, and even hunger was forgotten for a short time in the desire to see the foreigner; but Okiok had made up his mind to give them only one glimpsea sort of moral appetiserand reserve the full display of his lion until the following day. Just before arriving at the village, therefore, he called a halt, and explained to the hunters that the Kablunet had been very much wearied by his recent journey, that he would not permit him to be disturbed that night; but as he was to dwell with Angut, and was at that time in his, (Okiok's), hut, they would have an opportunity of seeing him during his brief passage from the one hut to the other. They were, however, to be very careful not to crowd upon him or question him, and not to speak at allin short, only to look!

This having been settled and agreed to, Okiok pushed on alone in advance, to prevent Rooney from showing himself too soon.

Arriving at his town residence, the Eskimo found his guest asleep, as usual, for the poor seaman found that alternate food and repose were the best means for the recovery of lost vigour.

Nuna was quietly cooking the seaman's next meal, and Nunaga was mending one of his garments, when Okiok entered. Both held up a warning finger when he appeared.

"Where is Tumbler?" he asked softly, looking round.

"Gone to the hut of Pussimek to play with Pussi," replied the wife; "we could not keep him quiet, so we"

She stopped and looked solemn, for Rooney moved. The talking had roused him. Sitting up, he looked gravely first at Nunaga, then at her mother, then at her father, after which he smiled mildly and yawned.

"So you've got back, Okiok?"

"Yes, Ridroonee. And all the hunters are coming, with plenty to eatgreat plenty!"

The women's eyes seemed to sparkle at these words, but they said nothing.

"That's a good job, old boy," said the seaman, rising. "I think I'll go out and meet them. It will be dark in a short time."

Here Okiok interposed with an earnest petition that he would not go out to the people that night, explaining that if he were to sit with them during supper none except the gluttons would be able to eat. The rest would only wonder and stare.

Of course our seaman was amenable to reason.

“But,” he said, with a humorous glance, “would it not be good for themespecially for the gluttonsto be prevented from eating too much?”

It was evident from the blank look of his visage that Okiok did not understand his guest. The idea of an Eskimo eating too much had never before entered his imagination.

“How can a man eat too much?” he asked. “Until a man is quite full he is not satisfied. When he is quite full, he wants no more; he can hold no more!”

“That says a good deal for Eskimo digestion,” thought our hero, but as he knew no native word for digestion, he only laughed and expressed his readiness to act as his host wished.

Just then the noise of cracking whips and yelping dogs was heard outside.

“Remain here,” said Okiok; “I will come again.”

Not long after the hospitable man’s exit all the noise ceased, but the seaman could hear murmuring voices and stealthy footsteps gathering round the hut. In a few minutes Okiok returned.

“Angut is now ready,” he said, “to receive you. The people will look at you as you pass, but they will not disturb you.”

“I’m ready to gothough sorry to leave Nuna and Nunaga,” said the gallant Rooney, rising.

The sounds outside and Okiok’s words had prepared him for some display of curiosity, but he was quite taken aback by the sight that met his eyes on emerging from the tunnel, for there, in absolute silence, with wide expectant eyes and mouths a-gape, stood every man, woman, and child capable of motion in the Eskimo village!

They did not stand in a confused group, but in two long lines, with a space of four or five feet between, thus forming a living lane, extending from the door of Okiok’s hut to that of Angut, which stood not far distant.

At first our seaman felt an almost irresistible inclination to burst into a hearty

fit of laughter, there seemed something so absurdly solemn in this cumulative stare, but good feeling fortunately checked him; yet he walked with his host along the lane with such a genuine expression of glee and good-will on his manly face that a softly uttered but universal and emphatic “Huk!” assured him he had made a good first impression.

When he had entered the abode of Angut a deep sigh of relief escaped from the multitude, and they made up for their enforced silence by breaking into a gush of noisy conversation.

In his new abode Red Rooney found Angut and old Kannoa, with a blazing lamp and steaming stove-kettle, ready to receive him.

Few were the words of welcome uttered by Angut, for Eskimos are not addicted to ceremonial; nevertheless, with the promptitude of one ever ready to learn, he seized his visitor’s hand, and shook it heartily in the manner which Rooney had taught himwith the slight mistake that he shook it from side to side instead of up and down. At the same time he pointed to a deerskin seat on the raised floor of the hut, where Kannoa had already placed a stone dish of smoking viands.

The smile which had overspread Rooney’s face at the handshaking faded away as he laid his hand on the old woman’s shoulder, and, stooping down, gazed at her with an expression of great tenderness.

Ah! Rooney, what is there in that old wrinkled visage, so scarred by the rude assaults of Time, yet with such a strong touch of pathos in the expression, that causes thy broad bosom to swell and thine eagle eyes to moisten? Does it remind thee of something very different, yet wonderfully like, in the old country?

Rooney never distinctly told what it was, but as he had left a muchloved grandmother at home, we may be permitted to guess. From that hour he took a tender interest in that little old woman, and somehowfrom the expression of his eye, perhaps, or the touch of his strong handthe old creature seemed to know it, and chuckled, in her own peculiar style, immensely. For old Kannoa had not been overburdened with demonstrative affection by the members of her tribe, some of whom had even called her an old witcha name which had sent a thrill of great terror through her trembling old heart, for the doom of witches in Eskimo land in those days was very terrible.

Next day, being that of the great feast, the entire village bestirred itself with the first light of morning. Men and women put on their best garments, the lamps were kindled, the cooking-kettles put on, and preparations generally commenced on a grand scale.

Awaking and stretching himself, with his arms above his head and his mouth open, young Ermigit yawned vociferously.

“Hah! how strong I feel,” he said, “a white bear would be but a baby in my hands!”

Going through a similar stretch-yawny process, his brother Norrak said that he felt as if he had strength to turn a walrus inside out.

“Come, boys, turn yourselves out o’ the house, and help to cut up the meat. It is not wise to boast in the morning,” said Okiok.

“True, father,” returned Norrak quietly, “but if we don’t boast in the morning, the men do it so much all the rest of the day that we’ll have no chance.”

“These two will be a match for you in talk before long,” remarked Nuna, after her sons had left.

“Ay, and also in body,” returned the father, who was rather proud of his well-grown boys. “Huk! what is Tumbler putting on?” he asked in astonishment.

“The dress that the Kablunet made for him,” said Nunaga, with a merry laugh. “Doesn’t it fit well? My only fear is that if Arbalik sees him, he will pierce him with a dart before discovering his mistake.”

“What are you going to begin the day with?” asked Nuna, as she stirred her kettle.

“With a feed,” replied Okiok, glancing slyly at his better half.

“As if I didn’t know that!” returned the wife. “When did Okiok ever do anything before having his morning feed?”

“When he was starving,” retorted the husband promptly.

This pleasantry was received with a giggle by the women.

“Well, father, and what comes after the morning feed?” asked Nunaga.

“Kick-ball,” answered Okiok.

“That is a hard game,” said the wife; “it makes even the young men blow like walruses.”

“Ay, and eat like whales,” added the husband.

“And sleep like seals,” remarked Nunaga.

“And snore likelike Okioks,” said Nuna.

This was a hard hit, being founded on some degree of truth, and set Okiok off in a roar of laughter.

Becoming suddenly serious, he asked if anything had been seen the day before of Ujarak the angekok.

“Yes, he was in the village in the evening,” replied Nuna as she arranged the food on platters. “He and Ippegoo were found in the green cave yesterday by the Kablunet. He was out about the ice-heaps, and came on them just as Tumbler saved Pussi, and Ippegoo saved them both.”

“Tumbler saved Pussi!” exclaimed the Eskimo, looking first at his daughter and then at his wife.

“Yes; Pussi was tumbling over an ice-cliff,” said Nunaga, “and Tumbler held on to her.”

“By the tail,” said Nuna. “So Ippegoo rushed out of the cave, and saved them both. Ujarak would have been too late. It seems strange to me that his torngak did not warn him in time.”

“Torngaks must be very hard-hearted,” said Okiok, with a look and tone of contempt that he did not care to conceal. “But what were they doing in the cave?”

“Who knows?” replied Nuna. “These two are always plotting. Ridroonee says they looked as if worried at having been discovered. Come, fall-to. You must be strong to-day if you would play kick-ball well.”

Okiok glanced with a look of care upon his brow at Nunaga, shook his head gravely once or twice in silence, and began breakfast.

After the meal was over he sallied forth to join in the sports, which were soon to begin. Going first to the hut of Angut, he found the most of his countrymen and women surrounding Red Rooney, who, having finished breakfast, was seated on a sledge conversing with Angut and Simek, and others of the chief men of the tribe. All the rest were gazing and listening with greedy eyes and ears.

“Hi! Okiok,” exclaimed the sailor heartily, as he rose and held out his hand, which his former host shook heartily, to the great surprise and delight of the crowd; “have you joined the gluttons, that you take so long to your morning feed? or have you slept longer than usual, to make you a better match for the

young men?”

“No; I was in dreamland,” answered the Eskimo, with profound gravity, which his countrymen knew quite well was pretended; “and I met a torngak there, who told me that the Kablunet needed much sleep as well as food, and must not be roused by me, although other fools might disturb him.”

“How kind of the torngak!” returned Rooney. “But he was not polite, for if he spoke to you of ‘other’ fools, he must have thought of you as one fool. Was he your own torngak?”

“No; I have no torngak. He was my grandmother’s. And he told me that the Kablunet was a great angekok, and would have a torngak of his own soon. Moreover, he said the games must begin at onceso come along, Ippegoo.”

As he spoke, Okiok caught the slender youth in his powerful arms, laid him gently on his back, flung some snow in his face, and then ran away.

Ippegoo, entering at once into the spirit of the fun, arose and gave chase. Excelling in speed as much as his opponent did in strength, the youth soon overtook him, managed to trip him up, and fell on the top of him. He was wildly cheered by the delighted crowd, and tried to punish Okiok; but his efforts were not very successful, for that worthy put both his mittened hands over his head, and, curling himself up like a hedgehog, lay invulnerable on the ice. Poor Ippegoo had not strength either to uncoil, or lift, or even move his foe, and failed to find a crevice in his hairy dress into which he might stuff snow.

After a few minutes Okiok straightened himself out, jumped up, and scurried off again over the ice, in the direction of the berg of the green cave, followed by the entire village.

It was on a level field of ice close to the berg referred to that the game of kick-ball was to be played. As Rooney was not yet strong enough to engage in rough play, a pile of deerskins was placed on a point of the berg, slightly higher than the heads of the people, and he was requested to mount thereon. There, as on a throne, he presided over the games, and became the gazing-stock of the tribe during the intervals of play. But these intervals were not numerous or prolonged, for most of the players were powerful men and boys, so thoroughly inured, by the nature of their lives, to hardship and vigorous action in every possible position of body that their muscles were always in the condition of those of a well-trained athlete. Even Ippegoo, with all his natural defects of mind and body, was by no means contemptible as a player, in those games, especially, which required agility and powers of endurance.

First they had a game of hand-ball. It was very simple. The players, who were not selected, but entered the lists at their own pleasure, divided themselves into two parties, which stood a little apart from each other. Then an ordinary hand-ball was tossed into the air by Okiok, who led one of the parties. Simek, the mighty hunter, led the other. These men, although approaching middle age, were still at the height of their strength and activity, and therefore fitting leaders of the younger men in this as well as the more serious affairs of life.

It seemed to Rooney at first as if Okiok and his band were bent on having all the fun to themselves, for they began to toss the ball to each other, without any regard to their opponents. But suddenly Simek and some of his best men made a rush into the midst of the other party with shouts and amazing bounds. Their object was to catch or wrest the ball from Okiok's party, and throw it into the midst of their own friends, who would then begin to amuse themselves with it until their opponents succeeded in wresting it from them.

Of course this led to scenes of violent action and wild but good-humoured excitement. Wrestling and grasping each other were forbidden in this game, but hustling, tripping up, pushing, and charging were allowed, so that the victory did not always incline either to the strong or the agile. And the difficulty of taking the ball from either party was much greater than one might suppose.

For full half an hour they played with the utmost energy, insomuch that they had to pause for a few seconds to recover breath. Then, with one accord, eyes were turned to the president, to see how he took it.

Delight filled every bosom, for they saw that he was powerfully sympathetic. Indeed Rooney had become so excited as well as interested in the game, that it was all he could do to restrain himself from leaping into the midst of the struggling mass and taking a part. He greeted the pause and the inquiring gaze with a true British cheer, which additionally charmed as well as surprised the natives. But their period of rest was brief.

Simek had the ball at the time. He suddenly sent it with a wild "Huk! hoo–o–o!" whirling into the air. The Kablunet was instantly forgotten. The ball came straight down towards a clumsy young man, who extended his hands, claw-like, to receive it. At that moment lppegoo launched himself like a thunderbolt into the small of the clumsy youth's back, and sent him sprawling on the snow amid shouts of laughter, while Norrak leaped neatly in, and, catching the ball as it rebounded, sent it up again on the same side. As it went up straight and came down perpendicularly, there was a concentric rush from all sides. Ujarak chanced to be the buffer who received the shock, and his big body was well able to sustain it. At the same moment he deftly caught the ball.

“Ho! his torngak helps him!” shouted Okiok ironically.

“So he does,” cried the wizard, with a scoffing laugh, as he hurled the ball aloft; “why does not your torngak help you?”

There was a loud titter at this, but the laugh was turned in favour of the other side when Ermigit caught the ball, and sent it over to the Okiok band, while their leader echoed the words, “So he does,” and spun the ball from him with such force that it flew over all heads, and chanced to alight in the lap of Red Rooney. It could not have landed better, for that worthy returned it as a point-blank shot which took full effect on the unexpectant nose of Ermigit.

The spirited lad was equal to the occasion. Although water rose unbidden to his eyes, he caught the ball, and with a shout of laughter flung it into the midst of his own side. Thus the play went on fast and furious, until both sides were gasping. Then with one consent they stopped for a more prolonged restfor there was no winning or losing at this game. Their only aim was to see which side could get hold of the ball oftenest and keep it longest until all were exhausted.

But the fun did not cease although the game did, for another and quieter game of strength was instituted. The whole party drew closer round their president, and many of them mounted to points of vantage on the berg, on the sides of which groups of the women and children had already taken up positions.

It may be remarked here that the snow-covered ice on which the game of ball had been played was like a sheet of white marble, but not so hard, for a heavy stamp with a heel could produce an indentation, though no mark was left by the ordinary pressure of a foot.

The competitors in the game of strength, or rather, of endurance, were only two in number. One was Okiok’s eldest son, Norrak, the other the clumsy young man to whom reference has been already made. The former, although the smaller and much the younger of the two, was remarkably strong for his age.

These two engaged in a singular style of boxing, in which, strange to say, the combatants did not face each other, nor did they guard or jump about. Stripped to the waist, like real heroes of the ring, they walked up to each other, and the clumsy youth turned his naked back to Norrak, who doubled his fist, and gave him a sounding thump thereon. Then Norrak wheeled about and submitted to a blow, which was delivered with such good-will that he almost tumbled forward. Again he turned about, and the clumsy one presented his back a second time; and thus they continued to pommel each other’s backs until they

began to pant vehemently. At last Norrak hit his adversary such a whack on the right shoulder that he absolutely spun him round, and caused him to roll over on his back, amid the plaudits of the assembly.

The clumsy one rose with a somewhat confused look, but was not allowed to continue the battle. There was no such thing as fighting it out “to the bitter end” among these hilarious Eskimos. In fact, they were playing, not fighting.

At this point Simek approached Rooney with a smiling countenance, and said

“There is another game of strength which we sometimes play, and it is the custom to appoint a man to choose the players. Will the Kablunet act this part to-day?”

Of course our seaman was quite ready to comply. After a few moments’ consideration, he looked round, with a spice of mischief in his heart, but a smile on his countenance, and said

“What could be more agreeable than to see the striving of two such good friends as Angut my host and Ujarak the angekok?”

There was a sudden silence and opening of eyes at this, for every one was well aware that a latent feeling of enmity existed between these two, and their personal strength and courage being equally well-known, no one up to that time had ventured to pit these two against each other. There was no help for it now, however. They were bound in honour, as well as by the laws of the community, to enter into conflict. Indeed they showed no inclination to avoid the trial, for Angut at once stepped quietly into the space in front of the president, and began to strip off his upper garments, while Ujarak leaped forward with something of a bounce, and did the same.

They were splendid specimens of physical manhood, both of them, for their well-trained muscles lay bulging on their limbs in a way that would have gladdened the sculptors of Hercules to behold. But there was a vast difference in the aspect of the two men. Both were about equal in height and breadth of shoulder, but Angut was much the slimmer and more elegant about the waist, as well as considerably lighter than his adversary. It was in the bearing of Angut, however, that the chief difference lay. There was a refinement of physiognomy and a grace of motion about him of which the other was utterly destitute; and it was plain that while the wizard was burning to come off victorious, the other was only willing, in a good-humoured way, to comply with the demands of custom. There was neither daring, defiance, contempt, nor fear in his countenance, which wore its wonted aspect of thoughtful serenity.

After this description of the champions, we feel almost unwilling to disappoint the reader by saying that the game or trial was the reverse of martial or noble. Sitting down on the hard snow, they linked their legs and arms together in a most indescribable manner, and strove to out-pull each other. There was, indeed, much more of the comic than the grand in this display, yet, as the struggle went on, a feeling of breathless interest arose, for it was not often that two such stalwart frames were seen in what appeared to be a mortal effort. The great muscles seemed to leap up from arm and thigh, as each made sudden and desperate effortsright and leftsometimes pulling and sometimes pushing back, in order to throw each other off guard, while perspiration burst forth and stood in beads upon their foreheads.

At last Ujarak thrust his opponent back to the utmost extent of his long arms, and, with a sudden pull, raised him almost to his feet.

There was a gasp of excitement, almost of regret, among the onlookers, for Angut was a decided favourite.

But the pull was not quite powerful enough. Angut began to sink back to his old position. He seemed to feel that now or never was his chance. Taking advantage of his descending weight, he added to it a wrench which seemed to sink his ten fingers into the flesh of Ujarak’s shoulders; a momentary check threw the latter off his guard, and next instant Angut not only pulled him over, but hurled him over his own head, and rolled him like a porpoise on the snow!

A mighty shout hailed the victory as the wizard arose and retired crestfallen from the scene, while the victor gravely resumed his coat and mingled with the crowd.

Ujarak chanced, in retiring, to pass close to Okiok. Although naturally amiable, that worthy, feeling certain that the wizard was playing a double part, and was actuated by sinister motives in some of his recent proceedings, could not resist the temptation to whisper

“Was your torngak asleep, that he failed to help you just now?”

The whisper was overheard by some of the women near, who could not suppress a subdued laugh.

The wizard, who was not at that moment in a condition to take a jest with equanimity, turned a fierce look upon Okiok.

“I challenge you,” he said, “to a singing combat.”

“With all my heart,” replied Okiok; “when shall it be?”

“To-morrow,” said the wizard sternly.

“To-morrow let it be,” returned Okiok, with the cool indifference of an Arctic hunter, to the immense delight of the women and others who heard the challenge, and anticipated rare sport from the impending duel.

Chapter Eleven.
The Hairy Ones feast and are Happy.

Lest the reader should anticipate, from the conclusion of the last chapter, that we are about to describe a scene of bloodshed and savagery, we may as well explain in passing that the custom of duelling, as practised among some tribes of the Eskimos, is entirely intellectual, and well worthy of recommendation to those civilised nations which still cling fondly and foolishly to the rapier and pistol.

If an Eskimo of the region about which we write thinks himself aggrieved by another, he challenges him to a singing and dancing combat. The idea of taking their revenge, or “satisfying their honour,” by risking their lives and proving their courage in mortal combat, does not seem to have occurred to themprobably because the act would be without significance among men whose whole existence is passed in the daily risk of life and limb and proof of courage.

Certainly the singing combat has this advantage, that intellect triumphs over mere brute force, and the physically weak may prove to be more than a match for the strong.

But as this duel was postponed to the following day, for the very good reason that a hearty supper and night of social enjoyment had first to be disposed of, we will turn again to the players on the ice-floe.

“Come, Angut,” said Rooney, descending from his throne or presidential chair, and taking the arm of his host; “I’m getting cold sitting up there. Let us have a walk together, and explain to me the meaning of this challenge.”

They went off in the direction of the sea-green cave, while Simek organised a game of kick-ball.

“Okiok tells me,” continued Rooney, “that there is to be no fighting or bloodshed in the matter. How is that?”

Angut expounded, as we have already explained, and then asked

“Have they no singing combats in your land?”

“Well, not exactly; at least not for the purpose of settling quarrels.”

“How, then, are quarrels settled?”

“By law, sometimes, and often by swordyou would call it spearand pistol. A pistol is a thing that spouts fire and kills. Nations occasionally settle their quarrels in the same way, and call it war.”

Angut looked puzzledas well he might!

“When two men quarrel, can killing do any good?” he asked.

“I fear not,” answered the seaman, “for the mere gratification of revenge is not good. But they do not always kill. They sometimes only wound slightly, and then they say that honour is satisfied, and they become friends.”

“Butbut,” said the still puzzled Eskimo, “a wound cannot prove which quarreller is right. Is it the one who wounds that is thought right?”

“No.”

“Is it then the wounded one?”

“O no. It is neither. The fact is, the proving of who is right and who is wrong has nothing to do with the matter. All they want is to prove that they are both very brave. Often, when one is slightly woundedno matter whichthey say they are satisfied.”

“With what are they satisfied?”

“That’s more than I can tell, Angut. But it is only a class of men called gentlemen who settle their quarrels thus. Common fellows like me are supposed to have no honour worth fighting about!”

The Eskimo looked at his companion, supposing that he might be jesting, but seeing that he was quite grave and earnest, he rejoined in an undertone

“Then my thoughts have been wrong.”

“In what respect, Angut?”

“It has often come into my mind that the greatest fools in the world were to be found among the Innuit; but there must be greater fools in the lands you tell of.”

As he spoke the sound of child-voices arrested them, and one was heard to

utter the name of Nunaga. The two men paused to listen. They were close to the entrance to the ice-cave, which was on the side of the berg opposite to the spot where the games were being held, and the voices were recognised as those of Pussi and Tumbler. With the indomitable perseverance that was natural to him, the latter had made a second attempt to lead Pussi to the cave, and had been successful.

“What is he goin’ to do?” asked Pussi, in a voice of alarm.

“Goin’ to run away vid sister Nunaga,” replied Tumbler. “I heard Ippegoo say dat to his mudder. Ujarak is goin’ to take her away, an’ nebber, nebber come back no more.”

There was silence after this, silence so dead and prolonged that the listeners began to wonder. It was suddenly broken. Evidently the horrified Pussi had been gathering up her utmost energies, for there burst from the sea-green depths of the cave a roar of dismay so stupendous that Angut and our seaman ran hastily forward, under the impression that some accident had occurred; but the children were sitting there all safeTumbler gazing in surprise at his companion, whose eyes were tight shut and her mouth wide-open.

The truth is that Pussi loved and was beloved by Nunaga, and the boy’s information had told upon her much more powerfully than he had expected. Of course Tumbler was closely questioned by Angut, but beyond the scrap of information he had already given nothing more was to be gathered from him. The two friends were therefore obliged to rest content with the little they had learned, which was enough to put them on their guard.

Ere long the sinking of the sun put an end to the games, but not before the whole community had kick-balled themselves into a state of utter incapacity for anything but feeding.

To this process they now devoted themselves heart and soul, by the light of the cooking-lamps, within the shelter of their huts. The feast was indeed a grand one. Not only had they superabundance of the dishes which we have described in a previous chapter, but several others of a nature so savoury as to be almost overpowering to the poor man who was the honoured guest of the evening. But Red Rooney laid strong constraint on himself, and stood it bravely.

There was something grandly picturesque and Rembrandtish in the whole scene, for the smoke of the lamps, combined with the deep shadows of the rotund and hairy figures, formed a background out of which the animated oily faces shone with ruddy and glittering effect.

At first, of course, little sound was heard save the working of their jaws; but as

nature began to feel more than adequately supplied, soft sighs began to be interpolated and murmuring conversation intervened. Then some of the more moderate began to dally with tit-bits, and the buzz of conversation swelled.

At this point Rooney took Tumbler on his knee, and began to tempt him with savoury morsels. It is only just to the child, (who still wore his raven coat), to say that he yielded readily to persuasion. Rooney also amused and somewhat scandalised his friends by insisting on old Kannoa sitting beside him.

“Ho! Ujarak,” at last shouted the jovial Simek, who was one of those genial, uproarious, loud-laughing spirits, that can keep the fun of a social assembly going by the mere force and enthusiasm of his animal spirits; “come, tell us about that wonderful bear you had such a fight with last moon, you remember?”

“Remember!” exclaimed the wizard, with a pleased look, for there was nothing he liked better than to be called on to relate his adventuresand it must be added that there was nothing he found easier, for, when his genuine adventures were not sufficiently telling, he could without difficulty expand, exaggerate, modify, or even invent, so as to fit them for the ears of a fastidious company.

“Remember!” he repeated in a loud voice, which attracted all eyes, and produced a sudden silence; “of course I remember. The difficulty with me is to forgetand I would that I could forgetfor the adventure was ho–r–r–r–ible!”

A low murmur of curiosity, hope, and joyful expectation, amounting to what we might style applause, broke from the company as the wizard dwelt on the last word.

You see, Eskimos love excitement fully as much as other people, and as they have no spirituous drinks wherewith to render their festivities unnaturally hilarious, they are obliged to have recourse to exciting tales, comic songs, games, and other reasonable modes of creating that rapid flow of blood, which is sometimes styled the “feast of reason and the flow of soul.” Simek’s soul flowed chiefly from his eyes and from his smiling lips in the form of hearty laughter and encouragement to othersfor in truth he was an unselfish man, preferring rather to draw out his friends than to be drawn out by them.

“Tell us all about it, then, Ujarak,” he cried. “Come, we are ready. Our ears are openyes; they are very wide open!”

There was a slight titter at this sly reference to the magnitude of the lies that would have to be taken in, but Ujarak’s vanity rendered him invulnerable to such light shafts. After glaring round with impressive solemnity, so as to

deepen the silence and intensify the expectation, he began:

“It was about the time when the ravens lay their eggs and the small birds appear. My torngak had told me to go out on the ice, far over the sea in a certain direction where I should find a great berg with many white peaks mounting up to the very sky. There, he said, I should find what I was to do. It was blowing hard at the time; also snowing and freezing. I did not wish to go, but an angekok must go forward and fear nothing when his torngak points the way. Therefore I went.”

“Took no food? no sleigh? no dogs?” asked Okiok in surprise.

“No. When it is a man’s duty to obey, he must not think of small things. It is the business of a wise man to do or to die.”

There was such an air of stern grandeur about Ujarak as he gave utterance to this high-flown sentiment, that a murmur of approval burst from his believers, who formed decidedly the greater part of the revellers, and Okiok hid his diminished head in the breast of his coat to conceal his laughter.

“I had no food with meonly my walrus spear and line,” continued the wizard. “Many times I was swept off my feet by the violence of the gale, and once I was carried with such force towards a mass of upheaved ice that I expected to be dashed against it and killed, but just as this was about to happen the”

“Torngak helpedeh?” interrupted Okiok, with a simple look.

“No; torngaks never help while we are above ground. They only advise, and leave it to the angekok’s wisdom and courage to do the rest,” retorted the wizard, who, although roused to wrath by these interruptions of Okiok, felt that his character would be damaged if he allowed the slightest appearance of it to escape him.

“When, as I said, I was about to be hurled against the berg of ice, the wind seemed to bear me up. No doubt it was a long hollow at the foot of the ice that sent the wind upwards, but my mind was quick. Instead of resisting the impulse, I made a bound, and went up into the air and over the berg. It was a very low one,” added the wizard, as a reply to some exclamations of extreme surprisenot unmingled with doubtfrom some of his audience.

“After that,” continued Ujarak, “the air cleared a little, and I could see a short way around me, as I scudded on. Small bergs were on every side of me. There were many white foxes crouching in the lee of these for shelter. Among them I noticed some white bears. Becoming tired of thus scudding before the wind, I made a dash to one side, to get under the shelter of a small berg and take rest.

Through the driving snow I could see the figure of a man crouching there before me. I ran to him, and grasped his coat to check my speed. He stood upoh, so high! It was not a man," (the wizard deepened his voice, and slowed here)"itwasawhitebear!"

Huks and groans burst at this point from the audience, who were covered with the perspiration of anxiety, which would have been cold if the place had not been so warm.

"I turned and ran," continued the angekok; "the bear followed. We came to a small hummock of ice. I doubled round it. The bear went pastlike one of Arbalik's arrowssitting on its haunches, and trying to stop itself in vain, for the wind carried it on like an oomiak with the sail spread. When the bear stopped, it turned back, and soon came up with me, for I had doubled, and was by that time running nearly against the wind. Then my courage rose! I resolved to face the monster with my walrus spear. It was a desperate venture, but it was my duty. Just then the snow partly ceased, and I could see a berg with sloping sides. 'Perhaps I may find a point of vantage there that I have not on the flat ice,' I thought, and away I ran for the sloping berg. It was rugged and broken. Among its masses I managed to dodge the bear till I got to the top. Here I resolved to stand and meet my foe, but as I stood I saw that the other side of the berg had been partly melted by the sun. It was a clear steep slope from the top to the bottom. The bear was scrambling up, foaming in its fury, with its eyes glaring like living lamps, and its red mouth a-gape. Another thought came to meI have been quick of thought from my birth! Just as the bear was rising to the attack, I sat down on the slope, and flew rather than slid to the bottom. It was an awful plunge! I almost shut my eyes in horrorbutbutkept them open. At the bottom there was a curve like a frozen wave. I left the top of this curve and finished the descent in the air. The crash at the end was awful, but I survived it. There was no time for thought. I looked back. The bear, as I expected, had watched me in amazement, and was preparing to followfor bears, you know, fear nothing. It sat down at the top of the slope, and stuck its claws well into the ice in front of it. I ran back to the foot of the slope to meet it. Its claws lost hold, and it came down thundering, like a huge round stone from a mountain side. I stood, and, measuring exactly its line of descent, stuck the butt of my spear into the ice with the point sloping upwards. Then I retired to see the end, for I did not dare to stand near to it. It happened as I had wished: the bear came straight on my spear. The point went in at the breast-bone, and came out at the small of the back; but the bear was not checked. It went on, taking the spear along with it, and sending out streams of blood like the spouts of a dying whale. When at last it ceased to roll, it lay stretched out upon the icedead!"

The wizard paused, and looked round. There was a deep-drawn sigh, as if the audience had been relieved from a severe strain of attention. And so they had; and the wizard accepted that involuntary sigh as an evidence of the success of his effort to amuse.

“How big was that bear?” asked Ippegoo, gazing on his master with a look of envious admiration.

“How big?” repeated Ujarak; “oh, as bigfar bigger thanthanthebiggest bear I have ever seen.”

“Oh, then it was an invisible bear, was it?” asked Okiok in surprise.

“How? What do you mean?” demanded the wizard, with an air of what was meant for grave contempt.

“If it was bigger than the biggest bear you have ever seen,” replied Okiok, with a stupid look; “then you could not have seen it, because, you know, it could not well be bigger than itself.”

“Huk! that’s true,” exclaimed one, while others laughed heartily, for Eskimos dearly love a little banter.

“Boh! ba! boo!” exclaimed Simek, after a sudden guffaw; “that’s not equal to what I did to the walrus. Did I ever tell it you, friends?but never mind whether I did or not. I’ll tell it to our guest the Kablunet now.”

The jovial hunter was moved to this voluntary and abrupt offer of a story by his desire to prevent anything like angry feeling arising between Okiok and the wizard. Of course the company, as well as Rooney, greeted the proposal with pleasure, for although Simek did not often tell of his own exploits, and made no pretension to be a graphic story-teller, they all knew that whatever he undertook he did passably well, while his irrepressible good-humour and hilarity threw a sort of halo round all that he said.

“Well, my friends, it was a terrible business!”

Simek paused, and looked round on the company with a solemn stare, which produced a smothered laughin some cases a little shriek of delightfor every one, except the wizard himself, recognised in the look and manner an imitation of Ujarak.

“A dreadful business,” continued Simek; “but I got over it, as you shall hear. I too have a torngak. You need not laugh, my friends. It is true. He is only a little one, howeverabout so high, (holding up his thumb), and he never visits

me except at night. One night he came to me, as I was lying on my back, gazing through a hole in the roof at our departed friends dancing in the sky. (See note.) He sat down on the bridge of my nose, and looked at me. I looked at him. Then he changed his position, sat down on my chin, and looked at me over my nose. Then he spoke.

"'Do you know White-bear Bay?' he asked.

"'Know it?' said I'do I know my own mother?'

"'What answer is that?' he said in surprise.

"Then I remembered that torngaksespecially little onesdon't understand jokes, nothing but simple speech; so I laughed.

"'Don't laugh,' he said, 'your breath is strong.' And that was true; besides, I had a bad cold at the time, so I advised him to get off my chin, for if I happened to cough he might fall in and be swallowed before I could prevent it.

"'Tell me,' said he, with a frown, 'do you know White-bear Bay?'

"'Yes!' said I, in a shout that made him stagger.

"'Go there,' said he, 'and you shall see a great walrus, as big as one of the boats of the women. Kill it.'

"The cold getting bad at that moment, I gave a tremendous sneeze, which blew my torngak away"

A shriek of delight, especially from the children, interrupted Simek at this point. Little Tumbler, who still sat on Rooney's knee, was the last to recover gravity, and little Pussi, who still nestled beside Nunaga, nearly rolled on the floor from sympathy.

Before the story could be resumed, one of the women announced that a favourite dish which had been for some time preparing was ready. The desire for that dish proving stronger than the desire for the story, the company, including Simek, set to work on it with as much gusto as if they had eaten nothing for hours past!

Note. Such is the Eskimo notion of the Aurora Borealis.

Chapter Twelve.
Combines Story-Telling (in both Senses) with Fasting, Fun, and more Serious Matters.

The favourite dish having been disposed of, Simek continued his story.

“Well,” said he, “after my little torngak had been blown away, I waited a short time, hoping that he would come back, but he did not; so I got up, took a spear in my hand, and went off to White-bear Bay, determined to see if the little spirit had spoken the truth. Sure enough, when I got to the bay, there was the walrus sitting beside its hole, and looking about in all directions as if it were expecting me. It was a giant walrus,” said Simek, lowering his remarkably deep voice to a sort of thunderous grumble that filled the hearts of his auditors with awe in spite of themselves, “amostawful walrus! It was bigger,”here he looked pointedly at Okiok“thanthan the very biggest walrus I have ever seen! I have not much courage, friends, but I went forward, and threw my spear at it.” (The listeners gasped.) “It missed!” (They groaned.) “Then I turned, and, being filled with fear, I ran. Did you ever see me run?”

“Yes, yes,” from the eager company.

“No, my friends, you never saw me run! Anything you ever saw me do was mere walkingcreepingstanding still, compared with what I did then on that occasion. You know I run fast?” (“Yes, yes.”) “But that big walrus ran faster. It overtook me; it overturned me; it swallowed me!”

Here Simek paused, as if to observe how many of them swallowed that. And, after all, the appeal to their credulity was not as much overstrained as the civilised reader may fancy, for in their superstitious beliefs Eskimos held that there was one point in the training of a superior class of angekoks which necessitated the swallowing of the neophyte by a bear and his returning to his friends alive and well after the operation! Besides, Simek had such an honest, truthful expression of countenance and tone of voice, that he could almost make people believe anything he chose to assert. Some there were among his hearers who understood the man well, and guessed what was coming; others there were who, having begun by thinking him in jest, now grew serious, under the impression that he was in earnest; but by far the greater number believed every word he said. All, however, remained in expectant silence while he gravely went on:

“My friends, you will not doubt me when I say that it was very hot inside of that walrus. I stripped myself, but was still too hot. Then I sat down on one of his ribs to think. Suddenly it occurred to me to draw my knife and cut myself out. To my dismay, I found that my knife had been lost in the struggle when I was swallowed. I was in despair, for you all know, my friends, how impossible it is to cut up a walrus, either from out or inside, without a knife. In my agony I seized the monster’s heart, and tried to tear it; but it was too hard-hearted for that. The effort only made the creature tremble and jump, which I found

inconvenient. I also knew from the curious muffled sound outside that it was roaring. I sat down again on a rib to consider. If I had been a real angekok, my torngak no doubt would have helped me at that timebut he did not."

"How could you have a torngak at all if you are not a real angekok?" demanded the wizard, in a tone that savoured of contempt.

"You shall hear. Patience!" returned Simek quietly, and then went on:

"I had not sat long when I knew by the motions of the beast that he was travelling over the iceno doubt making for his water-hole. 'If he gets into the sea,' I thought, 'it will be the end of me.' I knew, of course, that he could not breathe under water, and that he could hold his breath so long that before he came up again for fresh air I should be suffocated. My feelings became dreadful. I hope, my friends, that you will never be in a situation like it. In my despair I rushed about from the head to the tail. I must have hurt him dreadfully in doing soat least I thought so, from the way he jumped about. Once or twice I was tossed from side to side as if he was rolling over. You know I am a man of tender heart. My wife says that, so it must be true; but my heart was hardened by that time; I cared not. I cared for nothing!

"Suddenly I saw a small sinew, in the form of a loop, close to the creature's tail. As a last hope, without knowing why, I seized it and tugged. The tail, to my surprise, came slightly inwards. I tugged again. It came further in. A new thought came to me suddenly. This was curious, for, you know, that never since I was a little child have my thoughts been quick, and very seldom new. But somehow the thought camewithout the aid of my torngak too! I tugged away at that tail with all my might. It came further and further in each tug. At last I got it in as far as the stomach. I was perspiring all over. Suddenly I felt a terrific heave. I guessed what that was. The walrus was sick, and was trying to vomit his own tail! It was awful! Each heave brought me nearer to the mouth. But now the difficulty of moving the mass that I had managed to get inside had become so great that I felt the thing to be quite beyond my power, and that I must leave the rest to nature. Still, however, I continued the tugging, in order to keep up the sicknessalso to keep me employed, for whenever I paused to recover breath I was forced to resume work to prevent my fainting away altogether, being so terrified at the mere thought of my situation. To be inside a walrus is bad enough, but to be inside of a sick walrus!my friends, I cannot describe it.

"Suddenly there was a heave that almost rent the ribs of the creature apart. Like an arrow from a bow, I was shot out upon the ice, and with a clap like thunder that walrus turned inside out! And then," said Simek, with glaring solemnity, "I awokefor it was all a dream!"

There was a gasp and cheer of delight at this, mingled with prolonged laughter, for now the most obtuse even among the children understood that Simek had been indulging in a tale of the imagination, while those whose wits were sharper saw and enjoyed the sly hits which had been launched at Ujarak throughout. Indeed the wizard himself condescended to smile at the conclusion, for the tale being a dream, removed from it the only objectionable part in his estimation, namely, that any torngak, great or small, would condescend to have intercourse with one who was not an angekok.

“Now,” cried Okiok, starting up, “bring more meat; we are hungry again.”

“Huk! huk!” exclaimed the assenting company.

“And when we are stuffed,” continued Okiok, “we will be glad to hear what the Kablunet has to tell about his own land.”

The approval of this suggestion was so decided and hearty, that Red Rooney felt it to be his duty to gratify his hospitable friends to the utmost of his power. Accordingly he prepared himself while they were engaged with the second edition of supper. The task, however, proved to be surrounded with difficulties much greater than he had expected. Deeming it not only wise, but polite, to begin with something complimentary, he said:

“My friends, the Innuits are a great people. They work hard; they are strong and brave, and have powerful wills.”

As these were facts which every one admitted, and Rooney uttered them with considerable emphasis and animation; the statement of them was received with nods, and huks, and other marks of approval.

“The Innuits are also hospitable,” he continued. “A Kablunet came to them starving, dying. The Great Spirit who made us all, and without whose permission nothing at all can happen, sent Okiok to help him. Okiok is kind; so is his wife; also his daughter. They took the poor Kablunet to their house. They fedthey stuffedhim. Now he is getting strong, and will soon be able to join in kick-ball, and pull-over, and he may perhaps, before long, teach your great angekok Ujarak some things that he does not yet know!”

As this was said with a motion in one eye which strongly resembled a wink, the audience burst into mingled applause and laughter. To some, the idea of their wise man being taught anything by a poor benighted Kablunet was ridiculous. To others, the hope of seeing the wizard’s pride humbled was what is slangily termed “nuts.” Ujarak himself took the remark in good part, in consequence of the word “great” having been prefixed to his title.

“But,” continued the seaman, with much earnestness, “having said that I am grateful, I will not say more about the Innuit just now. I will only tell you, in few words, some things about my own country which will interest you. I have been asked if we have big villages. Yes, my friends, we have very big villagesso big that I fear you will find it difficult to understand what I say.”

“The Innuit have big understandings,” said Simek, with a bland smile, describing a great circle with his outspread arms; “do not fear to try them.”

“Well, one village we have,” resumed Rooney, “is as broad as from here to the house of Okiok under the great cliff, and it is equally long.”

The “huks” and “hois!” with which this was received proved that, big as their understandings were, the Eskimos were not prepared to take in so vast an idea.

“Moreover,” said the seaman, “because there is not enough of space, the houses are built on the top of each otheronetwothreefoureven five and sixone standing on the other.”

As each number was named, the eyes of the assembly opened wider with surprise, until they could open no further.

“Men, women, and children live in these houses; and if you were to spread them all over the ice here, away as far as you can see in every direction, you would not be able to see the ice at all for the houses.”

“What a liar!” murmured the mother of Arbalik to the mother of Ippegoo.

“Dreadful!” responded the latter.

“Moreover,” continued Rooney, “these people can put their words and thoughts down on a substance called paper and send them to each other, so that men and women who may be hundreds of miles away can talk with each other and understand what they say and think, though they cannot hear or see each other, and though their words and thoughts take days and moons to travel.”

The breathless Eskimos glanced at each other, and tried to open their eyes wider, but, having already reached the utmost limit, they failed. Unfortunately at that moment our hero was so tickled by the appearance of the faces around him, that he smiled. In a moment the eyes collapsed and the mouths opened.

“Ha! ha–a–a!” roared Simek, rubbing his hands; “the Kablunet is trying to beat my walrus.”

“And he has succeeded,” cried Angut, who felt it his duty to stand up for the credit of his guest, though he greatly wished that he had on this occasion confined himself to sober truth.

A beaming expression forthwith took the place of surprise on every face, as it suddenly dawned upon the company that Ridroonee was to be classed with the funny dogs whose chief delight it is to recount fairy tales and other exaggerated stories, with a view to make the men shout, the women laugh, and the children squeak with amusement.

“Go on,” they cried; “tell us more.”

Rooney at once perceived his mistake, and the misfortune that had befallen him. His character for veracity was shaken. He felt that it would be better to say no more, to leave what he had said to be regarded as a fairy tale, and to confine himself entirely to simple matters, such as an Eskimo might credit. He looked at his friend Angut. Angut returned the look with profound gravity, almost sorrow. Evidently his faith in the Kablunet was severely shaken. “I’ll try them once more,” thought Rooney. “It won’t do to have a vast range of subjects tabooed just because they won’t believe. Come, I’ll try again.”

Putting on a look of intense earnestness, which was meant to carry irresistible conviction, he continued

“We have kayaksoomiaksin my country, which are big enough to carry three or four times as many people as you have in this village.”

Another roar of laughter greeted this statement.

“Isn’t he a good liar?” whispered Arbalik’s mother.

“And so grave about it too,” replied Kunelik.

Red Rooney stopped.

The mother of Ippegoo, fearing he had divined her thoughts, was overwhelmed, and tried to hide her blushing face behind Issek.

“They don’t believe me,” said the seaman in a low voice to Okiok.

“Of course they don’t. You might as well tell us that the world is round, when we see that it is flat!”

Rooney sighed. He felt depressed. The impossibility of his ever getting these people to understand or believe many things was forced upon him. The undisguised assurance that they looked upon him as the best liar they had ever

met with was unsatisfactory.

“Besides all this, my friends,” he cried, with a feeling and air of reckless gaiety, “we have grand feasts, just as you have, and games too, and dances, and songs”

“Songs!” shouted Simek, with an excited look; “have you songs? can you sing?”

“Well, after a fashion I can,” returned Rooney, with a modest look, “though I don’t pretend to be much of a dab at it. Are you fond o’ singin’?”

“Fond!” echoed Simek, with a gaze of enthusiasm, “I love it! I love it nearly as much as I love Pussimek; better, far, than I love blubber! Ho! sing to us, Ridroonee.”

“With all my heart,” said Rooney, starting off with all his lung-power, which was by no means slight.

“Rule Britannia,” rendered in good time, with tremendous energy, and all the additional flourishes possible, nearly drove the audience wild with delight. They had never heard anything like it before.

“That beats you, Okiok,” said Simek.

“That is true,” replied Okiok humbly.

“What! does he sing?” asked Rooney.

“Yes; he is our maker of songs, and sings a little.”

“Then he must sing to me,” cried the sailor. “In my land the man who sings last has the right to say who shall sing next. I demand a song from Okiok.”

As the company approved highly of the demand, and Okiok was quite willing, there was neither difficulty nor delay. The good-natured man began at once, with an air of humorous modesty, if we may say so.

Eskimos, as a rule, are not highly poetical in their sentiments, and their versification has not usually the grace of rhyme to render it agreeable, but Okiok was an exception to the rule, in that he could compose verses in rhyme, and was much esteemed because of this power. In a tuneful and moderate voice he sang. Of course, being rendered into English, his song necessarily loses much of its humour, but that, as every linguist knows, is unavoidable. It was Red Rooney who translated it, which will account for the slightly Hibernian tone throughout. I fear also that Rooney must have translated rather

freely, but of course at this late period of the world's history it is impossible to ascertain anything certain on the point. We therefore give the song for what it is worth.

Okiok's Song.

I.

A seal once rowled upon the sea
  Beneath the shining sun,
Said I, "My friend, this very day
  Your rowlin' days are done."
"No, no," said he, "that must not be,"
  (And splashed the snowy foam),
"Beneath the wave there wait for me
  A wife and six at home."

II.

"A lie!" said I, "so you shall die!"
  I launched my whistling spear;
Right up his nose the weapon goes,
  And out behind his ear.
He looked reproachful; then he sank;
  My heart was very sore,
For down, and down, and down he went.
  I never saw him more.

III.

Then straight from out the sea arose

A female seal and six;
“O kill us now, and let our blood
With that of father’s mix.
We cannot hunt; we dare not beg;
To steal we will not try;
There’s nothing now that we can do
But blubber, burst, and die.”

IV.

They seized my kayak by the point,
They pulled me o’er the sea,
They led me to an island lone,
And thus they spoke to me:
“Bad man, are there not bachelors
Both old and young to spare,
Whom you might kill, and eat your fill,
For all the world would care?”

V.

“Why stain your weapon with the blood
Of one whose very life
Was spent in trying to provide
For little ones and wife?”
They paused and wept, and raised a howl.
(The youngest only squealed).

It stirred the marrow in my bones,
    My very conscience reeled.

VI.

I fell at once upon my knees,
    I begged them to forgive;
I said I'd stay and fish for them
    As long as I should live.
"And marry me," the widow cried;
    "I'd rather not," said I
"But that's a point we'd better leave
    To talk of by and by."

VII.

I dwelt upon that island lone
    For many a wretched year,
Serving that mother seal and six
    With kayak, line, and spear.
And strange to say, the little ones
    No bigger ever grew;
But, strangest sight of all, they changed
    From grey to brilliant blue.

VII.

"O set me free! O set me free!"
    I cried in my despair,

For by enchantments unexplained

They held and kept me there.

“I will. But promise first,” she said,

“You’ll never more transfix

The father of a family,

With little children six.”

IX.

“I promise!” Scarce the words had fled,

When, far upon the sea,

Careering gaily homeward went

My good kayak and me.

A mist rolled off my wond’ring eyes,

I heard my Nuna scream

Like Simek with his walrus big,

I’d only had a dream!

The reception that this peculiar song met with was compound, though enthusiastic. As we have said, Okiok was an original genius among his people, who had never before heard the jingle of rhymes until he invented and introduced them. Besides being struck by the novelty of his verses, which greatly charmed them, they seemed to be much impressed with the wickedness of killing the father of a family; and some of the Eskimo widows then present experienced, probably for the first time in their lives, a touch of sympathy with widowed seals who happened to have large families to provide for.

But there was one member of the company whose thoughts and feelings were very differently affected by the song of this national poetthis Eskimo Burns or Byronnamely the wizard Ujarak. In a moment of reckless anger he had challenged Okiok to combat, and, knowing that they would be called on to enter the arena and measure, not swords, but intellects, on the morrow, he felt ill at ease, for he could not hope to come off victorious. If it had been the

ordinary battle of wits in blank verse, he might have had some chance he thought, but with this new and telling jingle at the end of alternate lines, he knew that he must of a surety fail. This was extremely galling, because, by the union of smartness, shrewd common sense, and at times judicious silence, he had managed up to that time to maintain his supremacy among his fellows. But on this unlucky day he had been physically overcome by his rival Angut, and now there was the prospect of being intellectually beaten by Okiok.

“Strange!” thought the wizard; “I wonder if it was my intention to run away with Nunaga that brought this disgrace upon me.”

“It was,” said a voice very close to him.

The wizard looked round quickly, but no one seemed to be thinking of him.

It was the voice of Conscience. Ujarak felt uneasy, and stifled it at once. Everybody can do that without much difficulty, as the reader knows, though nobody has ever yet succeeded in killing Conscience outright. He then set himself to devise some plan for escaping from this duel. His imagination was fertile. While the revellers continued to amuse themselves with food, and song, and story, the wizard took to thinking.

No one thought his conduct strange, or sought to disturb him, for angekoks belong to a privileged class. But think as hard and as profoundly as he could, no way of escape presented itself until the evening was far advanced, and then, without an appreciable effort of thought, a door seemed to fly open, and that door wasIppegoo.

“Yes,” thought the wizard; “that will do. Nothing could be better. I’ll make him an angekok.”

It may be needful to explain here that the creation of an angekok is a serious matter. It involves much ceremonial action on the part of him who operates, and preparation on the part of him who is operated on. Moreover, it is an important matter. When once it has been decided on, nothing can be allowed to interfere with it. All other thingssave the unavoidable and urgentmust give way before it.

He would announce it that very night. He would boldly omit some of the preliminary ceremonial. The morrow would be a day of preparation. Next day would be the day of the ceremony of induction. After that it would be necessary for him to accompany the new-made wizard on his first journey to the realm of spirits. Thus the singing duel would have to be delayed. Ultimately he would manage to carry off Nunaga to the land of the southern Eskimo; thus he would be able to escape the ordeal altogether, and to laugh at

Okiok and his jingling rhymes.

When he stood up and made the announcement, declaring that his torngak had told him that another angekok must be created, though who that other one was had not yet been revealed to him, there was a slight feeling of disappointment, for Eskimos dearly love a musical combat; but when he pointed out that after the ceremonies were over, the singing duel might then come off, the people became reconciled to the delay. Being by that time exhausted in body and mind, they soon after retired to rest.

Ere long oblivion brooded over the late hilarious crew, who lay down like bundles of hair in their festal garments, and the northern lights threw a flickering radiance over a scene of profound quietude and peace.