Ungava
Vol.II

By
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Ungava

Chapter Twenty Two.
MaximusDeer spearingA surprisingly bad shotCharacter of the natives.

“Hallo! what have we here?” exclaimed Stanley, starting from his seat in amazement, as the giant entered the hall of Fort Chimohis left hand grasping a blood-stained wolf by the throat, and Edith resting in his right arm.

At first the startled father imagined his child must have been wounded, if not killed, by the savage animal; but his mind was immediately relieved on this point by Edith herself, who was no sooner laid on her bed than she recovered sufficiently to narrate the circumstances attending her fall.

“Well, Maximus,” said Stanley, returning to the hall and applying to the bulky savage the term that seemed most appropriate to him, “shake hands with me, my good fellow. You’ve saved Chimo’s life, it seems; and that’s a good turn I’ll not forget. But a. I see you don’t understand a word I say. Hallo! Moses, Moses! you deaf rascal, come here!” he shouted, as that worthy passed the window.

“Yis, mossue,” said Moses, entering the hall. “Oh, me! what a walrus am dis! Me do b’lieve him most high as a tree an’ more broader nor iveryt’ing!”

“Hold thy tongue, Moses, and ask the fellow where he came from; but tell him first that I’m obliged to him for saving Chimo from that villainous wolf.”

While Moses interpreted, Arnalooa and Okatook, being privileged members of the tribe, crossed over to Edith's room.

"Well, what says he?" inquired Stanley, at the end of a long address which the giant had delivered to Moses.

"Him say he heered we have come to trade, from Eskeemo to west'ard, and so him come for to see us."

"A most excellent reason," said Stanley. "Has he brought any furs?"

"Yis; him brought one two fox, and two t'ree deer. No have much furs in dis country, him say."

"Sorry to hear that. Perhaps his opinion may change when he sees the inside of our store. But I would like him to stay about the fort as a hunter, Moses; he seems a first-rate man. Ask him if he will consent to stay for a time."

"P'raps he fuss-rate, p'raps not," muttered Moses in a disparaging tone, as he turned to put the question.

"Him say yis."

"Very good; then take him to your house, Moses, and give him some food and a pipe, and teach him English as fast as you can, and see that it is grammatical. D'ye hear?"

"Yis, mossue, me quite sure for to teach him dat."

As Moses turned to quit the hall, Stanley called him back. "Ask Maximus, by-the-bye, if he knows anything of a party of Esquimaux who seem to have been attacked, not long ago, by Indians in this neighbourhood."

No sooner was this question put than the face of Maximus, which had worn a placid, smiling expression during the foregoing conversation, totally changed. His brows lowered, and his lips were tightly compressed, as he regarded Stanley for a few moments ere he ventured to reply. Then, in a deep, earnest tone, he related the attack, the slaughter of his people, their subsequent escape, and the loss of his bride. Even Moses was agitated as he went on, and showed his teeth like an enraged mastiff when the Esquimau came to speak of his irreparable loss.

"Stay one moment," said Stanley, when Maximus concluded. "I have something to show you;" and hastening into his room, he quickly returned with the little piece of sealskin that had been found at the deserted Indian camp. "Do you know anything of this, Maximus? Do you understand these

marks?”

The Esquimau uttered a cry of surprise when his eye fell on the piece of skin, and he seemed much agitated while he put several quick, earnest questions to Moses, who replied as earnestly and quickly; then turning rapidly on his heel, he sprang through the doorway, and was soon lost to view in the stunted woods of the ravine above the fort.

“That fellow seems in a hurry,” exclaimed Frank Morton, entering the room just as the savage made his exit. “Who is he, and wherefore in so great haste?”

“As to who he is,” answered Stanley, “I’ll tell you that after Moses has explained the cause of his sudden flight.”

“He say that him’s wife make dat skin, and de arrow on him skin show dat de Injuns take her to deir tents.”

“But did you not tell him that we found the skin long ago, and that the Indians must be far, far away by this timenobody knows where?” demanded Frank.

“Yis, me tell him. But he go for to see de spot. T’ink him find more t’ings, p’raps.”

“Oh, messieurs, voilà!” shouted La Roche, pointing towards the river, as he rushed, breathless with haste, into the hall; “les Esquimaux, dem kill all de deer dans le kontry. Oui, voilà! dans les kayak. Two dozen at voncevraiment!” Without waiting a reply, the excited Frenchman turned round and rushed out of the house, followed by Stanley and Frank, who seized their guns, which always hung ready loaded on the walls of the apartment.

On reaching the water’s edge, the scene that met their eye was indeed sufficient to account for the excitement of La Roche. A herd of perhaps fifty or sixty deer, on their way to the coast, and ignorant of the foes who had so recently invaded their solitudes, had descended the ravine opposite the fort, with the intention of crossing the river. The Esquimaux had perceived this, and keeping themselves and their kayaks concealed until most of the animals were in the water, and the leaders of the herd more than two-thirds over, they then gave chase, and getting between the deer and the opposite shore, cut off their retreat, and drove them towards their encampment.

Here the slaughter commenced, and Stanley and Frank arrived at the scene of action while they were in the midst of the wholesale destruction. In all directions the kayaks, with their solitary occupants, were darting about hither and thither like arrows in the midst of the affrighted animals; none of which, however, were speared until they were driven quite close to the shore. In their

terror, the deer endeavoured to escape by swimming in different directions; but the long double-bladed paddles of the Esquimaux sent the light kayaks after them like lightning, and a sharp prick on their flanks turned them in the right direction. There were so many deer, however, that a few succeeded in gaining the land; but here the guns of the traders awaited them. In the midst of this wild scene, Frank's attention was arrested by the cool proceedings of an Esquimau, whose name was Chacooto. He had several times exhibited a degree of shrewdness beyond his fellows during his residence near the fort, and was evidently a man of importance in the tribe. Chacooto had collected together a band of the herd, amounting to fifteen, and, by dint of cool decision and quick movements, had driven them to within a few yards of the shore, exactly opposite the spot whereon his tent stood. One young buck, of about two years old, darted away from the rest more than once, but, with a sweep of the paddle and a prick of the lance, Chacooto turned it back again, while a quiet sarcastic smile played on his countenance. Having driven the herd close enough in for his purpose, the Esquimau ended the career of the refractory buck with a single thrust of his lance, and then proceeded coolly to stab them all one after another.

"Och, the spalpeen!" said a voice at Frank's ear. "'Tis himsilf knows how to do it, an' no mistake. Musha! his lance goes out and in like a thailor's needle; an' he niver strikes more nor wance, the haythen!"

"He certainly does know how to do it, Bryan," replied Frank; "and it's a comfort to know that every thrust kills in a moment. I like to see as little of the appearance of cruelty as possible in work of this kind."

"Arrah! there's wan that'll chate 'im, anyhow," cried Bryan, throwing forward his gun in nervous haste, as one of the deer gained the land, despite Chacooto's rapidity, and bounded towards the hills.

Frank smiled at the eager haste of his companion, who was one of the poor shots of the party, and, consequently, always in a hurry. "Now, Bryan, there's a chance. Take your time. Just behind the shoulder; a little low, for that gun kicks horribly."

"Murder and blazes, she won't go off!" cried the exasperated Irishman, as, after a wavering effort to take aim, he essayed unsuccessfully to pull the trigger.

"Half-cock, man! Cock it!" said Frank quickly.

"So 'tis, be the mortial! Och, Bryan, yer too cliver, ye are!" he exclaimed, rectifying his error with a force that nearly tore off the dog-head. At that instant there was a sharp crack, and the deer, bounding into the air, fell dead

on the sand at the edge of the willows.

“Forgive me, Bryan,” said Massan, chuckling and reloading his piece as he walked up to his comrade. “I would not ha’ taken’t out o’ yer teeth, lad, if ye had been ready; but one bound more would ha’ put the beast beyond the reach o’ a bullet.”

“Faix, Massan, ye desarve to be hanged for murther. Shure I was waitin’ till the poor crayture got into the bushes, to give it a chance o’ its life, before I fired. That’s the way that gintlemen from the ould country does when we’re out sportin’. We always put up the birds first, and fire afterwards; but you salvages murther a poor brute on the sand, whin it’s only two fathoms from ye. Shame on ye, Massan.”

“See, Massan,” cried Frank, pointing to another deer, which, having escaped its pursuers, had gained the heights above. “That fellow is beyond us both, I fear. Be ready when it comes into view beyond the cliff there.”

But Massan did not move; and when Frank threw forward his gun, he felt his arm arrested.

“Pardon me, monsieur,” said Massan respectfully; “there’s a sure bullet about to start for that deer.”

As he spoke, he pointed to Dick Prince, who, ignorant of the fact that the deer had been seen by Frank, was watching its reappearance from behind a neighbouring rock, at some distance from where they stood. In a second it came into viewthe bullet spedand the deer bounded lightly into the bushes, evidently unhurt!

It is difficult to say whether Dick Prince or his comrades exhibited most amazement in their looks at this result. That the crack shot of the partythe man who could hit a button in the centre at a hundred yards, and cut the head off a partridge at a hundred and fiftyshould miss a deer at ninety yards, was utterly incomprehensible.

“Is it yer own gun ye’ve got?” inquired Bryan, as the discomfited marksman walked up.

“No; it’s yours,” replied Prince.

A smile, which resolved itself into a myriad of wrinkles, flitted over the blacksmith’s face as he said

“Ah, Prince! ye’ll requare long practice to come to the parfect use o’ that wipon. I’ve always fired three yards, at laste, to the left, iver since we fell over

the hill togither. If it’s a very long shot, it requares four to take the baste in the flank, or four an’ a half if ye want to hit the shoulder, besides an allowance o’ two feet above its head, to make up for the twist I gave it the other day in the forge, in tryin’ to put it right!”

This explanation was satisfactory to all parties, especially so to Prince, who felt that his credit was saved; and if Prince had a weakness at all, it was upon this point.

The deer were now all killed, with the exception of those of the band that had been last in entering the river. These, with a few stragglers, had returned to the shore from which they started. The remainder of the evening was devoted to skinning and cutting up the carcassesan operation requiring considerable time, skill, and labour.

While the people at the fort were thus employed, Maximus (who adopted at once the name given to him by Stanley) returned from his fruitless journey to the Indian camp, and assisted the men at their work. He made no allusion whatever to his visit to the deserted Indian camp; but, from the settled expression of deep sadness that clouded his countenance, it was inferred that what he had seen there had not tended to raise his hopes.

The supply of deer obtained at this time was very seasonable, for the frost had now begun to set in so steadily that the meat could be hung up to freeze, and thus be kept fresh for winter’s consumption. Some of it, however, was dried and stored away in bales; while a small quantity was pounded after being dried, made into pemmican, and reserved for future journeys.

As for the Esquimaux, they gave themselves up, during the first night, to feasting and rejoicing. During the short time that they had been at the fort, they had converted the promontory on which they were encamped into a scene of the utmost confusion and filth. A regard for truth constrains us to say, that although these poor creatures turned out to be honest, and simple, and kind-hearted, they did not by any means turn out to be cleanly; quite the reverse.

They had erected four summer tents on the beach, which were composed of skins sewed together, and supported on poles in such a way as to afford ample room for the accommodation of their families. The entrance to each tent was through a passage, which was also made of skins, hung over a line fastened to a pole at the distance of twelve or fifteen feet from the tent. Each side of this entrance was lined with piles of provisionsseals, fish, ducks, and venison, in various stages of decay, which rendered the passage into the interior a trying operation. True, it was intended that the frost should prevent this decay; but, unfortunately, the frost did not always do its duty. The manner in which they

cut up their deer and prepared them for future use was curious. After cutting the animals into two, without skinning them, they pinned up the front half with the heart and liver in the cavity. The other half they treated in a similar way, minus the heart and liver, and then put them out to freeze until required. When frozen, they were frequently used in their tents as seats, until the gradual diminution of the larder demanded that they should be appropriated to their proper use.

The tribe of Esquimaux who resided near Fort Chimo at this time were possessed of an enormous stone kettle, in which they boiled an entire deer at one time; and while the good people luxuriated on the flesh of the animal in their tents, the dogs assembled round the boiler to await the cooling of the soupthus verifying the assertion formerly made by Massan on that head.

The dogs resembled those of the Newfoundland breed in some respects, but were scarcely so large or good-looking, and had erect instead of pendent ears. There were about a dozen of them; and it was wonderful to observe the patience with which they sat in a circle round the kettle, gazing earnestly at the soup, licking their chaps the while, in anticipation of the feast.

The successful hunt was regarded as worthy of being specially celebrated by the distribution of a glass of grog to the men, and also to the Esquimaux; for at the time we write of, the Hudson’s Bay Company had not yet instituted the wise and humane regulation which has since become a standing order throughout all parts of the country, except where there is oppositionnamely, that ardent spirits shall not be given to the natives. However, Stanley’s natural disposition led him to be very circumspect in giving spirits to the men and natives, and the supply now issued was very small.

In the men it produced a desire for the violin, and created a tendency to sing and tell stories. In the Esquimaux it produced at first dislike, and afterwards wild excitement, which, in the case of Chacooto, ended in a desire to fight. But his comrades, assisted by his wives, overpowered him, tied him in a sack made of sealskin, and left him to roar and kick till he fell asleep!

The honesty of these natives was exhibited very strikingly in all their dealings with the fur-traders. Although iron tools of every description were scattered about the fort, while the men were engaged in erecting the several buildings, not one was missed; and even the useless nails and scraps of metal that were thrown away, when they were found by chance by the Esquimaux, were always brought to the house, and the question asked, “Were they of any use?” before being appropriated. They were great beggars, however; which was not surprising, considering the value of the articles possessed by the traders, and their own limited means of purchasing them. Their chief wealth at this time

lay in boots and deerskins, which the women were constantly employed in preparing; but Stanley urged them to go into the interior and hunt, as, although deerskins and boots were useful, furs were infinitely more valuable. But the Esquimaux had much too lively a dread of the Indians to venture away from the coast, and seemed inclined to hang about the place in comparative idleness much longer than was desirable.

Chapter Twenty Three.
More arrivalsHonestyIndians come upon the sceneThe tribes reconciledDisease and death change the aspect of thingsPhilosophic discourse.

A day or two after the successful deer-hunt above related, several bands of Esquimaux arrived at Fort Chimo, and encamped beside their comrades. This unusual influx of visitors soon exhausted the venison that had been procured; but hunting parties were constantly on the alert, and as game of all kinds was plentiful, they lived in the midst of abundance. To all of these Stanley made small presents of beads and tobacco, and recommended them strongly to go and hunt for furs. But they seemed to like their quarters, and refused to move. The new arrivals, along with those who had first come, formed a band of about three hundred, and were found, almost without exception, to be a quiet, inoffensive, and honest people.

As a proof of this latter quality, we may mention a circumstance that occurred a few days after the arrival of the last band. Being desirous of taking some additional soundings, Stanley launched his boat by the help of the Esquimaux, for his own men were all absent hunting and fishing. The boat referred to had been sent to the fort in the ship, and was a most useful and acceptable gift from the Governor of the Fur Company to the gentleman in charge of Ungava. Stanley hoisted his sails, and prepared to run down the river; but ere he had advanced a hundred yards, he was startled by a burst of loud cries from the shore, and, looking back, he observed the whole band of natives pouring like a torrent into the fort! His heart leaped within him as he thought of his unprotected wife and child. Turning the boat towards the shore, he ran it on the beach, and, leaving it with all the sails standing, he rushed into the square of the fort, forcing his way through the crush of natives, whose vociferous talking rendered what they said, for a time, unintelligible. At length Moses forced his way through the crowd, followed by one of the natives, who led a large dog by a line fastened round its neck.

“What’s the matter, Moses? what’s wrong?” cried Stanley.

“Oh, not’ing at all,” replied Moses, casting a look of pity at his countrymen.

“Dem are great gooses. Die man here wid de dog, him say dat de child’n was play in de square of dis fort, an’ one o’ dem trow stone and broke a window. It was de son ob dis man what do it, an’ him say he most awful sorryan’ all de people sorry, so dey bring de dog to pay for de broken window.”

“I’m glad it’s nothing worse,” cried Stanley, much relieved. “Tell them I’m happy to find they are sorry, and I hope they will keep the children out of the square in future; but I don’t want the dog. It was an accident, and not worth making such a noise about.”

The Esquimaux, however, would not agree to look upon this accident as a light matter. They said truly, that glass was not to be got so easily as the ice-blocks with which they formed windows to their own winter houses, so they insisted on the dog being accepted; and at length Stanley gave in, but took care that the native who gave it should not be a loser in consequence of his honesty. Moreover, Stanley begged of them to send up several of their best dogs, saying that he would purchase them, as he was in want of a team for hauling the winter firewood.

Next day, while Stanley was engaged in the trading store with a party of Esquimaux, he was surprised by hearing a volley of musketry fired at the back of the fort. Snatching up a loaded gun as he ran hastily out, he found that the shots had been fired by a band of Indians as a salute to the fort on their arrival.

This was the first time that Indians had made their appearance since the arrival of the fur-traders; and their advent at the present time was most fortunate, as it afforded Stanley an opportunity of commencing his negotiations as peacemaker in the presence of a considerable band of both parties. The Indians, fifteen in number, were all clothed, with the exception of their chief, in deerskin hunting shirts, ornamented moccasins of the same material, and cloth leggings. They wore no head-dress, but their long, straight, black hair was decorated with feathers and small metallic ornaments, among which were several silver thimbles. Their powder-horns and shot-pouches were gaily ornamented with bead and quill work; and they were all armed with long guns, on which they leaned as they stood silently, in a picturesque group, on the flat, rocky platform above the spring, which has been more than once alluded to.

This platform overlooked the fort, and was a favourite promenade of the traders. At present it formed a sort of neutral ground, on which the Indians took their stand. The red men were overawed by the very superior number of the Esquimaux, and felt that they were safe only so long as they stood on the flat rock, which was the only path leading to the ravine, through which, if need be, they could easily escape into the mountains.

The chief of the Indians, unlike his fellows, was dressed in a costume of the most grotesque and brilliant character, and, certainly, one which, however much it might raise the admiration of his savage companions, did not add to his dignity in the eyes of the traders. He wore a long, bright scarlet coat, richly embroidered with gold lace, with large cuffs, and gilt buttons; a pair of blue cloth trousers, and a vest of the same material; a broad worsted sash, and a hat in the form of the ordinary beaver or silk hat of Europe. The material, however, was very coarse; but this was made up for by the silver, and gilt cords, and tassels with which it was profusely decorated. He evidently felt his own importance, and stood with a calm, dignified gaze, waiting to be addressed.

Hailing Ma-istequan, who leaned on the axe with which he had been cutting firewood when the volley of the Indians arrested him, Stanley bade him invite them to enter the fort.

“We cannot come down,” replied the chief, after Ma-istequan had given the invitation. “The Eskimos are in numbers like the stars; we are few. If the pale-faces are our friends, let them come up here and take us by the hand and bring us down.”

“Very reasonable,” said Stanley to Frank, who stood beside him; “we must take care that the Esquimaux do not take advantage of their numbers to avenge their ancient wrongs.”

Then, turning to the natives, who had now crowded in large numbers into the fort, Stanley addressed them in a serious tone; told them that the time had now come when he hoped to reconcile the Innuit and the Allat (Esquimau name for Indians) together; and that he expected they would show their gratitude for his many kindnesses to them by treating the Indians, who were his friends, with hospitality. The Esquimaux promised obedience, after which Stanley ascended to the promenade, and taking the Indian chief by the hand, led him towards the fort, followed by the whole band in single file.

It is not necessary to detail the speeches that followed on both sides on this occasion, and the eloquence that was expended that evening in the cause of peace. Suffice it to say that the Indians and Esquimaux shook hands and exchanged gifts in the presence of the assembled garrison of Fort Chimo. But although the traders had reason to congratulate themselves on having so far succeeded in the establishment of peace, they could not conceal from themselves the fact that while, on the one hand, the Esquimaux appeared to be perfectly sincere and cordial in their professions, on the other hand the Indians evinced a good deal of taciturnity at first, and even after their reserve was overcome, seemed to act as men do who are constrained to the performance of

a distasteful action.

In general character, the Indians of Labrador do not contrast well with the Esquimauxat least this may with truth be said of those who afterwards became attached to the district of Ungava. The Indian is reserved and taciturn, while the Esquimau is candid, frank, and communicative. Of course there are exceptions on both sides.

On the evening of the same day, Stanley had much difficulty in overcoming the reserve of the Indians, so as to procure information regarding the interior; and it was not until their hearts were opened by the influence of tobacco, that they condescended to give the required information. This was to the effect that there were not many fur-bearing animals in the immediate vicinity of Ungava, but that there were a good many in the wooded country lying to the southward and eastward. Here, however, the Indians do not care to hunt, preferring rather to keep to the heights of land, and near the coast, where the deer are numerous. In fact, Stanley afterwards found that the facility with which the Indians procured deer in this part of the country was a serious drawback to the fur trade, as they contented themselves with trapping just enough of otters, foxes, etcetera, to enable them to procure a supply of ammunition with which to hunt the deer.

The Indians had brought a few beaver and other furs to trade, and, after receiving a good meal and a few presents, they took up their quarters on a plot of ground close to the fort. Here they lived a short time in perfect friendship with the Esquimaux, visiting them, and hunting in company; but more than once they exhibited their natural disposition by stealing the goods of their neighbours. On one occasion, two Esquimau children were missed from the camp, and in the course of the day they returned to their parents clothed in Indian costume! This was a very polite piece of attention on the part of the Indians, but the effect of it was much marred, the same day, by the abstraction of a knife from an Esquimau tent. Stanley insisted on the article being restored, and severely reprimanded the offender. But, although the general harmony of the camp was sometimes broken by such events, the friendship between the two parties seemed to be gradually increasing, and Stanley saw with satisfaction that the Allat and the Innuit bade fair to become fast friends for the future.

But an event occurred at this time which put an end to their intercourse, and very much altered the aspect of affairs. For some time past the men at the fort had been subject to rather severe attacks of cold, or a species of influenza. This they unfortunately communicated to the Esquimaux, who seemed to be peculiarly susceptible of the disease. Being very fat and full-blooded, it had the most dreadful effect on the poor creatures, and at a certain stage almost

choked them. At last one night it was reported that ten of their number had died from absolute suffocation. All of these had been strong and robust, and they died after two days' illness.

One of those who were attacked was Edith's little friend, Arnalooa, and just before the ten Esquimaux died, Edith had gone down to the camp with a present of beads to console her. She found her much better, and, after talking to her for some time, she took her leave, promising to pay her another visit next day. True to her promise, Edith sallied forth after breakfast with a little native basket on her arm. About half an hour afterwards, while Stanley was sitting in the hall with his wife and Frank, they were startled by the sudden appearance of Edith, out of breath from the speed with which she had run home, and her face overspread with a deadly paleness.

"What is the matter, my darling?" cried her mother, starting up in alarm.

"Oh! the Esquimaux are lying dead on the sand," gasped Edith, as she laid her head on her mother's breast, "and the rest are all gone."

Without waiting to hear more, Frank and Stanley took down their guns and hastened to the camp. Here a scene of the most horrible kind presented itself. The whole camp exhibited evidences of a hasty flight, and eight of the people who had died during the night were lying exposed on the rocks, with their white faces and ghastly eyeballs turned towards the sky. The other two had been buried on the rocks under a heap of stones, which did not conceal them entirely from view.

"No wonder poor Edith was alarmed," said Stanley sadly, as he leaned on his fowling-piece and surveyed the scene of desolation and death.

"I have been told," remarked Frank, "that the Esquimaux have a superstitious dread of this river. Oolibuck mentioned to me this morning that he has had a good deal of conversation with the natives about this disease, and they told him that it invariably attacks them when they enter this river, and carries them off by dozens; so that they never come into it except when they require wood, and always stay as short a time as possible."

"Ah! that's bad," said Stanley; "I fear that it will go much against the success of the establishment. But we must hope better things; and, truly, with this exception, all has gone well hitherto. Said they anything more, Frank?"

"Yes; they hinted, it seems, their intention of flying away from this fatal spot, and taking up their abode for the winter at the mouth of False River, where they can obtain a livelihood by seal-fishing; but Oolibuck thought they did not mean to put the threat in execution, and did not imagine that they were in such

alarm that they would go off without burying their dead."

"We must do that for them, Frank," said Stanley, turning to retrace his steps to the fort; "send down as many of the men as you can spare to-day, and get it done at once."

"By the way," said Frank, as they walked along the beach, "it seems that many years ago the Moravian missionaries came to the mouth of this river, and talked of setting up a trading-fort here; but, from some cause unknown, they gave up their design and went away. Maximus has been telling me all he knows about the matter; but his reports are vague, and the event must have occurred, if it occurred at all, when he was a child."

"Very possibly, Frank. You know the Moravians have settlements along the coasts of Labrador, to the eastward of this. They may have made an attempt long ago to push as far as this. I have always had a high opinion of the energy and perseverance of these missionaries, but I cannot get over the incongruity of their strange way of mingling trade with religion. It seems to me an unnatural sort of thing for missionaries to be fur-traders. I do not mean by this to object to their system, however; I daresay it works well, but I've had no means of judging."

"It is strange," replied Frank; "yet it seems a good plan. The missionaries trade there in order that they may live and preach. 'Twould be a good thing for the Indian country if the same principles and practice actuated the traders; with this difference, that instead of missionaries becoming fur-traders, the fur-traders would become missionaries. It does seem a species of infatuation," continued Frank, energetically, as he warmed with the subject, "that men, calling themselves Christians, should live for years and years among the poor Indians of America and never once name to them the great and saving name of Christ. Of course I do not wonder at those who make little or no profession of Christianity; but there are men in the fur-trade who seem to be deeply impressed with the truths of God's Wordwho are alive to the fact that there is no name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved except the name of Christwho know and feel that the Indians around them are living without God, and therefore without hope in the worldwho feel that Christ is all in all, and that the Christian religion, however perfect and beautiful as a code of morals, is utterly worthless as to salvation unless there be in the heart the special love of Jesus Christ;men who admit and profess to believe all this, yet never speak of Christ to the nativesnever mention the name that can alone save them from eternal destruction."

"Be not hasty, Frank," replied Stanley. "I agree with you, that it is strange indeed we do not see and hear more of this missionary spirit among the

traders, and I, for one, take your words as a deserved rebuke to myself; but if there are, as you say, many among us who are deeply impressed with the truths of God's Word, how know you that we never mention our Saviour's name to the Indians? Although fur-traders do not mount the pulpit, they may, in private, make mention of that name, and do an amount of good that will only be fully known when the trader, the trapper, and the Indian shall stand side by side before the judgment-seat of Christ. Observe, I do not say that this is actually the case; I only suggest that it is possiblemay I not add, probable?"

"It may be so," returned Frank, "it may be so, and God forgive me if I have judged the men of the fur-trade unjustly; but I certainly know one who has made somewhat of a profession of Christianity in his day, and yet has done next to nothing, and that one is Frank Morton."

"I'll not gainsay that, Frank," said Stanley, with a quiet smile; "and I think we are not likely to err much when we apply censure to ourselves. It is curious that you and I should have been thinking of the very same subject. A few days ago, while my wife and I were conversing together about the Esquimaux, we agreed to devote a good deal of our leisure time next winter to reading and explaining the Bible to our Esquimau interpreters, in the hope that they may afterwards be the means of much good among their poor countrymen."

Whether or not the good resolutions made at this time were ever put in practice we cannot say. Let us hope that they were.

Not long after the sudden flight of the Esquimaux, the Indians struck their tents and took their departure for the interior, with the intention, as they said, of hunting for furs, but more probably, as Ma-istequan suggested, to hunt the deer. During all the time of their residence at the fort, Maximus had kept out of their way as much as possible. He seldom met them without a frown of hatred, for he regarded them as the representatives of a race which had robbed him of his bride; and there were times when the giant's spirit chafed so fearfully at the sight of the red men, that nothing but the remembrance of his promise to Stanley, to offer them no injury, prevented him from stirring up his tribe to overwhelm and destroy them. It was, therefore, with a feeling of relief that Maximus beheld them march single file over the rocky platform, and disappear in the ravine that led into the mountains.

The traders of Ungava were once more left in solitude, and from this time forward, until the winter set in, they devoted all their energies to laying up a stock of provisions sufficient to last till spring.

Dick Prince and Massan were sent after the deer in company. Augustus and Bryan were dispatched to a small lake to establish a fishery; in which they

were very successful, and soon caught a large supply of excellent white-fish, trout, and carp, which they gutted and hung up by their tails to dry and freeze. Frank and Moses went to another small lake, about ten miles down the river, and built a hut of willows, in which they dwelt while engaged at the fishery. As there was still much to be done in the way of completing the fort, and making furniture, Stanley retained La Roche, Oolibuck, and the two Indians to assist him in this, as well as in the performance of the miscellaneous minor duties about the station, such as cutting up firewood, covering the roofs of the stores with tarpaulin, shooting such birds and animals as came near the fort, constructing rude chairs and tables, cooking, etcetera, etcetera; while François and Gaspard were sent up the river to fell trees, for the purposes both of building and firewood. Edith and her mother found ample occupationthe latter in the use of her needle and the cares of the household; the former in learning her lessons, visiting her berry-ravine, dressing her doll (for she had a doll, as a matter of course), and in holding long and frequent converse with Chimo.

Thus they spent their time; too busily occupied to take much note of its rapid flight, and scarce noticing the lengthening nights and shortening days, until needles of ice began with slow and silent progress to shoot across and solidify the waters of the bay.

Chapter Twenty Four.
Effect of snow on the feelings, not to mention the landscapeA wonderful dome of ice.

There are times and seasons, in this peculiar world of ours, when the heart of man rejoices. The rejoicing to which we refer is not of the ordinary kind. It is peculiar; and, whether its duration be long or short, its effect powerful or slight, it is quite distinct and emphatic. We do not intend to enter into a detail of the occasions that call forth this feeling of exultation. Far be it from us to venture into such perilous depths of philosophy. Our sole reason for making these preliminary observations is, that we may, with proper emphasis, introduce the statement, that one of these occasions of rejoicing is, when man arises from his couch, on a brilliant, sunny, sparkling morning, gazes forth from his window, and beholds the landscapewhich yesterday was green, and red, and brown, and blueclad in a soft mantle of whitest snow!

What! you don’t agree with us? You shudder at the preposterous idea of such a sight being fitted to rejoice the heart of man in any degree whatever? Well, well; do not sneer at our weakness. If we cannot sympathise with each other on this subject, perchance there are other things in which we can. But whatever be our opinion in regard to this, the point that we have to deal with at present is, the opinion of Edith Stanley, who, on rising hastily one morning,

and looking forth from her little window, evinced the rejoicing of her heart most emphatically, by her loud exclamation of delight and the sparkling of her bright blue eyes.

Independently of the cheerful lightness and the virgin purity of the mantle, which in itself tended to awaken emotions of gladness in Edith's heart, there was something in its sudden appearance that carried her back violently and vividly to bygone days. The winter garb had no associations, yet, with Ungava; but it had with Moose Fort, and the dear companions she used to play with there. It recalled the time when she and her little friends sallied forth, each with her small wooden sledge drawn after her by a line, to slide thereon down the banks of the frozen river with headlong speed, and upset at the bottom amid shouts of laughter. It recalled the time when she made the first attempt to walk in snow-shoes, upon which occasion she tripped and fell into the snow, as a matter of course, and was advised to wait till she was older. It recalled the memory of her father's team of dogs, and the delightful drives she used to have over the frozen river; which drives often resulted in an upset, perhaps several, and always resulted in fun. It recalled the house in the old fort that used to be her home; the row of houses belonging to the men, to which she often went, and was always welcomed as a great favourite; the water-hole on the river from which the old Canadian drew his daily supply; and the snow-house in the yard which she built in company with Frank Morton, and which stood the whole winter through, but gave way at last before the blazing sun of spring, and fellas ill luck would have itwhen she and Chimo were sitting there, so that she and the dog together had a hard struggle ere they got free. All these, and many more thick-coming memories of other days, were aroused by the vision of snow that met Edith's gaze that morning, and caused her heart with peculiar fervour to rejoice.

Winter had now descended with iron grasp upon Ungava. For some weeks the frost had been so intense that every lake and pool was frozen many inches thick, and the salt bay itself was fringed with a thick and ever-accumulating mass of ice. The snow which now fell was but the ceremonial coronation of a king whose reign had commenced in reality long before.

But the sunshine did not last long. The rolling fogs and vapours of the open and ice-laden sea beyond ascended over the wild mountains, obscured the bright sky, and revealed the winter of the north in all its stern, cold reality. Every cliff and crag and jagged peak had its crown of snow, and every corrie, glen, and gorge its drifted shroud. In places where the precipices were perpendicular, the grey rocks of the mountains formed dark blotches in the picture; but, dark although they were, they did not equal in blackness the river, on which floated hundreds of masses of ice and several ponderous icebergs,

which had been carried up from the sea by the flood-tide. Over this inky expanse the frost-smoke hung like a leaden pallan evil spirit, as it were, which never left the spot till protracted and intense frost closed the waters of the river altogether, and banished it farther out to sea. But this entire closing of the river very seldom happened, and never lasted long.

Fort Chimo itself, at least as much of it as remained unburied, was a mere speck on the edge of the white plain at the mountain's foot, scarce distinguishable, at a short distance, from the straggling black pines and willow bushes that seemed thrust out into the waste from the ravines above and below the fort. But on a nearer approach, the fort assumed an air of greater importance; the influences, too, of the cold, cheerless scene we have described, were broken and dissipated by the sights of comfort and sounds of cheerfulness within. The shout of the water-drawer, as he roused the dogs and went forth with his empty cask, hauled on a little sledge, to draw from the bubbling spring behind the fort; the sounds of the hammer, the chisel, and the axe, in the carpenter's shop; the merry clank of Bryan's hammer, and the bright flame that gleamed from the window of the forge,all bore evidence of the fact, that however powerful the influence of winter might be without, it had little power within the wooden walls of Fort Chimo, and could not check the life, or heart, or industry of man.

The only other human being visible in the open air, besides the water-drawer, was La Roche, who, with a fur cap covering his head and ears, and leathern mittens on his hands, hewed and hacked the billets with which he purposed to replenish the fire for cooking the mid-day meal.

Pausing in his labour, and dusting off the hoar-frost that covered his eyebrows and whiskers, he looked at the edge of his hatchet for a few seconds with an expression of contempt. Then, throwing the implement on his shoulder, he crossed the yard and entered the blacksmith's shop.

"Bryan," said he, seating himself on the edge of the forge and filling his pipe, while Vulcan's votary scattered a shower of gems from a white-hot bar of iron at every blow of his hammer"Bryan, you no fit for not'ing. Dat axe is blont encore. Oui, c'est vrai. Now dat is très mal. How you not can temper him edge better?"

"Timper it better, is it?" answered Bryan, putting the iron bar in the fire, and regarding his companion earnestly while he blew the bellows. "Faix, 'tis mysilf I'd need to timper better, in order to put up wi' the likes o' you, ye wretched crature. How can ye expict it to kape its idge when ye lave it for iver lyin' among yer pots and kittles?"

“Dat is not it,” replied La Roche, applying a glowing coal to his pipe. “’Tis de mauvais steel. But I not com for to fight wid you. Your tongue trop long pour dat. I com for ax you to give me turn ov de grindstone, s’il vous plait.”

“Ye don’t desarve it, Losh; but wait till I’ve finished this job and I’ll lind ye a hand.”

“Be-the-bye,” resumed Bryan, when the metal was cooled, “has François finished that sled for Miss Edith?”

“Oui,” replied La Roche, seating himself at the grindstone. ”(Ah! pas si vite, a leet more slow, Bryan.) Oui, him make it all ready; only want de ring-bolts.”

“Thin it won’t want thim long. Ye can take thim over to the shop when ye go across. There they are on the binch.”

Bryan continued to turn the handle of the stone for some time in silence.

“D’ye know, Losh,” he resumed, “whin Mister Frank is goin’ to the fishery?”

“He go demain, I b’lieve, and Mademoiselle Edith go too.”

“None o’ the min goin’?” inquired the blacksmith.

“Non. Monsieur Frank just go for to try if dere be any fish to be cotch by de hook; and I t’ink he go more for to give Edith one drive dan dat.”

“Very likely, Losh. The poor purty little crature. She’s very fond o’ sledgin’ and walkin’ in snow-shoes. ’Tis well for her, bekase there’s a want o’ companions for her here intirely.”

“Ah! mercy, dat is superb, magnifique!” said the Frenchman, feeling the edge of the axe with his thumb. “It sharp ’nuff to shave de hair off your ogly face, Bryan.”

“Thin be off wid ye, an’ don’t kape me longer from my work. An’ shut the door quick behind ye; there’s cowld enough in the place already.”

So saying, Bryan resumed his hammer, and La Roche, following the snow-track across the yard, recommenced his labour of chopping firewood.

Next day, Frank and Edith made preparations for the excursion alluded to in the foregoing conversation.

The object for which this excursion was undertaken was twofoldfirst, to ascertain if there were any fish in a large lake about ten miles distant from the fort; and, secondly, to give little Edith a drive for the good of her health. Not

that her health was bad, but several weeks of bad weather had confined her much to the house, and her mother thought the change would be beneficial and agreeable; and tenderly did that mother's heart yearn over her little child, for she felt that, although she was all to Edith that a mother could be, nature had implanted in her daughter's mind a longing desire for the companionship of little ones of her own age, which could not be satisfied by any substitutenot even that of a tender mother, who sought, by all the means in her power, to become a child again for Edith's sake.

Immediately after breakfast that day Frank took Edith by the hand, and led her round by the back of the fort, towards the kennel where the dogs were kept, intending to release Chimo, who was to have the honour of hauling the sledge of his young mistress. In passing the spring, Edith paused, as she had often done before during the winter, to gaze with wonder on the transformation that had taken place in the appearance of the once green and fertile spot. Not only was it covered with deep snow, but over the spring there was formed a singular dome of ice. This dome was a subject of continual astonishment to every one at Ungava. It had commenced to rise soon after the first hard frosts had sealed up the little fountain from the open air. As time passed by, the covering became thick ice, and was bulged gradually up above the surrounding waste, until it reached an elevation of not much less than twelve or thirteen feet. Inside of this the spring bubbled up as of yore.

"What think you, Edith?" said Frank, as a sudden thought occurred to him; "shall I cut a doorway into that crystal house, and see if the spirit of the spring dwells there?"

Edith clapped her hands with delight at the idea, and urged her companion to begin at once. Then, checking him as he was about to commence the work with his hatchet, she said earnestly

"Do spirits really dwell in the springs, Frank?"

"Why, Eda, we must send to England for a lot of fairy tales to teach you what I mean. I do but jest when I speak of spirits living there. But many books, have been written about pretended spirits and fairies, which tell us of their wonderful adventures, and what they said and did long ago. I shall tell you some of these stories one of these days. But I daresay there are no spirits in this spring."

"Faix, an' it would be a rale misfortune if there was, sir," remarked Bryan, who came up at this moment, and touched his cap; "for it would be only sperits and wather, which wouldn't kape in this cowld climate. I've finished the ring-bolts for the sled, sir, an' came to see when ye would have them

fixed."

"Put them in your pocket, Bryan, for a few minutes, and lend a hand here to cut a hole through this dome."

As Frank spoke, he drew a small axe from his belt, and began to lay about him so vigorously that the icy splinters flew in all directions like a shower of broken crystal. Bryan seconded his efforts, and in less than half an hour a block of solid ice, about four feet high and two broad, was cut out and detached from the side of the dome.

"That'll do, Bryan," said Frank, when their work was nearly completed; "I'll finish it myself now. Go to the carpenter's house, and François will show you what to do with the sled."

As Bryan walked away, Frank dealt the mass of ice a blow that split it into several pieces, which he quickly removed, revealing to the astonished and eager gaze of his young companion a cavern of a most beautiful light blue colour. Taking Edith by the hand, he led her into this icy cave. Its walls were quite luminous and delicately blue, except in places where the green moss and earth around the spring had been torn from the ground and lifted up along with the dome. Icicles hung in various places from the roof, and the floor was hard and dry, except in the centre, where the spring bubbled up through it, and cut a channel across towards one side of the icy wall, where it disappeared under the snow.

"Oh, what a beautiful palace!" cried Edith, with delight, after she had gazed around her for a few minutes in silent wonder and admiration. "I shall come and live here, Frank. Oh! do come, and let us get chairs and a small table, and make it our sitting-room. We can come every day when the sun shines and read, or you can tell me the tales about spirits and fairies you spoke of!"

"A good idea, Eda; but I fear we would need a stove to keep us warm. It strikes me it will make a capital ice-house in spring to keep our fresh meat in. It will last long after the snow is melted."

"Then we shall make a palace of it in winter and a meat-store in spring," cried Edith, laughing, as she walked round this newly-discovered house, examining its blue walls and peeping into the cold black spring. Meanwhile Frank examined it with a view to the utilitarian purpose, and, after both of them had gone round it several times, they continued on their way towards the dog-kennel.

The sledge which François had constructed for Edith was made after the model of those used by the Esquimaux. There were two stout runners, or

skates, made of wood, for sliding over the snow. These were slightly turned up, or rather rounded up, in front, and attached to each other by means of cross bars and thin planks of wood; all of which were fastened, not by nails (for iron-work snaps like glass in such a cold climate as that of Ungava), but by thongs of undressed sealskin, which, although they held the fabric very loosely together in appearance, were, nevertheless, remarkably strong, and served their purpose very well. Two short upright bars behind served as a back to lean against. But the most curious part of the machine was the substance with which the runners were shod, in order to preserve them. This was a preparation of mud and water, which was plastered smoothly on in a soft condition, and then allowed to freeze. This it did in a few minutes after being exposed to the open air, and thus became a smooth, hard sheathing, which was much more durable and less liable to break than iron, or indeed any other sheathing that could be devised. This substance is, of course, easily repaired, and is always used by the Esquimaux in winter.

Esquimau sledges being heavy, and meant for carrying a number of people, require large teams of dogs. But Edith’s sledgeor sled, as the men called itwas little. Moreover, Edith herself was little and light, therefore Chimo was deemed sufficiently powerful to draw it. So thoroughly correct were they in this supposition, that when Edith was seated in her sledge for a trial trip, and Chimo harnessed, he ran away with her and gave Frank a chase of half a mile over the river ere he condescended to stop in his wild career.

But the intended excursion was suddenly interrupted and postponed, by an event which we shall relate in the next chapter.

Chapter Twenty Five.
Buried aliveBut not killedThe giant in the snow-storm.

The event which prevented the excursion referred to in the last chapter was neither more nor less than a snowstorm. “Was that all?” say you, reader? Nay, that was not all. Independently of the fact that it was a snowstorm the like of which you have never seen, unless you have travelled in northern climes, it was a snow-storm that produced results. Of these, more hereafter.

The storm began with a sigha mysterious sigh, that swept over the mountains of Ungava with a soft, mournful wail, and died slowly away in the distant glen of the Caniapuscaw, as if the spirit of the north wind grieved to think of the withering desolation it was about to launch upon the land.

The gathering clouds that preceded and accompanied this sigh induced Frank Morton to countermand his orders for the intended journey. In order to console Edith for the disappointment, he went with her into the hall, and, drawing a

low stool towards the blazing stove, placed a draught-board upon it. Then he placed another and a lower stool beside the first, on which he seated Edith. Spreading a deerskin robe upon the ground, he stretched himself thereon at full length, and began to arrange the men.

The hall, which was formerly such a comfortless apartment, was now invested with that degree of comfort which always gathers, more or less, round a place that is continually occupied. The ceiling was composed of a carpet of deerskin stretched tightly upon the beams. The walls were hung all round with the thick heavy coats and robes of leather and fur belonging to the inmates, and without which they never ventured abroad. The iron stove in the centre of the apartment, with its pipe to conduct away the smoke, and its radiant fire of logs, emitted a cheerful glow in its immediate vicinity; which glow, however, was not intense enough to melt the thick ice, or rather hoar-frost, an inch deep, with which the two windows were encrusted, to the almost total exclusion of the view and the serious diminution of the light. The door was padded all round its edges with fur, which tended to check the bitter wind that often blew against it, and tempered the slight draught that did force its way through. Altogether the hall at Fort Chimo was curious and comfortablerather shaggy in its general appearance, but sound and trustworthy at bottom.

A small rough table, the work of Frank Morton, stood close to the stove; and beside it was seated Mrs Stanley, with a soft yellow deerskin before her, which she was carefully transforming into a hunting coat for her husband. On another and a larger table was spread the tea equipage. Those who would understand this aright must for tea read supper. Among fur-traders the two are combined. Candlesdips made at the forthad been brought some time ago by La Roche, who entered the hall by a back door which communicated with a passage leading to the kitchen behind.

“What can have become of papa, I wonder?” Mrs Stanley designated her husband by this epithet, in consequence of her desire to keep up the fiction of her being Edith’s little sister or playfellow.

Frank looked up from the board. “I know not,” said he. “I left him giving some orders to the men. We have been getting things made snug about the fort, for we expect a pretty stiff breeze to-night.Take care, Eda; your crown’s in danger.”

“Oh! so it is,” cried Edith, snatching back her piece, and looking with intense earnestness at the board.

Frank might have observed, had he not been too deeply engaged with his game, that the expected stiff breeze had already come, and was whistling

round the fort with considerable vigour.

“You’ll beat me, Eda, if you play so boldly,” said Frank, with a smile. “There, give me another crown.”

“And me too,” said Edith, pushing up her piece. As she spoke, the door burst open, and Stanley sprang into the room.

“Whew! what a night!” he cried, shutting the door with a forcible bang, in order to keep out the snow-drift that sought to enter along with him.

Two moves would have made Frank the conqueror, but the gust of wind upset the board, and scattered the men upon the floor.

Stanley looked like a man of white marble, but the removal of his cap, coat, and leggings produced a speedy and entire metamorphosis.

“Ho! La Roche!”

“Oui, monsieur.”

“Here, take my coat and shake the snow off it, and let’s have supper as speedily as may be. The draughts without, Frank, are a little too powerful for the draughts within, I fear.What, wife, making another coat? One would think you had vowed to show your affection for me by the number of coats you made. How many have you perpetrated since we were married?”

“Never mind; go and put on one now, and come to supper while it is hot.”

“I’m glad it is hot,” cried Stanley from his bedroom. “One needs unusual heat within to make up for the cold without. The thermometer is thirty below.”

While the party in the hall were enjoying their evening meal, the men were similarly employed beside the stove in their own habitation. There was not much difference in the two apartments, save that the confusion in that of the men was much greater, in consequence of the miscellaneous mass of capotes, caps, belts, discarded moccasins, axes, guns, and seal-spears, with which they saw fit to garnish the walls. The fumes of tobacco were also more dense, and the conversation more uproarious.

“’Tis a howlin’ night,” observed Massan, as a gust of more than usual violence shook the door on its hinges.

“Me t’ink de snow-drift am as t’ick in de sky as on de ground,” said Oolibuck, drawing a live coal from the fire and lighting his pipe therewith.

“Hould on, boys!” cried Bryan, seizing his chair with both hands, half in jest

and half in earnest, as another blast shook the building to its foundation.

The two Indians sat like statues of bronze, smoking their calumets in silence, while Gaspard and Prince rose and went to the window. But the frozen moisture on the panes effectually prevented their seeing out.

It was indeed an awful nightsuch a night as had not, until now, visited the precincts of Fort Chimo. Viewed from the rocky platform on the hill, the raging of the storm was absolutely sublime. The wind came sometimes in short, angry gusts, sometimes in prolonged roars, through the narrows, sweeping up clouds of snow so dense that it seemed as though the entire mass had been uplifted from the earth, hurling it upwards and downwards and in circling eddies, past the ravines, and round the fort, and launching it with a fierce yell into the valley of the Caniapuscaw. The sky was not altogether covered with clouds, and the broken masses, as they rolled along, permitted a stray moonbeam to dart down upon the turmoil beneath, and render darkness visible. Sometimes the wind lulled for a second or two, as if to breathe; then it burst forth again, splitting through the mountain gorges with a shriek of intensity; the columns of snow sprang in thousands from every hollow, cliff and glen, mingled in wild confusion, swayed, now hither, now thither, in mad uncertainty, and then, caught by the steady gale, pelted on, like the charging troops of ice-land, and swept across the frozen plain.

Could human beings face so wild a storm as this? Ay, they couldat least they could dare to try!

There was one traveller out upon the hills on that tremendous night. The giant was in the midst of it; but weak as the bulrush were the mighty limbs of Maximus before the rushing gale. Several days previous to this the Esquimau had been sent down to his brethren at False River, to procure some seal-meat for the dogs, and to ascertain the condition of the natives and their success in fishing. On arriving, he found that they had been so far successful, that starvation (their too frequent guest) had not yet visited their dwellings of snow. But Maximus found the old woman who had formerly saved his life very ill, and apparently about to die. Having learned from experience the efficacy of Stanley’s medicines, he resolved to procure some for the old woman, whom he had tenderly watched over and hunted for ever since the eventful day of the attack. His dogs were exhausted, and could not return. But the bold Esquimau was in the prime of life, and animated by the fire of vigorous youth. The storm was beginning to mutter in the distance. What then?Had he not faced the blasts of the frozen regions many a time before? Without saying a word, he threw a junk of seal-flesh into his wallet, and, striding back upon his track at the mountain’s base, he disappeared in the driving snow.

Before reaching the fort, however, the full fury of the storm had burst upon him. It cast him headlong into the snow; but he rose and staggered on. Again it burst forth, and again he fell before it like a stately pine. Rising to his knees, Maximus draw the hood of his hairy garment close round his head and face, and tried to peer through the driving snow; but he could not see until a slight lull came; then he observed a hummock of ice at a short distance, and, rising, made towards it. The lulls were short-lived, however. The storm threw him down again; instantly he was drifted over with snow; another blast came, lifted the drift into the air, and left the Esquimau exposed to all its fury. But Maximus was not conquered. He rose again, panting, it is true, but sturdy as ever, and ready to take advantage of the next lull. It came soon; and he saw a rock, or, it might be, the base of a cliff close at hand. With a quick run he reached it; and, going down on his knees, began with his gloved hands to scrape a hollow in the snow. Having made a hole big enough to contain his body, he lay down in it, and, pulling the superincumbent snow down upon him, was almost buried in the ruin. Scarcely had he drawn the hood of his coat well over his face, when another burst of the storm dashed a column of curling drift upon the rock, and the place where he lay was covered up; not a wrinkle in the drift remained to mark the spot where he was buried!

All that night the storm roared among mountains with bitter fury; but next day the wind was subdued, and the sun shone brightly on the grey rocks and on the white wreaths of snow. It shone in all the lustre of an unclouded winter sky. Not only did the sun smile upon the scene, but two mock suns or parhelia, almost as bright as himself, shone on either side of him. Yet no ray of light illuminated the dwellings of the fur-traders. All was darkness there, until Stanley rose from his couch and lighted a candle, for the purpose of examining his watch.

“Hallo! Frank, Frank!” he cried, entering the hall, while he hastily threw on his garments; “turn out, man; there’s something wrong here. ’Tis past noon, and dark as midnight. Bring your watch; perhaps I’m wrong.”

Frank yawned vociferously, and sprang from his bed. In two seconds more he made his appearance in his trousers and shirt.

“Past twelve, no doubt of yea-o-ow! That accounts for my waking three times and going off again; but”

“Hey! what have we here?” cried Stanley, as he opened the front door, and disclosed to view a solid wall of snow.

“Snowed up; dear me! eh! that’s odd,” said Frank, beginning to comprehend

the state of matters.

Snowed up they were, undoubtedly; so thoroughly snowed up that there was not a ray of daylight within their dwelling. Had Frank been above the snow, instead of below it, he would have seen that the whole fort was so completely buried that nothing was visible above the surface except the chimneys and the flagstaff. After the first few moments of surprise had passed, it occurred to Stanley that they might ascend to the regions above by the chimney, which was wide enough, he thought, to admit a man; but on looking up, he found that it also was full of drifted snow. This, however, could have been easily removed; but there was a bar of iron stretching across, and built into the clay walls, which rendered escape by that passage impossible.

“There’s nothing for it, Frank, but to dig ourselves out, so the sooner we begin the better.”

By this time they were joined by Edith and her mother, who, although much surprised, were not at all alarmed; for rough travelling in a wild land had taught them to regard nothing as being dangerous until it was proved to be so. Besides, Stanley had assured them that they had nothing to fear, as the only evil he anticipated would be the trouble they were sure to have in getting rid of the superabundant snow. While they were talking, the back door was opened violently, and La Roche, in a state of dishabille, burst into the room.

“O messieurs, c’est fini! Oui, le world him shut up tout togedder. Oh, misere! Fat shall ye to do?”

“Hold your tongue, La Roche,” said Frank, “and bring the kitchen shovel.”

The cook instantly turned to obey, and as he rushed towards the kitchen his voice was heard exclaiming in the passage

“Ah, c’est terrible! Mais I ver’ moshe fear de shovel be out in de neige. Ah, non; here it is. C’est bien.”

Returning in haste to the hall, he handed a much dilapidated iron shovel to Frank, who threw off his coat and set to work with vigour. The tables and chairs, and all the furniture, were removed into the inner apartments, in order to afford room for the snow which Frank dug from the open doorway and shovelled into the centre of the room. As only one at a time could work in the narrow doorway, the three men wrought with the shovel by turns; and while one was digging the tunnel, the other two piled the débris in a compact mound beside the stove. As no fire had yet been kindled, the snow, of course, did not melt, but remained crisp and dry upon the floor. Meanwhile Edith looked on with deep interest, and occasionally assisted in piling the snow; while her

mother, seeing that her presence was unnecessary, retired to her own room.

“There,” cried Frank, pausing and surveying an immense cavern which he had dug into the drift, “that’s a good spell. Take a turn now, La Roche, and dig upwards; we should see daylight soon.”

“Ah, vraiment, it be time, for it am von o’clock,” replied La Roche, as he plied the shovel.

The tunnel was cut in such a way as that, while it ran outwards, it also sloped upwards; and, from the angle at which it lay, Stanley calculated that thirty feet or thereabouts would bring them to the surface. In this he was correct, for when La Roche had worked for half an hour, the snow above became slightly luminous. But the labour of conveying it from the end of the tunnel into the hall became, of course, greater as the work advanced. At length the light penetrated so clearly that La Roche was induced to thrust his shovel upwards, in the expectation of penetrating the mass. The effect of this action was striking and unexpected. Instantly the roof fell in, and a flood of sunshine poured into the tunnel, revealing the luckless Frenchman struggling amid the ruins.

“Oh, pull me hout!” he spluttered, as Frank and Stanley stood laughing heartily at his misfortune. One of his legs happened to protrude from the mass as he made this earnest request; so Frank seized it, and dragged the poor man by main force from his uncomfortable position. Immediately afterwards they all three scrambled through the aperture, and stood in open day.

The sight that met their eyes was a curious though not a satisfactory one. All that remained visible of Fort Chimo were, as we have said, the chimneys and the flagstaff. In regard to the general aspect of the neighbourhood, however, there was little alteration; for the change of position in the drifts among the mountain gorges, and the addition to their bulk, made no striking alteration in the rugged landscape. In some places the gale had cleared the sides of the mountains and left their cliffs exposed to view; in other spots the gorges and ravines were choked up, and the pine tops nearly covered; and the open water in the lake was more encumbered than usual with icebergs.

“Now, La Roche,” said Stanley, after they had surveyed the desolate scene for a few minutes in silence, “go fetch the shovel and we’ll dig out the men. I daresay, poor fellows, they’re beginning to wonder at the length of the night by this time.”

La Roche prepared to descend into the tunnel, when their attention was arrested by a strange sound beneath the snow. In a few minutes the crust began to crack at a spot not more than two yards from where they stood; then there

was a sudden rupture, accompanied by a growl, and followed by the appearance of the dishevelled head and arms of a man.

“Musha, boys, but I’m out!” Bryan coughed the snow from around his mouth, and winked it from his eyes, as he spoke. The first sight that met his bewildered gaze was three pair of expanded eyeballs and three double rows of grinning teeth, a few feet from his face. Uttering a cry of terror, he fell back into the hole, the snow closed over him, and he was gone!

It need scarcely be added that Frank and Stanley commenced to dig into this hole with as much vigour as their frequent explosions of laughter would allow. In a few minutes it was re-opened, and the men issued one by one from durance vile.

“Och, sirs, ye gave me a mortial start!” exclaimed Bryan, as he rose to view the second time. “I thought for sartin ye were all polar bears. Faix we’ve had a job o’t down there. I’ll be bound to say there’s twinty ton o’ snowbad luck to itin the middle o’ the floor.”

“There’s work for us here that’ll last two weeks, I guess,” said Massan, as he and several of the others stooped down and gazed into the tunnel leading to the hall, at the end of which Edith’s laughing face met their view.

“When did you awake, and begin to suspect that something was wrong?” inquired Stanley of Dick Prince.

“Awake!” cried Bryan, answering the question; “we awoke at laste a dozen times. I suppose it must have bin the time for brikfust; for, ye see, although we could ha’ slept on long enough; our intariors couldn’t, be no manes, forgit their needcessities.”

“We shall have to work a bit yet ere these necessities are attended to, I fear,” said Stanley. “Go, François, and one or two of you, and open up the dog-kennel. The rest of you get all the shovels you can lay hands on, and clear out the houses as fast as you can.”

“Clear out de chimbleys fust, mes garçons,” cried La Roche, looking up from the tunnel. “Den ve vill git dejeuner ready toute suite.”

“That will we, lad,” said Bryan, shouldering a spade and proceeding towards the chimney of the hall; while the rest of the party, breaking up into several groups, set to work, with spades, shovels, and such implements as were suitable, to cut passages through the square of the fort towards the doors of the several buildings. As Massan had said, it proved to be no light work. The north-west gale had launched the snow upon the exposed buildings of Fort

Chimo until the drift was fifteen or sixteen feet deep, so that the mere cutting of passages was a matter of considerable time and severe labour.

Meanwhile, Maximus awoke, and sought to raise himself from his lair at the foot of the rock. But his first effort failed. The drift above him was too heavy. Abandoning, therefore, the idea of freeing himself by main force, he turned round on his side and began to scrape away the snow that was directly above his head. The masses that accumulated in the course of this process he forced down past his chest; and, as his motions tended to compress and crush the drift around him in all directions, he soon made room enough to work with ease. In ten minutes he approached so near to the surface as to be able, with a powerful effort, to burst it upwards, and step out of his strange dormitory into the sunshine.

This method of spending the night has been resorted to more than once by arctic travellers who had lost their way; and it is sad to think that many who have perished might have saved their lives had they known that burrowing could be practised with safety. The Esquimaux frequently spend the night in this manner, but they prefer building a snow-house to burrowing, if circumstances will permit.

Cutting a slice of seal-meat, and eating as he went, Maximus resumed his journey, and soon afterwards arrived at the fort, where he found the men busied in excavating their buried dwellings.

Here he stated the case of the old woman, and received such medicines as Stanley, in his amateur medical wisdom, saw fit to bestow. With these he started immediately to retrace his steps, having been directed to proceed, after administering them, to the lake where Frank meant to try the fishing under the ice. A family of Esquimaux had been established on another lake not so far distant from the fort; and having been taught by the fur-traders how to set nets under the ice, they succeeded in procuring more than enough for their subsistence. It was hoped, therefore, that the larger lake would afford a good supply; and, the weather having become decidedly fine, Frank prepared to set out on the following day.

Chapter Twenty Six.
An excursionIgloo building, and fishing under the iceA snow-table and a good feastEdith spends the night under a snow-roof for the first but not the last time.

“Now then, Edith,” cried Frank, looking in at the door of the hall, “your carriage waits, and Chimo is very restive.”

“Coming, coming,” exclaimed a treble voice within; “I’m getting new lines put to my snow-shoes, and will be ready in two minutes.”

Two minutes, translated into female language, means ten, sometimes twenty. Frank knew this, and proceeded to re-adjust the sash that secured his leathern capote, as he walked towards the little sledge in front of the fort. He then tied down the ear-pieces of his fur cap more carefully, for it was very cold, though clear and sunny. The frost had set fast the lake opposite the fort, and, by thus removing the frost-cloud that overhung the open water farther out to sea, relieved the fort from the mists in which it was usually enveloped. By this time fifteen out of the “two” minutes having elapsed, he re-examined the lock of his gun, and adjusted the warm deerskin robe on Edith’s little sledge, patted Chimo on the head, looked up at the clouds, and began to whistle.

“Now, Frank, here I am,” cried Edith, running towards him with her snow-shoes in her hand, followed by her father and mother.

“Quiet, Chimodown, sir!” said Frank, restraining the dog as it sought to bound towards its mistress. Being harnessed to the sledge, this was a very improper proceeding and was rebuked accordingly; so Chimo was fain to crouch on the snow and look back at Edith as Frank placed her in the sledge, and arranged the deerskin robes round her.

Edith wore a long fur cloak and cloth leggings. Her feet were protected from the cold by two pair of blanket socks, besides very thick moccasins of deerskin. The usual head-dress of civilised females in these regions is a round fur cap; but Edith had a peculiar affection for the Cree Indian headdress, and, upon the present occasion, wore one which was lined with fur and accommodated with ear-pieces, to defy the winter cold. The child’s general appearance was somewhat rotund. Painters would probably have said there was a little too much breadth, perhaps, in the picture. Her pointed cap, however, with the little bow of ribbon on the top, gave her a piquant air, and did away with the heavy appearance of her costume to some extent; in fact, Edith looked like a fat little witch. But if she looked fat before being wrapped up in the sledge furs, she looked infinitely fatter when thus placed, and nothing of her visible except her two twinkling eyes. So grotesque was she that the whole party burst into a loud laugh as they surveyed her. The laugh made Chimo start off at full gallop, which caused Frank to grasp the line of the sledge that trailed behind, and hurry over the snow at a most undignified pace.

“Take care of her,” cried Mr Stanley.

“Ay, ay,” shouted Frank.“Softly, Chimosoftly, you rascal!”

In ten minutes the travellers were round the point and fairly out of sight; but

the shouts of Frank, and an occasional howl from Chimo, floated back on the breeze as Stanley and his wife returned leisurely to the hall.

The road, or rather the ground, over which Frank Morton drove Edith that day was exceedingly rough and ruggedso rough that we will not try the endurance of the reader by dragging him over it. We will merely indicate its general features. First of all, they drove about three miles along the level snow at the foot of the mountains. So far the road was good; and Chimo went along merrily to the music of the little thimble-like brass bells with which his harness was garnished. Then they came to a ravine, and Edith had to get out, put on her snow-shoes, and clamber up, holding by Frank's hand; while Chimo followed, dragging the sledge as he best could. Having gained one of the terraces, Edith slipped her feet out of the snow-shoe lines, jumped into the sledge, and was swept along to the next ravine, where she got out again, resumed her snow-shoes, and ascended as before. Thus they went up the ravines and along the terraces until the summit of the first mountain range was reached. Having rested here a few minutes, Edith once more got into the sledge, and Chimo set off. But as there was now a long piece of level ground over which for some miles they could travel in the direction of the coast, Frank took the sled-line in his hand, and held the dog at a quick walking pace. Afterwards they turned a little farther inland, and came into a more broken country, where they had sometimes to mount and sometimes to descend the hills. There were many gorges and narrow fissures in the ground here, some of which were covered over and so concealed with snow that the travellers ran some risk of falling into them. Indeed, at one place, so narrow was their escape that Chimo fell through the crust of snow, and disappeared into a fissure which descended a hundred feet sheer down; and the sledge would certainly have followed had not Frank held it back by the line; and Chimo was not hauled up again without great difficulty. After this, Frank went in front with a pole, and sounded the snow in dangerous-looking places as he went along.

Towards the afternoon they arrived at the lake where they intended to encamp, and, to their great delight, found Maximus there already. He had only arrived a few minutes before them, and was just going to commence the erection of a snow-house.

"Glad to see you, Maximus," cried Frank, as he drove up. "How's the old woman, eh?"

"She small better," replied Maximus, assisting Edith to alight. "Dis goot for fish."

Maximus was a remarkably intelligent man, and, although his residence at the

fort had been of short duration as yet, he had picked up a few words of English.

“A good lake, I have no doubt,” replied Frank, looking round. “But we need not search for camping ground. There seems to be very little wood, so you may as well build our hut on the ice. We shall need all our time, as the sun has not long to run.”

The lake, on the edge of which they stood, was about a mile in circumferenee, and lay in a sort of natural basin formed by savage-looking hills, in which the ravines were little more than narrow fissures, entirely devoid of trees. Snow encompassed and buried everything, so that nothing was to be seen except, here and there, crags and cliffs of gray rock, which were too precipitous for the snow to rest on.

“Now, Eda, I will take a look among these rocks for a ptarmigan for supper; so you can amuse yourself watching Maximus build our house till I return.”

“Very well, Frank,” said Edith; “but don’t be long. Come back before dark; Chimo and I will weary for you.”

In a few minutes Frank disappeared among the rocks upon the shore; and Maximus, taking Edith by the hand, and dragging her sledge after him, led her a couple of hundred yards out on to the ice, or, more properly speaking, the hard beaten snow with which the ice was covered. Chimo had been turned loose, and, being rather tired after his journey, had coiled himself up on a mound of snow and fallen fast asleep.

“Dis place for house,” said Maximus, pausing near a smooth, level part of the lake. “You stop look to me,” he added, turning to the little girl, who gazed up in his large face with an expression half of wonder and half of fun. “When you cold, run; when you hot, sit in sled and look at me.”

In compliance with this request, Edith sat down in her sledge, and from this comfortable point of view watched the Esquimau while he built a snow-hut before her.

First of all, he drew out a long iron knife, which had been constructed specially far him by Bryan, who looked upon the giant with special favour. With the point of this he drew a circle of about seven feet in diameter; and so well accustomed was he to this operation that his circle, we believe, could not have been mended even by a pair of compasses. Two feet to one side of this circle he drew a smaller one, of about four feet in diameter. Next, he cut out of the snow a number of hard blocks, which were so tough that they could not be broken without a severe blow, but were as easily cut as you might have sliced

a soft cheese with a sharp knife. These blocks he arranged round the large circle, and built them above each other, fashioning them, as he proceeded, in such a manner that they gradually rose into the form of a dome. The chinks between them he filled compactly with soft snow, and the last block, introduced into the top of the structure, was formed exactly on the principle of the key-stone of an arch. When the large dome was finished, he commenced the smaller; and in the course of two hours both the housesor, as the Esquimaux call them, iglooswere completed.

Long before this, however, Frank had returned, from an unsuccessful hunt, to assist him; and Edith had wondered and wearied, grown cold and taken to running with Chimo, and grown warm and returned to her sledge, several times. Two holes were left in the igloos to serve as doors; and, after they were finished, the Esquimau cut a square hole in the top of each, not far from the key-stones, and above the entrances. Into these he fitted slabs of clear ice, which formed windows as beautiful and useful as if they had been made of glass. There were two doorways in the large igloo, one of which faced the doorway of the smaller. Between these he built an arched passage, so that the two were thus connected, and the small hut formed a sort of inner chamber to the larger.

“Now, dem done,” said Maximus, surveying his work with a satisfied smile.

“And very well done they are,” said Frank. “See here, Eda, our snow-fort is finished. The big one is to be the grand hall and banqueting-room, and yonder little hut is your private boudoir.”

“Mine!” exclaimed Edith, running away from Chimo, with whom she had been playing, and approaching the new houses that had been so speedily put up. “Oh, how nice! what fun! only think!a snow bedroom! But won’t it be cold, Frank? And is the bed to be of snow too?”

The black moustache of the giant curled with a smile at the energy with which this was said.

“We will make the bedsteads of snow, Eda,” replied Frank, “but I think we shall manage to find blankets of a warmer material.Now, Maximus, get the things put inside, and the lamp lighted, for we’re all tired and very hungry.”

The lamp to which Frank referred was one which Maximus had brought, along with a few other articles, from the Esquimau camp. It was made of soft stone, somewhat in the form of a half moon, about eight inches long and three broad, and hollowed out in the inside. Esquimaux burn seal-fat in it, and in winter have no other means of warming their houses or cooking their food. But for both purposes it is quite sufficient. The heat created by these lamps, combined

with the natural warmth of the inhabitants, is frequently so great in the igloos of the Esquimaux that they are fain to throw off a great portion of their upper garments, and sit in a state of partial nudity; yet the snow-walls do not melt, owing to the counteracting influence of the intense cold without.

Maximus had brought some seal-fat, or blubber, along with him. A portion of this he now put into the lamp, and, placing the latter on a snow-shelf prepared expressly for it, he set it on fire. The flame, although not very steady, was bright enough to illuminate the large igloo, and to throw a strong gleam into the smaller one. Over this lamp Frank placed a small tin kettle, filled with snow, which was speedily converted into water; and while this was being boiled, he assisted Edith in spreading out the bedding. As we have already said, the floor of this snow-house was of the same material as the walls. But one-half of it was raised about a foot above the other half, according to Esquimau rules of architecture. This elevated half was intended for the bed, which consisted of a large deer-skin robe, spread entirely over it, with the soft hair upwards. Another large robe was placed above this for a blanket, and a smaller one either for a pillow or an additional covering if required; but both of these were tossed down in a heap at the present time, to form a luxuriant seat for Frank and Edith. As their legs hung over the edge of the elevated couch, they were thus seated, as it were, on an ottoman. A mat of interlaced willows covered the floor, and on this sat Maximus, towering in his hairy garments like a huge bear, while his black shadow was cast on the pure white wall behind him. In the midst stood a small table, extemporised by Frank out of a block of snow, and covered with the ample skirt of his leathern topcoat, which the increasing temperature of the air inside the igloo rendered too warm.

Beside Edith, on the most comfortable portion of the ottoman, sat Chimo, with an air of majestic solemnity, looking, as privileged dogs always do look under like circumstances, as if the chief seat belonged to him as a matter not of favour but of right. On the table was spread a solid lump of excellent pemmicanexcellent, because made by the fair hands of Mrs Stanley. It stood vis-à-vis to a tin plate whereon lay three large steaming cuts of boiled fresh salmonfresh, because, although caught some months before, it had been frozen solid ever since. There was a large tin kettle of hot tea in the centre of the boardif under the circumstances we may use the termand three tin cups out of which to drink it; besides a plate containing broken pieces of ship-biscuit and a small quantity of sugar wrapped up in a morsel of paper. Also a little salt in a tin box.

All these things, and tempting delicacies, had up till now been contained within the compass of a small, compact, insignificant-looking parcel, which

during the journey had occupied a retiring position in the hinder part of Edith's sledgeso true is it that the really great and the useful court concealment until duty calls them forth and reveals their worth and their importance to an admiring world. The admiring world on the present occasion, however, consisted only of Frank, Edith, Maximus, and Chimo; unless, indeed, we may include the moon, who at that moment poured her bright beams through the ice-window of the hut and flooded the centre of the snow-table with light.

"Aren't we snug, Eda?" cried Frank, as he filled her tin with tea. "What a charming house! and so cheap, too! There's sugar beside you. Take care you don't use salt by mistake.Maximus, hold out your pannikin. That's the true beverage to warm your heart, if you take it hot enough."

"Tankee, sur," said the giant, extending his cup with one hand, while with the other he forced into his capacious mouth as much pemmican as it could hold.

"Frank," said Edith, "we must build an igloo at the fort when we return."

"So we will, now that I know how to do it. Hand me the salt, please, and poke Chimo's nose away from the salmon. Yes, and we'll invite papa and mamma to come and take supper at our house.Maximus, is this the exact way your friends build their winter houses?"

"Yis, sur," answered the Esquimau, looking up from the cut of salmon which he lifted with his fingers in preference to a fork or knife. "Dey always buil' um so. But not dis t'ing," he added, touching the snow-table.

"No, I suppose not," said Frank. "I flatter myself that that is a recent improvement."

"We do great many igloo sometime," continued Maximus, "vid two, t'ree, fourplenty pass'ges goin' into von a-doder."

"What does he mean by that?" inquired Edith, laughing.

"I suppose he means that they connect a number of their igloos together by means of passages.And do they keep them as clean and snug as this, Maximus?"

The Esquimau replied by a loud chuckle, and a full display of his magnificent teeth, which Frank understood to signify a decided negative.

When supper was ended Chimo was permitted to devour the scraps, while Frank assisted Edith to arrange her little dormitory. It was much the same in its arrangements as the larger apartment, and was really as comfortable and warm as one could desire. Returning to the large apartment, Frank spread out the

couch on which he and Maximus were to repose; and then, sitting down beside the stone lamp, he drew forth his Bible, as was his wont, and began to read.

Soon after lying down Edith heard the deep voices of her companions engaged in earnest conversation; but these sounds gradually died away, and she fell asleep, to dream of her berry-ravine at Fort Chimo. As the night wore on, the deep breathing of the men told that they, too, had sought and found repose. The lamp burned slowly down and went out, and, when the moon threw her parting rays over the scene, there was nothing to tell of the presence of human beings in that cold, wild spot, save two little white mounds on the frozen lake below.

Chapter Twenty Seven.
Frank Morton gets into difficulties.

Chimo's loud bark and the angry snarl of a large wolf, as it darted away to seek the shelter of the kills, were the sounds that awoke our travellers in the grey dawn of the following morning.

Frank started up, seized his gun, and darted through the doorway of the igloo; in doing which he dashed the door of snow to atoms. He had only the satisfaction, however, of seeing the wolf's tail flourish in the air, as the animal bounded over a snow-drift and disappeared in a ravine.

"Ha! how cold it is!" he exclaimed, re-entering the igloo hastily; far having issued forth without his coat or cap, the two minutes during which he stood exposed to the open air cooled him down nearly to the freezing point. "Hallo, Maximus! jump up; light the lamp while I fill the kettle. Heyday! it solidifies the very marrow in one's bones. Ho, Edith! up with you, lazy thing; there has been a wolf to bid you good-morrow."

While Frank rattled on thus he belted his leathern coat round him, put on his fur cap, and prepared breakfast; while Edith rose and resumed the cap and cloak which she had put off on lying down to rest.

"Maximus," said Frank, after the first duties of the day were concluded, "we must now go and set the hooks; but as cutting holes in the ice will occupy you some time, I'll take a short walk along the margin of the lake with my gun. Be careful of Edith till I return."

So saying, Frank went off, taking Chimo along with him; while Maximus seized the axe and ice-chisel, and began the laborious process of digging through to the water. The ice on the lake was five feet thick, but by dint of great perseverance the Esquimau succeeded in making several holes through it

ere Frank returned. Each hole was large enough to contain the body of a man, but a little wider above than below. In these holes were set stout cod-lines, with hooks of about half an inch or more in diameter. They were made of white metal, and clumsy enough to look at; but fish in the lakes of Ungava are not particular. These hooks were baited with lumps of seal-fat, and ere half an hour elapsed the success of the anglers was very decided and satisfactory.

Frank hauled up a white-fish of about six pounds weight at the first dip, and scarcely had he thrown it on the ice when Maximus gave a galvanic start, hauled up his line a few yards with laughable eagerness, then stopped suddenly, under the impression, apparently, that it was a false alarm; but another tug set him again in motion, and in three seconds he pulled a fine lake-trout of about ten pounds weight out of the hole. Edith, also, who had a line under her care, began to show symptoms of expectation.

“Capital!” cried Frank, beating his hands violently against his shoulders; for handling wet line, with the thermometer at twenty below zero is decidedly cold work“capital! we must set up a regular fishery here, I think; the fish are swarming. There’s another,eh? nohe’s off”

“Oh! oh!! oh!!!” shrieked Edith in mingled fear and excitement, as, at each successive “oh!” she received a jerk that well-nigh pulled her into the ice-hole.

“Hold hard!” cried Frank; “now then, haul away.” Edith pulled, and so did the fish; but as it was not more than five pounds weight or so, she overcame it after a severe struggle, and landed a white-fish on the ice.

The next shout that Edith gave was of so very decided and thrilling a character that Frank and Maximus darted to her side in alarm, and the latter caught the line as it was torn violently from her grasp. For a few minutes the Esquimau had to allow the line to run out, being unable to hold the fishat least without the risk of breaking his tackle; but in a few seconds the motion of the line became less rapid, and Maximus held on, while his huge body was jerked violently, notwithstanding his weight and strength. Soon the line relaxed a little, and Maximus ran away from the hole as fast as he could, drawing the line after him. When the fish reached the hole it offered decided resistance to such treatment; and being influenced, apparently, by the well-known proverb, “Time about’s fair play,” it darted away in its turn, causing the Esquimau to give it line again very rapidly.

“He must be an enormously big fellow,” said Frank, as he and Edith stood close to the hole watching the struggle with intense interest.

The Esquimau gave a broad grin.

“Yis, he most very biggesthie!”

The cause of this exclamation of surprise was the slacking of the line so suddenly that Maximus was induced to believe the fish had escaped.

“Him go be-off. Ho yis!”

But he was wrong. Another violent tug convinced him that the fish was still captivethough an unwilling oneand the struggle was renewed. In about a quarter of an hour Maximus dragged this refractory fish slowly into the hole, and its snout appeared above water.

“Oh! what a fish!” exclaimed Edith.

“Put in de spear,” cried the Esquimau.

Frank caught up a native spear which Maximus had provided, and just as the fish was about to recommence the struggle for its life, he transfixed it through the gills, and pinned it to the side of the ice-hole. The battle was over; a few seconds sufficed to drag the fish from its native element and lay it at full length on the ice.

And few anglers have ever had the pleasure of beholding such a prize. It was a trout of fully sixty pounds weight, and although such fish are seldom if ever found in other parts of the world, they are by no means uncommon in the lakes of North America.

Having secured this noble fish, Maximus cut it open and cleaned it, after which it was left to freeze. The other fish were then similarly treated; and while the Esquimau was thus engaged, Frank and Edith continued their sport. But daylight in these far northern regions is very short-lived in winter, and they were soon compelled unwillingly to leave off.

“Now, Maximus,” said Frank, as they rolled up their lines, “I don’t intend to keep you longer with us. Edith and I can manage the fishing very well, so you may return to your friends at False River, and take the seal-flesh for the dogs up to the fort. Get the loan of some of their dogs and a sled to haul it; and come round this way in passing, so as to pick up any fish we may have ready for you. The moon will be up in a little, so be off as fast as you can.”

In obedience to these orders, Maximus packed up a small quantity of provisions, and bidding good-bye to his two friends, set off to make the best of his way to the coast.

That night Frank and his little charge sat down to sup together in the igloo at the head of their snow-table, and Chimo acted the part of croupier in the room

of the Esquimau. And a pleasant evening they spent, chatting, and laughing, and telling stories, by the light of the stone lamp, the mellow flame of which shed a warm influence over the sparkling dome of snow. Before retiring to rest, Frank said that they must be up with the first light, for he meant to have a hard day's fishing; but man little knows what a day may bring forth. Neither Frank nor Edith dreamed that night of the events that were to happen on the morrow.

On awaking in the morning they were again roused by the voice of the wolf which had visited them the day before. In order to catch this wolf, Maximus had, just before starting, constructed a trap peculiar to the Esquimaux. It was simply a hole dug down through the ice at the edge of the lake, not far from the igloo. This hole was just wide enough to admit the body of a wolf, and the depth sufficient to render it absolutely impossible for the animal to thrust his snout to the bottom, however long his neck might be. At the bottom a tempting piece of blubber, in very high condition, was placed. The result of this ingenious arrangement was most successful, and, we may add, inevitable. Attracted by the smell of the meat, our friend the wolf came trotting down to the lake just about daybreak, and sneaked suspiciously up to the trap. He peeped in and licked his lips with satisfaction at the charming breakfast below. One would have thought, as he showed his formidable white teeth, that he was laughing with delight. Then, spreading out his fore legs so as to place his breast on the ice, he thrust his head down into the hole and snapped at the coveted blubber. But he had mistaken the depth, and blaming himself, no doubt, for his stupidity, he slid a little further forward, and pushed his head deeper down. What! not at it yet? Oh! this is preposterous! Under this impression he rose, shook himself, and advancing his shoulders as far as prudence would allow, again thrust down his head and stretched his neck until the very sinews cracked. Then it was, but not till then, that the conviction was forced on him that that precious morsel was totally and absolutely beyond his reach altogether. Drawing himself back he sat down on his haunches and uttered a snarling bark of dissatisfaction. But the odour that ascended from that hole was too much for the powers of wolfish nature to resist. Showing his teeth with an expression of mingled disappointment and ferocity, he plunged his head into the hole once more. Deeper and deeper still it went, but the blubber was yet three inches from his eager nose. Another shoveno! dislocation alone could accomplish the object. His shoulders slid very imperceptibly into the hole. His nose was within an inch of the prize, and he could actually touch it with his tongue. Away with cowardly prudence! what recked he of the consequences? Up went his hind legs, down went his head, and the tempting bait was gained at last!

Alas for wolfish misfortunes! His fore legs were jammed immovably against

his ribs. A touch of his hind foot on the ice would remedy this mishap, but he was too far in for that. Vigorously he struggled, but in vain. The blood rushed to his head, and the keen frost quickly put an end to his pains. In a few minutes he was dead, and in half an hour he was frozen, solid as a block of wood, with his hind legs and tail pointing to the sky.

It was at the consummation of this event that another wolf, likewise attracted by the blubber, trotted down the wild ravine and uttered a howl of delighted surprise as it rushed forward to devour its dead companionfor such is the custom among wolves. And this was the howl that called Frank forth in time to balk its purpose.

Frank happened to be completely dressed at the time, and as he saw the wolf bound away up the mountain gorge, he seized his gun and snow-shoes, and hastily slung on his powder-horn and shot-belt.

“Edith,” he cried, as he was about to start, “I must give chase to that wolf. I won’t be gone long. Light the lamp and prepare breakfast, dearat least as much of it as you can; I’ll be back to complete it.Hallo, Chimo! here, Chimo!” he shouted, whistling to the dog, which bounded forth from the door of the hut and followed his master up the ravine.

Edith was so well accustomed to solitary wanderings among the rugged glens in the neighbourhood of Fort Chimo that she felt no alarm on finding herself left alone in this wild spot. She knew that Frank was not far off, and expected him back in a few minutes. She knew, also, that wild animals are not usually so daring as to show themselves in open ground after the break of day, particularly after the shouts of human beings have scared them to their dens; so, instead of giving a thought to any possible dangers that might threaten her, she applied herself cheerfully and busily to the preparation of their morning meal. First she lighted the lamp, which instantly removed the gloom of the interior of the igloo, whose little ice-window as yet admitted only the faint light of the grey dawn. Then she melted a little snow, and cleaned out the kettle, in which she placed two cuts of fresh trout; and having advanced thus far in her work, thought it time to throw on her hood and peep out to see if Frank was coming. But there was no sign of Frank, so she re-entered the igloo and began to set things to rights. She folded up the deerskins on which she had reposed, and piled them at the head of the willow matting that formed her somewhat rough and unyielding mattress, after which she arranged the ottoman, and laid out the breakfast things on the snow-table. Having accomplished all this to her entire satisfaction, Edith now discovered that the cuts of salmon were sufficiently well boiled, and began to hope that Frank would be quick, lest the breakfast should be spoiled. Under the influence of this feeling she threw on her hood a second time, and going out upon the lake,

surveyed the shore with a scrutinising gaze. The sun was now so far above the natural horizon that the daylight was pretty clear, but the high mountains prevented any of his direct rays from penetrating the gloom of the valley of the lake. Still there was light enough to enable the solitary child to distinguish the objects on shore; but Frank's tall form was not visible anywhere.

Heaving a slight sigh, Edith returned to the hut, soliloquising thus as she went"Dear me! it is very strange that Frank should stay away so long. I fear that the trout will be quite spoiled. Perhaps it would be very good cold. No doubt of it. We shall have it cold, and then I can get the tea ready."

In pursuance of this plan, the anxious little housekeeper removed the trout from the kettle, which she cleaned out and refilled with snow. When this was melted and boiled, she put in the tea. In due time this also was ready, and she sallied forth once more, with a feeling approaching to anxiety, to look for Frank. Still her companion did not make his appearance, and for the first time a feeling of dread touched her heart. She strove to avert it, however, by considering that Frank might have been obliged to follow the wolf farther than he expected or intended. Then a thrill of fear passed through her breast as the thought occurred, "What if the wolf has attacked and killed him?" As time wore on, and no sound of voice or gun or bark of dog broke the dreary stillness of that gloomy place, a feeling of intense horror took possession of the child's mind, and she pictured to herself all kinds of possible evils that might have befallen her companion; while at the same time she could not but feel how awful was her unprotected and helpless condition. One thought, however, comforted her, and this was that Maximus would certainly come to the hut on his return to the fort. This relieved her mind in regard to herself; but the very relief on that point enabled her all the more to realise the dangers to which Frank might be exposed without any one to render him assistance.

The morning passed away, the sun rose above the hills, and the short-lived day drew towards its close; still Frank did not return, and the poor child who watched so anxiously for him, after many short and timid wanderings towards the margin of the lake, returned to the igloo with a heart fluttering from mingled anxiety and terror. Throwing herself on the deerskin couch, she burst into a flood of tears. As she lay there, sobbing bitterly, she was startled by a noise outside the hut, and ere she could spring from her recumbent position, Chimo darted through the open doorway, with a cry between a whine and a bark, and laid his head on Edith's lap.

"Oh! what is it, my dog? Dear Chimo, where is Frank?" cried the child passionately, while she embraced her favourite with feelings of mingled delight and apprehension. "Is he coming, Chimo?" she said, addressing the dumb animal, as if she believed he understood her. Then, rising hastily, she

darted out once more, to cast a longing, expectant gaze towards the place where she had seen her companion disappear in the morning. But she was again doomed to disappointment. Meanwhile Chimo's conduct struck her as being very strange. Instead of receiving with his usual quiet satisfaction the caresses she heaped upon him, he kept up a continual whine, and ran about hither and thither without any apparent object in view. Once or twice he darted off with a long melancholy howl towards the hills; then stopping short suddenly, stood still and looked round towards his young mistress. At first Edith thought that the dog must have lost his master, and had come back to the hut expecting to find him there. Then she called him to her and examined his mouth, expecting and dreading to find blood upon it. But there were no signs of his having been engaged in fighting with wolves; so Edith felt sure that Frank must be safe from them at least, as she knew that Chimo was too brave to have left his master to perish alone. The dog submitted with much impatience to this examination, and at last broke away from Edith and ran yelping towards the hills again, stopping as before, and looking back.

The resolute manner with which Chimo did this, and the frequency of its recurrence, at length induced Edith to believe that the animal wished her to follow him. Instantly it occurred that he might conduct her to Frank; so without bestowing a thought on the danger of her forsaking the igloo, she ran in for her snow-shoes, and putting on her hood and thick mittens, followed the dog to the margin of the lake. Chime's impatience seemed to subside immediately, and he trotted rapidly towards the ravine into which Frank had entered in pursuit of the wolf that morning. The dog paused ever and anon as they proceeded, in order to give the child time to come up with him; and so eager was Edith in her adventure, and so hopeful was she that it would terminate in her finding Frank, that she pressed forward at a rate which would have been utterly impossible under less exciting circumstances.

At the foot of the ravine she found the remains of the wolf which had been caught in the snow-trap that morning. Frank had merely pulled it out and cast it on the snow in passing, and the torn fragments and scattered bones of the animal showed that its comrades had breakfasted off its carcass after Frank had passed. Here Edith paused to put on her snow-shoes, for the snow in the ravine was soft, being less exposed to the hardening action of the wind; and the dog sat down to wait patiently until she was ready.

"Now, Chimo, go forward, my good dog. I will follow you without fear," she said, when the lines were properly fastened to her feet.

Chimo waited no second command, but threaded his way rapidly up the ravine among the stunted willow bushes. In doing so he had frequent occasion to wait for his young mistress, whose strength was rapidly failing under the unwonted

exertion she forced herself to make. At times she had to pause for breath, and as she cast her eyes upwards and around at the dreary desolation of the rugged precipices which everywhere met her view, she could with difficulty refrain from shedding tears. But Edith's heart was warm and brave. The thought of Frank being in some mysterious, unknown danger, infused new energy into her soul and strengthened her slight frame. Having now recovered somewhat from the nervous haste which urged her to travel at a rate much beyond her capacity, she advanced into the ravines of the mountains with more of that steady, regular tramp which practice in the use of her snow-shoes had taught her to assume; so that, being of a robust constitution naturally, she became stronger and more able for her undertaking as she advanced.

For nearly two hours Chimo led Edith into the midst of the mountains. The scenery became, if possible, more savage as they proceeded, and at length grew so rugged and full of precipices and dark gorges, or rather splits in the hills, that Edith had much difficulty in avoiding the danger of falling over many of the latter, which were partially concealed by, and in some places entirely covered over with, a crust of snow. Fortunately, as daylight waned, a brilliant galaxy of stars shone forth, enabling her to pick her steps.

Hitherto they had followed Frank's snow-shoe track undeviatingly, but near the top of a cliff Chimo suddenly diverged to the left, and led his mistress by a steep and tortuous natural path to the bottom. Here he ran quickly forward, uttering a low whine or whimper, and disappeared round the corner of the precipice. Hastening after the dog with a beating heart, Edith speedily gained the projection of the cliff, on turning which she was startled and terrified by hearing a loud snarling bark mingled with a fierce growl. In another moment she beheld Chimo bounding towards a gaunt savage-looking wolf, which stood close beside the body of a man extended at full length upon the snow.

At first the wolf did not seem inclined to retreat, but the shriek which Edith uttered on suddenly beholding the scene before her induced him to turn tail and fly. In another moment the terrified child sank exhausted on the snow beside the insensible form of Frank Morton.

Chapter Twenty Eight.
Edith becomes a heroine indeed.

The shock which Edith received on beholding the bloodstained countenance of her companion completely paralysed her at first, but only for a few minutes.

The feeling of certainty that Frank would perish if assistance were not rendered tended to restore her scattered faculties, and nerve her heart for the duties now required of her; and she rose with a feeling of determination to

save her companion or die beside him. Pour child! she little knew the extent of her own feebleness at that moment; but she breathed an inward prayer to Him who can, and often does, achieve the mightiest results by the feeblest means.

Raising Frank's head from the snow, she placed it in her lap, and with her handkerchief removed the blood from his forehead. In doing this she observed, to her inexpressible relief, that he breathed freely, and seemed rather to be in a state of stupor than insensibility. The place where he lay was a dark rent or split in the mountain, the precipices of which rose on either side to a height of between thirty and forty feet. The top of this chasm was entirely covered over with a crust of snow, through which there was a large gap immediately above the spot where Frank lay, revealing at once the cause of his present sad condition. He had evidently been crossing the ravine by means of the deceptive platform of snow, unaware of the danger of his position, and had been suddenly precipitated to the bottom. In descending, his head had struck the side of the cliff, which cut it severely; but the softness of the snow into which he fell saved him from further injury, except the stunning effect of the fall. How long he had lain in this state Edith had no means of knowing, but it must have been a considerable time, as Chimo could not have left him until after his fall. Fortunately the wolf had not touched him, and the wound in his head did not appear to be very deep. Observing that parts of his face were slightly frostbitten, Edith commenced to rub them vigorously, at the same time calling upon him in the most earnest tones to speak to her. The effect of this roused him a little. In a few minutes he opened his eyes, and gazed languidly into the child's face.

"Where am I, Eda?" he said faintly, while a gentle smile played about his lips.

"You are in the mountains, Frank. Dear Frank! do open your eyes again. I'm so glad to hear your voice! Are you better now?"

The sound of his voice attracted Chimo, who had long ago abandoned the pursuit of the wolf, and was seated beside his master. Rising, he placed his cold nose on Frank's cheek. The action seemed to rouse him to the recollection of recent events. Starting up on his knees, with an angry shout, Frank seized the gun that lay beside him and raised it as if to strike the dog; but he instantly let the weapon fall, and exclaiming, "Ah, Chimo, is it you, good dog?" he fell back again into the arms of his companion.

Edith wept bitterly for a few minutes, while she tried in vain to awaken her companion from his state of lethargy. At length she dried her tears hastily, and, rising, placed Frank's head on her warm cloak, which she wrapped round his face and shoulders. Then she felt his hands, which, though covered with thick leather mittens, were very cold. Making Chimo couch at his feet, so as to

imbue them with some of his own warmth, she proceeded to rub his hands, and to squeeze and, as it were, shampoo his body all over, as vigorously as her strength enabled her. In a few minutes the effect of this was apparent. Frank raised himself on his elbow and gazed wildly round him.

“Surely I must have fallen. Where am I, Edith?” Gradually his faculties returned. “Edith, Edith!” he exclaimed, in a low, anxious voice, “I must get back to the igloo. I shall freeze here. Fasten the lines of my snowshoes, dear, and I will rise.”

Edith did as she was desired, and immediately Frank made a violent effort and stood upright; but he swayed to and fro like a drunken man.

“Let me lean on your shoulder, dear Eda,” he said in a faint voice. “My head is terribly confused. Lead me; I cannot see well.”

The child placed his hand on her shoulder, and they went forward a few paces togetherEdith bending beneath the heavy weight of her companion.

“Do I lean heavily?” said Frank, drawing his hand across his forehead. “Poor child!”

As he spoke he removed his hand from her shoulder; but the instant he did so, he staggered and fell with a deep groan.

“O Frank! dear Frank! why did you do that?” said Edith, anxiously. “You do not hurt me. I don’t mind it. Do try to rise again.”

Frank tried, and succeeded in walking in a sort of half-sleeping, half-waking condition for about a milestumbling as he went, and often unwittingly crushing his little guide to the ground. After this he fell once more, and could not again recover his upright position. Poor Edith now began to lose heart. The utter hopelessness of getting the wounded man to advance more than a few yards at a time, and her own gradually increasing weakness, induced the tears once more to start to her eyes. She observed, too, that Frank was sinking into that state of lethargy which is so dangerous in cold climates, and she had much difficulty in preventing him from falling into that sleep which, if indulged in, is indeed the sleep of death. By persevering, however, she succeeded in rousing him so far as to creep a short distance, now and then, on his hands and kneessometimes to stagger a few paces forward; and at length, long after the cold moon had arisen on the scene, they reached the margin of the lake.

Here Frank became utterly powerless, and no exertion on the part of his companion could avail to rouse him. In this dilemma, Edith once more wrapped him in her warm cloak, and causing Chimo to lie at his feet, hastened

over the ice towards the igloo. On arriving she lighted the lamp and heated the tea which she had made in the morning. This took at least a quarter of an hour to do, and during the interval she endeavoured to allay her impatience by packing up a few mouthfuls of pemmican and biscuit. Then she spread the deerskins out on the couch; and when this was done, the tea was thoroughly heated. The snow on the river being quite hard, she needed not to encumber herself with snow-shoes; but she fastened the traces of her own little sledge over her shoulders, and, with the kettle in her hand, ran as fast as her feet could carry her to the place where she had left Frank and Chimo, and found them lying exactly as they lay when she left them.

“Frank! Frank! here is some hot tea for you. Do try to take some.”

But Frank did not move, so she had recourse to rubbing him again, and had soon the satisfaction of seeing him open his eyes. The instant he did so, she repeated her earnest entreaties that he would take some tea. In a few minutes he revived sufficiently to sit up and sip a little of the warm beverage. The effect was almost magical. The blood began to course more rapidly through his benumbed limbs, and in five minutes more he was able to sit up and talk to his companion.

“Now, Frank,” said Edith, with an amount of decision that in other circumstances would have seemed quite laughable, “try to get on to my sled, and I’ll help you. The igloo is near at hand now.”

Frank obeyed almost mechanically, and creeping upon the sled with difficulty, he fell instantly into a profound sleep. Edith’s chief anxiety was past now. Harnessing Chimo to the sled as well as she could, she ran on before, and a very few minutes brought them to the snow-hut. Here the work of rousing Frank had again to be accomplished; but the vigour which the warm tea had infused into his frame rendered it less difficult than heretofore, and soon afterwards Edith had the satisfaction of seeing her companion extended on his deerskin couch, under the sheltering roof of the igloo. Replenishing the lamp and closing the doorway with a slab of snow, she sat down to watch by his side. Chimo coiled himself quietly up at his feet; while Frank, under the influence of the grateful warmth, fell again into a deep slumber. As the night wore on, Edith’s eyes became heavy, and she too, resting her head on the deerskins, slept till the lamp on the snow-shelf expired and left the hut and its inmates in total darkness.

Contrary to Edith’s expectations, Frank was very little better when he awoke next day; but he was able to talk to her in a faint voice, and to relate how he had fallen over the cliff, and how afterwards he had to exert his failing powers in order to defend himself from a wolf. In all these conversations his mind

seemed to wander a little, and it was evident that he had not recovered from the effects of the blow received on his head in the fall. For two days the child tended him with the affectionate tenderness of a sister, but as he seemed to grow worse instead of better, she became very uneasy, and pondered much in her mind what she should do. At last she formed a strange resolution. Supposing that Maximus must still be at the Esquimau village at the mouth of False River, and concluding hastily that this village could not be very far away, she determined to set out in search of it, believing that, if she found it, the Esquimau would convey her back to the igloo on the lake, and take Frank up to Fort Chimo, where he could be properly tended and receive medicine.

Freaks and fancies are peculiar to children, but the carrying of their freaks and fancies into effect is peculiar only to those who are precocious and daring in character. Such was Edith, and no sooner had she conceived the idea of attempting to find the Esquimau camp than she proceeded to put it in execution. Frank was in so depressed a condition that she thought it better not to disturb or annoy him by arousing him so as to get him to comprehend what she was about to do; so she was obliged to commune with herself, sometimes even in an audible tone, in default of any better counsellor. It is due to her to say that, in remembrance of her mother’s advice, she sought the guidance of her heavenly Father.

Long and earnest was the thought bestowed by this little child on the subject ere she ventured to leave her companion alone in the snow-hut. Frank was able to sit up and to assist himself to the articles of food and drink which his little nurse placed within his reach, so that she had no fear of his being in want of anything during the dayor two at mostthat she expected to be absent; for in her childlike simplicity she concluded that if Maximus could travel thither in a few hours, she could not take much longer, especially with such a good servant as Chimo to lead the way. Besides this, she had observed the way in which the Esquimau had set out, and Frank had often pointed out to her the direction in which the camp lay. She knew also that there was no danger from wild animals, but determined, nevertheless, to build up the door of the igloo very firmly, lest they should venture to draw near. She also put Frank’s loaded gun in the spot where he was wont to place it, so as to be ready to his hand.

Having made all her arrangements, Edith glided noiselessly from the hut, harnessed her dog, closed the door of the snow-hut, and jumping into the furs of her sledge, was soon far away from the mountain lake. At first the dog followed what she thought must be the track that Maximus had taken, and her spirits rose when, after an hour’s drive, she emerged upon a boundless plain, which she imagined must be the shores of the frozen sea where the Esquimaux lived. Encouraging Chimo with her voice, she flew over the level surface of

the hard frozen snow, and looked round eagerly in all directions for the expected signs of natives.

But no such signs appeared, and she began to fear that the distance was greater than she had anticipated. Towards the afternoon it began to snow heavily. There was no wind, and the snow fell in large flakes, alighting softly and without any sound. This prevented her seeing any great distance, and, what was worse, rendered the ground heavy for travelling.

At length she came to a ridge of rocks, and supposing that she might see to a greater distance from its summit, she got out of the sledge and clambered up, for the ground was too rough for the sledge to pass. Here the view was dreary enoughnothing but plains and hummocks of ice and snow met her view, except in one direction, where she saw, or fancied that she saw, a clump of willows and what appeared to be a hut in the midst of them. Running down the rugged declivity, she crossed the plain and reached the spot; but although the willows were there, she found no hut. Overcome with fatigue, fear, and disappointment, she sat down on a wreath of snow and wept. But she felt that her situation was much too serious to permit of her wasting time in vain regrets, so she started up and endeavoured to retrace her steps. This, however, was now a matter of difficulty. The snow fell so thickly that her footsteps were almost obliterated, and she could not see ten yards before her. After wandering about for a few minutes in uncertainty, she called aloud to Chimo, hoping to hear his bark in reply. But all was silent.

Chimo was not, indeed, unfaithful. He heard the cry and responded to it in the usual way, by bounding in the direction whence it came. His progress, however, was suddenly arrested by the sledge, which caught upon and was jammed amongst the rocks. Fiercely did Chimo strain and bound, but the harness was tough and the sledge immovable. Meanwhile the wind arose, and although it blew gently, it was sufficient to prevent Edith overhearing the whining cries of her dog. For a time the child lost all self-command, and rushed about she knew not whither, in the anxious desire to find her sledge; then she stopped, and restrained the pantings of her breath, while with both hands pressed tightly over her heart, as if she would fain stop the rapid throbbing there, she listened long and intently. But no sound fell upon her ear except the sighing of the cold breeze as it swept by, and no sight met her anxious gaze save the thickly falling snow-flakes.

Sinking on her knees, Edith buried her face in her hands and gave full vent to the pent-up emotions of her soul, as the conviction was at length forced upon her mind that she was a lost wanderer in the midst of that cold and dreary waste of snow.

Chapter Twenty Nine.
A dark cloud of sorrow envelops Fort Chimo.

Three days after the events narrated in the last chapter the fort of the fur-traders became a place of weeping; for on the morning of that day Maximus arrived with the prostrate form of Frank Morton, whom he had discovered alone in the igloo on the lake, and with the dreadful news that little Edith Stanley was nowhere to be found!

It may be more easily imagined than described the state of mind into which the parents of the child were thrown; but after the first burst of emotion was past, Stanley felt that a thorough and immediate search was the only hope that remained to him of finding his little one alive. Still, when he considered the intensity of the cold to which she must have been exposed, and the length of time which had already elapsed since she was missed, his heart sank, and he could scarcely frame words of comfort to his prostrated partner. Maximus had examined the immediate neighbourhood of the lake, in the hope of finding the tracks of the lost one; but a heavy fall of snow had totally obliterated these, and he wisely judged that it would be better to convey the sick man to the fort as quickly as possible and give the alarm, so that parties might be sent out to scour the country in all directions.

Frank was immediately put to bed on his arrival, and everything done in order to restore him. In this attempt they succeeded so far as to obtain all the information he could give concerning his fall; but he remembered nothing further than that Edith had been the means of bringing him to the snow-hut, where he lay in a deep, torpid slumber, until the voice and hand of Maximus awakened him. When Frank was told that Edith was lost, he sprang from his bed as if he had received an electric shock. The confusion of his faculties seemed swept away, and he began to put on his garments with as much vigour as if he were well and strong; but ere he belted on his leather coat his cheek grew pale, his hand trembled, and he fell in a swoon upon the bed. This convinced him of the impossibility of doing anything in the search, and he was prevailed on, after two or three similar failures, to leave the work to others.

Meanwhile the mountains and valleys of Ungava were traversed far and near by the agonised father and his men. The neighbourhood of the lake was the first place searched, and they had not sought long ere they discovered the little sledge sticking fast among the rocks of the sea-coast, and Chimo lying in the traces almost dead with cold and hunger. The dog had kept himself alive by gnawing the deerskin of which the traces were made. Around this spot the search was concentrated, and the Esquimaux of the neighbouring camp were employed in traversing the country in all directions; but, although scarce a foot

of ground escaped the eager scrutiny of one or other of the party, not a vestige of Edith was to be seennot so much as a footprint in the snow.

Days and nights flew by, and still the search was continued. Frank quickly recovered under the affectionate care of the almost heartbroken mother, who found some relief from her crushing sorrow in ministering to his wants. But the instant he could walk without support, and long before it was prudent to do so, Frank joined in the search. At first he could do little, but as day after day passed by his strength returned so rapidly that the only symptoms that remained to tell of his late accident were his pale cheek and the haggard expression of his countenance. But the mysterious disappearance of Edith had more to do with the latter than illness.

Weeks passed away, but still the dark cloud of sorrow hung over Fort Chimo, for the merry young voice that was wont to awake the surrounding echoes was gone. The systematic search had now been given up, for every nook, every glen, and gorge, and corrie within fifteen miles of the spot where they had found the little sledge, had been searched again and again without success. But hope clung with singular tenacity to the parents' hearts long after it had fled from those of the men of the fort and of the Esquimaux. Every alternate day Stanley and Frank sallied forth with heavy steps and furrowed brows to explore more carefully those places where the child was most likely to have strayed, expecting, yet fearing, to find her dead body. But they always returned to the bereaved mother with silent lips and downcast looks.

They frequently conversed together about her, and always in a hopeful tone, each endeavouring to conceal from the other the real state of his own mind. Indeed, except when necessity required it, they seldom spoke on any other subject.

One day Stanley and Frank were seated by the blazing stove in the hall conversing as usual about the plan of the search for that day. Mrs Stanley was busied in preparing breakfast.

"'Tis going to blow hard from the north, Frank," said Stanley, rising and looking out of the window; "I see the icebergs coming into the river with the tide. You will have a cold march, I fear."

Frank made no reply, but rose and approached the window. The view from it was a strange one. During the night a more than usually severe frost had congealed the water of the lake in the centre, and the icebergs that sailed towards the Caniapuscaw River in stately grandeur went crashing through this young ice as if it had been paper, their slow but steady progress receiving no perceptible check from its opposition. Some of these bergs were of great size,

and in proceeding onwards they passed so close to the fort that the inhabitants feared more than once that a falling pinnacle might descend on the stores, which were built near to the water's edge, and crush them. As the tide gradually rose it rushed with violence into the cavities beneath the solid ice on the opposite shore, and finding no escape save through a few rents and fissures, sent up columns or spouts of white spray in all directions, which roared and shrieked as they flew upwards, as if the great ocean were maddened with anger at finding a power strong enough to restrain and curb its might. At intervals the main ice rent with a crash like the firing of artillery; and as if nature had designed to carry on and deepen this simile, the shore was lined with heaps of little blocks of ice which the constantly recurring action of the tide had moulded into the shape and size of cannon balls.

But such sights were common to the inhabitants of Fort Chimo, and had long ago ceased to call forth more than a passing remark.

"May it not be possible," murmured Stanley, while he leant his brow on his hand, "that she may have gone up False River?"

"I think not," said Frank. "I know not how it is, but I have a strange conviction that she is yet alive. If she had perished in the snow, we should certainly have found her long ago. I cannot explain my feelings, or give a reason for them, but I feel convinced that darling Eda is alive."

"Oh, God grant it!" whispered Stanley in a deep voice, while his wife hastened from the room to conceal the tears which she could not restrain.

While Frank continued to gaze in silence on the bleak scene without, a faint sound of sleigh-bells broke upon his ear.

"Hark!" he cried, starting, and opening the door.

The regular and familiar sound of the bells came floating sweetly on the breeze. They grew louder and louder, and in a few seconds a team of dogs galloped into the fort, dragging a small sled behind them. They were followed by two stalwart Indians, whose costume and manner told that they were in the habit of associating more with the fur-traders than with their own kindred. The dogs ran the sled briskly into the centre of the fort, and lay down panting on the snow, while the two men approached the hall.

"'Tis a packet," cried Stanley, forgetting for the moment his sorrow in the excitement of this unexpected arrival.

In a moment all the men at the fort were assembled in the square.

“A packet! Where come you from?”

“From Moose Fort,” replied the elder Indian, while his comrade unfastened from the sled a little bundle containing letters.

“Any news? Are all well?” chorused the men.

“Ay, all well. It is many day since we left. The way is very rough, and we did not find much deer. We saw one camp of Indian, but they ’fraid to come. I not know why. But I see with them one fair flower which grow in the fields of the Esquimaux. I suppose the Indian pluck her, and dare not come back here.”

Stanley started, and his cheek grew pale.

“A fair flower, say you? Speak literally, man: was it a little white girl that you saw?”

“No,” replied the Indian, “it was no white girl we saw. It was one young Esquimau woman.”

Stanley heaved a deep sigh and turned away, muttering, “Ah! I might have known that she could not have fallen into the hands of Indians so far to the south.”

“Well, lads, take care of these fellows,” he cried, crushing down the feelings that had been for a brief moment awakened in his heart by the Indian’s words, “and give them plenty to eat and smoke.” So saying he went off with the packet, followed by Frank.

“Niver fear ye; come along, honey,” said Bryan, grasping the elder Indian by the arm, while the younger was carried off by Massan, and the dogs taken care of by Ma-istequan and Gaspard.

On perusing the letters, Stanley found that it would be absolutely necessary to send a packet of dispatches to headquarters. The difficulties of his position required to be more thoroughly explained, and erroneous notions corrected.

“What shall I do, Frank?” said he, with a perplexed look. “These Indians cannot return to Moose, having received orders, I find, to journey in a different direction. Our own men know the way, but I cannot spare the good ones among them, and the second-rate cannot be depended on without a leader.”

Frank did not give an immediate reply. He seemed to be pondering the subject in his mind. At length he said, “Could not Dick Prince be spared?”

“No; he is too useful here. The fact is, Frank, I think I must send you. It will do you good, my dear boy, and tend to distract your mind from a subject which is now hopeless.”

Frank at first objected strongly to this plan, on the ground that it would prevent him from assisting in the forlorn search for Edith; but Stanley pointed out that he and the men could continue it, and that, on the other hand, his (Frank’s) personal presence at headquarters would be of great importance to the interests of the Company. At length Frank was constrained to obey.

The route by which he purposed to travel was overland to Richmond Gulf on snow-shoes; and as the way was rough, he determined to take only a few days’ provisions, and depend for subsistence on the hook and gun. Maximus, Oolibuck, and Ma-istequan were chosen to accompany him; and three better men he could not have had, for they were stalwart and brave, and accustomed from infancy to live by the chase, and traverse trackless wastes, guided solely by that power of observation or instinct with which savages are usually gifted.

With these men, a week’s provisions, a large supply of ammunition, a small sledge, and three dogs, of whom Chimo was the leader, Frank one morning ascended the rocky platform behind the fort, and bidding adieu to Ungava, commenced his long journey over the interior of East Main.

Chapter Thirty.
An old friend amid new friends and noveltiesA desperate battle and a glorious victory.

The scene of our story is now changed, and we request our patient reader to fly away with us deeper into the north, beyond the regions of Ungava, and far out upon the frozen sea.

Here is an island which for many long years has formed a refuge to the roedeer during the winter, at which season these animals, having forsaken the mainland in autumn, dwell upon the islands of the sea. At the time of which we write the island in question was occupied by a tribe of Esquimaux, who had built themselves as curious a village as one could wish to see. The island had little or no wood on it, and the few willow bushes that showed their heads above the deep snow were stunted and thin. Such as they were, however, they, along with a ledge of rock over which the snow had drifted in a huge mound, formed a sort of protection to the village of the Esquimaux, and sheltered it from the cold blasts that swept over the frozen sea from the regions of the far north. There were about twenty igloos in the village, all of which were built in the form of a dome, exactly similar to the hut constructed by Maximus on the lake. They were of various sizes, and while some stood apart with only a small

igloo attached, others were congregated in groups and connected by low tunnels or passages. The doorways leading into most of them were so low that the natives were obliged to creep out and in on their hands and knees; but the huts themselves were high enough to permit the tallest man of the tribe to stand erect, and some of them so capacious that a family of six or eight persons could dwell in them easily. We may remark, however, that Esquimau ideas of roominess and comfort in their dwellings differ very considerably from ours. Their chief aim is to create heat, and for this end they cheerfully submit to what we would consider the discomfort of crowding and close air.

The village at a little distance bore a curious resemblance to a cluster of white beehives; and the round, soft, hairy natives, creeping out and in continually, and moving about amongst them, were not unlike (with the aid of a little imagination) to a swarm of monstrous black beesan idea which was further strengthened by the continuous hum that floated on the air over the busy settlement. Kayaks and oomiaks lay about in several places supported on blocks of ice, and seal-spears, paddles, dans, lances, coils of walrus-line, and other implements, were intermingled in rare confusion with sledges, sealskins, junks of raw meat and bones, on which latter the numerous dogs of the tribe were earnestly engaged.

In the midst of this village stood a hut which differed considerably from those around. It was built of clear ice instead of snow. There were one or two other igloos made of the same material, but none so large, clean, or elegant as this one. The walls, which were perpendicular, were composed of about thirty large square blocks, cemented together with snow, and arranged in the form of an octagon. The roof was a dome of snow. A small porch or passage, also of ice, stood in front of the low doorway, which had been made high enough to permit the owner of the mansion to enter by stooping slightly. In front and all around this hut the snow was carefully scraped, and all offensive objectssuch as seal and whale blubberremoved, giving to it an appearance of cleanliness and comfort which the neighbouring igloos did not possess. Inside of this icy residence, on a couch of deerskin was seated Edith Stanley!

On that terrible night when the child lost her way in the dreary plain, she had wandered she knew not whither, until she was suddenly arrested by coming to the edge of the solid ice on the shores of Ungava Bay. Here the high winds had broken up the ice, and the black waters of the sea now rolled at her feet and checked her progress. Terrified at this unexpected sight, Edith endeavoured to retrace her steps; but she found to her horror that the ice on which she stood was floating, and that the wind, having shifted a point to the eastward, was driving it across to the west side of the bay. Here, in the course of the next day, it grounded, and the poor child, benumbed with cold and faint with hunger,

crept as far as she could on to the firm land, and then lay down, as she thought, to die.

But it was otherwise ordained. In less than half an hour afterwards she was found by a party of Esquimaux. These wild creatures had come from the eastward in their dog-sledges, and having passed well out to the seaward in order to avoid the open water off the mouth of False River, had missed seeing their countrymen there, and therefore knew nothing of the establishment of Fort Chimo. In bending towards the land again after passing the bay they came upon Edith's tracks, and after a short search they found her lying on the snow.

Words cannot convey an adequate impression of the unutterable amazement of these poor creatures as they beheld the fair child, so unlike anything they had ever seen or imagined; but whatever may have been their thoughts regarding her, they had sense enough to see that she was composed of flesh and blood, and would infallibly freeze if allowed to lie there much longer. They therefore lifted her gently upon one of the large sleighs, and placed her on a pile of furs in the midst of a group of women and children, who covered her up and chafed her limbs vigorously. Meanwhile the drivers of the sledges, of which there were six, with twenty dogs attached to each, plied their long whips energetically; the dogs yelled in consternation, and, darting away with the sledges as if they had been feathers, the whole tribe went hooting, yelling, and howling away over the frozen sea.

The surprise of the savages when they found Edith was scarcely, if at all, superior to that of Edith when she opened her eyes and began to comprehend, somewhat confusedly, her peculiar position. The savages watched her movements, open-mouthed, with intense curiosity, and seemed overjoyed beyond expression when she at length recovered sufficiently to exclaim feebly,"Where am I? where are you taking me to?"

We need scarcely add that she received no reply to her questions, for the natives did not understand a word of her language, and with the exception of the names of one or two familiar objects, she did not understand a word of theirs. Of how far or how long they travelled Edith could form no idea, as she slept profoundly during the journey, and did not thoroughly recover her strength and faculties until after her arrival at the camp.

For many days after reaching the Esquimau village poor Edith did nothing but weep; for, besides the miserable circumstances in which she was now placed, she was much too considerate and unselfish in her nature to forget that her parents would experience all the misery of supposing her dead, and added to this was the terrible supposition that the natives into whose hands she had fallen might never hear of Fort Chimo. The distracted child did her utmost by

means of signs to make them understand that such a place existed, but her efforts were of no avail. Either she was not eloquent in the language of signs, or the natives were obtuse. As time abated the first violence of her grief, she began to entertain a hope that ere long some wandering natives might convey intelligence of her to the fur-traders. As this hope strengthened she became more cheerful, and resolved to make a number of little ornaments with her name inscribed on them, which she meant to hang round the necks of the chief men of the tribe, so that should any of them ever chance to meet with the fur-traders, these ornaments might form a clue to her strange residence.

A small medal of whalebone seemed to her the most appropriate and tractable material, but it cost her many long and weary hours to cut a circular piece of this tough material with the help of an Esquimau knife. When she had done it, however, several active boys who had watched the operation with much curiosity and interest, no sooner understood what she wished to make than they set to work and cut several round pieces of ivory or walrus-tusk, which they presented to their little guest, who scratched the name EDITH on them and hung them round the necks of the chief men of the tribe. The Esquimaux smiled and patted the child's fair head kindly as they received this piece of attention, which they flattered themselves, no doubt, was entirely disinterested and complimentary.

Winter wore gradually away, and the ice upon the sea began to show symptoms of decay opposite to the camp of the Esquimaux. During the high winds of spring the drift had buried the village so completely that the beehives were scarcely visible, and the big black bees walked about on the top of their igloos, and had to cut deep down in order to get into them. For some time past the natives had been unsuccessful in their seal-hunting; and as seals and walruses constituted their chief means of support, they were reduced to short allowance. Edith's portion, however, had never yet been curtailed. It was cooked for her over the stone lamp belonging to an exceedingly fat young woman whose igloo was next to that of the little stranger, and whose heart had been touched by the child's sorrow; afterwards it was more deeply touched by her gratitude and affection. This woman's name was Kaga, and she, with the rest of her tribe, having been instructed carefully by Edith in the pronunciation of her own name, ended in calling their little guest Eeduck! Kaga had a stout, burly husband named Annatock, who was the best hunter in the tribe; she also had a nephew about twelve or fourteen years old, named Peetoot, who was very fond of Edith and extremely attentive to her. Kaga had also a babya mere bag of fatto which Edith became so attached that she almost constituted herself its regular nurse; and when the weather was bad, so as to confine her to the house, she used to take it from its mother, carry it off to her own igloo, and play with it the whole day, much in the same way as little girls play with

dollswith this difference, however, that she considerately restrained herself from banging its nose against the floor or punching out its eyes!

It was a bright, clear, warm day. Four mock suns encircled and emulated in brilliancy their great original. The balmy air was beginning to melt the surface of the snow, and the igloos that had stood firm for full half a year were gradually becoming dangerous to walk over and unsafe to sit under. Considerable bustle prevailed in the camp, for a general seal-hunting expedition was on foot, and the men of the tribe were preparing their dog-sledges and their spears.

Edith was in her igloo of ice, seated on the soft pile of deerskins which formed her bed at night and her sofa by day, and worrying Kaga's baby, which laughed vociferously. The inside of this house or apartment betokened the taste and neatness of its occupant. The snow roof, having begun to melt, had been removed, and was replaced by slabs of ice, which, with the transparent walls, admitted the sun's rays in a soft, bluish light, which cast a fairy-like charm over the interior. On a shelf of ice which had been neatly fitted into the wall by her friend Peetoot lay a rude knife, a few pieces of whalebone and ivory (the remains of the material of which her medals had been made), and an ivory cup. The floor was covered with willow matting, and on the raised half of it were spread several deerskins with the hair on. A canopy of willow boughs was erected over this. On another shelf of ice, near the head of the bed, stood a small stone lamp, which had been allowed to go out, the weather being warm. The only other articles of furniture in this simple apartment were a square table and a square stool, both made of ice blocks and covered with sealskins.

While Edith and her living doll were in the height of their uproarious intercourse, they were interrupted by Peetoot, who burst into the room, more like a hairy wild-man-o'-the-wood than a human being. He carried a short spear in one hand, and with the other pointed in the direction of the shore, at the same time uttering a volley of unintelligible sounds which terminated with an emphatic "Eeduck!"

Edith's love for conversation, whether she made herself understood or not, had increased rather than abated in her peculiar circumstances.

"What is it, Peetoot? Why do you look so excited? Oh dear, I wish I understood youindeed I do! But it's of no use your speaking so fast.(Be quiet, baby darling.)I see you want me to do or say something; what can it be, I wonder?"

Edith looked into the boy's face with an air of perplexity.

Again Peetoot commenced to vociferate and gesticulate violently; but seeing, as he had often seen before, that his young friend did not appear to be much enlightened, he seized her by the arm, and, as a more summary and practical way of explaining himself, dragged her towards the door of the hut.

“Oh, the baby!” screamed Edith, breaking from him and placing her charge in the farthest and safest part of the couch. “Now I’ll go with you, though I don’t understand what you want. Well, I suppose I shall find out in time, as usual.”

Having led Edith towards the beach, Peetoot pointed to his uncle’s sledge, to which the dogs were already harnessed, and made signs that Edith should go with them.

“Oh, I understand you now. Well, it is a charming day; I think I will. Do you think Annatock will let me? Oh, you don’t understand. Never mind; wait till I put on my hood and return the baby to its mother.”

In two minutes Edith reappeared in her fur cloak and Indian hood, with the fat baby sprawling and laughing on her shoulder. That baby never cried. It seemed as though it had resolved to substitute laughing in its stead. Once only had Edith seen tears in its little black eyes, and that was when she had given it a spoonful of soup so hot that its mouth was scalded by it.

Several of the sledges had already left the island, and were flying at full speed over the frozen sea, deviating ever and anon from the straight line in order to avoid a hummock of ice or a gap of open water caused by the separation of masses at the falling of the tide, while the men shouted, and the dogs yelled as they observed the flourish of the cruelly long and heavy lash.

“Shall I get in?” said Edith to Annatock, with an inquiring look, as she approached the place where the sledge was standing.

The Esquimau nodded his shaggy head, and showed a row of remarkably white teeth environed by a thick black beard and moustache, by way of reply to the look of the child.

With a laughing nod to Kaga, who stood watching them, Edith stepped in and seated herself on a deerskin robe; Annatock and Peetoot sat down beside her; the enormous whip gave a crack like a pistol-shot, and the team of fifteen dogs, uttering a loud cry, bounded away over the sea.

The sledge on which Edith was seated was formed very much in the same manner as the little sled which had been made for her at Fort Chimo. It was very much larger, how ever, and could have easily held eight or ten persons. The runners, which were shod with frozen mud (a substance that was now

becoming nearly unfit for use owing to the warm weather), were a perfect wonder of ingenuityas, indeed, was the whole machinebeing pieced and lashed together with lines of raw hide in the most complicated manner and very neatly. The dogs were each fastened by a separate line to the sledge, the best dog being placed in the centre and having the longest line, while the others were attached by lines proportionably shorter according to the distance of each from the leading dog, and the outsiders being close to the runners of the sledge. All the lines were attached to the front bar of the machine. There were many advantages attending this mode of harnessing, among which were the readiness with which any dog could be attached or detached without affecting the others, and the ease with which Annatock, when so inclined, could lay hold of the line of a refractory dog, haul him back without stopping the others, and give him a cuffing. This, however, was seldom done, as the driver could touch any member of the team with the point of his whip. The handle of this terrible instrument was not much more than eighteen or twenty inches long, but the lash was upwards of six yards! Near the handle it was about three inches broad, being thick cords of walrus-hide platted; it gradually tapered towards the point, where it terminated in a fine line of the same material. While driving, the long lash of this whip trails on the snow behind the sledge, and by a peculiar sleight of hand its serpentine coils can be brought up for instant use.

No backwoodsman of Kentucky was ever more perfect in the use of his pea-rifle or more certain of his aim than was Annatock with his murderous whip. He was a dead shot, so to speak. He could spread intense alarm among the dogs by causing the heavy coil to whiz over them within a hair’s-breadth of their heads; or he could gently touch the extreme tip of the ear of a skulker, to remind him of his duty to his master and his comrades; or, in the event of the warning being neglected, he could bring the point down on his flank with a crack like a pistol-shot, that would cause skin and hair to fly, and spread yelping dismay among the entire pack. And how they did run! The sledge seemed a mere feather behind the powerful team. They sprang forth at full gallop, now bumping over a small hummock or diverging to avoid a large one, anon springing across a narrow gap in the ice, or sweeping like the snowdrift over the white plain, while the sledge sprang and swung and bounded madly on behind them; and Annatock shouted as he flourished his great whip in the excitement of their rapid flight, and Peetoot laughed with wild delight, and Edith sat clasping her hands tightly over her kneesher hood thrown back, her fair hair blown straight out by the breeze, her cheeks flushed, her lips parted, and her eyes sparkling with emotion as they whirled along in their mad and swift career.

In half an hour the low village was out of sight, and in half an hour more they

arrived at the place where a number of the Esquimaux were scattered in twos and threes over the ice, searching for seal-holes, and preparing to catch them.

“What is that man doing?” cried Edith, pointing to an Esquimau who, having found a hole, had built a semicircular wall of snow round it to protect him from the light breeze that was blowing, and was sitting, when Edith observed him, in the attitude of one who listened intently. The hood of his sealskin coat was over his head, so that his features were concealed. At his feet lay a stout, barbed seal-spear, the handle of which was made of wood, and the barb and lower part of ivory. A tough line was attached to this, and the other end of it was fastened round the man’s waist; for when an Esquimau spears a seal, he prepares to conquer or to die. If he does not haul the animal out of the hole, there is every probability that it will haul him into it. But the Esquimau has laid it down as an axiom that a man is more than a match for a seal; therefore he ties the line round his waist,which is very much like nailing the colours to the mast. There seems to be no allowance made for the chance of an obstreperously large seal allowing himself to be harpooned by a preposterously small Esquimau; but we suppose that this is the exception to the rule.

As Edith gazed, the Esquimau put out his hand with the stealthy motion of a cat and lifted his spear. The next instant the young ice that covered the hole was smashed, and, in an instant after, the ivory barb was deep in the shoulder of an enraged seal, which had thus fallen a sacrifice to his desire for fresh air. The Esquimau immediately lay back almost at full length, with his heels firmly imbedded in two notches cut in the ice at the edge of the hole; the seal dived, and the man’s waist seemed to be nearly cut in two. But the rope was tough and the man was stout, and although the seal was both, it was conquered in the course of a quarter of an hour, hauled out, and thrown exultingly upon the ice.

This man had only watched at the seal-hole a couple of hours, but the natives frequently sit behind their snow walls for the greater part of a day, almost without moving hand or foot.

Having witnessed this capture, Annatock drove on until the most of his countrymen were left behind. Suddenly he called to the dogs to halt, and spoke in a deep, earnest tone to his nephew, while both of them gazed intently towards a particular quarter of the sea. Edith looked in the same direction, and soon saw the object that attracted their attention, but the only thing it seemed like to her was an enormous cask or barrel.

“What is it?” said she to Peetoot, as Annatock selected his largest spear and hastened towards the object.

Of course Edith received no reply save a broad grin; but the little fellow followed up this remark, if we may so call it, by drawing his fingers through his lips, and licking them in a most significant manner. Meanwhile Annatock advanced rapidly towards the object of interest, keeping carefully behind hummocks of ice as he went, and soon drew near enough to make certain that it was a walrus, apparently sound asleep, with its blunt snout close to its hole, ready to plunge in should an enemy appear.

Annatock now advanced more cautiously, and when within a hundred yards of the huge monster, lay down at full length on his breast, and began to work his way towards it after the manner of a seal. He was so like a seal in his hairy garments that he might easily have been mistaken for one by a more intellectual animal than a walrus. But the walrus did not awake, and he approached to within ten yards. Then, rising suddenly to his feet, Annatock poised the heavy weapon, and threw it with full force against the animal's side. It struck, and, as if it had fallen on an adamantine rock, it bounded off and fell upon the ice, with its hard point shattered and its handle broken in two.

For one instant Annatock's face blazed with surprise; the next, it relapsed into fifty dimples, as he roared and tossed up his arms with delight at the discovery that the walrus had been frozen to death beside its hole!

This catastrophe is not of unfrequent occurrence to these elephants of the northern seas. They are in the habit of coming up occasionally through their holes in the ice to breathe, and sometimes they crawl out in order to sleep on the ice, secure, in the protection of their superabundant fat, from being frozenat least easily. When they have had enough of sleep, or when the prickling sensation on their skin warns them that nothing is proof against the cold of the Polar Seas, and that they will infallibly freeze if they do not make a precipitate retreat to the comparatively warm waters below, they scramble to their holes, crush down the new ice with their tusks and thick heads, and plunge in. But sometimes the ice which forms on the holes when they are asleep is too strong to be thus broken, in which case the hapless monster lays him down and dies.

Such was the fate of the walrus which Annatock was now cutting up with his axe into portable blocks of beef. For several days previous to the thaw which had now set in, the weather had been intensely cold, and the walrus had perished in consequence of its ambitious desire to repose in the regions above.

Not far from the spot where this fortunate discovery had been made, there was a large sheet of recently-formed black ice, where the main ice had been broken

away and the open water left. The sheet, although much melted by the thaw, was still about three inches thick, and quite capable of supporting a man. While Annatock was working with his back to this ice, he heard a tremendous crash take place behind him. Turning hastily round, he observed that the noise was caused by another enormous walrus, the glance of whose large round eyes and whose loud snort showed clearly enough that he was not frozen like his unfortunate companion. By this time the little boy had come up with Edith and the sledge. So Annatock ordered him to take the dogs behind a hummock to keep them out of sight, while he selected several strong harpoons and a lance from the sledge. Giving another lance to Peetoot, he signed to Edith to sit on the hummock while he attacked the grisly monster of the deep.

While these preparations were being made, the walrus dived; and while it was under water, the man and the boy ran quickly forward a short distance, and then lay down behind a lump of ice. Scarcely had they done so when the walrus came up again with a loud snort, splashing the water with its broad, heavy flipperswhich seemed a sort of compromise between legs and finsand dashing waves over the ice as it rolled about its large, unwieldy carcass. It was truly a savage-looking monster, as large as a small elephant, and having two tusks of a foot and a half long. The face bore a horrible resemblance to that of a man. Its crown was round and bulging, its face broad and massive, and a thick, bristling moustacherough as the spines of a porcupinecovered its upper lip, and depended in a shaggy dripping mass over its mouth. After spluttering about a short time it dived again.

Now was Annatock’s time. Seizing a harpoon and a coil of line, he muttered a few words to the boy, sprang up, and running out upon the smooth ice, stood by the edge of the open water. He had not waited here more than a few seconds when the black waters were cleft by the blacker head of the monster, as it once more ascended to renew its elephantine gambols in the pool. As it rose, the Esquimau threw up his arm and poised the harpoon. For one instant the surprised animal raised itself breast-high out of the water, and directed a stare of intense astonishment at the man. That moment was fatal. Annatock buried the harpoon deep under its left flipper. With a fierce bellow the brute dashed itself against the ice, endeavouring in its fury to reach its assailant; but the ice gave way under its enormous weight, while Annatock ran back as far as the line attached to the harpoon would permit him.

The walrus, seeing that it could not reach its enemy in this way, seemed now to be actually endued with reason. It took a long gaze at Annatock, and then dived. But the Esquimau was prepared for this. He changed his position hastily, and played his line the meanwhile, fixing the point of his lance into the ice, in order to give him a more effective hold. Scarcely had he done so than

the spot he had just left was smashed up, and the head of the walrus appeared, grinning and bellowing as if in disappointment. At this moment Peetoot handed his uncle a harpoon, and, ere the animal dived, the weapon was fixed in his side. Once more Annatock changed his position; and once again the spot on which he had been standing was burst upwards. It was a terrible sight to see that unearthly-looking monster smashing the ice around it, and lashing the blood-stained sea into foam, while it waged such mortal war with the self-possessed and wary man. How mighty and strong the one! how comparatively weak and seemingly helpless the other! It was the triumph of mind over matterof reason over blind brute force. But Annatock fought a hard battle that day ere he came off conqueror. Harpoon after harpoon was driven into the walrus; again and again the lance pierced deep into its side and drank its life-blood; but three hours had passed away before the dead carcass was dragged from the deep by the united force of dogs and man. During this terrible combat Edith had looked on with such intense interest that she could scarcely believe her eyes when she found, from the position of the sun, that the day was far advanced. It was too late now to think of cutting up the carcasses without assistance, so Annatock determined to return home and tell his countrymen of his good fortune.

It is a custom among the Esquimaux to consider every animal that is killed as the common property of allthe successful hunter being entitled to all the titbits, besides his portion of the equal dividend; so that Annatock knew he had only to give the signal, and every able-bodied man in the village, and not a few of the women and children, would descend like vultures on the spoil. Jumping into his sledge, he stretched out his exhausted frame at full length beside Edith, and committed the whip to Peetoot.

“I’m so glad,” cried Edith, with a beaming face, “that we have killed this beast. The poor people will have plenty to eat now.”

“Ha! ha! ha!” roared Peetoot, giving increased emphasis to each successive shout, and prolonging the last into a yell of delight, as he cracked the ponderous whip from side to side like a volley of pistolry.

“O Peetoot!” exclaimed Edith, in a remonstrative tone, as the sledge swayed to and fro with the rate at which they were sweeping over the plain, “don’t drive so fast; you will kill the poor dogs!”

“Ho! ho! ho-o-o! Eeduck!” roared the boy, aiming a shot at the leader’s left ear, and bringing the thick end of the whip down on the flanks of the six hindmost dogs.

Thus, amid a volley of roars, remonstrances, yells, yelps, and pistolry, Edith

and her friends scoured over the frozen sea, and swept into the Esquimau camp like a whirlwind.

Chapter Thirty One.
Another desperate battle, and a decided victoryThe Esquimaux suffer a severe loss.

The night that followed the day of which we have given an account in the last chapter was a night of rest to Edith, but not to the Esquimaux.

Scarcely allowing themselves time to harness their dogs, after the news reached them, they set off for the scene of action in a body. Every sledge was engaged, every able-bodied male and female started. None were left in camp except the sick, of whom there were few; and the aged, of whom there were fewer. While engaged in the hurried preparations for departure the women sang with delight, for they had been living on very short allowance for some weeks past, and starvation had been threatening them; so that the present success diffused among these poor creatures a universal feeling of joy. But their preparations were not numerous. A short scene of excited bustle followed Annatock's arrival, a few yells from the dogs at starting, and the deserted camp was so silent and desolate that it seemed as if human beings had not been there for centuries.

It did not continue long, however, in this state. Two or three hours later, and the first of the return parties arrived, groaning under the burdens they carried and dragged behind them. The walrus-flesh was packed on the dog-sledges; but as for the few seals that had been caught, they were sledges to themselvescords being tied to their tails, to which a dozen natives attached themselves, and dragged the carcasses over the snow.

Peetoot, whose spirit that night seemed to be intoxicated with success, and who felt that he was the lion of the night (after Annatock!), seated himself astride of one of the dead seals, and was dragged into camp on this novel sledge, shouting a volley of unintelligible jargon at the top of his voice, in the midst of which "Eeduck" frequently resounded. At length the last lingerer arrived, and then began a feast of the most extraordinary kind. The walrus-flesh was first conveyed to the igloo of Annatock, where it was cut up and distributed among the natives. The women seemed quite frantic with joy, and went about from hut to hut embracing one another, by way of congratulation. Soon the lamps of the village were swimming with oil, the steaks stewing and roasting, the children provided with pieces of raw blubber to keep them quiet while the larger portions were being cooked, and the entire community gormandising and rejoicing as savages are wont to do when suddenly visited

with plenty in the midst of starvation.

During all this scene, Edith went about from hut to hut enjoying herself. Nay, reader, be not horrified; thou knowest not the pliable and accommodating nature of humanity. Edith did not enjoy the filth by which she was surroundedfar from it; neither did she enjoy the sight of raw blubber being sucked by little babies, especially by her own favourite; but she did enjoy the sight of so much plenty where, but a few hours ago, starvation had begun to threaten a visit; and she did enjoy and heartily sympathise with the undoubted and great happiness of her hospitable friends. A very savoury dish, with a due proportion of lean to the fat, cut specially to suit her taste, smoked on Eeduck's table that night, and Peetoot and the baby helped her to eat it. Really it would be a matter of nice calculation to ascertain whether Peetoot or the baby laughed most on this jovial occasion. Undoubtedly the former had the best of it in regard to mere noise; nevertheless the pipe of the latter was uncommonly shrill, and at times remarkably racy and obstreperous. But as the hours flew by, the children throughout the camp generally fell asleep, while their seniors sat quietly and contentedly round their kettles and lamps, eating and slumbering by turns. The amount of food consumed was enormous, and quite beyond the belief of men accustomed to the appetites of temperate zones; but we beg them to remember that arctic frosts require to be met with arctic stimulants, and of these an immense quantity of unctuous food is the best.

Next morning the Esquimaux were up and away by daybreak, with their dogs and sledges, to bring home the remainder of the walrus-meat; for these poor people are not naturally improvident, and do not idle their time in luxurious indolence until necessity urges them forth again in search of food. In this respect they are superior to Indians, who are notoriously improvident and regardless of the morrow.

This day was signalised by another piece of success on the part of Annatock and his nephew, who went to the scene of yesterday's battle on foot. Edith remained behind, having resolved to devote herself entirely to the baby, to make up for her neglect of the previous day. On reaching the place where the walrus had been slain, Annatock cut off and bound up a portion with which he intended to return to the camp. While he was thus employed, along with a dozen or more of his countrymen, Peetoot came running towards him, saying that he thought he saw a seal lying on the ice far ahead. Having a harpoon and two spears with them, Annatock left his work and followed his nephew to the spot where it was supposed to be lying. But on reaching the place they found that it was gone, and a few bells floating at the surface of the hole showed where it had made its descent to the element below. With the characteristic indifference of a man accustomed to the vicissitudes and the disappointments

of a hunter's life, the elder Esquimau uttered a grunt and turned away. But he had not proceeded more than a few paces when his eye became riveted on the track of some animal on the ice, which appeared to his practised eye to be quite fresh. Upon examination this proved to be the case, and Annatock spoke earnestly for a few minutes with his nephew. The boy appeared from his gestures to be making some determined remarks, and seemed not a little hurt at the doubting way in which his uncle shook his head. At length Peetoot seized a spear, and, turning away, followed the track of the animal with a rapid and determined air; while Annatock, grasping the other spear, followed in the boy's track.

A brisk walk of half an hour over the ice and hummocks of the sea carried them out of sight of their companions, but did not bring them up with the animal of which they were in chase. At length Peetoot halted, and stooped to scrutinise the track more attentively. As he did so an enormous white bear stalked out from behind a neighbouring hummock of ice, and after gazing at him for a second or two, turned round and walked slowly away.

The elder Esquimau cast a doubtful glance at his nephew, while he lowered the point of his spear and seemed to hesitate; but the boy did not wait. Levelling his spear, he uttered a wild shout and ran towards the animal, which instantly turned towards the approaching enemy with a look of defiance. If Annatock had entertained any doubts of his nephew's courage before, he had none now; so, casting aside all further thought on the subject, he ran forward along with him to attack the bear. This was a matter attended with much danger, however, and there was some reason in the man feeling a little uncertainty as to the courage of a youth who, he was aware, now faced a bear for the first time in his life!

At first the two hunters advanced side by side towards the fierce-looking monster, but as they drew near they separated, and approached one on the right, the other on the left of the bear. As it was determined that Annatock should give the death-wound, he went towards the left side and hung back a moment, while Peetoot advanced to the right. When about three yards distant the bear rose. The action had a powerful and visible effect upon the boy; for as polar bears are comparatively long-bodied and short-legged, their true proportions are not fully displayed until they rear on their hind legs. It seemed as if the animal actually grew taller and more enormous in the act of rising, and the boy's cheek blanched while he shrank backwards for a moment. It was only for a moment, however. A quick word of encouragement from Annatock recalled him. He stepped boldly forward as the bear was glancing savagely from side to side, uncertain which enemy to attack first, and, thrusting his lance forward, pricked it sharply on the side. This decided the point. With a

ferocious growl the animal turned to fall upon its insignificant enemy. In doing so its left shoulder was fully exposed to Annatock, who, with a dart like lightning, plunged his spear deep into its heart. A powerful shudder shook the monster's frame as it fell dead upon the ice.

Annatock stood for a few minutes leaning on his spear, and regarding the bear with a grim look of satisfaction; while Peetoot laughed, and shouted, and danced around it like a maniac. How long he would have continued these wild demonstrations it is difficult to sayprobably until he was exhaustedbut his uncle brought them to a speedy termination by bringing the butt-end of his spear into smart contact with Peetoot's flank. With a howl, in which consternation mingled with his glee, the boy darted away over the ice like a reindeer to convey the glad news to his friends, and to fetch a sledge for the bear's carcass.

On returning to the village there was immediately instituted another royal feast, which continued from day to day, gradually decreasing in joyous intensity as the provender decreased in bulk, until the walruses, the bear, and the seals were entirely consumed.

Soon after this the weather became decidedly mild, and the power of the sun's rays was so great that the snow on the island and the ice on the sea began to be resolved into water. During this period several important changes took place in the manners and customs of the Esquimaux. The women, who had worn deerskin shoes during the winter, put on their enormous waterproof summer boots. The men, when out on the ice in search of seals, used a pair of wooden spectacles, with two narrow slits to peep through, in order to protect their eyes from the snow-blindness caused by the glare of the sun on the ice and snowa complaint which is apt to attack all arctic travellers in spring if not guarded against by some such appliance as the clumsy wooden spectacles of the Esquimaux. Active preparations were also made for the erection of skin summer tents, and the launching of kayaks and oomiaks. Moreover, little boys were forbidden to walk, as they had been wont to do, on the tops of the snow-houses, lest they should damage the rapidly-decaying roofs; but little boys in the far north inherit that tendency to disobedience which is natural to the children of Adam the world over, and on more than one occasion, having ventured to run over the igloos, were caught in the act by the thrusting of a leg now and then through the roofs thereof, to the indignation of the inmates below.

A catastrophe of this sort happened to poor Peetoot not long after the slaying of the polar bear, and brought the winter camp to an abrupt termination.

Edith had been amusing herself in her house of ice all the morning with her

adopted baby, and was in the act of feeding it with a choice morsel of seal-fat, partially cooked, to avoid doing violence to her own prejudices, and very much under-done in order to suit the Esquimau baby's tastewhen Peetoot rushed violently into the hut, shouted Eeduck with a boisterous smile, seized the baby in his arms, and carried it off to its mother. Edith was accustomed to have it thus torn from her by the boy, who was usually sent as a messenger when Kaga happened to desire the loan of her offspring.

The igloo in which Kaga and her relations dwelt was the largest in the village. It was fully thirty feet in diameter. The passage leading to it was a hundred yards long, by five feet wide and six feet high, and from this passage branched several others of various lengths, leading to different storehouses and to other dwellings. The whiteness of the snow of which this princely mansion and its offices were composed was not much altered on the exterior; but in the interior a long winter of cooking and stewing and general filthiness had turned the walls and roofs quite black. Being somewhat lazy, Peetoot preferred the old plan of walking over this palace to going round by the entrance, which faced the south. Accordingly, he hoisted the fat and smiling infant on his shoulder, and bounded over the dome-shaped roof of Kaga's igloo. Alas for the result of disobedience! No sooner had his foot touched the key-stone of the arch than down it went. Dinner was being cooked and consumed by twenty people below at the time. The key-stone buried a joint of walrus-beef, and instantly Peetoot and the baby lay sprawling on the top of it. But this was not all. The roof, unable to support its own weight, cracked and fell in with a dire crash. The men, women, and children struggled to disentomb themselves, and in doing so mixed up the oil of the lamps, the soup of their kettles, the black soot of the walls and roof, the dogs that had sneaked in, the junks of cooked, half-cooked, and raw blubber, and their own hairy-coated persons, into a conglomerate so atrocious to behold, or even think upon, that we are constrained to draw a curtain over the scene and spare the reader's feelings. This event caused the Esquimaux to forsake the igloos, and pitch their skin tents on a spot a little to the southward of their wintering ground, which, being more exposed to the sun's rays, was now free from snow.

They had not been encamped here more than three days when an event occurred which threw the camp into deep grief for a time. This was the loss of their great hunter, Annatock, the husband of Kaga. One of those tremendous north-west gales, which now and then visit the arctic seas and lands with such devastating fury, had set in while Annatock was out on the ice-floe in search of seals. Many of his comrades had started with him that day, but being a bold man, he had pushed beyond them all. When the gale came on the Esquimau hunters prepared to return home as fast as possible, fearing that the decaying ice might break up and drift away with them out to sea. Before starting they

were alarmed to find that the seaward ice was actually in motion. It was on this ice that Annatock was employed; and his countrymen would fain have gone to warn him of his danger, but a gap of thirty feet already separated the floe from the main ice, and although they could perceive their friend in the far distance, busily employed on the ice, they could not make their voices heard. As the gale increased the floe drifted faster out to sea, and Annatock was observed running anxiously towards the land; but before he reached the edge of the ice-raft on which he stood, the increasing distance and the drifting clouds of snow hid him from view. Then his companions, fearful for their own safety, hastened back to the camp with the sad news.

At first Kaga seemed quite inconsolable, and Edith exerted herself as a comforter without success; but as time wore on the poor woman's grief abated, and hope began to revive within her bosom. She recollected that the event which had befallen her husband had befallen some of her friends before in exactly similar circumstances, and that, although on many occasions the result had been fatal, there were not a few instances in which the lost ones had been driven on their ice-raft to distant parts of the shore, and after months, sometimes years, of hardship and suffering, had returned to their families and homes.

Still this hope was at best a poor one. For the few instances there were of return from such dangers, there were dozens in which the poor Esquimaux were never heard of more; and the heart of the woman sank within her as she thought of the terrible night on which her husband was lost, and the great, stormy, ice-laden sea, over whose surging bosom he was drifted. But the complex machinery of this world is set in motion and guided by One whose power and wisdom infinitely transcend those of the most exalted of His creatures; and it is a truth well worthy of being reiterated and re-impressed upon our memories, that in His hands those events that seem most adverse to man often turn out to be for his good.

Chapter Thirty Two.
Edith waxes melancholy, but her sadness is suddenly turned into joy; and the Esquimaux receive a surprise, and find a friend, and lose one.

The sea! How many stout hearts thrill and manly bosoms swell at the sound of that little word, or rather at the thought of all that it conveys! How many there are that reverence and love thy power and beauty, thy freedom and majesty, O sea! Wherein consists the potent charm that draws mankind towards thee with such irresistible affection? Is it in the calm tranquillity of thy waters, when thou liest like a sheet of crystal, with a bright refulgent sky reflected in thy soft bosom, and the white ships resting there as if in empty space, and the glad sea-

mews rippling thy surface for a brief moment and then sailing from the blue below to the deeper blue above, and the soft song of thy wavelets as they slide upon the shingly shore or lip among the caves and hollows of the rocks! Or is it in the loud roar of thy billows, as they dash and fume and lash in fury on the coasts that dare to curb thy might?that might which, commencing, mayhap, in the torrid zone of the south, has rolled and leaped in majesty across the waste of waters, tossed leviathans as playthings in its strength, rushed impetuously over half the globe, and burst at last in helplessness upon a bed of sand! Or does the charm lie in the yet fiercer strife of the tempest and the hurricane, when the elements, let loose, sweep round the shrinking world in fury; or in the ever-changing aspect of thy countenance, now bright and fair, now ruffled with the rising breeze, or darkened by the thunder-cloud that bodes the coming storm!

Ah yes! methinks not one but all of these combined do constitute the charm which draws mankind to thee, bright ocean, and fills his soul with sympathy and love. For in the changeful aspects of thy visage there are talismans which touch the varied chords that vibrate in the hearts of men. Perchance, in the bold whistle of thy winds, and the mad rolling of thy waves, an emblem of freedom is recognised by crushed and chafing spirits longing to be free. They cannot wall thee round. They cannot map thee into acres and hedge thee in, and leave us naught but narrow roads between. No ploughshare cleaves thee save the passing keel; no prince or monarch owns thy haughty waves. In thy hidden caverns are treasures surpassing those of earth; and those who dwell on thee in ships behold the wonders of the mighty deep. We bow in adoration to thy great Creator; and we bow to thee in love and reverence and sympathy, O sea!

Edith sat on the sea-shore. The glassy waves were no longer encumbered with ice, but shone like burnished gold in the light of the summer sun. Here and there, however, a large iceberg floated on the deepa souvenir of winter past, a guarantee of winter yet to come. At the base of these blue islands the sea, calm though it was, broke in a continual roar of surf, and round their pinnacles the circling sea-birds sailed. The yellow sands on which the child sat, the green willows that fringed the background of brown rocks, and the warm sun, contrasted powerfully with the vestiges of winter on the sea, while a bright parhelia in the sky enriched and strengthened these characteristics of an arctic summer.

There was busy life and commotion in the Esquimau camp, from which Edith had retired to some distance to indulge in solitude the sad reveries of home, which weighed more heavily on her mind as the time flew by and the hope of speedy delivery began to fade.

“O my own dear mother,” sighed the child aloud, while a tear trickled down each cheek, “shall I never see you more? My heart is heavy with wishing, always wishing. But no one comes. I never see a boat or a ship on that wide, wide sea. Oh, when, when will it come?”

She paused, and, as she had often done before, laid her face on her hands and wept. But Edith soon recovered. These bursts of grief never lasted long, for the child was strong in hope. She never doubted that deliverance would come at last; and she never failed to supplicate at the throne of mercy, to which her mother had early taught her to fly in every time of trouble and distress.

Soon her attention was attracted from the sea, over whose wide expanse she had been gazing wistfully, by the loud voices of the Esquimaux, as a number of them prepared to embark in their kayaks. Several small whales had been descried, and the natives, ever on the alert, were about to attack them. Presently Edith observed Peetoot running along the beach towards her with a seal-spear or harpoon in his hand. This youth was a remarkably intelligent fellow, and had picked up a few words and sentences of English, of which he made the most.

“Eeduck! Eeduck!” he cried, pointing to one of the oomiaks which the women were launching, “you go kill whalefunny; yes, Eeduck.”

“I don’t think it will be very funny,” said Edith, laughing; “but I’ll go to please you, Peetoot.”

“Goot, Eeduck; you is goot,” shouted the boy, while he flourished his harpoon, and seizing his companion by the hand, dragged her in the direction of the kayaks.

In a few minutes Edith was ensconced in the centre of the oomiak amid a pack of noisy Esquimau women, whose tongues were loosed and spirits raised by the hope of a successful hunt. They went merely for the purpose of witnessing the sport, which was to be prosecuted by twelve or thirteen men, each in his arrow-like kayak. The women sat round their clumsy boat with their faces to the bow, each wielding a short, broad paddle, with which they propelled their craft at good speed over the glassy wave; but a few alternate dips of the long double-bladed paddles of the kayaks quickly sent the men far ahead of them. In the stern of the oomiak sat an old grey-headed man, who filled the office of steersman; a duty which usually devolves upon old men after they become unfit to manage the kayak. Indeed, it requires much vigour as well as practice to paddle the kayak, for it is so easily upset that a man could not sit in it for a minute without the long paddle, in the clever use of which lies the security of the Esquimau.

When the flotilla had paddled out a short distance a whale rose, and lay as if basking on the surface of the water. Instantly the men in the kayaks shot towards it, while the oomiak followed as fast as possible. On drawing near, the first Esquimau prepared his harpoon. To the barb of this weapon a stout line, from eight to twelve fathoms long, was attached, having a dan, or float, made of a sealskin at the other end of it. The dan was large enough to hold fifteen gallons or more.

Having paddled close to the whale, the Esquimau fixed the harpoon deep in its side, and threw the dan overboard. The whale dived in an agony, carrying the dan down along with it, and the Esquimau, picking up the liberated handle of the harpoon as he passed, paddled in the direction he supposed the whale must have taken. In a short time the dan re-appeared at no great distance. The kayaks, as if shot from a bow, darted towards the spot, and before the huge fish could dive a second time, it received two more harpoons and several deep stabs from the lances of the Esquimaux. Again it dived, carrying two additional dans down with it. But the dragging tendency of these three large floats, combined with the deep wounds it had received, brought the fish sooner than before to the surface, where it was instantly met and assailed by its relentless pursuers, who, in the course of little more than an hour, killed it, and dragged it in triumph to the shore.

The natives were still occupied in towing the captured fish, when one of the men uttered a wild shout, and pointed eagerly out to sea. At first Edith imagined that they must have seen another whale in the distance; but this opinion was quickly altered when she observed the eager haste with which they paddled towards the land, and the looks of surprise with which, ever and anon, they regarded the object on the horizon. This object seemed a mere speck to Edith’s unaccustomed eyes; but as she gazed long and earnestly at it, a thought flashed across her mind. She sprang up; her sparkling eyes seemed as though they would burst from their sockets in her eager desire to make out this object of so great interest. At this moment the oomiak touched the land. With a bound like a gazelle Edith sprang on shore and ran panting with excitement to the top of a rocky eminence. Here she again directed her earnest gaze out to sea, while her colour went and came as she pressed her hands upon her breast in an agony of hope. Slowly but surely the speck came on; the wind shifted a point, which caused a gleam of sunlight to fall upon a sail. It was a boat! there could be no doubt of itand making directly for the island! Unable to contain herself, Edith, uttering a piercing cry, sank upon the ground and burst into a passionate flood of tears. It was the irresistible impulse of hope long deferred at length realised; for the child did not entertain a doubt that this was at length the answer to her prayers.

Meanwhile the Esquimaux ran about in a state of extraordinary excitement. These people had very probably heard of the ships which once a year pass through Hudson's Straits on their way to the depôts on the shores of Hudson's Bay; but they had never met with them, or seen a Kublunat (white face) before that great day in their annals of discovery when they found little Edith fainting in the snow. Their sharp eyes had at once detected that the approaching boat was utterly different from their own kayaks or oomiaks. And truly it was; for as she drew near with her white sails bending before the evening breeze that had recently sprung up, and the Union Jack flying from her peak, and the foam curling before her sharp prow, she seemed a very model of grace and symmetry.

There were only three figures in the boat, one of whom, by the violent gesticulations that he made as they approached, bespoke himself an Esquimau; the other two stood erect and motionless, the one by the tiller, the other by the sheet.

"Let go," said a deep soft voice, when the boat was within a stone's-cast of the shore.

The sheet flapped in the wind as the peak fell, and in another instant the keel grated on the sand.

For one moment a feeling of intense disappointment filled Edith's heart as she sought in vain for the face of her father or Frank; then with a cry of joy she sprang forward and flung herself into the arms of her old enemy, Gaspard!

"Thank God!" said Dick Prince, with a tremulous voice, as he leaped lightly from the boat and clasped the child in his arms; "thank God we have found you, Miss Edith! This will put new life into your poor mother's heart."

"Oh! how is she? Why did she not come with you?" sobbed Edith; while Dick Prince, seating himself on a rock, drew her on his knee and stroked her fair head as she wept upon his shoulder.

Meanwhile Annatock was being nearly devoured by his wife and child and countrymen, as they crowded round him to obtain information, and to heap upon him congratulations; and Gaspard, in order to restrain, and at the same time relieve his feelings, essayed to drag the boat out of the water, in which attempt, giant though he was, being single-handed, he utterly failed.

After the first eager questions were answered on both sides, the natives were informed by their comrade of the nature and objects of the establishment at Ungava, and they exhibited the most extravagant signs of joy on hearing the news. When their excitement was calmed down a little, they conducted the

party to their principal tent, and set before them the choicest viands they possessed, talking vehemently all the while, and indulging in a few antics occasionally, expressive of uncontrollable delight.

“Ye see, Miss Edith,” began Prince, when he and Gaspard were seated before a round of walrus-beef, “the way we came to know your whereabouts was this: Gaspard and me was sent down to the coast to hunt seals, for we were getting short o’ blubber, and did not like to be obleeged to give deer’s-meat to the dogs. Your father gave us the boat; ‘for,’ says he, ‘Prince, it’ll take ye down faster than the canoe with this wind; and if ye see any o’ the natives, be sure ye don’t forget to ask about her, Prince.’ Ye see, Miss Edith, ever since ye was lost we never liked to mention your name, although we often spoke of you, for we felt that we might be speakin’ o’ the dead. Hows’ever, away we went for the shores o’ the bay, and coasted along to the westward a bit. Then we landed at a place where there was a good lot o’ field-ice floatin’, with seals lyin’ on it, and we began to catch them. One day, when we was goin’ down to the ice as usual, we saw a black object sittin’ on a floe that had drifted in the night before with a stiff breeze.

“‘That’s a queer-lookin’ seal,’ says Gaspard.

“‘So ’tis,’ said I. ‘If there was ever black bears up hereabouts, I would say it was one o’ them.’

“‘Put a ball in yer gun,’ says Gaspard; for ye see, as we had been blazin’ at small birds the day before, there was nothing but shot in it. So I put in a ball, and took aim at the beast, intendin’ to give it a long shot. But I was mercifully prevented from firin’. Jist as I squinted along the barrel, the beast rose straight up, and held up both its fore paws. ‘Stop!’ roars Gaspard, in an awful fright; and sure enough I lowered my gun, and the beast hailed us in the voice of a man, and began to walk to the shore. He seemed quite worn out when he landed, and I could understand enough of his jargon to make out that he had been blown out to sea on the floe, and that his name was Annatock.

“While we were talkin’ to the Esquimau, Gaspard cries out, ‘I say, Prince, look here! There’s a sort o’ medal on this chap’s neck with somethin’ written on it. You’re a larned fellow, Prince; see if ye can make it out.’ So I looked at it, and rubbed my eyes once or twice, I can tell you, for, sure enough, there was EDITH as plain as the nose on my face.”

“Oh,” exclaimed Edith, smiling through her tears, “that was the medal I hung round his neck long, long ago! I hoped that it might be seen some day by people who knew me.”

“I thought so, miss,” returned Prince“I thought as much, for I knew that the

Esquimau could never have invented and writ that out of his own head, ye see. But Gaspard and me had most awful trouble to get him to explain how he came by it, and where he came from. Howsoever, we made out at last that he came from an island in this direction; so we just made up our minds to take the boat and come straight away for the island, which we did, takin' Annatock to pilot us."

"Then does my father not know where you are, or anything about your having heard of me?" inquired Edith, in surprise.

"Why, no, Miss Edith," replied Prince. "You see, it would have lost us two or three days to have gone back to Fort Chimo; and, after all, we thought it might turn out a false scent, and only raise your poor mother's hopes for nothin'. Besides, we were sent away for a week or two, so we knew they wouldn't wonder at our absence; so we thought, upon the whole, it would be best to come at once, specially since it was sich a short distance."

"A short distance!" repeated Edith, starting up. "I thought we must be miles and miles, oh, ever so far away! Is the distance really short?"

"Ay, that it is, little one," said Prince, patting the child on the head. "It is not more than three days' rowing from this island, and a stiff breeze on the quarter would carry us there in less than two."

"And Frank, where is Frank?" said Edith,with a look of eager inquiry.

"Ah, miss," replied Prince, "he has been away almost as long as yourself. Soon after you were lost a packet came from the south, and he was obleeged to give up the sarch after youthough he was loath to do itand set out with three o' the men for Moose. From that day to this we've heerd nothin' of him. But the journey he had to make was a long onehavin' to go round all the way to York Fortso we didn't expect to hear o' him afore now. But I'll tell ye more about all your old friends when we gitthings ready for a start to-morrow."

The remainder of that day was spent in making preparation for setting sail on the following morning. The first intimation of the existence of the new trading-fort had thrown the child-like natives into rapturous delight; but when Prince told them he intended to go off the next day with the child who had been as a bright spirit in their camp so long, they fell into the depths of grief. Indeed, there was manifested a slight desire to offer forcible opposition to this; but when Edith told them, through the medium of Peetoot, who acted as her interpreter, that the distance to her father's fort was not great, and that she would expect them to come often there, and stay long, they became reconciled to her departure; and when she sought to turn their minds (a work of no great difficulty at any time) away from that subject by describing to them the

treasures of the trading-store, they danced and laughed and sang like very children. Even Kaga's baby crowed with a racy richness of feeling, and smiled with an oily brilliancy of expression, compared with which all its former exhibitions were mere child's play.

But when the hour of departure really came, and Edith bade farewell to her kind friends, whose rude but warm hospitality she had enjoyed so long, they were again plunged into the deepest distress; and when the little boat finally put to sea, there was not a tearless eye among the tribe, while Edith was swiftly borne from their island shore before a strong and favouring breeze.

Chapter Thirty Three.
The clouds are broken, the sun bursts through and once more irradiate Port ChimoHopes and fears for Maximus.

The wings of time moved slowly and heavily along at Fort Chimo. Hope long deferred, expectation frequently reviving and as often disappointed, crushed the spirits of the little party. The song, and jest, and laugh seldom sounded from the houses of the men, who went through their daily avocations almost in silence. Not only had the loss of Editthe bright spirit of the place, the tender rosebud in that savage wildernesscast an overwhelming gloom upon the fort, but the failure of the trade, to a great extent, had added to the general depression, and now fresh anxiety was beginning to be felt at the non-appearance of Frank Morton.

"Jessie," said Stanley one day, as he rose from the desk at which he had been writing, and put on his cap with the intention of taking a stroll along the beach, "will you come with me today? I know not how it is, but every time I go out now I expect to hear the ship's gun as it comes through the narrows."

Mrs Stanley rose, and throwing on a shawl and hood, accompanied her husband in silence.

"Perhaps," she said at length, "you expect to hear the gun because the vessel ought to be here by this time."

As she spoke, La Roche came up and touched his cap. "Please, madame, vat you vill have pour dinner?"

"Whatever you please, La Roche. Repeat yesterday's," answered Mrs Stanley, with the air of one who did not wish to be troubled further on the subject. But La Roche was not to be so easily put down.

"Ah, madame! pardonnez moi. Dat is impossible. Ve have fresh fish yesterday,

dere be no fresh fish to-day. More de pity. C’est dommagedat Gaspard him gone away”

La Roche was interrupted by a sudden exclamation from his master, who pointed, while he gazed earnestly, towards the narrows of the river. It seemed as if the scene of last year were repeated in a vision. Against the dark rock appeared the white, triangular sail of a vessel. Slowly, like a phantom, it came into view, for the wind was very light; while the three spectators on the beach gazed with beating hearts, scarcely daring to credit their eyes. In a few seconds another sail appeareda schooner floated into view; a white cloud burst from her bows, and once again the long, silent echoes of Ungava were awakened by the roaring of artillery. The men of the fort left their several employments and rushed to the beach to welcome the vessel with a cheer; but although it was heartfelt and vigorous, it was neither so prolonged nor so enthusiastic as it was on the first occasion of the ship’s arrival.

As the vessel dropped anchor opposite the fort, Frank Morton leaped on her bow, and along with the crew returned the cheer with a degree of energy that awakened memories of other days.

“There’s Frank!” cried Stanley, turning on his wife a glance of joy. “Bless the boy! It warms my heart to see him. He must have picked up some Indian woman by the way. I see the flutter of a petticoat.”

As he spoke, the boat pushed off from the vessel’s side, and a few rapid strokes sent it bounding towards the shore.

“Eh! what’s this?” exclaimed Stanley, as his wife broke from him, and with a wild shriek rushed into the lake.

The figure of a child stood on the boat’s bow, with her arms extended to the shore.

“Hurrah, lads! give way!” shouted Frank’s deep voice.

“Mother! mother!” cried the child.

In another moment Frank bounded over the boat’s side and placed Edith in her mother’s arms!

Reader, there are incidents in the histories of men which cannot be minutely described without being marred. Such an one was the meeting between the father and mother and their long-lost child. We refrain from attempting to draw aside the curtain further than to say that the joy and gratitude in more than one heart at Ungava found vent that night in thanksgiving to Him who

can bring light out of darkness and turn sorrow into joy.

The greater part of the day was spent at the fort in that feverish excitement which cannot calm down to steady conversation, but vents itself in eager, rambling questions and abrupt replies. Meanwhile, the necessity of discharging the cargo of the vessel, and preparing the furs for shipment, served to distract the attention and occupy the hands of the whole party.

As evening advanced, La Roche, true to his duty, placed supper on the table, and Stanley and his wife, along with Edith and Frank, while they partook of the meal, continued their inquiries.

“Whereabouts was it, Frank, that you fell in with the boat?” said Stanley.

“Not more than five miles from the mouth of the river, at about six this morning. We observed the boat beset by a pretty solid pack of ice, and you may be sure we were not a little surprised when we saw the Union Jack run up to her peak; so I ordered our boat to be lowered, intending to go to her assistance. While the men were doing this, I examined her with the glass, and then it was that I found, to my amazement and inexpressible joy, that the boat contained Prince, Gaspard, and Edith.”

“Ah! Frank,” said Mrs Stanley, “was it not a strange providence that you, who were so sad at being compelled to give up the search, should be the one appointed to find our beloved child, and bring her back to us?”

“Nay,” replied Frank, “it was not I who found her. Let me not rob Dick Prince and Gaspard of the honour and gratitude which they have nobly won.”

“And what do you think of the non-arrival of Maximus?” said Stanley, whose feelings were still too much perturbed to allow him to dwell for more than a few minutes at a time on any subject. Frank shook his head.

“I know not what to think,” said he. “As I have told you already, we left him at Moose Fort with his recovered bride, and we got the missionary to marry them there in due form. Next day they started in a small canoe on their return voyage to Ungava, and the day following I left for Lake Superior. I fully expected to find them here on my return.”

Stanley looked grave. “I fear much,” said he, “that some mischance has befallen the good-hearted Esquimau. He was well armed, you say, and amply supplied with provisions?”

“Ay, most certainly. He took two guns with him, saying that his wife was as good a shot as himself.”

“The men wish to know where the heavy goods are to be put,” said Massan, as he opened the door, and stood, cap in hand, awaiting orders.

Stanley rose to leave the room.

“I’ll be with you in a minute, Massan.Then, Frank, we’ll expect an account of your journey to-night. Eda is very anxious that we should be told all about your wonderful adventures in the mountains. Meanwhile I shall be off to look after the men.”

When the sun had set that night, and the song of the sailors had ceased, and most of the wearied inhabitants of Fort Chimo were enjoying a fragrant pipe after the labours of the day, Frank and Stanley seated themselves, one on either side of the fire-place, with Mrs Stanley and Edith in front of the hearth between them. An extra pine-knot was thrown on the fire, which, in a few minutes, rendered the candle on the table unnecessary. Stanley lit his pipe, and after drawing one or two whiffs to make sure that it would keep alight, said,“Now, Frank, my boy, we’re ready for you; fire away.”

Frank fired away, literally, for he applied a piece of glowing charcoal to his pipe, and fired off half a dozen rapid puffs in reply, as it were, to his friend opposite. Then he began.

Chapter Thirty Four.
Rough and tumbleA polar bear made usefulFishing and floundering, and narrow escapesAn unexpected discovery, productive of mingled perplexity and joy.

“You remember, I daresay, that the day on which I left Ungava, last spring, was an unusually fine onejust such a day, Eda, as those on which you and I and Chimo were wont to clamber up the berry-glen. But the clambering that we went through there was nothing to the work we went through on our third day from the fort. Maximus and Oolibuck were first-rate climbers, and we would have got over the ground much faster than we did but for the dogs, which could not travel easily over the rough ground with their loaded sled. Chimo, indeed, hauled like a hero, and if the other dogs had been equal to him we would have been here before to-day. Well, as I said, our third day was one of considerable toil. Leaving the river we struck into the mountains, but after nearly breaking our sled to pieces, and endangering our necks more than once, we found it necessary to return to the river and follow its windings into the interior.

“After many days of as rough travelling as I ever experienced, we came to the lake district on the height of land, and travelled for some time more rapidly

and with much greater ease. There were plenty of ptarmigan here, so that we saved our provisionsa matter of importance, as you know, in a country where we might have found nothing fit for food. One evening, towards sunset, as we were crossing a large lake, it came on to snow heavily, and ere long we could not see the land.

"'What shall we do, Maximus?' said I; 'it seems to me that if we go on we may wander out of our course and lose much time ere we find it again. Shall we turn back?'

"'Better go on,' replied Maximus.

"Oolibuck seemed to be of the same opinion, so I gave my whip a flourish to urge on the dogs, which were beginning to flag, owing to the difficulty of drawing the sled through the deepening snow. But the two rear dogs could hardly be prevailed on to move. Even Chimo was knocked up. In this dilemma Maximus came to my aid. He hung one of the ptarmigan at his belt, and letting the dogs smell it, walked on before. The hungry animals brightened up instantly, and went forward for a considerable distance with alacrity.

"But after trudging on for two or three miles, the snow fell so thickly that we thought proper to call a halt and hold another council of war.

"'Now,' said I, 'it is my opinion that we should encamp on the ice; there is no use in wearying the dogs, and ourselves in uncertainty; what think you, lads?'

"'Me t'ink so too,' said Oolibuck.

"Maximus nodded his head by way of assent, so we immediately set to work to make our encampment. You recollect the hut we built on the lake when I was so badly hurt, and when you were lost, Eda? Well, we made a snow-house just like that one; and as we worked very hard, we had it up and were all snug under its shelter in little more than two hours. Meanwhile, the dogs were fed; and a small piece of wood, that we fortunately brought with us on the sled, was cut up, and a fire kindled. But this only served long enough to boil the kettle; and then it went out, leaving us to eat our supper in the dark, for by this time the sun had set. However, we did not mind that much; and when we had finished, and were stretched out side by side on the snow, smoking our pipes, while the dogs lay at our feet and kept us warm, I thought that a palace could not have been more comfortable than our snow-house.

"As we had no wood wherewith to make another fire, and so could not procure water except by the tedious process of digging through the ice, I resolved to try an experiment which I had once heard had been attempted with success. This was, to fill a bottle with snow and take it to bed with me. During the

night the heat of my body melted the snow, and in the morning we had sufficient water to give us each a draught at breakfast.

“When morning came we found that it was blowing and drifting so hard that we could not venture to move; so we made up our minds to remain where we were until the weather should moderate.

“‘Maximus,’ said I, after our breakfast of cold boiled ptarmigan was over, ‘set to work outside and dig a hole through the ice. I have no doubt we shall find fish in this lake. If we do, they will form an excellent addition to our fare. I will prepare the lines and hooks.’

“Maximus, whose huge body was stretched out at full length, while he enjoyed his pipe, rose to obey; but as he was about to leave the hut Oolibuck said a few words to him.

“‘Please, sir,’ said Oolibuck, with his usual oily smile, ‘my countrymen fish in igloo when blow hard. Pr’aps ve make hole here, if you like.’

“‘Very good,’ said I; ‘make the hole where you please, and look sharp about it, else I shall have my lines prepared before you reach the water.’

“The two Esquimaux immediately set to work, and in less than an hour a hole about six feet deep was yawning in the middle of our floor. Through this we set two lines, and our usual luck attended us immediately. We caught five or six excellent white-fish, and one or two trout, in the first half-hour, so that we were enabled to give the dogs a capital feed. Moreover, we froze as many as we could carry along with us for future use; but we had not the satisfaction of having a good dinner of them that day, as we had no wood wherewith to make fire. You would have been greatly amused had you peeped in at the ice-window of our igloo that day, as we sat round the hole in the floor with eager, excited looks. I confess, however, that I left the work principally to the two men, who seemed to relish it amazingly. Maximus was earnest and energetic, as he always is; but the expression of Oolibuck’s face underwent the most extraordinary transformationsnow beaming with intense hope, as he felt, or thought he felt, a tug; anon blazing with excitement, while his body jerked as if a galvanic shock had assailed it, under the influence of a decided pull. Then his visage was elongated as the fish escaped, and was again convulsed by another pull, or shone in triumph as he hauled the wriggling captive into the light of day.

“Towards evening the wind fell, and we resumed our journey. We were not again interrupted by weather for more than a week after this, but were much perplexed by the chains of small lakes into which we came. At last we reached Clearwater Lake, and had a long consultation as to the best course to pursue,

because it was now a question whether we should follow the chain of lakes by which we came up to Ungava in our canoes, or make a straight cut for the coast and take our chance of finding it. While we were yet uncertain what to do, our course was decided by a polar bear!"

"A polar bear!" cried Edith, in surprise.

"Ay; a polar bear and her cub settled the question for us, as you shall hear presently," replied Frank. "But first hand me papa's tobacco-pouch, please, as my pipe is exhausted.

"There, now," continued Frank, re-lighting his pipe, and throwing a fresh log on the fire, "that's comfortable. Well, as I said, we were somewhat perplexed as to what we should do, when, in wandering about the lake endeavouring to find the outlet, I came upon the track of a polar bear; and by the side of it were little foot-prints, which showed me that it was a she-bear with her cub. I observed that the tracks were quite fresh.

"'Now, then, Maximus,' said I, pointing to the tracks, which went to the westward, 'there is a sure guide who will conduct us by the quickest route to the coast.' I could tell this, Eda, because I knew that the bear had found food rather scarce in those high regions, and would descend Clearwater River in order to fish in the open water at the falls, which are very numerous in that river. On reaching the coast it would find plenty seals in the sea. In the meantime I had nothing to do but follow its track to be conducted by the shortest route to Clearwater River, the commencement of which was difficult to find owing to the flatness of the margin of the lake at this end. Away we went then, and, as I had expected, were soon led to the river, down the banks of which we scrambled, over rocks and crags, through bushes and snow, until we came to the coast at Richmond Gulf.

"But it took us many weeks to accomplish the journey which I have briefly sketched thus far, and when we reached the coast, worn with hard travel, and our clothing uncomfortably ragged, the spring was well advancedrivers were breaking up, ducks and geese were passing to the north, and there were thousands of deer, so that we found ourselves suddenly in the midst of abundance. Just before reaching the gulf I witnessed the breaking up of a river, which was one of the grandest sights I ever saw.

"The river was not a very large one. On reaching it we were much struck with a curious barrier of ice that was jammed across it. On examination I saw that the ice had given way some time before we arrived there, and an enormous cake, of many yards surface and fully six feet thick, had, while being hurled along by the swelling water, caught upon the rugged rocks and been tilted

upon end. Thus it formed a temporary barrier, against which other masses were forced until the outlet was completely checked, and the water began to rise with great rapidity. As we stood on the high cliff, looking down on the wild ravine in which this was going on, I heard a loud crack. In another instant the obstructing barrier burst like a thunderclap, and the pent-up waters leaped with one mighty roar into their accustomed channel! The devastation created was inconceivably grand. Rocks of many tons weight were torn up, cast like playthings on the rushing ice, and hurled on the cliffs below, while trees, and ice, and water swept down the gorge in a mad whirl, that made my brain reel as I gazed at it. In an hour the worst of this awful scene was over, but the unutterable desolation that was left will remain for centuries, I believe, to tell of the mighty rush that happened there.

“Our first experience of Richmond Gulf was not by any means pleasant. When we arrived it was covered with ice; but we did not know that, although it appeared to be solid enough, it was in reality little better than frozen sludge or foam. Oolibuck happened to be walking first, with the line of his little sled over his shoulder. For a short distance we plodded on, intending to cross the gulf; but I was suddenly aroused from a reverie by a shout from Maximus. Looking hastily up, I beheld nothing of Oolibuck except his head above the ice, while Maximus was trying to pull him out by hauling at the tail-line of the sled. Luckily Oolibuck had kept fast hold of the line which was over his shoulder, and after much trouble we succeeded in dragging him out of the water. A sharp frost happened to have set in, and before we got back to the shore the poor fellow’s garments were frozen so stiff that he could not run.

“‘This is a bad job, Maximus,’ said I; ‘we must carry him. Do you lift his head, and I’ll take the feet.’

“‘Oh be queek! I is frizzen up,’ cried Oolibuck, casting a rueful look through his tangled locks, which were a mere mass of icicles!

“Maximus gave a loud chuckle, and before I could assist him he seized his comrade in his powerful arms, heaved him over his shoulder like a sack, and ran towards the shore as lightly as if his burden were a child instead of a big over-fed Esquimau!

“Arrived at the woods, we wrapped Oolibuck in our blankets; then we kindled a fire, and in two hours after his clothes were dried and himself ready to proceed. This might have turned out a more serious accident, however, and we felt very thankful when we had our damp companion steaming beside a good fire. The lesson was not thrown away, for we coasted round Richmond Gulf instead of attempting to cross it.

“And now,” continued Frank, stirring the fire and re-lighting his pipe, which invariably went out at the interesting parts of his narrative“now I come to that part of my story which bears on the fate of Maximus.

“As I have said, we had arrived at the coast, and began to look forward to Moose Fort as the first resting-place on our journey. By far the greater part of the journey lay before us, Eda; for, according to my calculation, I have travelled since last spring a distance of three thousand miles, nearly a thousand of which have been performed on foot, upwards of a thousand in boats and canoes, and a thousand by sea; and in the whole distance I did not see a civilised spot of ground or a single roadnot so much as a bridle-path. As Bryan’s favourite song has it

“‘Over mountains and rivers I was pelted to shivers.’

“But I’m happy to say I have not, as the same song continues, ‘met on this land with a wathery grave.’ I was very near it once, however, as you shall hear.

“Well, away we went along the coast of James’s Bay, much relieved to think that the mountains were now past, and that our road henceforth, whatever else it might be, was level. One evening, as we were plodding wearily along, after a hard day’s march over soft snow alternated with sandy beachfor the spring was fast advancingwe came suddenly on a camp of Indians. At first I thought they must be some of the Moose Indians, but on inquiry I found that they were a party of Muskigons, who had wandered all over East Main, and seemed to be of a roving, unsettled disposition. However, we determined to encamp along with them for that night, and get all the information we could out of them in regard to their hunting-grounds.

“We spent a great part of the night in the leathern wigwam of the principal chief, who was a sinister-looking old rascal, though I must say he received us hospitably enough, and entertained us with a good deal of small-talk, after time and the pipe had worn away his reserve. But I determined to spend part of the night in the tent of a solitary old woman who had recently been at Moose Fort, and from whom I hoped to hear some news of our friends there. You know I have had always a partiality for miserable old wives, Eda; which accounts, perhaps, for my liking for you! This dame had been named Old Moggy by the people at Moose; and she was the most shrivelled, dried-up, wrinkled old body you ever saw. She was testy too; but this was owing to the neglect she experienced at the hands of her tribe. She was good-tempered by nature, however; a fact which became apparent the longer I conversed with her.

“‘Well, Old Moggy,’ said I, on entering her tent, ‘what cheer, what cheer?’

“‘There’s no cheer here,’ she replied peevishly, in the Indian tongue.

“‘Nay, then,’ said I, ‘don’t be angry, mother; here’s a bit o’ baccy to warm your old heart. But who is this you have got beside you?’ I asked, on observing a good-looking young girl, with a melancholy cast of countenance, seated in a dark corner of the wigwam, as if she sought concealment. I observed that she was whiter than Indians usually are, and supposed at first that she was a half-breed girl; but a second glance convinced me that she had little if any of the Indian blood in her veins.

“‘She is my only friend,’ said Old Moggy, her dark eye brightening as she glanced towards the girl. ‘She was to have been my son’s wife, but the Great Spirit took my son away. She is all that is left to me now.’

“The old woman’s voice trembled as she spoke the last few words, and she spread her skinny hands over the small fire that smouldered in the centre of the floor.

“I was proceeding to make further inquiries into this girl’s history, when the curtain-door of the tent was raised and Oolibuck thrust in his shaggy head.

“‘Please, sir, de ole chief him wants baccy. I have smoke all mine. Vill you give some?’

“‘Here you are,’ said I, throwing a lump to the Esquimau. ‘Send Maximus to me; I want to speak with him.’

“‘I is here,’ said Maximus, outside the tent.

“‘Ah! that’s right.Now, Old Moggy, I’ll be back in a few minutes, so don’t go to sleep till I return.’

“As I was about to issue from the tent, the young girl passed me hastily, and, drawing the hood over her head and face, darted through the opening. I found Maximus gazing after her in surprise.

“‘Hallo, Maximus! what’s wrong? Do you think the girl’s a witch?’

“‘No; but I t’ink she be funny. She look close into my face, and fly ’way when you come hout o’ tent.’

“‘That’s odd. Did you ever see her before?’

“‘I not see her yet. She keep face covered up.’

“‘Well, come along, it doesn’t signify. I want you to go with me to the chief’s wigwam, to ask where we are to put the dogs for the night, and to see about

our own quarters.’

“Old Moggy’s wigwam stood at the distance of several hundred yards from the other tents of the village, from which it was separated by a belt of stunted trees and willows. Through this copsewood Maximus and I took our way, following one of the many beaten tracks made by the Indians. The night was clear, and we found no difficulty in picking our steps among the low shrubs. When we were about half-way through this wood, I observed a female form gliding among the bushes. She ran towards Maximus, who walked in advance and concealed me with his bulky form. But a slight bend in the road revealed my figure, and the woman paused, as if uncertain what to do.

“‘Surely that is your unknown friend again,’ said I, as we both halted. Then I beckoned her to approach. At first she appeared unwilling to do so; but suddenly she seemed to change her mind, and walking boldly up to Maximus, she threw back her hood and stood before him. I observed that she was Moggy’s young friend, but a wondrous change had come over her. The pale cheeks were now covered with a bright blush, and the sad eyes were sparkling with animation, as she gazed intently into the face of the Esquimau. For a few seconds Maximus looked like one thunder-struck. ‘Aneetka!’ he exclaimed vehemently, and, striding forward with a suppressed cry, clasped the girl in his arms.

“You may easily conceive my surprise at this scene. Immediately the recollection of the attack by the Indians on the Esquimau camp, and of Maximus’s young bride having been carried off, flashed upon me, and I had no doubt that the Esquimau girl now stood before me. Indeed, the fact of the broken exclamations uttered by the pair being in the Esquimau tongue put this beyond a doubt. A feeling of great delight filled my heart as I looked upon the couple thus unexpectedly reunited; while they, quite oblivious of my presence, poured out a flood of question and reply, in the midst of which they ever and anon embraced, to make sure, no doubt, of their physical identity. Then it suddenly occurred to me that I was behaving very ill, so I wheeled about and sauntered away to a little distance in the direction of the shore, in order to take some astronomical observations of the sky, and gaze inquiringly up at the moon, which at that moment broke through a bank of clouds, tipping the icebergs on the sea and the branches of the overhanging trees with silver light.

“In quarter of an hour Maximus came to me and presented his long-lost bride, Aneetka, whose pretty face beamed with joy, while her lover’s frame appeared to expand with felicity until he looked like an exaggerated Hercules. But we had no time to waste in talking of the past. The present required our instant and earnest attention; so we sat down on the stem of a fallen tree to consult as to how we were to get Aneetka out of the hands of her Indian captors. Her

brief history, after she was captured at Ungava, was as follows:

“The Indian who had intended to make her his bride found her resolved rather to die than to marry him; but hoping that time would overcome her objection, he placed her under the care of his widowed mother, Old Moggy, on returning to his village in the interior. Soon afterwards this Indian was killed by a brown bear, and the poor mother became a sort of outcast from the tribe, having no relations to look after her. She was occasionally assisted, however, by two youths, who came to sue for the hand of the Esquimau girl. But Aneetka, true to her first love, would not listen to their proposals. One of these lovers was absent on a hunting expedition at the time we discovered Aneetka; the other, a surly fellow, and disliked by the most of his comrades, was in the camp. From the day of her son’s death, a feeling of sympathy had sprung up between Old Moggy and the Esquimau girl, and this had gradually strengthened into affection.

“Thus matters stood when we fell in with her. After much deliberation, it was resolved that I should go to the old chief and tell him that Old Moggy and her adopted child wished to quit the tribe and go to Moose with us, to live there; while Aneetka should go and acquaint her old protectress with our plans and her own altered circumstances.

“‘Adieu, then, Aneetka,’ said I, as the girl pushed her lover away and bounded into the woods.‘Now, Maximus, nothing will do for it but stout hearts and strong arms. Come along, lad.’

“I found, to my surprise, that the old chief had no objection to the arrangement I proposed. A few of the others did not seem inclined to part with their captive; but I explained to them the advantage it would be to them to have friends at court, as it were, and said that the fur-traders would be glad to support Moggy in her old agewhich was true enough, for you all know as well as I do that there is not a post in the country where there are not one or more old or otherwise helpless Indians supported gratuitously by the Hudson’s Bay Company. The only man who resolutely opposed the proposal was Meestagoosh, the rejected lover; but I silenced him in a novel manner. He was a tall, powerful fellow, of about my own size.

“‘Come,’ said I to his assembled comrades, in the Indian language, for I found they understood my bad mixture of Cree and Sauteaux very well‘come, friends, let us deal fairly in this matter. My man there has taken a fancy to the girllet Meestagoosh and Maximus wrestle for her.’

“A loud laugh greeted this proposal, as the Indians surveyed the huge proportions of my Esquimau.

“‘Well, then,’ I continued, ‘if Meestagoosh is afraid of the Esquimau, I have no objections to try him myself.’ The Indian looked at me with an angry glance, and seemed, I thought, half inclined to accept the challenge; so, to cut the matter short, I took him by the throat and hurled him to the grounda feat which was evidently enjoyed by his countrymen.

“Meestagoosh rose and retired with a savage scowl on his face, and I saw no more of him. Indeed, I believe he left the camp immediately.

“After this no opposition was offered, and I made the matter sure by distributing a large quantity of powder, shot, and tobacco to the chiefs. Old Moggy made no objection to our plan, so we set out the next day with an additional dog purchased from the Indians in order to make our team strong enough to haul the old woman when she got knocked up with walking. Six days brought us to Moose Fort, just as the ice on the river was breaking up. Here, as I have already told you, Maximus and Aneetka were married in due form by the Wesleyan missionary, after they had received some instruction and expressed their desire to become Christians. Then they were supplied with a canoe and all necessary provisions, and sent off to go round the coast to Ungava, accompanied by our good dog Chimo, for whom we had now no further use, and by Old Moggy, who would not consent to be separated from her friend Aneetka. They started along the coast on a fine spring day, and the back of his sealskin coat, shining in the sun’s rays like velvet, as the canoe swept out to sea, and disappeared behind a low point, was the last that I saw of Maximus.

“I will not weary you just now,” continued Frank, “with the details of my subsequent journeying, as, although full of incidents, nothing of a very thrilling character occurred except once. At Moose I remained till the rivers were clear of ice, and then set off into the interior of the country with a small canoe and five men, Oolibuck being bowsman. For many days we voyaged by rivers and lakes, until we arrived at the Michipicoten River, which is a very rough one, and full of tremendous falls and rapids. One day, while we were descending a rapid that rushed through a dark gorge of frowning rocks, and terminated in a fall, our canoe was broken in two, and the most of us thrown into the water. We all swam ashore in safety, with the exception of one man, who clung to the canoe, poor fellow, and was carried along with it over the fall. We never saw him more, although we searched long and carefully for his body.

“We now found ourselves in a very forlorn condition. We were dripping wet, without the means of making a fire, and without provisions or blankets, in the midst of a wild, uninhabited country. However, we did not lose heart, but set off on foot to follow the river to its mouth, where we knew we should find

relief at Michipicoten Fort. The few days that followed were the most miserable I ever passed. We allayed the cravings of hunger by scraping off the inner bark of the trees, and by a few of last year's berries which had been frozen and so preserved. Once or twice we crossed the river on rafts of drift-wood, and at night lay down close to each other under the shelter of a tree or cliff. At length we arrived at the fort on Lake Superior, quite worn out with fatigue and starvation. Here we waited until the canoes from Canada passed; and after a somewhat similar voyage, through woods, rivers, and lakes, arrived at length, about the beginning of autumn, at York Fort, on Hudson's Bay.

"Here I spent some weeks in recalling to memory and recording on paper the contents of my dispatches, which had been lost, along with our canoe and baggage, in Michipicoten River; and when these were finished and delivered, I embarked, along with our outfit of goods, in the Beaver, and sailed for Ungava. I need scarcely add that the voyage was a prosperous one, and that the brightest day in it all was that on which we found the boat, with our dear little Edith, beset among the ice near the entrance to Ungava Bay."

While Frank was thus occupied in narrating the events of his long journey in the hall of Fort Chimo, Oolibuck was similarly employed in entertaining the men. After the day's toil of unloading the ship was over, he was placed in the middle of the circle, directly in front of the blazing fire, by Dick Prince and Massan; while Moses, Oostesimow, Gaspard, and Ma-istequan sat on his right; and Bryan, La Roche, François, and Augustus supported him on the leftall having pipes in their mouths, which were more or less blackened by constant use. A pipe was then handed to Oolibuck, and the order given, generally by Bryan, "to blaze away."

This the oily-visaged Esquimau did with right good-will; and the shouts of laughter which issued from the house occasionally, as he proceeded with his interminable narration, proved that the spirit and humour of the stout voyageur had not been crushed by the trials and dangers of his long, eventful journey.

Chapter Thirty Five.
A stirring period in the life of Maximus.

Intermingled joy and sorrow is the lot of man. Thus it has ever been; thus, no doubt, it shall continue to be until the present economy shall have reached its termination. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" is a sufficient reply to those who would fain have it otherwise. But, independently of this view of the subject, may we not, with the painter's eye, regard joy as the light, sorrow as the shade, in the picture of life? And who would have a painting all light or all shadow?

Maximus found it so in his experience. The shadows in the picture of his life had of late been broad and dark, but a flash of vivid brilliancy had crossed it when he found his bride. Afterwards the light and shade were chequered, as we shall see.

On leaving Moose, Maximus proceeded a day's journey along the coast, and at night, as the weather was fine, he encamped with his wife and Old Moggy and Chimo on the open seashore. Here he held a consultation as to their future proceedings. As long as they were on the shore of James's Bay they were in danger of being found by Indians; but once beyond Richmond Gulf they would be comparatively safe, and in the land of the Esquimaux. After mature deliberation it was resolved that they should travel during the night, and rest and cook their food during the daytime, when a fire would not be so likely to attract attention if kindled in sequestered places.

This plan answered very well, and they passed stealthily along the coast when the Indians, if there were any there, were buried in repose. On approaching the camp of the tribe, however, from whom Aneetka had been taken, Maximus deemed it advisable to paddle far out to seathe weather being fortunately calmand to rest for a day and a night as well as they could in their frail bark. Maximus sat in the stern of the canoe and steered; his wife sat in the bow and paddled day after day as vigorously as if she had been a man. As for poor Old Moggy, she sat in the middle and paddled a little when she felt cold; but she slept during the greater part of the journey. Chimo conceived it to be his duty to enjoy himself, and did so accordingly, at all times and in every possible way.

During that livelong day and night, and all the following day, the giant's arm never flagged; Aneetka, too, rested only once or twice at the earnest request of her husband; but the little bark never once slackened its speed until the second night. Then Old Moggy was awakened.

"Mother," said Aneetka, who acted as interpreter between her husband and the old woman, "we want to sleep for an hour or two. You seem to have rested well. Will you wake and watch?"

The old woman yawned, rubbed her eyes, and assented, after the question had been twice repeated. Then laying their heads on opposite sides of the canoe, without otherwise changing their positions, the husband and wife sank into repose.

Two hours afterwards the old Indian woman, who had remained motionless as a dark statue all the time, uttered a slight sound. Instantly the sleepers awoke, for those who are in the midst of danger sleep lightly.

“It is time to go on,” said the old woman, as she lay back again in her lair, rolled herself up into a bundle, and went to sleep.

Maximus and his wife resumed their paddles, and the light craft glided swiftly on its way to the far north.

As the sun rose they neared the land, and soon after they were seated not far from a high cliff, eating their breakfast beside a small fire, which sent so thin a column of smoke into the air that it was almost dissipated ere it reached the tree-tops. It was hoped that the Indians had been now so far overshot that there was no danger of even a straggler being near them. But they took the precaution to load their two guns with ball, and lean them against a tree within reach of their hands. When the meal was over, Maximus retired from the fire a few paces, and throwing himself at full length on the green moss beneath a tree, he fell into a sound sleep.

He had not lain thus more than quarter of an hour when he was startled by the report of a gun, which was followed by a wild scream and a chorus of unearthly yells. At the same instant, and ere he could attempt to rise, his legs and arms were pinioned to the ground by four powerful Indians. For an instant Maximus was paralysed. Then the terrible reality of his position, the scream of Aneetka, and the sight of the thong with which his captors were about to bind him, caused his spirit to rebound with a degree of violence that lent him for the moment the strength of a giant. With a shout, in which even a tone of contempt seemed to mingle the Esquimau hurled his captors right and left, and sprang to his feet. The Indians fled; but one, who was a moment later in rising than the others, received a blow that felled him instantly. Maximus glanced quickly round in search of his wife, and observed her being hurried away by two Indians. As the arrow leaps from the bow the Esquimau sprang forward in pursuit. The Indians saw him coming. In bitter anger they prepared to let her go and fly, for having dropped their guns in the scuffle they were unable to fire upon their approaching foe. But there were other Indians in the bush whose weapons were levelled at the breast of Maximus, and the next moment would have been his last, but for a stone thrown from the cliffs above, which struck him on the forehead and stretched him bleeding and insensible upon the ground.

When Maximus recovered from the effects of the blow, he found himself lying on the cold earth in total darkness, and firmly bound hand and foot. It is impossible to describe the agony of that bold spirit as he lay writhing on the ground, in the vain effort to burst the cords that bound him. He thought of Aneetka and his own utter helplessness, while she was, no doubt, in urgent need of his strong arm to deliver her. The thought maddened him, and again he strove in vain to burst his fetters, and yelled aloud in despair. The echoing

rocks gave back his cry, and then all was silence. The dreadful thought now flashed across him that the Indians had buried him alive in some dark cavern, and brave though he was, he trembled in every limb with agony.

Thus Maximus lay until the grey dawn shone in upon him, and showed that he was in a cave. Scarcely had he noted this fact when the figure of a man darkened the cave's mouth and approached him. As the Indian bent over his helpless foe he revealed the savage features of Meestagoosh. For an instant he cast a look of mingled hatred and triumph on his enemy; then drawing a scalping-knife from his girdle, he stooped and cut the thong that bound his feet, at the same time signing to him to rise, for he knew that Maximus did not understand Indian. The Esquimau obeyed, and was led by the Indian through the woods towards the cliff where the struggle of the previous night had taken place. Here they came suddenly into view of the Indian camp.

There were no tents: several green blankets that lay on the moss under the trees indicated where the party had lain during the night; and at a considerable distance apart from these sat Old Moggy, with her face buried in her skinny hands. Beside her stood Aneetka, with a calm but slightly anxious expression on her pale countenance. Chimo was held in a leash by an Indian. From the fact of the Indians being without tents or women, and having their faces daubed with red paint, besides being armed with knives, guns, and tomahawks, Maximus concluded that they composed a war party.

On seeing her husband, Aneetka uttered a suppressed cry and bounded towards him; but ere she had proceeded two paces an Indian laid his hand on her arm, and led her back to where the old woman sat. Meestagoosh led Maximus to the same spot, and having confronted him with his wife, he said to the latter,"Now, she-bear of the north, translate between us. If I think you tell lies, the dogs shall have your bones to pick."

Aneetka replied meekly, "You cannot hurt one hair of our heads unless the Great Spirit permit you."

"We shall see," retorted the Indian with a scornful laugh. "Tell the polar bear," continued Meestagoosh, in a contemptuous tone, "that I did not expect to catch him so soon. I have been fortunate. It was kind of him to come in my way, and to bring his she-bear with him. Tell him that I and my braves are going to pay a visit to his nation, to take a few scalps. I let him know this piece of good news because he will never know it from his friends, as he shall be food for dog very soon."

On this being translated, the face of Maximus assumed an expression of deep gravity mingled with sadness. His mind flew to the far north, and he thought

of the midnight assault and the death-cry of women and children. The nature of the Esquimau was too noble and generous to be easily ruffled by the contemptuous tone of such a man as Meestagoosh; but his heart sank within him when he thought of the power as well as the will that the Indian had to put his threat into execution.

“Tell him,” said Maximus quietly, “that I have no wish to talk with him, but remind him that Indians are not gods; they are men.”

“Yes, he says truly,” retorted Meestagoosh, “the Indians are men, but Esquimaux are dogs.”

While this conversation was going on, and the Indians were intent upon the scene, Old Moggy, who was not deemed worthy of being noticed, contrived unobserved to possess herself of a knife, and springing suddenly towards Maximus with an agility of which she seemed utterly incapable, she endeavoured to cut the thongs that bound his arms. Her hand was caught, however, by Meestagoosh, in time to frustrate her intention. Without deigning a word of remark, the Indian struck her a heavy blow on the cheek with the back of his open hand, which nearly stunned her. Staggering backward, she fell upon the ground with a low wail.

The bosom of Maximus felt as if it would burst with rage. Before any one could prevent him, he raised his foot and struck Meestagoosh so violently on the chest that he fell as if he had been shot. In a moment he recovered, drew his knife, and springing like an infuriated tiger at his enemy, drove it with deadly force at his throat. Fortunately the arms of Maximus were tied in front of him, so that by raising them he was enabled to guard his chest and receive the stab on his wrist. The knife passed quite through the fleshy part of his left arm, but in doing so it severed one of the cords that bound him. Thought is not quicker than the mighty wrench with which the Esquimau burst the remaining cord and dashed his opponent to the ground. Before the astonished Indians could level their guns, Maximus had seized Aneetka in his arms and was bounding madly towards the cliff, which was not more than fifty yards distant. Every gun poured forth its deadly contents before he gained it; but his very nearness to the Indians seemed to contribute to his safety, and the suddenness of his flight rendered their hasty aim uncertain. In another moment he was round the point and behind the sheltering cliff, while the Indians uttered a terrific yell and darted forward in pursuit. Just about thirty paces beyond the point of the cliff that hid him for a few moments from view was the cave in which Maximus had spent the night. Quick as thought he sprang up the steep short ascent that led to its narrow entrance and darted in.

Scarcely had he placed Aneetka behind a projection that formed an ample

shelter at the mouth of the cave, when Chimo, who had broken from his captors, also darted in and crouched at his master's feet. Meanwhile the Indians came sweeping round the point, and seeing by the entrance of the dog where the fugitives had taken shelter, they bounded up the ascent. The first who reached the cave's mouth rashly passed the entrance. Ere he could fire his piece he received a blow from the fist of the Esquimau that fractured his skull, hurled him down the steep ascent, and dashed him against his comrades in the rear. This sudden repulse effectually checked the Indians, who are notoriously bad at storming. Indeed they would never have ventured to enter the cave in this manner had they not known that Maximus was totally unarmed.

Withdrawing to a distance of about forty yards, the Indians now formed in a line, and loading their guns, fired volley after volley into the cave's mouth. But Maximus and his wife crouched with the dog behind the ledge of rock at the entrance, and remained there in perfect safety. In a few minutes the Indians ceased firing, and one of their number cautiously approached the cave, supposing, no doubt, that the fusillade must have wounded if it had not killed those within; but the instant he passed the entrance, knife in hand, he was caught in the powerful arms of Maximus and hurled down the slope.

A yell of indignation from the Indians followed this feat, and another volley was fired into the cave, but without effect; and the savages, seeing that it was impossible in this way to dislodge their foe, assembled in a group to consult.

Meanwhile Old Moggy had made good use of the opportunity thus afforded her to effect her escape. She darted into the bushes and made for the rocky ground in the rear of the camp. In doing so she happened to pass the tree against which leaned the two guns belonging to her friends. They had escaped notice during the mêlée of the previous day, and, with the shot-belts and powder-horns, remained where they had been placed when she and her companions landed. The old woman eagerly seized these, and clambered with them over the rocks at a rate that would have done credit to more youthful limbs. On reaching a ridge of rock that overlooked the cave where Maximus was sheltered, Old Moggy became aware of how matters stood. She could also see, from her elevated position, that a track, or the bed of a dried-up watercourse, led through the bushes towards the cave. Without a moment's delay she descended it; but, on drawing near to the cave, she found that there was a barren spot of about thirty yards in extent between the place of refuge and the edge of the bushes. This open space was completely exposed to the view of the natives, who at that time were firing across it into the cavern; for, after their consultation, they had changed their position and renewed the fusillade. Moggy was now in despair. She knew that it would be impossible to pass the open ground without being shot, and she also felt certain that, when

the Indians found their present attempts were fruitless, they would resort to others, in prosecuting which they would in all probability discover her. While she meditated thus, she looked earnestly towards the cave, and observed the astonished gaze of Maximus fixed upon her; for, from his position behind the ledge of rock, he could see the old woman without exposing himself to the Indians. While they gazed at each other a thought occurred to Old Moggy. She made a series of complicated signs, which, after frequent repetition, were understood by Maximus to mean that he was to expose himself to the view of the Indians. Instantly comprehending her meaning, the Esquimau stepped boldly from his place of concealment and shook his fist contemptuously in the face of his enemies. A shower of bullets and a yell of rage followed the act. This was just what Old Moggy had expected and desired. Not a gun remained undischarged, and before they could reload, she passed quickly over the open ground and bounded into the cave, where she turned and shook aloft the two guns with a hoarse laugh of triumph ere she sought the shelter of the ledge of rock.

The Indians were so filled with fury at being thus outwitted by an old woman, that they forgot for a moment their usual caution, and rushed in a body up the slope; but ere they had accomplished half the distance two of their number fell, to rise no more. This was sufficient to check their career. Howling with baffled rage, and without waiting to pick up their fallen comrades, they darted right and left to seek the shelter of the bushes, for they could no longer remain in the open ground, now that their enemies were armed.

For nearly an hour after this all was silence. Maximus and his companions could only form conjectures as to the movements of the Indians, for none of them were to be seen. However, as they had no resource but to remain in their retreat until night-fall, they endeavoured to make the place as comfortable as possible, and busied themselves in cleaning their arms.

It happened that from the cave’s mouth they could see their canoe, which still lay on the beach where they had originally left it; and, while they were looking at it, they perceived one of the Indians stealing down towards it. Fortunately Maximus had a gun in his hand ready loaded, and the instant the Indian appeared he fired and shot him. No second Indian dared to venture towards the little craft, although it lay only a few yards distant from the edge of the forest; for they knew that the watchful eye of the Esquimau was upon them, and that instant death would be the fate of him who should make the attempt. The little canoe now became an object of intense interest to both parties. The Indians knew that if their foe should succeed in reaching it he could easily escape. This, of course, he could not hope to do as long as daylight lasted; nor even when night should arrive, unless it were a very dark one. But, on the other

hand, they knew that they did not dare to venture near it so long as there was sufficient light to enable Maximus to take aim at them with his deadly gun. Both parties, therefore, remained silent and apparently inactive during the remainder of the day.

But the busy brains both of Indians and Esquimaux were, during this weary interval, employed in planning how to circumvent each other. As the shades of night deepened, each became more watchful. Once only did Maximus move from his post, in order to go to the farther end of the cave, where the large powder-horn had been placed for safety. As he did so, Chimo, who was tied to a rock, tried to follow him, and on finding that he was restrained, uttered a loud, mournful howl. This cry sent a thrill to the heart of Maximus, for it immediately occurred to him that any attempt to leave the cave stealthily would instantly be intimated to the watchful foe by the dog, and to take Chimo with them was impossible.

“The dog must die,” said Old Moggy, who divined at once what was passing in the man’s mind.

Maximus shook his head sadly.

“I cannot kill Chimo,” he said to Aneetka; “he is Edith’s dog.”

Aneetka made no reply, for she felt the power of her husband’s objection to injure the dog of his little favourite; yet she could not but perceive that the crywhich was invariably repeated when any of the party moved away from the animalwould betray them in the moment of danger. Nothing further was said for some time, but Old Moggy, who had no tender reminiscences or feelings in regard to the dog, proceeded quietly and significantly to construct a running-noose on the stout thong of leather that encircled her waist and served as a sash.

While she was thus engaged the sun’s last rays faded away and the night began to deepen around them. To the satisfaction of both parties the sky was draped with heavy clouds, which gave promise of a night of intense darkness. This was absolutely essential not only to the Indians but to Maximus, who had at length formed a plan by which he hoped to turn the dreaded cry of the dog to good account, although he had little hope of saving it from the Indians, should he succeed in escaping with the women. As the night grew darker he began to put this plan in execution.

Taking his station at the entrance of the cave, he took a long and steady aim at the bow of the canoe, which could now be only seen dimly. Having adjusted the gun to his satisfaction he marked its position exactly on the rock, so that, when the canoe should be entirely hid from sight, he could make certain of

hitting any object directly in front of it. Then he ordered Moggy and his wife to keep moving about the cave, so that the howling of Chimo should be kept up continually, and thus not appear unusual when they should really forsake the cave and attempt their escape. In order to show that he was still on the alert, he shortly after aimed at the canoe, which was now quite invisible, and fired. The effect was more startling than had been expected. A death-cry rent the air and mingled with the reverberations of the shot, proving that it had taken deadly effect on one of the Indians, who, under cover of the darkness, had ventured to approach the coveted canoe. A volley was instantly fired in the direction of the cave from various parts of the bushes, but without effect.

Maximus now kept up a continued fire, sometimes discharging a succession of rapid shots, at other times firing at irregular intervals of from three to ten minutes. This he did purposely, with a view to his future plans. In the meantime the dog was made to keep up a continuous howling.

“Now, Aneetka,” said Maximus, as the ring of his last shot died away, “go, and may the Great Spirit guide thee!”

Without a word of reply, the two women glided noiselessly like shadows into the thick darkness. About two minutes after they had disappeared, Maximus again fired several shots, taking care, however, to point considerably to the right of the canoe. Then he ceased for three minutes, and again fired several shots irregularly. At the last shot he passed from the cave so silently and quickly that even Chimo was deceived, and snuffed the air for a moment ere it renewed its sad wailing. In less than two minutes the Esquimau had glided, with the noiseless tread of a panther, to the spot where the canoe lay. Here he found his wife and the old woman crouching beside it. The water’s edge was about ten yards distant. A few seconds would suffice to lift the light bark in his powerful arms and launch it. Aneetka and the old woman, who had already received minute instructions what to do, had glided quietly into the sea the instant Maximus touched them; for, as we have said, it was intensely dark and they could not see a yard before them. The women now stood up to the knees in water, with their paddles in their hands ready to embark.

Stooping down, the Esquimau seized the canoe; but, just as he was about to lift it, he observed a tall dark object close to his side.

“Wah!” whispered the Indian, “you are before me. Quick! the Esquimau dog will fire again.”

The words of the Indian were cut short by the iron gripe of Maximus on his throat, and the next instant he was felled by a blow that would have stunned an ox. So decided and quick was the action that it was not accompanied by more

noise than might have been caused by the Indian endeavouring to lift the canoe, so that his comrades were not alarmed. Next moment the canoe was in the water. But the long silence, which had now been unbroken for eight or ten minutes, except by the howling of Chimo in the cave, began to arouse the suspicion of the red men; and no sooner was this the case than they glided from the bushes in all directions with noiseless tread. In a second or two the body of their fallen comrade was discovered, and a yell of fury rent the air (for concealment was now unnecessary), while they dashed into the water in pursuit. The darkness favoured the fugitives for a few seconds, and enabled the women to embark; but just as Maximus was about to step into his place, Meestagoosh seized him by the throat!

Maximus was possessed of that ready presence of mind and prompt energy of character which are so necessary to a warrior, especially to him who wars with the prowling and stealthy savage. Almost in the same instant he gave the canoe a shove that sent it bounding out to sea, and raised his hand to catch the invisible arm which he knew must be descending with the deadly knife towards his heart. He succeeded so far that, although he did not arrest it, he turned the blow aside, receiving only a slight wound on the shoulder. Ere it could be repeated, he dealt his adversary a blow on the forehead, and hurled him back insensible into the water.

The Esquimau immediately glided out into deep water; and now, for the first time in his life, he felt keenly the disadvantage of not being able to swim. This is an art which the inhabitants of the icy seas have never acquired, owing probably to the shortness of the season of open water, and the intense cold of the ice-laden seas, even in summer. The Indians, on the contrary, who live beside the warm lakes and rivers of the interior, are many of them pretty expert swimmers. Thus it happened that Maximus was obliged to stand up to his neck in the water, not daring to move or utter a sound, while his friends and foes alike sought in vain for him in the darkness.

While he stood thus, uncertain how to act, he heard the water rippling near to him, and distinguished the hard breathing of a swimmer. Soon he observed a dark head making straight towards him. A sarcastic smile played for a moment on the face of the gigantic Esquimau, as he thought of the ease with which he should crush his approaching foe; and his hand was already raised to strike when it was arrested by a low whine, and the next moment Chimo was endeavouring to clamber upon his shoulder!

It instantly occurred to Maximus that he might turn the dog’s swimming powers to good account. Seizing Chimo by the flanks with both hands, he turned its head out to sea, and keeping it in that position, was dragged into deep water. When he had been thus conveyed what appeared to be about fifty

yards, he uttered a low cry. He was heard by the Indians as well as by those in the canoe; but the latter happened to be nearer to the spot, and a few strokes of the paddles sent them alongside of their comrade, who quickly caught the stern of the bark. The women plied their paddles, the Esquimau gave a shout of triumph, and half immersed in the water, was dragged away from shore. A yell of anger, and, soon after, a desultory discharge of firearms, told that the Indians had given up the chase.

But it was now a question how Maximus was to be got into the canoe. The frail bark was so crank that a much lighter weight than that of the burly Esquimau would have upset it easily; and as the stern was sharp, there was no possibility of climbing over it. This was a matter of considerable anxiety, for the water was excessively cold, being laden with ice out at sea. While in this dilemma, the canoe grated on a rock, and it was discovered that in the dark they had well-nigh run against a low cape that jutted far out from the land at this part of the coast. Here Maximus and the dog landed, and while the one shook its wet sides, the other wrung the moisture from his garments; after which necessary operation he leaped, with his canine friend, into the canoe, and they pushed well out to sea.

When daylight returned, they were far beyond the reach of their Indian enemies.

Chapter Thirty Six.
Happy meetings and joyous feastingsLove, marriage, desertion, desolation, and conclusion.

After the escape narrated in the last chapter, the stout Esquimau and his companions travelled in safety; for they had passed the country of the Indians, and were now near the lands of their own people.

But if Maximus had not now to fight with men, he was not exempted from doing fierce battle with the elements of these inhospitable climes. For hundreds of miles he travelled along the east coast of Hudson’s Bay and the southern shores of the Straits, now driven ashore by the storm, anon interrupted by drift-ice, and obliged to carry his canoe for miles and miles on his shoulders, while the faithful Aneetka trudged by his side, happy as the day was long; for, although her load was necessarily a heavy one, her love for Maximus made it rest lighter than the eider-down that floated from her fingers when she plucked the wild birds for their evening meal. Moggy, too, waddled along after her own fashion, with a resolution and energy that said much for her strength and constitution. She only carried the light paddles and a few trifling articles that did not incommode her much.

During the spring and summer and autumn they pursued their arduous journey, living from hand to mouth on the produce of their guns, nets, seal-spears, and fishing-lines, which generally supplied them with enough for their daily wants, sometimes with abundance, but not unfrequently with just sufficient to keep them alive. Three or four times they met with Esquimaux, and rendered essential service to them, and to the fur-traders, by telling them of the new fort at Ungava, recounting the wonders of the store there, and assuring them that the chief desire of the traders, after getting their furs, was to do them good, and bring about friendly intercourse between them and the Indians.

Late in the autumn the three voyageurs drew near to Ungava Bay, and in passing along the coast opposite to the island on which Edith had spent the winter, they overtook Annatock and his whole tribe, with a flotilla of oomiaks and kayaks, on their way to the same place. At the mouth of the bay they were joined by the Esquimaux of False River, who were carrying supplies of seal-blubber to the fort for the use of the dogs in winter, and a few deerskins to trade.

It was a bright and beautiful autumn afternoon (a rare blessing in that dreary clime) when they passed the narrows of the river, and came in sight of Fort Chimo.

On that day an unusually successful deer-hunt had taken place, and the fiddle had, as Bryan expressed it, been “sarved out” to the men, for the purpose of rejoicing their hearts with sweet sounds. On that day a small band of Indians had arrived with a rich and unusually large stock of furs, among which there were one or two silver foxes and a choice lot of superb martens. This tended to gladden the heart of Stanley; and truly he needed such encouragement. At one of the Company’s inland trading-posts such a bundle of furs would have been received as a matter of common occurrence; but it was otherwise with the poverty-stricken Ungava, from which so much had been expected before its dreary, barren character was known.

On that day, too, a picturesque iceberg had grounded near the fort at high water, and Frank took Edith in the small canoe to paddle her among its peaked and fantastic fragments.

“You will be steersman and sit in the stern, Eda,” said Frank, as they embarked. “I will stand in the bow and keep you clear of ice-tongues.”

“How beautiful!” exclaimed the delighted child, as their light craft glided in and out among the icy pinnacles which overhung them in some places as they passed. “Don’t you hear a strange noise, Frank?”

Truly Frank did hear a strange noise, and beheld a strange sight, for at that

moment the Esquimau flotilla passed the narrows and swept round the bay; while the natives, excited by their unusual numbers and the unexpected return of Maximus, yelled and screamed and threw about their arms in a manner that defies description.

“There must be strangers among them,” said Frank, as he paddled towards the shore; “they are too numerous for our friends of False River.”

“That seems to be an Indian canoe coming on ahead,” remarked Stanley, who, along with his wife and most of the men, had hurried to the beach on hearing the shouts of the approaching multitude.

“Can it be possible?” exclaimed Frank, as the canoe drew near; “does it not look like Maximuseh?”

“Oh! o-o-o-oh! there’s Chimo!” screamed Edith, her eyes dancing with mingled amazement and delight.

The dog in his anxiety to reach the shore had leaped into the water; but he had miscalculated his powers of swimming, for the canoe instantly darted ahead. However, he was close on the heels of Maximus.

“Give him a chare, bays,” cried Bryan, as he ran down to the beach waving a large hammer round his head. “Now thin, hooray!”

The appeal was responded to with heartfelt energy by the whole party, as their old comrade sprang from the canoe, and leaving his wife to look after herself, ran toward Stanley and Frank and grasped them warmly by the hands, while his huge face beamed with emotion.

“I hope that’s your wife you’ve brought with you, Maximus,” said Stanley.

“I can answer for that,” said Frank; “I know her pretty face well.”

“Ah! le poor chien,” cried La Roche; “it vill eat Miss Edith, I ver’ much b’lieve, voilà!”

This seemed not unlikely, for the joy manifested by poor Chimo at the sight of his young mistress was of a most outrageous character, insomuch that the child was nearly overturned by the dog’s caresses.

“Musha! what have ye got there, Maximus?” said Bryan, who had been gazing for some time past in solemn wonder at the figure of Old Moggy, who, regardless of the noise and excitement around her, was quietly carrying the goods and chattels from the canoe to the beach. “Shure ye’ve found yer ould grandmother. She’s the mortial parsonification of my own mother. Faix if it

wasn’t that her proboscis is a taste longer, I’d swear it was herself.”

At this point Massan stepped forward and took Maximus by the arm.

“Come along, lad; there’s too much row here for a comfortable palaver; bring your wife wi’ you. Ye’ve run out o’ baccy, now? Of coorse ye have. Come, then, to the house; I’ll fill yer pipe and pouch, too, boy.See after his canoe, La Roche; and bring the old ooman, Bryan.”

“Mind yer own consarns an’ let yer shupariors proceed ye,” said Bryan, as he shoved past, and tucking Old Moggy’s arm within his own, marched off in triumph to the fort.

Meanwhile, the main body of Esquimaux had landed, and the noise and confusion on the shore were so great that scarcely an intelligible sound could be heard. In the midst of all this, and while yet engaged in caressing Chimo, Edith felt some one pluck her by the sleeve, and on looking round she beheld the smiling faces of her old friends Arnalooa and Okatook. Scarcely had she bestowed a hearty welcome on them, when she was startled by an ecstatic yell of treble laughter close to her ear; and turning quickly round, she beheld the oily visage of Kaga with the babythe babyin her hood, stark naked, and revelling in mirth as if that emotion of the mind were its native elementas indeed it was, if taken in connection with seal-fat.

Scarcely had she recovered from her delight at this meeting, when she was again startled by a terrific shout, and immediately after Peetoot performed a violent dance around her, expressive of unutterable joy, and finished off by suddenly seizing her in his arms, after which he fled, horrified at his own presumption.

To escape from this scene of confusion the traders returned to the fort, having directed the Esquimaux to pitch their camp on the point below; after which they were to assemble in the yard, for the double purpose of palavering and receiving a present of tobacco.

That night was spent by the inhabitants of Fort Chimo in rejoicing. In her own little room Edith entertained a select tea-party, composed of Arnalooa, Okatook, Peetoot, Chimo, and the baby; and really it would be difficult to say which of them made most noise or which behaved most obstreperously. Upon mature consideration we think that Chimo behaved best; but that, all things considered, is not saying much for him. We rather think the baby behaved worst. Its oily visage shone again like a lustrous blob of fat, and its dimples glided about the surface in an endless game of hide-and-seek! As for Peetoot, he laughed and yelled until the tears ran over his cheeks, and more than once, in the excess of his glee, he rubbed noses with Chimoa piece of familiarity

which that sagacious animal was at length induced to resent and put a stop to by a gentle and partial display of two tremendous rows of white ivory.

In the hall Stanley held a levee that lasted the greater part of the evening; and in the men’s house a ball was got up in honour of the giant’s return with his long-lost Aneetka.

Ah, reader! although the countenances of the men assembled there were sunburnt and rough, and their garments weather-worn and coarse, and their language and tones unpolished, think not that their hearts were less tender or sympathetic than the hearts of those who are nurtured in softer scenes than the wilds of Ungava. Their laugh was loud and uproarious, it is true, but there was genuine, heartfelt reality in it. Their sympathy was boisterously expressed, mayhap, if expressed at all, but it was truly and deeply felt, and many an unbidden tear glanced from the bronzed cheeks of these stalwart men of the north, as they shook their gigantic comrade by the hand and wished him joy, and kissed his blooming bride.

Aneetka had long since laid aside her native garb, and wore the more graceful and womanly costume of the Indian women, and Maximus wore the capote and leggings of the voyageur. But there were not wanting gentlemen from the camp at the point whose hairy garments and hoods, long hair and beards, did honour to the race of the Esquimaux; and there were present ladies from the same place, each of whom could a tail unfold that would have been the admiration and envy of tadpoles, had any such creatures been there to see them. They wore boots too, to which, in width at least, those worn by fishermen are nothing. Some of them carried babies in their hoodslittle naked imps, whose bodies and heads were dumplings (suet dumplings, we may add, for the information of the curious), and whose arms and legs were sausages.

Bryan was great that nighthe was majestic! The fiddle all but spoke, and produced a sensation of dancing in the toes of even those who happened to be seated. Bryan was great as a linguist, too, and exhibited his powers in this respect with singular felicity in the vocal entertainment that followed the dancing. The Esquimau language seemed a mere trifle to him, and he conversed, while playing the violin, with several “purty craytures” in their native tongue, with an amount of volubility quite surprising. Certainly it cannot be said that those whom he addressed expressed much intelligence; but Esquimaux are not usually found to be quick in their perceptions. Perchance Bryan was metaphysical!

Mirth, hearty, real mirth reigned at the fort, not only that day, but for many a day afterwards; for the dangers, and troubles, and anxieties of the first year were past. Hope in the future was strong, despite the partial failures that had

been experienced; and through the goodness of God, all those who composed the original band of the “forlorn hope” were reunited, after many weary months of travel, danger, and anxiety, during part of which a dark and dreary cloud (now happily dispelled) had settled down on Fort Chimo.

Years have rolled away since the song and shout of the fur-trader first awakened the echoes of Ungava. Its general aspect is still the same, for there is no change in the everlasting hills. In summer the deer still wander down the dark ravines and lave their flanks in the river’s swelling tide, and in winter the frost-smoke still darkens the air and broods above the open water of the sea; but Fort Chimo, the joy and wonder of the Esquimaux and the hope of the fur-trader, is gone, and a green patch of herbage near the flat rock beside the spring alone remains to mark the spot where once it stood.

In the course of time the changes that took place in the arrangements of the Fur Company required the presence of Stanley at another station, and he left Ungava with his wife and child. The gentleman who succeeded him was a bold, enterprising Scottish Highlander, whose experience in the fur trade and energy of character were a sufficient guarantee that the best and the utmost would be done for the interests of the Company in that quarter. But however resolute a man may be, he cannot make furs of hard rocks, nor convert a scene of desolation into a source of wealth. Vigorously he wrought and long he suffered, but at length he was compelled to advise the abandonment of the station. The Governor of the Companya man of extraordinary energy and success in developing the resources of the sterile domains over which he ruledwas fain to admit at last that the trade of Ungava would not pay. The order to retreat was as prompt and decisive as the command to advance. A vessel was sent out to remove the goods, and in a brief space of time Fort Chimo was dismantled and deserted.

The Esquimaux and Indians soon tore down and appropriated to their own use the frames of the buildings, and such of the materials of the fort as had been left standing; and the few remnants that were deemed worthless were finally swept away and every trace of them obliterated by the howling storms that rage almost continually around these desolate mountains.

And now, reader, it remains for me to dismiss the characters who have played their part in this brief tale. Of most of them, however, I have but little to say, for they are still alive, scattered far and wide throughout the vast wilderness of Rupert’s Land, each acting his busy part in a new scene; for it is frequently the fate of those who enter this wild and stirring service to be associated for a brief season under one roof, and then broken up and scattered over the land, never again to be reunited.

George Stanley, after a long sojourn in the backwoods, retired from the service, and, with his family, proceeded to Canada, where he purchased a small farm. Here Edith waxed strong and beautiful, and committed appalling havoc among the hearts of the young men for thirty miles around her father's farm. But she favoured no one, and at the age of seventeen acquired the name of being the coldest as well as the most beautiful and modest girl in the far west.

There was a thin young man, with weak limbs and a tendency to fall into a desponding state of mind, who lived about three miles from Mr Stanley's farm. This young man's feelings had been so often lacerated by hopes and fears in reference to the fair Edith, that he mounted his pony one evening in desperation, and galloped away in hot haste to declare his passion, and realise or blast his hopes for ever. As he approached the villa, however, he experienced a sensation of emptiness about the region of the stomach, and regretted that he had not taken more food at dinner. Having passed the garden gate, he dismounted, fastened his pony to a tree, and struck across the shrubbery towards the house with trembling steps. As he proceeded, he received a terrific shock by observing the flutter of a scarf, which he knew intuitively belonged to Edith. The scarf disappeared within a bower which stood not more than twenty yards distant from him, close beside the avenue that led to the house. By taking two steps forward he could have seen Edith, as she sat in the bower gazing with a pensive look at the distant prospect of hill and dale, river and lake, in the midst of which she dwelt; but the young man could as easily have leaped over Stanley's villa, farm and all, as have taken these two steps. He essayed to do so; but he was rooted to the ground as firmly as the noble trees under which he stood. At length, by a great effort, he managed to crawlif we may so express itto within a few yards of the bower, from which he was now concealed only by a few bushes; but just as he had screwed up his soul to the sticking point, and had shut his eyes preparatory to making a rush and flinging himself on his knees at Edith's feet, he was struck powerless by the sound of a deep sigh, and, a moment after, was all but annihilated by a cough!

Suddenly the sound of horse-hoofs was heard clattering up the avenue. On came the rider, as if in urgent haste. In a few seconds a curve in the avenue brought him into view. He was a man of handsome and massive proportions, and bestrode a black charger that might have carried a heavy dragoon like a feather. A wheel-barrow had been left across the track, over which the steed went with an easy yet heavy bound, betokening well-balanced strength and weight; and a bright smile lighted up the rider's bronzed face for an instant, as his straw-hat blew off in the leap and permitted his curling hair to stream out in the wind. As he passed the bower at a swinging gallop, an exclamation of

surprise from Edith attracted his attention. The charger's hoofs spurned the gravel while he was reined up so violently that he was thrown on his haunches, and almost before the thin young man could wink in order to clear his vision, this slashing cavalier sprang to the ground and entered the bower.

There was a faint scream, which was instantly followed by a sound so peculiar that it sent a thrill of dismay to the cavity in which the heart of the weak young man had once lodged. Stretching out his hand he turned aside the branches, and was brought to the climax of consternation by beholding Edith in the arms of the tall stranger! Bewildered in the intellect, and effectually crippled about the knees and ankles, he could only gaze and listen.

"So you have comeat last!" whispered Edith, while a brilliant blush overspread her fair cheek.

"O Edith!" murmured the stalwart cavalier, in a deep musical voice, "how my heart has yearned for this day! How I have longed to hear your sweet and well-remembered voice! In the desolate solitudes of the far north I have thought of you. Amid the silent glades of the forest, when alone and asleep on my mossy couch or upon my bed of snow, I have dreamed of youdreamed of you as you were, a fair, sweet, happy child, when we wandered together among the mountains of Ungavaand dreamed of you as I fancied you must have become, and as I now find you to be. Yes, beloved girl, my heart has owned but one image since we parted, years ago, on the banks of the Caniapuscaw River. Your letters have been my bosom friends in all my long, long wanderings through the wilderness; and the hope of seeing you has gladdened my heart and nerved my arm. I have heard your sighs in every gentle air that stirred the trees, and your merry laugh in the rippling waters. Even in the tempest's roar and the thundering cataract I have fancied that I heard you calling for assistance; and many a time and oft I have leaped from my couch to find that I did but dream. But they were pleasant and very precious dreams to me. O Edith! I have remembered you, and thought of you, and loved you, through months and years of banishment! And now"

Again was heard the peculiar sound that had thrilled with dismay the bosom of the weak young man.

"Halo! whence came this charger?" shouted a hale, hearty voice, as Stanley walked towards the bower. "Eh! what have we here?" he exclaimed, rushing forward and seizing the stranger in his arms,"FrankFrank Morton!"

This was too much. The weak young man suddenly became strong as Hercules. He turned and fled down the avenue like a deer. The pony, having managed to unfasten its bridle, stood in the centre of the way gazing down the

avenue with its back towards its master. Unwonted fire nerved the youth's limbs; with one bound he vaulted leap frog over the animal's back into the saddle, dashed his spurs into its sides, and fled like a whirlwind from the scene of his despair.

Frank Morton and George Stanley, being both men of promptitude and decision, resolved that one month was long enough to make preparations for the marriage; and Edith, being the most dutiful daughter that ever lived, did what she was bid.

That beautiful cottage which stands in the midst of most exquisite scenery, about two miles from Stanley's villa, is inhabited by Frank Morton and his family. That crow which you have just heard proceed from the nursery was uttered by the youngest of five; and yonder little boy with broad shoulders, who thrusts his hands into his pockets in a decided manner, and whistles vociferously as he swaggers down the avenue, is Master George F. Morton, on his way to school.

La Roche and Bryan were so fortunate as to be appointed to the same establishment after leaving Ungavasomewhere near the mouth of the Mackenzie River, and within the region of all but perpetual frost and snow. They are sometimes visited by Esquimaux, which is fortunate; for, as Bryan says, "it guves him an opportunity o' studyin' the peecoolier dialects o' their lingo."

Dick Prince was the only one who lost his life in the "forlorn-hope." He was drowned while out shooting in the bay alone in his canoe. A sudden storm upset his frail bark and left him struggling in the water. Prince was a strong swimmer, and he battled long for his life; but the ice-laden sea benumbed his hardy limbs, and he sank at last, without a cry, to rise no more. He was a noble specimen of his classa brave, modest, unobtrusive son of the forest, beloved and respected by his companions; and when his warm heart ceased to beat, it was felt by all that a bright star of the wilderness had been quenched for ever. His body was found next day on the beach, and was interred by his mourning comrades in a little spot of ground behind the fort. It was many a long day after this melancholy event ere Massan could smile; and when the fort was finally deserted, he put in practice his long-meditated intention of becoming a hunter and taking to the Rocky Mountains, where he wanders now, if he has escaped the claws of the dreaded grizzly bear and the scalping-knife of the Red Indian.

Moses, finding the life of a fur-trader not quite to his taste, rejoined his countrymen, and reverted to killing seals and eating raw blubber. The two Indians also returned to a purely savage life, which, indeed, they had only

forsaken for a time. Augustus and Oolibuck died; and the latter left a son, who has already rendered good service as interpreter to the arctic expeditions, as his worthy father did before him. François and Gaspard are still together at one of the posts of the interior. They are now fast friends, and have many a talk over the days when they quarrelled and messed together at Fort Chimo.

As for the poor Esquimaux, they were for a time quite inconsolable at the departure of the fur-traders, and with a species of childlike simplicity, hung about the bay, in the hope that they might, after all, return. Then they went off in a body to the westward, and the region of Ungava, to which they had never been partial, was left in its original dreary solitude. It may be that some good had been done to the souls of these poor natives during their brief intercourse with the traders. We cannot tell, and we refrain from guessing or speculating on a subject so serious. But of this we are assuredif one grain of the good seed has been sown, it may long lie dormant, but it cannot die.

Maximus accompanied his countrymen, along with Aneetka and Old Moggy, who soon assumed the native costume, and completely identified herself with the Esquimaux. Maximus was now a great man among his people, who regarded with deep respect the man who had travelled through the lands of the Indians, had fought with the red men, single-handed, and had visited the fur-traders of the south. But the travelled Esquimaux was in reality a greater man than his fellows supposed him to be. He fully appreciated the advantages to be derived from a trading-post near their ice-girt lands, and resolved, when opportunity should offer, to do all in his power to strengthen the friendship now subsisting between the Indians and the Esquimaux of Ungava, and to induce his countrymen, if possible, to travel south towards the establishment on James’s Bay.

He still retains, however, a lingering affection for the spot where he had spent so many happy days, and at least once a year he undertakes a solitary journey to the rugged mountains that encircled Fort Chimo. As in days of yore, with wallet on shoulder and seal-spear in hand, the giant strides from rock to rock along the now silent banks of the Caniapuscaw River. Once again he seats himself on the flat rock beside the spring, and gazes round in sadness on those wild, majestic hills, or bends his eye upon the bright green spot that indicates the ancient site of the trading-post, not a vestige of which is now visible, save the little wooden cross that marks the lonely grave of Dick Prince; and the broad chest of the giant heaves with emotion as he views these records of the past, and calls to mind the merry shouts and joyous songs that used to gladden that dreary spot, the warm hearth at which he was wont to find a hearty welcome, and the kind comrades who are now gone for ever. Ungava spreads, in all its dark sterility, around him, as it did in the days before the traders

landed there; and that bright interval of busy life, in which he had acted so prominent a part, seems now but the fleeting fancy of a bright and pleasant dream.