

**A FATHER'S
OPINION:**

"8, Shelley Avenue, East Ham.- Dear Sir,- I am greatly pleased with the tales you publish in the 'UNION JACK.' I have one son, and your paper is the only one I allow him to read.- Yours, C. ARNOLD."



Hade jumped fearlessly over the edge of the precipice. His body cut through the air like an arrow as he fell towards the snowdrift below.

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BY S. CLARKE HOOK.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIGHT, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES — DR. BLETCHLEY GETS THE WORST OF IT—A FUTILE CHASE—STARTING UNDER DIFFICULTIES—THE STORM.

In one corner of the playground of Dr. Bletchley's school the boys had assembled, watching Silas, the doctor's son, amuse himself in his customary manner by bullying one of the younger boys.

"You're a little sneak, Bertie Arnold," Silas said, seizing him by the collar. "It was you who told, I know it was; and if you don't confess I'll flog you worse than I mean to now."

Bertie Arnold was a finely-built lad, with a fearless expression in his dark eyes; but Silas was two years older, and considerably bigger. There was not a boy in the school who dared to tackle him, though this may have been because he was the doctor's son.

"You let me alone, Silas," Bertie said. "You are always bullying someone. You are afraid of anyone your own size."

"You little hound, take that!" shouted Silas, putting out his leg, and giving Bertie a blow that caused him to trip over it, and fall to the ground.

The lad got up and looked round at the faces for some signs of sympathy, but he saw none; then an angry light came into those dark eyes as they met Silas'.

Mistaking that look, the bully sprang at the crowd once more; Bertie's fist shot out, and his adversary received it between the eyes.

"Hurrah! A fight! Give it to him, Bletchley!"

Bletchley willingly took this advice, and he delivered some round-handed blows that made Bertie's ears sing; but, having once begun the fight, he meant going through with it, and Silas knew that he was thoroughly in earnest.

Bertie was driven backwards by superior strength, but he got in some blows that made his adversary wish that the fight was over, or had never yet begun.

At last Silas got him against the wall, then, with a vicious gleam in his eyes, he dealt a blow at Bertie's face that would probably have ended the fight had he not jerked his head aside, with the result that Silas's knuckles were wrecked upon the wall.

Now was Bertie's chance, and he took it. Three times his fist shot into Silas's nose; then, before he recovered from the shock, Bertie rushed in and flung him to the ground.

"Give it to him, Silas!" shouted his friends. "You are not hurt."

But the unhappy Silas knew that he was. He had had considerably more than enough, and he flatly refused to fight any more.

"Won't you catch it from old Bletchley, Arnold," said one of the boys.

"Silas won't tell," asserted Bertie. "He will be ashamed to."

"It won't want much telling. Bletchley isn't blind as well as stupid. Why, Silas is bleeding like a stuck pig; besides, just look at his eyes! There goes the bell, too. Come on, you chaps. We will have some fun now."

The boys had to ascend a flight of stairs to enter the school-room, and they got grumbled at by the servant, who, with pail and brush, was waiting to scrub the stairs; but the boys were too excited to take any heed of her request to wipe their feet.

Dr. Bletchley was a tall, bony-looking individual, possessed of plenty of strength and temper, as many of the boys knew to their cost.

All scrambled to their seats.

"Silence!" cried the doctor, rapping the desk with his cane. "Fifty lines, Bell, for talking."

"Please, doctor, it wasn't—"

"A hundred lines, Bell. If you speak again I shall cane you."

This obtained a profound silence, which was broken by the unhappy Silas, who came blundering into the schoolroom, howling like a dervish.

"Look—look what Ber— Bub—boohoo!"

"What's this?" roared the doctor. "Who has done this, Silas?"



Several of the famished creatures leaped up at Made, who kept them at bay with his tomahawk.

"Ber—Bertie Arnold."

"That boy is a perfect little villain!" shouted the doctor. "Is it not enough that I feed him and clothe him; that he eats the bread of charity; that—that—that I—he— Come forth, Bertie Arnold. Did you strike that young gentleman?"

"Yes, doctor. If you please it was a fight."

The doctor did not look pleased at all, and he grasped his cane in a manner that presaged a warm five minutes for Bertie.

"That's false! You struck him with something."

"I know I did."

"What did you strike him with?"

"My fists."

"Silence, boys! If you dare to laugh I'll cane you all round. How did he strike you, Silas?"

"He—he took—me by surprise— Boohoo!"

"Step forth, Bell!" commanded the irate doctor.

"Answer me truthfully. How did Arnold strike that young gentleman?"

"If you please, doctor, straight from the shoulder on the nose."

"A thousand lines, sir! Go to your seat."

"Well, I'm hanged!" murmured Bell. "Don't you laugh at me, Billy Leath, or I'll punch your head."

"I'll make an example of you, you young rascal!" cried the doctor, seizing Bertie by the back of the neck, and lashing him in a manner, which in these days would probably have obtained for him six weeks' imprisonment.*

Silas ceased blubbering as Bertie shrieked for mercy. The boys held their breaths, and thought what an awful thing it would be if their turn ever came.

Suddenly Bertie darted between the legs of the doctor, who would have fallen on his face had he not released his hold. Bertie was free now, and he sprang across the room; then, when Bletchley made a rush at him, the lad seized the first object that came to hand, which was a large volume on astronomy, and sent it full in the doctor's face with a force that must have caused him to see plenty of stars.

This checked the doctor's rush, and gave Bertie time to reach the door, then down the stairs he sprang. Mary, the servant, fortunately for her own safety, had run short of soap, and had gone to fetch some, leaving her pail right in the centre of the stairs. Bertie saw it, and got past all right. Dr. Bletchley did not. One foot he put in the pail, then he put his head on one of the stairs, and went down the remainder of the flight anyhow, while a couple of gallons of soap-suddy and particularly dirty water poured on to the top of him; and Mary, who had rushed to the scene, screamed like a steamer's syren.

Bertie, hoping to delay the inevitable, bolted into the greenhouse, where Pat, the gardener and factotum, was doing some whitewashing.

"Don't let him hit me, Pat!" gasped Bertie.

"What—the doctor?"

"Yes."

"Faith! he is a gentleman who generally makes up his mind to do a thing, then does it. What have you done?"

"I thrashed his son, and the doctor is angry because he stumbled over Mary's pail, and pitched downstairs."

"Begorra! Some gints have bad tempers."

"It's no joking matter, Pat."

"Bedad! that must be the doctor's opinion."

"He has hit me fearfully. I believe he must have cut my back to pieces."

"Pull off your coat and shirt, Bertie. Make haste. He'll be here together directly—that is, if he hasn't broken his neck."

"I don't think he has done that!" groaned Bertie, pulling off his clothes. "He couldn't have made so much noise if his neck had been broken. Does it show, Pat?"

"Put on your things, lad," said the Irishman. "Now get up in that corner of the greenhouse. Make haste! Here he comes."

"Have you seen that young vagabond, Arnold?" began the doctor; then he caught sight of him.

"Stand aside," he added. "I am going to flog that boy."

"Faith! sir, you have flogged him too much already, and it's not touching him any more that you are."

"You insolent villain, stand aside!"

"Now, doctor, keep aisy. Don't I tell you I won't have him hit."

"Will you stand aside, fellow?"

"Bedad! then, I won't!"

"Take that, you insolent scoundrel!" shouted the infuriated doctor, lashing Pat over the head with his cane.

"Begorra! ye dirty spalpeen, but I'll teach you to strike the like of me!" cried Pat, dipping his brush into the pail of whitewash, and slapping the doctor across first one cheek

then the other with it, until he looked more like Old Father Christmas than a black-bearded schoolmaster.

Bletchley retaliated with his cane until he was nearly blinded and choked by Pat's slap-dashing; then he turned and fled, and Pat seized the pail, and sent all the whitewash he had not slopped on the doctor's face down his back.

Bertie forgot his pain, and, sitting on a box of lobelia, shouted with laughter.

"Bedad! don't laugh at a man because he has got into a scrape," said Pat, who was as serious as an owl.

"He will have another scrape before he gets that whitewash off. You have painted him this time, Pat!"

"Sure, that's the truth, only it's the wrong colour. Now, Bertie, I'm thinking he'll be a bit vexed about this."

"He looked cross before you covered up his face. Oh, Pat, you would get your work done in no time if you slopped it on as quickly as that! He will want a new coat, too."

"Faith! I'm thinking I'll send me notice in."

"I don't think there will be any necessity to do that, Pat."

"Faith! you think he will bear me malice about this little dispute. I was better brought up than that. 'Never lose your temper, mi boy,' were my father's words when he chucked a bailiff through his sitting-room window, 'it's sure to cause damage; and never bear malice. Go and fetch me a pail of water, Pat, and I'll throw it over that bleary-eyed reptile, in case he's hurt himself.'"

"But I say, Pat, what are we going to do?" inquired Bertie.

"Bedad! I'm thinking we might as well go somewhere else. Suppose we pay Andrew McPherson a visit?"

Nothing could have been suggested more to Bertie's inclination. Although Andrew was a young man, and Bertie only a lad, a deep friendship existed between them, and on many a Saturday afternoon the young Scotchman had taken Bertie for a sail in his fishing smack, and had taught him swimming and rowing, to say nothing of some knowledge of sailing.

Andrew was a splendid specimen of his heroic race. Tall, and very powerfully built, with an honest, fearless face, withal kindly, grey eyes, he was as fine a type of a Briton as could be met with. He was seated in his cottage intently studying a chart, while a number of nautical instruments were about the little room.

"I'm glad to see you, Pat!" Andrew exclaimed. "And you, too, Bertie. But how is it you are out at this time?"

"Faith, the school was adjourned!" said Pat. "We have given that blessed doctor a week's notice together."

"How's that?"

"His temper is wrong entirely. I was whitewashing, and he got his coat splashed."

"Surely he hasn't given you notice for that?"

"He caned me," explained Bertie. "Then he wanted to hit me again, and Pat slopped half a pailful of whitewash in his face, and threw the other half down his back."

"Ha, ha! Serve the brute right! But what are you going to do?"

"We thought we would come and consult you," said Pat.

"You are a trifle more cautious than me mother's best-looking son."

"You must have been an only child, Pat," replied Andrew, laughing. "Look here! what is the good of your fooling about here?"

"Faith, that's just entirely what the doctor wants to know!"

"You see, Pat, this cottage was where I was born, and I love the old place. But now mother and father are gone, it has grown lonely. Year in and year out I've lived on here, but of a winter's night, when the wind comes over the sea, it seems a dreary life. Besides, all the world is before me, and I want to be something more than a fisherman. It's a hard life at best of times, and a poorly paid one; and if I've saved a bit of money, it is because my father left me this cottage and as fine a craft as ever weathered a storm. Very well. Now I'm going to seek my fortune. I'm going to sail for Hudson Bay, and then—well, then I'll see what turns up."

"Andrew, let-me come!" cried Bertie, springing to his feet. "Everybody hates me, except you and Pat. Let me come!"

"And, bedad, I'll make one of the party, if you'll have me!"

"Then here's a hand, my trusty friends,

And gie's a hand o' thine."

sang Andrew, suiting the action to the word.

At that moment there was a loud knocking.

"I'm doubtful it's the schoolmaster," observed Andrew, coolly opening the door, and revealing Dr. Bletchley, with a cut across his forehead, where it had struck the stair, and accompanied by a policeman.

"That's the vagabond!" cried the irate doctor, pointing at Mike. "I give him in custody for assault. You see where he struck me on the forehead."

"You'll have to come along of me, young man," said the constable.

*It was different when editors and authors were boys.—Ed.

"I'll take the boy," declared the doctor. "Come here, you little villain!"

"Stop a minute, you two!" said Andrew, standing in front of them. "This is my house, and you will enter it at your peril!"

"Do your duty, constable, and arrest that man!" shouted Bletchley.

"You'll not enter my house!" declared Andrew. "Leave this room immediately!"

"I shall do no such thing!" said Bletchley. "Unhand me, young man! How dare— Constable, I give him in custody."

But the policeman knew he dare not enter the house.

Andrew sent the doctor sprawling through the doorway; then, shutting the door, he coolly seated himself by the table and began to talk over their future plans.

"Perhaps it will be as well for you two to get aboard tonight," said Andrew. "You will be out of danger then, and I can bring the remainder of the things aboard by degrees."

To this Pat agreed, and after supper the start was made. Andrew led the way out of the back door and across the little garden; but they had scarcely left the house when they heard the voices and footsteps of a couple of constables, who flashed their lanterns round.

"There's the young rascal!" yelled Bletchley, who formed one of the party.

Bertie darted aside to avoid the doctor, and in doing so ran full tilt against a constable, into whose stomach he butted with an impetus that made the policeman gasp like any codfish.

"Let me hold him!" cried the doctor. "Go after that Irish scoundrel!"

Bertie struggled desperately, but he was quite unable to free himself from the doctor's grip.

Meanwhile Andrew whispered a few words to Pat, and they both darted away at their utmost speed, followed by the two constables. They had proceeded about a couple of hundred yards, when they separated.

"Faith, me boy, keep close to me together!" shouted a voice.

"That's the Irishman!" cried the constable. "Come on! We'll have him directly. Never mind t'other chap!"

"Tare an' hounds! but it's an illigant race entirely! Come on, ye spalpeens!"

And so they did for quite a mile; then the fugitive stopped, and allowed his pursuers to come up.

"Patrick O'Hare," panted one of the constables, "I have a warrant here for your apprehension. You are my prisoner."

"Why, you great owl, my name is Andrew McPherson!" said that worthy. "Sometimes I get the Irish accent, but I'm a Scotchman, for all that. Patrick O'Hare has taken another direction."

And so he had, as Dr. Bletchley knew to his cost. Directly Pat had given the constables the slip, he returned to the spot where Bertie was struggling with the infuriated doctor.

"Let him go, old long nose! Begorra, but if it's fighting ye mean, I'm your man!"

Then before Dr. Bletchley quite knew what had happened, he and Pat rolled into a thick rose-bush.

"By the powers, but I'm scratched entirely!" groaned Pat, when he at last got free. "There are about forty thousand thorns in that bush, and every one of them has dug its business end into me!"

"Yah! you vagabond!" howled the doctor; "I'll put you in prison!"

"Bedad, the man is cross again!" observed Pat. "Come along, Bertie! We will go to the sea for the benefit of our healths."

They soon reached the shore, and presently Andrew made his appearance in a little boat, in which he rowed them aboard the "Sunbeam," as his fishing-smack was named.

The next few days were occupied by Andrew in getting provisions aboard. He had already a considerable store, but it was necessary to increase it now that he had more mouths to fill. Neither Pat nor Bertie went ashore, for fear of accidents.

At last all was ready, and Andrew set sail, though the weather was far from propitious. A westerly gale was blowing, and although they did not feel the force of it while in the bay, they did directly they reached the open sea.

The huge waves burst over the little vessel as she beat against the head-wind with a fury that made her tremble, while the black, jagged rocks which lined the shore seemed fearfully close.

Andrew stood at the helm, and skillfully steered his craft; but each minute the wind increased, and, in spite of the fact that his sails were closely reefed, it seemed only too likely that her mast would be carried away.

Besides this peril, there was another one, even more terrible. The wind was so changeable that he found it almost impossible to beat against it, and many an anxious glance he cast at the line of rocks, amongst which the seas were bursting with a

fury that, had the "Sunbeam" struck, would have strewn her timbers on the seething waters.

Andrew had just brought his vessel round on the starboard tack, when a mighty billow, towering above all the rest, came rolling towards them.

"Hold on for your lives!" he shouted.

Pat seized Bertie, and the next moment the wave burst over them with a roar so terrible that it seemed as though the "Sunbeam" must founder.

CHAPTER II.

A FEARFUL NIGHT—THE COLLISION WITH AN ICEBERG—BERTIE IS SWEEPED OVERBOARD—A HOPELESS SEARCH—BERTIE'S TERRIBLE ADVENTURES.

Pat and Bertie were swept aft, and probably this saved their lives, for either the force of the sea or the furious blast of wind smashed the main-sheet, and the lugsail, with the heavy block attached, was lashing to and fro with a fury that would certainly have killed them had it struck them.

The "Sunbeam" was quite unmanageable, and she was driving dead on to the rocks. In a very few minutes she must strike.

Watching his opportunity, Andrew sprang forward. The lashing sail caught him, and flung him to the deck; but he was on his feet in a second. Then, gaining the vessel's bows, he let go the anchor and quickly lowered the sails.

All this was done with an adroitness that proved he well knew his work. And now some terribly anxious moments were spent.

Would that anchor hold? Andrew watched the little vessel with the deepest anxiety as she strained at her cable; then, when he saw it held fast, he hurriedly repaired the damaged sheet.

The day was closing in now, and soon darkness added to the horror of their situation. Andrew did not attempt to set the sails again, but all through the night he kept watch by the cable, fearful each moment that it would part.

And as he stood at the "Sunbeam's" bows wave after wave swept over him with a force that nearly tore him from his hold. At last day broke, and now the fury of the storm died away. The wind, too, veered until it got to the south-east, when a fresh start was made. The little vessel was soon speeding on her long voyage, and although at times the wind rose to a gale, and the seas ran very high, no further dangers attended the daring voyagers until they arrived in Canadian waters.

The cold was now intense, while sometimes for days together they were almost becalmed in dense fogs.

One night, during one of these fogs, a wind had sprung up, and all three comrades went on deck to set sail. It was freezing hard, and the deck was like a sheet of ice, while the fog was so thick that the light at the masthead was invisible.

As the "Sunbeam" plunged through the sea, occasionally the sound of ice grating against her sides could be heard. Although the wind was blowing stiffly now, the fog continued. Suddenly the air grew colder; it seemed as though an icy blast swept by the little vessel, while there was a strange echoing sound as the waves rolled by.

Andrew was at the helm, wondering what could be the cause of that sudden cold, when there was a terrific crash, and he was almost flung from his feet.

They had struck an iceberg; and, guessing this was the case, Andrew put his helm hard aport. Then the "Sunbeam" tore her way through the broken ice with a deafening noise.

"Go below, Pat!" shouted Andrew, "and see if we have sprung a leak."

"Bedad, I thought I was killed entirely!" cried Pat, springing below.

Hurriedly lighting a lantern, he commenced to search, but he found no leak.

"She's as sound as a bell!" he shouted to Andrew at last.

"Would you like to have a look yourself?" Andrew replied.

"Yes. We had better make quite sure," Andrew replied.

"Ask Bertie to come to the helm for a few minutes."

"Bertie is not down here!" cried Pat in a tone of dismay.

"Surely he followed you down?" exclaimed Andrew.

"Faith, he did not, then!" replied Pat, hurrying up.

Both shouted loudly to the lad, but no answer came. Pat now made a careful search of the deck, thinking that Bertie might have been thrown down, and stunned by the blow; but he soon convinced himself that he was not aboard.

Andrew at once put the little vessel about; but the possibility of recovering their young comrade was very remote, because Pat had spent quite a quarter of an hour in searching for a leak.

"He was a good swimmer," said Andrew; "and would be able to keep up for a considerable time."

"That's true," replied Pat, with a sigh. "But how are we going to find him in this fog?"

This was a question that Andrew was unable to answer, and, indeed, in his own mind, he knew how hopeless the search was; nevertheless, for hours they cruised about, from time to time shouting loudly on the chance of Bertie answering; but the only sound they heard was the angry roar of the seas as they burst on the "Sunbeam's" bows.

All through the night they continued the search, and when day began to dawn they felt that hope was over. The fog was still as dense as ever, and the wind had dropped to a dead calm. Half numbed by the extreme cold, the two comrades went below, and Pat prepared breakfast. For some moments they sat at the table in silence, then Pat pushed away his plate.

"It's no good, Andrew," he said, glancing at the vacant seat. "I can't touch any food. Poor little Bertie! To think that we should have lost him like that. It seems too dreadful to be true."

"I feel it is my fault, too," replied Andrew. "It was I who suggested the voyage, and a disastrous one it has proved."

Just before the "Sunbeam" collided with the iceberg, Bertie had gone forward, and, seating himself upon the bulwarks, he tried to peer through the fog; but it was so dense that they were upon the mighty block of ice before he saw it.

The terrific impact threw him backwards, he struggled to save himself, but his hands slipped from the frozen wood-work, and, losing his balance, he plunged headlong into the icy water.

When he struck out for the surface, to his horror he found some object above that prevented him from rising. He was beneath the vessel's keel. A terrible sense of suffocation seized him. Something had caught in his clothing, and he was being dragged along by the "Sunbeam." At last, with a desperate effort, he wrenched himself free. Then he rose to the surface, gasping for breath.

He just had sufficient strength to keep himself afloat, and he shouted for help; but his voice seemed faint even to himself, and he knew it could never be heard aboard the "Sunbeam," as she ground her way through the floating ice.

In an agony of dread, Bertie saw her hull disappear in the bank of fog; then he was alone in the mighty ocean.

Though quite devoid of hope, he struggled on, although he felt his limbs becoming numbed with the cold, while the floating ice, as the waves washed it to and fro, cut him severely.

At last he felt the use of his limbs leaving him, and, as a large wave came rolling towards him, he had not strength to rise to it, but sank in the icy sea. Again he rose, and now another wave caught him up, and flung him in to the jagged edge of the iceberg.

Bertie had just sufficient strength left to crawl from beyond the reach of the waves, then he lay helplessly on the mighty boulder of ice, while the keen air stiffened his drenched clothing.

When he had somewhat recovered from the terrible exhaustion, he clambered up to the summit of the iceberg; but the fog was far too thick to allow him to see the vessel.

The poor lad's sufferings during the night were dreadful, and before day broke he almost wished he had met his death in the icy waters.

Presently a thrill of joy shot through his aching breast. With a last effort he struggled into a sitting posture. Quite close to the iceberg on which he was drifting, he heard the shouts of his comrades.

Bertie tried to call for help; but to his horror his voice only came in a hoarse whisper, and, strive as he would, he was not able to utter a cry that could possibly be heard by those aboard. He had completely lost his voice through exposure and cold.

Presently the shouts ceased. Andrew and Pat had gone below, and Bertie knew that the "Sunbeam" was drifting past almost within a stone's throw of him.

With a moan of despair, the lad fell back on the ice, and from his motionless form it seemed that death had at last ended his sufferings.

"Let us come on deck," said Andrew, turning from the untasted breakfast.

Pat followed in silence, and now they found that a light breeze had sprung up. Believing it to be quite useless to remain longer in the vicinity, Andrew continued his course, and sailed away from the iceberg on which poor Bertie lay.

As the wind freshened, the fog shifted, then the sun burst forth, and the yellow bank of fog went rolling away to leeward.

Both men glanced round the vast expanse of sea, then they saw the glittering iceberg some miles astern.

"It is possible—" began Andrew. Then, checking the utterance of the hope he felt to be so improbable, he put his vessel about, and sailed for the iceberg, while both his eyes

and Pat's were fixed intently on the mass of ice as the "Sunbeam" drew slowly towards it.

"By the powers, he is upon it!" cried Pat.

"Get the dinghy overboard," said Andrew, springing to wards it.

The tiny boat was soon launched, and Andrew lowered the "Sunbeam's" sails. With quickly beating hearts, they sprang into the little boat, and pulled swiftly towards the iceberg. Pat climbed up the slippery surface, then he raised the motionless and apparently lifeless lad in his arms.

"He lives," said Andrew. "We will save him yet."

Through the bounding waves the little craft dashed, the "Sunbeam's" side was reached, then, leaving her to drift with the tide, the two comrades set to work to restore poor Bertie; and at the end of an hour their efforts were rewarded by the lad regaining consciousness.

From this point they encountered fine though bitterly cold weather. Within a week the "Sunbeam" was safely riding at anchor in Hudson Bay at the mouth of the river that flows from North Lined Lake.

Except for a large store, where hunters came to barter furs with the Yankee proprietor, the region was as wild as could well be imagined, and now it looked doubly desolate by reason of the ground being covered with several inches of snow.

Sam, the storekeeper, was a man who understood his business and his customers well, and for that reason he invariably carried a brace of revolvers and a bowie-knife in his belt.

CHAPTER III.

IN SAM'S STORE—HADE, THE INDIAN WARRIOR—A DUEL—IN AN ICE-NIP—THE WRECK OF THE "SUNBEAM"—TAKING TO THE ICE.

Having made all secure aboard, though there seemed to be no one in that part who would plunder, the three comrades went ashore, and proceeded towards the store. Here they were rather surprised to find a considerable number of trappers, driven thither by stress of weather, exchanging the few furs they had taken for spirit highly flavoured with fusel-oil.

The questions that Andrew asked soon convinced him that no reliance was to be placed on Sam's word.

"Money to be made in this part? I reckon, stranger, you are about right," observed Sam. "I'm about the only one who can't get the hang of it; then, you see, I'm one of the generous cusses what can't see a pal starve when he's got any furs to barter for food. I'd give away my shirt."

Bedad, then, if it's the one you have got on now!" observed Pat, "and you feel like giving it to me, I'll not deprive you of it!"

"I guess you reckon you are mighty 'cute?" said Sam, with an angry light in his shifty eyes, as a shout of laughter greeted Pat's words.

"Not a bit of it, my boy. Only don't you go giving away your valuables in that reckless fashion. If shirts increased in value with age like china, I would say that is a mighty rare one you have got on!"

"Anyhow, have you come here to buy?" demanded Sam.

"What? Old shirts? Not me."

"Then git, you skunk!" shouted Sam. "Go through that 'ere doorway, unless you want to be chucked through."

The dispute was here interrupted by the door being thrown open, and the entrance of a redskin warrior. He was quite young, and of magnificent physique. His features were regular, though now they were distorted with passion. His brilliant black eyes glanced swiftly round the room, then he stepped up to Bertie, and looked intently into his face. As he did so, the angry gleam left his eyes; but it quickly returned when he faced Sam, who had got his hand on his revolver-butt.

"Now, then, what do you want?"

"I am Hade," replied the warrior, drawing himself up to his full stature.

"It don't matter a cuss to me who you are!" retorted Sam, getting behind the counter, for he saw mischief brewing.

"The Ojibways are friendly with the white men. Their hunters bring in furs, and receive rifles and powder in exchange. The furs are good; but the rifles and powder are not!"

"Begorra! P'raps they're made in Germany?" suggested Pat.

"The rifles burst when they are fired, and one of my warriors is killed."

"What's that got to do with me?" demanded Sam. "I wouldn't care if the whole race of red-skinned skunks was killed!"

"I ask the white man to return the furs, or—"

"Return your grandmother! Do you take me for a child? Now, you evil-looking skunk, I'll plug you if you don't put up that axe!"

Hade had drawn his tomahawk, and, with a furious gesture, he struck it into the thick wooden counter. The blow was so terrific that the keen weapon was half buried in the wood, which was splintered in all directions.

"Thus I strike the blow of war!" cried Hade.

"You red-skinned cuss!" roared Sam, "you can strike the blow of war, as you call it, as much as you please, but hang me if you are going to strike it in my counter! Take that! and—"

"Tare and hounds!" cried Pat, springing at Sam, and wrenching the revolver from his grasp. "Here, Andrew, catch hold of this; and this one as well. Now keep easy."

"You thundering Irish blackguard!" shouted Sam. "I'll about pulverise you!"

"Bedad, you can do that as much as you like, old noney!" retorted Pat. "But you are not going to murder that young Indian while I stand by."

"Just keep that door shut," said Sam. "I'll give this Irish pig a lesson as I reckon he'll not forget. Don't none of you fellows interfere. I'll about lay him out!"

The American was quite two stone heavier than his opponent, but Pat's attitude showed that he was no novice in the art. With a wild rush, Sam commenced the attack; but his rush was checked by two stinging blows in the face, and as he looked round in a bewildered manner he got a third one, that sent him sprawling over one of the tables, much to the delight of the onlookers, who yelled with glee. It was a matter of perfect indifference to them who won, so long as they saw a good fight.

Sam had another try at slogging; then, finding from painful experience that Pat got in quite three blows to his one, he closed.

But here again he had reckoned without his host. Pat was quite as good at wrestling as he was at fighting, and, getting the unlucky Sam across his hips, he pitched him clean over the counter. For a second only Sam's legs were visible, as he stood on his head behind the bar; then his heels crashed into a shelf that supported a four-gallon jar of whisky and a few dozen bottles of the same spirit, with the result that all came down with a crash, which rose above the howls of laughter.

The huge jar was smashed to atoms, so were the bottles; and when Sam struggled to his feet whisky streamed down him.

"Bedad, you'll waste some spirit if you fight like that!" observed Pat, eyeing his unlucky opponent.

"Give me a revolver, you cusses!" shouted Sam.

"Have another turn at him with your fists!" cried one of the company. "You are getting on fine. Keep up your spirits!"

"Begorra, he has been knocking them down!" observed Pat. "I never saw such a careless creature in all my life. You will never mend that glass by swearing at it."

"I'll have your life for this, you Irish porker!" roared Sam.

"The white man is brave," said the young Indian warrior, "and Hade the Ojibway is his friend for ever."

"Bedad, give us your hand together, Hade!" said Pat. "Yah! begorra, bears ain't in it! If that's the grip you give your friends, it's mighty thankful I am that I'm not your enemy!"

"I guess you two cusses had better finish it off with pistols!" said one of the company. "Give Sam a revolver."

"Let me get out of the show!" cried another, bolting towards the door.

One of the party handed the American a pistol, and he immediately fired at Pat.

"Begorra, do you take me for a hen-pheasant?" cried Pat, turning a table on end, regardless of the glasses which were on it.

Then he glanced from behind this shelter, and Sam fired again, but, though the ball tore its way through the woodwork, it missed Pat.

"You vagabond!" cried Andrew, levelling his revolver at the American. "If you fire at an unarmed man again it will be your last shot!"

Sam turned towards Andrew for a moment; then Pat lifted the table up, and, making a rush at his foe, literally dropped on to the top of him.

Sam went down with a heavy bang, and Pat sat on the overturned table, beneath which his antagonist lay.

"Bedad, it's like being aboard ship!" exclaimed Pat, as Sam's struggles caused the table to rock violently.

But, struggle as much as he would, he could not get from beneath it.

Andrew put a revolver in Pat's hand. Then he got off the table and watched his adversary with a seriousness that convulsed Bertie. When Sam rose to his feet, and saw that his opponent was now armed, he made no attempt to fire, but allowed the strangers to depart without further molestation.

Having asked a few questions as to the destination of his newly made friends, Hade bid them farewell, and they went aboard the "Sunbeam."

The cold was so intense that it was decided not to keep watch; indeed, it seemed quite unnecessary to do so, as there was not the slightest chance of any vessel coming up the river.

The three comrades were soundly asleep, when something struck the little vessel with a force that caused them all to spring from their berths.

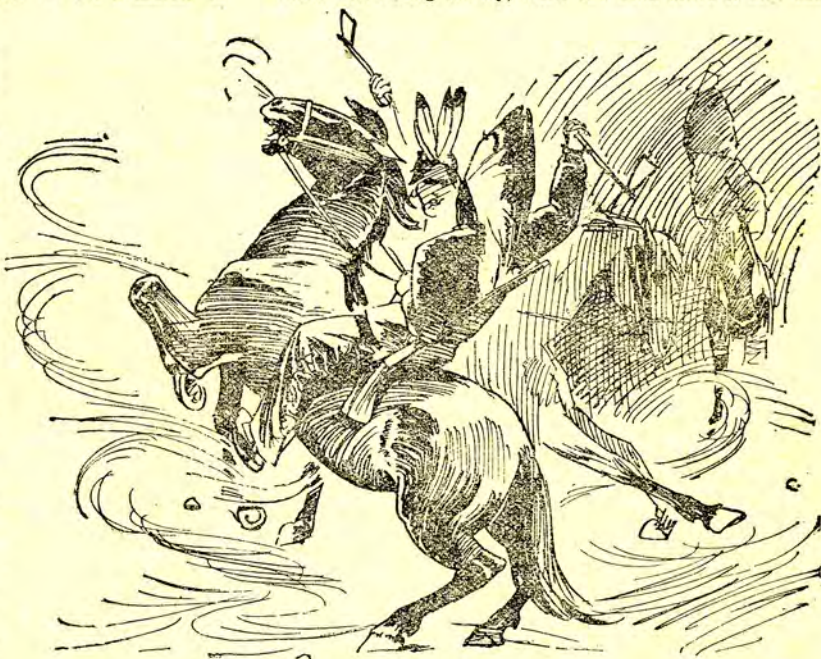
"Did you hear anything?" inquired Andrew.

"Begorra, I did; and felt it, too! I thought that Yankee was fighting me again. Hark!"

A most unearthly sound now arose, and the vessel was so shaken that it seemed as though she were about to founder.

With one accord the three friends sprang on deck.

Snow was falling thickly, while the wind drove it into their



Hade dashed at the chief. It was a duel to the death.

eyes with a force that at first prevented them seeing anything.

At that moment the vessel received another blow; then she was swept up the river, while there was a terrible grinding sound.

Andrew sprang to the "Sunbeam's" side, and looked anxiously over.

"We are in an ice-nip," he said. "The tide has turned, and in flowing up the river has brought enormous quantities of ice. It must have cut our cable."

"Faith, it is taking us in the direction in which we want to go," said Pat, "so it doesn't much signify."

"You forget that the fearful pressure is likely to crush the vessel's sides in. However, we must hope for the best. It is impossible for us to do anything."

As they watched in deep anxiety the grinding sound increased, and the great blocks of ice were crushed against the "Sunbeam" with a pressure that cut into the wood.

For hours this lasted, and all the time she was being driven up the river by the wind and tide. Matters soon became so serious that Andrew advised his comrades to make preparations, in case they were compelled to abandon the vessel, though how they were to reach the shore remained a mystery. The dinghy would have been crushed in a few seconds. However, they got together a large supply of cartridges and their

rifles, Andrew having purchased a light one specially for Bertie before they started on their voyage.

At last the weary night passed by, though the daylight only revealed the full peril of their situation.

The whole river was a mass of floating blocks of ice, which had congealed round the "Sunbeam" until she was imbedded in an icefield, which extended half across the river.

The action of the tide was crushing this against her sides with a fearful pressure, and every now and then a sharp, cracking sound told that her timbers were giving way.

"It's nearly all over with the poor old craft," said Andrew, coming from below. "Water is pouring into her. We must take to the ice at once."

The dinghy was lowered on to the ice, with such provisions as they could take away, and this was scarcely done when there was a loud crash, hundreds of tons of ice were forced against the "Sunbeam's" sides, and she was crushed in like an egg-shell.

CHAPTER IV.

CARRIED UP THE RIVER—THE INDIAN ENCAMPMENT—UNDER FIRE—GAINING THE SHORE—NIGHT IN THE FOREST—BERTIE SEES A MYSTERIOUS FORM—ATTACKED BY WOLVES—A PERILOUS SHOT—A DESPERATE STRUGGLE.

Andrew turned from his wrecked vessel with a sigh, but their present peril was too great to allow him to lament his loss. Stepping to the edge of the ice-floe, he looked anxiously towards the shore, but a glance was quite sufficient to convince him that no boat could possibly live amongst those swirling blocks of ice, which were grinding together with deafening noise, and with a force that caused splinters to fly into the air in showers.

As the tide turned the mass of ice on which they were was not swept back, as they had expected, but it remained almost stationary. Getting into the boat, to guard against the piercing cold as well as they were able, they waited, hoping that the river would freeze completely over; but the swift tide prevented this.

When it turned once more the sky became overcast, then the wind got up, and snow commenced to fall, first in fine flakes, then in a blinding storm. Presently they felt the mass of ice heaving, as the howling wind raised the water into waves, which dashed beneath the ice. Then there was a crack like a pistol-shot, the ice-floe split from end to end, and the portion they were on was swept up the river by the furious wind and tide.

Nearly numbed with the cold, and expecting each moment that the floe would split again, and they would be precipitated into the water, which would be certain death, the three comrades suffered keenly, both in body and mind; but no complaint was made, and Bertie bore his sufferings as bravely as his older companions.

By the time night came on they were passing through a forest of pine-trees, which lined the river-bank on either side. Now amongst those trees appeared a red glow, which extended half across the water.

"What do you make of that, Pat?" inquired Andrew. "It looks warm, at any rate!"

"Faith, I think we shall find it warm enough before we are past!" replied Pat. "Look at those black-looking demons shifting about!"

"Yes, they are savages; and, if one may judge by their appearance, will be none too friendly. They have a large camp-fire, at any rate. I hope its light will not reveal us as we drift past. Get your rifles ready, in case of accidents."

Unfortunately, the ice-floe was drifting near that bank on which the Indian encampment was, and the dusky forms of the plumed and fur-clad warriors were distinctly visible to the comrades.

Directly they drifted in the stream of light, which the huge fire threw half across the river, one of the savages stepped to the bank; then he uttered a cry that brought twenty or thirty others to his side.

Suddenly there was a red flash, and a bullet whizzed past, while the sharp report of a rifle set all doubt at an end as to whether the savages were hostile.

"Get behind the boat!" cried Andrew. "Quick! they are going to fire again."

He had scarcely spoken when a volley of rifles rang out, and the bullets crashed against the ice.

"Bedad, we will show them we have some rifles, too!" exclaimed Pat, aiming at one of the dusky forms.

The savage uttered a cry of pain, and sprang into the black shadows; then, while Pat put a fresh cartridge into his weapon, Andrew and Bertie fired.

For some moments now the Indians reserved their fire. The raft of ice was swept towards the spot where they were lurking amongst the bushes, and arrows, spears, and deadlier rifle-balls came pouring in. The boat was pierced in a dozen

places, and the three comrades were compelled to lie flat on the ice, whose rugged surface afforded them some shelter while they slowly drifted past.

It was quite impossible to see whether they were being swept close to the bank or not, as they did not dare to show themselves to their foes; but presently the rattle of missiles against the ice grew less frequent, and they saw the gleam of firelight far behind them.

"We are past, bedad!" exclaimed Pat, with a sigh of relief. "And the best of it is that those bloodthirsty imps don't seem to be following. Look ahead, Andrew. As sure as taxes, we are running on to dry ground."

This was the case; a sharp bend in the river caused the tide to flow against the opposite bank to that on which the Indian encampment was.

"Be ready to spring ashore," said Andrew. "Never mind the boat. We cannot possibly save that."

The ice-floe was swept rapidly towards the bank, and all three comrades stood up.

"Now is your time!" cried Andrew. And the three sprang together, and alighted in safety.

"I'll tell you what it is!" exclaimed Pat. "This wind blows mighty cold, and if we have got to pass the night here, I'm thinking a fire would be a handy thing to have."

This suggestion was readily adopted, and in a very short time they had collected a quantity of dead pinewood, which made an admirable fire.

As they discussed their future plans, the night deepened, and now fierce howlings arose from all parts of the forest. Pat arranged to take first watch; but, in spite of the weird sounds and the intense cold, he found it a very difficult matter to keep his eyes open, so tired out was he. At last he seated himself at the foot of a pine-tree, and within five minutes was as soundly asleep as he had ever been in his life.

Andrew and Bertie were also fast asleep; but suddenly the latter started up, and looked round the snowy pine forest in awe. He had awoke from a nightmare, and his heart was throbbing so wildly that he could hear his pulse beating.

Now, as he looked fearfully amongst the black shadows cast by the pine trees, he thought he saw a stealthy form glide by. Bertie was about to wake Pat, then, ashamed that he should feel such fear, and believing that what he had seen was only the result of his heated imagination, he rose to his feet, and stepped noiselessly amongst the pine trees, cocking his rifle in case of accidents.

The mournful howling which Bertie had heard before falling asleep had grown nearer now. He glanced back to make sure the camp-fire, which had burnt low, was still visible; then when he turned again, he distinctly saw a dark form glide amongst the trees.

Without contemplating the terrible risk he ran, Bertie quickly followed, and the form moved so noiselessly that he could scarcely believe it to be human. Presently the lad turned again, and now, to his dismay, he could no longer see the light from the camp-fire, nor was he at all certain in which direction it lay.

At that moment he again caught sight of the mysterious form, and now he saw that he was an Indian warrior.

"Who are you?" demanded Bertie, levelling his rifle.

"The white lad is brave to enter into the forest depths alone. I am Hade the Ojibway."

"Oh! I remember you," said Bertie. "You are a friend, are you not?"

"Had I been your foe, your lifeless body would have lain beside your comrades! But, hark! Do you know what that howling means?"

"I suppose it is caused by wild beasts?"

"Who are drawing nearer to your camp-fire. Follow me. I will show you."

"My comrades are asleep, Hade."

"It does not signify. No harm will befall them until we return. I wish you to see your danger."

"Can you find your way to the camp-fire? I cannot see the light."

"The Indian needs no light to guide him in his native forest," replied Hade, drawing his tomahawk. "Behold!"

Bertie started back in surprise. For, ahead of them, in a glade, appeared hundreds of grizzly wolves, who were snarling and howling fiercely.

"They are nearly starving!" Hade exclaimed. "They know well where your camp-fire is, the same as I did when a mile away."

"But you could not see it, Hade. How could you know where it was?"

"I will show you. Keep your rifle ready. See! Those wolves are following us."

Hade made a circuit, and several times he glanced back at the snarling pack, who were following him up. Presently he stopped, and turned Bertie's face towards the wind.

"Can my young friend smell the smoke?" he inquired.

"Yes; quite plainly."

"Walk straight in that direction, and you will shortly reach your comrades."

Bertie did as directed, and Hade followed him with the noiseless tread of a savage; while the pack of starving wolves came creeping up behind.

As they came in sight of the camp-fire, one of the wolves leapt at Hade. His keen ear detected the noise the brute made as it sprang from the bushes; swiftly turning, his tomahawk flashed in the firelight, and the wolf fell lifeless at the warrior's feet. Nothing daunted, several other of the famished creatures leapt up on Hade, who, with terrific blows, kept them at bay. Suddenly an enormous brute sprang upon his back. Bertie saw its vicious flashing eyes. In a second his rifle was at his shoulder, and a great dread seized him, for he knew that were he to miss his aim the ball might take Hade's life. However, he dared not hesitate. Steadying his nerves as well as he was able, he pressed the trigger, and the ball went crashing into the fierce beast's skull.

At the sound of the rifle-shot both Andrew and Pat sprang to the spot, while the wolves, terrified at the report, slunk off amongst the trees.

"Get back to the camp-fire," said Hade, as calmly as though his life had not just been imperilled. "There are many hundreds of those wolves, and they will soon renew the attack."

The Indian warrior was right. He had scarcely spoken when they sprang forward once more.

In a few seconds the weapons were emptied; then the unequal struggle became terrible.

Hade's strength seemed almost superhuman. From side to side his bloodstained battleaxe swept, and the trampled snow was soon strewn with lifeless bodies.

Bertie, who was unable to be of much service in the fierce struggle, had quickly placed fresh cartridges in his revolver, and, springing to his comrades' side, he poured the six shots into the howling pack of wolves.

Terrified at the flashing pistol, and the fierce resistance they had met with, the starving brutes drew back; then Hade seized a large pine log, and hurled the flaming brand into their midst.

Uttering yelps of fear, the wolves scattered and fled.

"There is only one way to keep them off," said Hade. "Their numbers are increasing; I hear their howls from all directions. Reload your weapons quickly, and try to keep the pack at bay until my work is done."

CHAPTER V.

FIRING THE FOREST—CAPTURED BY INDIANS—THE UPRaised TOMAHAWK—LIFE FOR LIFE—THE SIGNAL OF THE NIGHT—A TERRIBLE COMBAT—HADE'S HEROISM.

With his spear, Hade dragged the burning logs beneath a large pine tree, then, with swift strokes of his tomahawk, he ripped the bark off the trunk. Higher and higher the flames licked round the tree, till the resinous wood ignited, then the fire rushed upwards with a fierce crackle, until the keen wind swept it onwards.

The next tree caught, then others, until a mighty wave of flame roared through the forest, and the affrighted wolves fled before it.

The air grew hot. The roar of the fire terrific. The black heavens were tinged to a ruddy glow as the expanse of flame raged through the pine forest, spreading as it went with fearful rapidity.

Hade watched the conflagration unmoved.

"My white friends can now proceed along the river bank," he said. "But many perils are in their path. Farewell! Hade's way is in the opposite direction."

Waving his spear, the Ojibway strode away, and his tall form soon disappeared amongst the dark shadows.

"Bodad! but this is a disagreeable situation entirely!" exclaimed Pat. "It is all very well to follow the river bank, but where are we going to, and what are we going to do when we get there?"

"I don't know, Pat," replied Andrew; "but it is useless to remain here. We had better go from the direction of the fire, as Hade advises. We have a better chance of obtaining food."

This was agreed to, and the little party pushed on through the remainder of the night. The country through which they passed was wild in the extreme; but game was terribly scarce. The first few days of their journey they secured a few brace of wild fowl. One night they had lighted their camp-fire, and, while their supper was roasting, were discussing the advisability of endeavouring to find their way back to the coast.

The night though calm was bitterly cold, and the three comrades felt it keenly, in spite of their large camp-fire. For the first time since they had camped in the forest they heard no howling from the famished wolves. They little dreamt

what was the reason of this as they sat round the fire waiting for their supper.

The night grew deeper, and the wind fell, until the only sound that dispelled the solemn silence was the crackle of the camp-fire. Now, amongst the dark trunks of the forest trees a shadow moved over the snowy ground. He was an Indian warrior, and his painted form and arms showed that he was on the war-path. Presently another came, and he, too, moved with such a noiseless tread that none but the keen ear of a savage would have detected it. Others followed, and they glided round the camp-fire in a great circle, which gradually closed in.

Suddenly a fearful cry rang out, and, with a furious rush, the savages leapt upon their victims, who, totally unprepared for such an assault, were overpowered before they could offer the slightest resistance. Their arms were bound behind their backs with lassoes, and they were dragged through the forest at a pace they found it hard to maintain.

In this way they were forced to travel for some days, the savages only resting for a few hours at a time to take such food as they were able to secure; but game was still very scarce, and they fared very badly, while the three prisoners were only given barely sufficient to support life.

At last an enormous encampment was reached, where at least three hundred huts surrounded a mighty fire, that threw a glow over the whole vale. Towards this fire the captives were led, and in a very few minutes were surrounded by a gang of ferocious-looking savages, amongst whom were many women and children.

An aged warrior now stepped forward, and addressed the crowd in his native language, which, of course, was utterly unintelligible to the captives, except that they judged from the fierce gestures that there was no hope; and the furious shout from every throat which followed the warrior's speech confirmed this opinion.

Now the savage approached the helpless captives and drew his tomahawk.

"I have asked my warriors what shall be your doom," he said in English, which it was evident many of the savages understood. "Your fate is death! Your people have forced us to war against you, and your three lives shall be the first we take!"

"We have done you no harm," said Andrew.

"I hate your race!" cried the savage furiously. "I would deal death to you all!"

As he spoke he seized Bertie, and raised his gleaming battle-axe.

"Stop!" cried Andrew and Pat in a breath. "Surely you will not commit such a vile deed as to take that lad's life?"

"He shall die!" replied the savage. "See, my tomahawk shall strike the first—"

The upraised weapon was lowered as a murmur, which rose to a terrible cry, ran round the vast throng of warriors.

A tall form strode amongst them, and as the firelight fell upon him the captives recognised Hade.

He had evidently been running swiftly, for his broad breast heaved, and, in spite of his every effort, it was some few moments before he could steady his voice.

Every eye was fixed upon the young warrior, as, with a haughty stride, he stepped towards the captives, and with a few strokes of his keen knife severed their bonds. Then, evidently so that they might understand his words, he spoke in English, and most of the listeners appeared to comprehend his meaning.

"Warriors," he cried, in a voice that was perfectly audible to the whole concourse, "the hour has come when we must strike; but we must not strike our friends! I journeyed to the white man, and demanded back the furs of which he robbed us. Surrounded by his people, I struck the blow of war, and but for my white friend here I might have met my death. Again this white lad saved my life. Now, as long as my right arm can wield the battleaxe it shall protect the lives of these three white men, for the boy is a man in bravery! I, Hade, chief of the Ojibway nation, have spoken!"

The captives looked at Hade, surprised that one so young should be at the head of all those warriors; but no one attempted to dispute his authority. He himself conducted the captives into his wigwam, and here he ordered food to be served.

While they were making an excellent meal the young chief's eyes were earnestly fixed on Bertie, and presently, placing his brawny hand on the lad's shoulder, he said:

"When the summer sun shone over the forest and the plain I met one who much resembled my white friend. Hade never forgets a face of friend or foe. Tell me, had you a father who came to this part?"

"Yes. It is many years ago," said Bertie, in a sorrowful voice, "and he is dead. I think he was killed by Indians."

"Was he a hunter?"

"No. I think he bought some business. I know it was somewhere on the shore of Hudson Bay. But I was very

young when he left me. He did not dare to take me with him, for fear I should come to harm. But I wish he had.

"I have seen him," said Hade. "I knew your face directly I saw it in that store. I only saw him once, but he was very like you."

Bertie rose to his feet and gazed at the savage with a look of horror in his eyes.

"Hade," he demanded, "was it you or your people who—who took my dear father's life?"

"No, neither my people nor I ever harmed him. I will prove my words to you. But let my white friends listen to me. Those whom you call the Copper Indians have crossed the hills; they are on the warpath, and mean to try their strength against the Ojibways. Before the morning dawns they will be upon us. Then shall my people's war cry fill the air, and drown the cries of the wounded. I will lead my warriors to victory or to death!"

"But how do you know they are about to attack you, Hade?" inquired Andrew.

"I have seen them in the forest in their warpaint," replied the young chief. "Hark! do you hear that cry?"

"It is the howl of a wolf," said Andrew.

"No, it is the signal of one of my scouts that danger is at hand; but the Ojibway is ever ready to meet it. Before break of day the hills shall be strewn with the bodies of my foes."

For a moment the young chief stood erect at the entrance of the hut; then he strode forth, and the three comrades followed to watch the coming strife.

The scene that followed was weird and terrible in the extreme. As the gigantic fire illumined the vale, the swarthy plumed warriors could be seen passing to and fro, their keen-edged tomahawks and keener spears glittering brightly over the surrounding hills.

Suddenly above the fierce murmur of many voices Hade's stern command rang out, and the warriors disappeared as if by magic. When they again entered the valley every man was mounted, while a fiery mustang was led towards Hade.

Springing upon its back, he uttered his fierce war cry, which was taken up by those myriad warriors, until the hills resounded with the terrible shout.

Now an answering shout of defiance arose, and the opposing force appeared. Once more Hade's voice rose above the uproar; then the contending forces dashed at each other with a fury that was truly terrible. To and fro they swayed, while the clashing tomahawks dealt death on every side. Ever in the thickest of the fight, Hade's tall form could be seen, and such was the ferocity with which he fought that even his fierce opponents seemed to fear to meet him.

The Copper Indians greatly outnumbered the Ojibways, and, in spite of their splendid bravery, the latter were being driven back. As though aware of the awful scene that would follow should they once force their way into the encampment, Hade urged on his warriors by words and deeds to greater fury. Then from amongst the foe a shout of triumph was audible. It was uttered by the Copper chief, who saw his warriors were conquering.

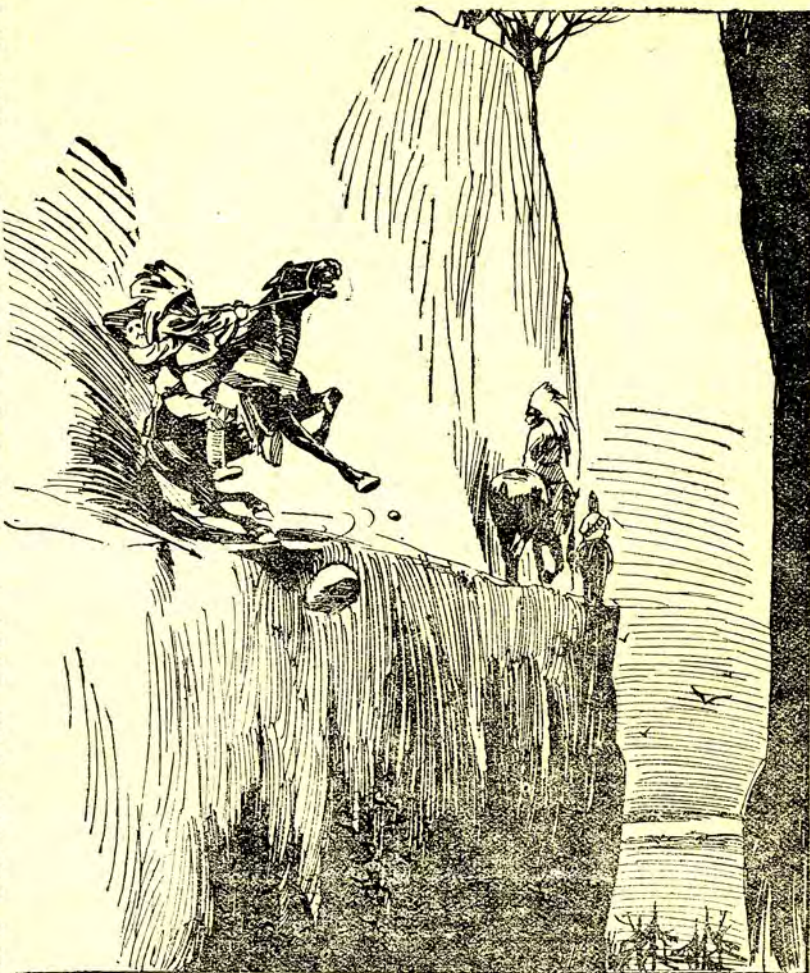
Hade heard that shout. He saw his hated foe, whose huge plume was conspicuous above those of the struggling warriors. Then his black eyes flashed with a furious light, his deep chest expanded, and, with a mighty rush, he dashed into the very midst of the foe.

Three warriors fell before the terrible blows he dealt. Others sprang towards him, but with sweeping strokes of his gleaming tomahawk he cleared a passage through them.

The Copper chief saw that his deadly foe was struggling to get at him, and he seemed quite prepared to meet him. Riding forward, he struck blow after blow with his tomahawk, but every one was guarded and returned.

Emboldened by the intrepid valour of their chief, the Ojibways made a final rush, and such was its fury that their foes were hurled back.

Now Hade dashed at the chief. Their tomahawks met with



The terrified animal uttered a shrill neigh, and began to plunge violently.

a force that smashed the handles. With one brawny arm Hade grasped his foe round the body; then, with a strength that seemed superhuman, he dragged him from the mustang's back, and bore him struggling from the crowd.

The Copper Indians made an attempt to rescue their chief, but a fierce rush of Ojibways cut them off. For a moment they wavered; then, with a furious charge, the Ojibways hurled them back, and they fled before their conquerors.

Still grasping the vanquished chief, whose arms were pinioned to his sides by the terrible grip, Hade rode slowly into the encampment, and, approaching the spot from where Andrew and his comrades had been watching the combat, he released his hold, and his foe fell to the ground gasping for breath. The pressure had almost crushed in his ribs.

"He has boasted that one day he would meet me in single combat!" cried Hade, keeping his eyes fixed keenly on the fallen chief. "Well, we have met. My white friends, see who fears. He said he would carry my scalp into his wigwam. Many times he has taken my warriors unawares, and slain our women and their little children. Now his time has come, and he shall die!"

As Hade spoke he raised his spear. The Copper chief had risen to his feet. With a quick movement he drew his knife, and hurled it at Hade's breast. Almost as the deadly weapon was touching him the young chief threw himself backwards, and his foe darted away.

But Hade was too quick for him. With lightning rapidity he hurled his spear, and it wounded the flying chief, but he still bounded onwards.

Hade quickly uncoiled his lasso, and, galloping a short distance after him, he flung it through the air. Without even waiting to see if it were true to its mark, Hade reined his horse round; then, with a violent jerk, he flung the flying chief backwards, and he fell lifeless to the ground, with the noose drawn tightly round his neck.

Disheartened at the death of their chief, the Copper Indians now drew off, nor did they renew the attack.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HUNTING PARTY—THE STAMPEDE OF BUFFALOES—HADE'S FLIGHT—A FEARFUL LEAP.

The following morning there was a great commotion in the encampment of the Ojibway warriors, and Hade explained to his friends that there was to be a great hunt. A herd of buffaloes had been seen some miles further north, and as there was a great scarcity of provisions, such an opportunity could not be missed. He invited his friends to accompany him, and to this they readily agreed.

After a somewhat scanty breakfast, the party, mounted on mustangs, started. Hade had only taken a few warriors with him, in case of a fresh attack by the Copper Indians; but those he had taken were skilful warriors. Bertie could ride fairly well, and Hade gave him a few hints, which proved of great service to him. Then he took him over several leaps, and, in spite of the mustang having no saddle on, Bertie kept his seat admirably.

At last they reached the open plain, and now against the snow-line they could distinguish some dark forms. The wind was blowing towards the horsemen, and Hade now gave the order to ride towards the herd.

Away dashed the riders amidst a shower of snow. Bertie forgot the piercing cold in his excitement. Being such a light weight, he kept well in front of the party, and Hade had all his work to do to keep level with him. At last the buffaloes scented them, and away they dashed. The Ojibways separated, and, circling round the flying herd, endeavoured to turn them.

"Let my white friends follow me!" cried Hade. "We shall get the first shot."

Taking this advice, they rode for many a mile to the left, and Bertie began to feel very disappointed, because the buffaloes had almost disappeared in the distance.

"Aren't we going the wrong way, Hade?" he inquired at last.

"No. My warriors will drive the herd this way. See yonder trees. Remain behind them. The buffaloes are turning now."

This proved to be the case, and presently their huge shaggy bodies grew more distinct, and now they came dashing forward at a terrific pace, sending up a cloud of snow.

"Let my white friends pick out one of the herd, and fire at his left shoulder. Do not move from behind these trees," said Hade, though he himself went out boldly in the open.

The herd were coming directly towards the young chief, but beyond loosening his spear he made no preparation to receive them. At last, when they were almost upon him, Bertie and his two friends fired, and a cow fell to the ground; but a huge bull, the leader of the herd, dashed straight at Hade. They could see its bloodshot eyes as the fierce beast lowered its head to charge at the intrepid chief. As it was almost upon him Hade raised his spear, and hurled it deep into the snorting brute's side; at the same time he caused his horse to spring, and the buffalo charged past. But it quickly turned, and charged again at its foe. Hade hurled a second spear, and this time he brought the infuriated animal to the ground.

Springing from his horse, he quickly despatched the two buffaloes, while his warriors went after the remainder of the herd; nor did they return empty-handed.

"I must send this meat back to my people," said Hade. "But would my white friends like to spend a few days hunting on the plains?"

"There's nothing we would like better!" they all exclaimed.

"It is well," replied Hade. "I will give the order for my warriors to carry this food back to the encampment. With the furs we can build a hut, and there is plenty of wood for our fire."

The Ojibways had very soon cut up the carcasses into huge lumps of meat, and leaving some pieces of the hump with their chief, they took their departure.

Hade now hacked off some of the lower branches of the trees, and, twining these together, he formed the framework of a hut, over which he threw the buffalo skins; then he lighted a huge fire in front of the opening, and placed some slices of the juicy meat to cook in front of it.

Bertie enjoyed the meal immensely, and as snow fell thickly towards night, it was decided not to attempt any more hunting that night. Hade had foreseen this fall of snow, and sent the mustangs home with his warriors, fearing they would suffer too keenly with the cold. After a second meal, Pat and Andrew began to get drowsy, and as it was now growing late, they retired into the little hut; but for an hour or more Bertie sat listening to Hade's wondrous tales. Suddenly the young chief ceased speaking. Starting up, he listened intently.

"Danger is at hand!" he cried. "Arouse your comrades quickly."

Considering that it was very dark owing to the falling snow, which the keen wind was driving across the plain with blinding force, and beyond its mournful howl Bertie could hear no other sound, he failed to understand how Hade could possibly know that danger was at hand; but he quickly obeyed the chief's order.

"Faith! I can only hear the wind," exclaimed Pat. "And, bedad! I can feel it, too. It's blowing mortal cold."

"Let my white friend place his ear to the ground, then he will hear another sound."

"Begorra! so I can. It's thunder, I think!" cried Pat.

"The fiercest storm that ever raged is not so perilous as that sound. Listen! It grows louder. It is coming this way. Now can you hear it?"

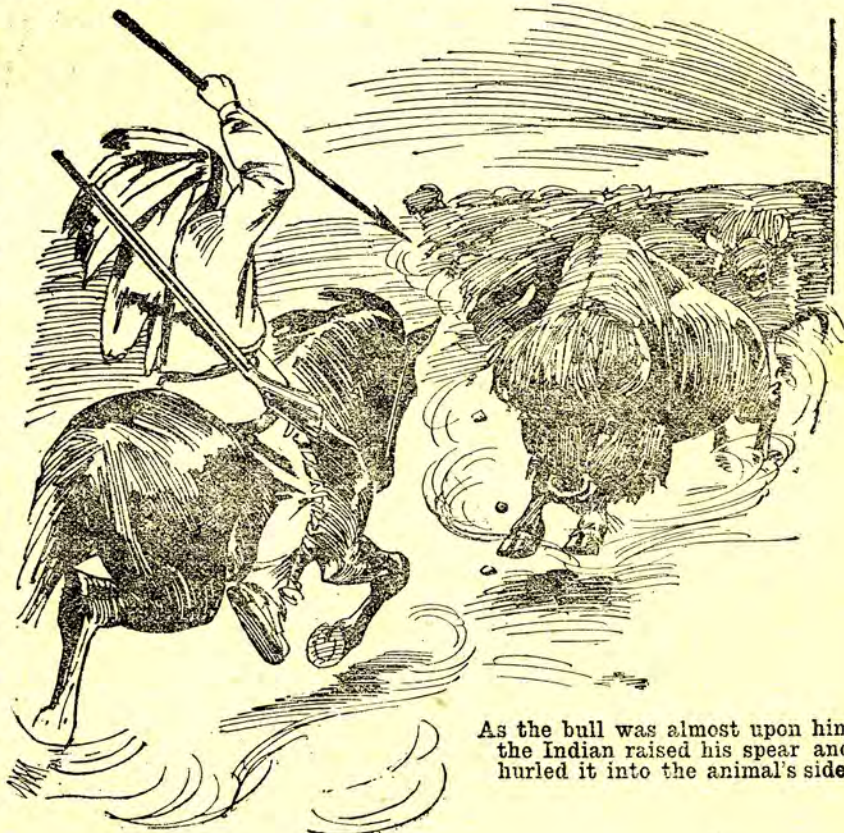
"That I can!" exclaimed Bertie. "But it still sounds to me like thunder. What is it, Hade?"

"A stampede of buffaloes," replied the young chief. "There will be hundreds there, and they are coming directly towards us."

"How would it be to climb one of these trees?" suggested Bertie.

"It would be well; but the Copper Indians will be chasing these buffaloes," said Hade. "We should escape the one to fall into the hands of the others. Quick! Follow me."

As Hade spoke, he darted across the snowy ground at a wonderful speed, and the others did their utmost to keep up



As the bull was almost upon him the Indian raised his spear and hurled it into the animal's side.

with him. The rumbling sound increased to a roar; and now to windward they saw a black mass darting towards them at the speed of the wind.

Hade cast several anxious glances round. He knew that unless they got outside that vast herd they would be trampled to death by the fierce beasts' feet.

"Easter, if you can!" he shouted. "Keep straight on. I will overtake you."

Then, darting to the right, he drew a spear, and waited to turn the mighty rush if possible.

As the terrified beasts caught sight of the young warrior they swerved; but one huge bull came dashing towards him. Then, uttering a savage bellow, it lowered its shaggy head and charged.

With poised spear and expanded breast the Indian chief stood. The buffalo was not three yards from him. Then swifter than an arrow the spear shot from Hade's hand, and its keen head was buried in the maddened beast's heart, and, as Hade leapt aside, the buffalo's lifeless body skidded along the ground.

Now a yell of fury told that Hade's conjecture that the buffaloes were being chased by savages was correct. They had seen their hated enemy, the young chief who had conquered them, and their terrible war-whoop echoed over the plain.

Hade uttered his own cry of defiance, then darted away, keeping to windward, so that the drifting snow should impede his enemies' vision. The pace at which he ran was terrific, and even before his foes could rein their horses round, he was out of sight. But they could see his trail in the snow, and by this they followed him, yelling like a pack of angry wolves.

Guided by these fierce cries, Bertie and his comrades followed, but the shouts soon grew faint in the distance. They knew Hade had purposely led the savages away from them. He had risked his life for their sakes, and to them it seemed certain that he must lose it.

At last they could no longer hear the angry cries, and now their further progress was barred by a high plateau, whose snowclad crest towered against the heavens. The face of this cliff was almost perpendicular, and the wind had drifted the snow against it until a vast mound lay at the base.

"Hark!" exclaimed Bertie. "I think I can hear their shouts again."

A few moments passed, then borne by the wind came the Copper Indians' yells. The snow had ceased falling now, and as the wind drifted, the clouds across the black heavens, the moon burst forth. This would reveal Hade distinctly to his foes.

Louder and louder grew the yells, and presently, to the amazement of Bertie and his comrades, Hade appeared running swiftly along the brink of the precipice. He must have traversed miles to gain the height, for they could see the plateau extending across the plain now the moon shone forth. Presently horsemen appeared on both sides of the young chief. The savages had formed into a crescent, and were driving Hade to the brink of the precipice.

No spear was hurled at him. Probably his fierce enemies wished to capture him alive, so that they might torture him to death. Hade had hurled his last spear; but he still had his tomahawk, and this he held in his right hand.

Now he reached the brink of the precipice, and his tall form looked larger still in the moonlight. The horsemen, who had completely surrounded him, reined in. It seemed as though they feared to approach the renowned chief, and he laughed scornfully at their cowardice. Then one, bolder than the rest, rode forward. Hade hurled the gleaming battleaxe, which struck the savage's breast, and his death-cry rang out on the night air.

He was unarmed now. With yells of fury the savages dashed towards him. Hade uttered the warcry of his nation; then, turning, his black eyes flashed down the height.

With a swift, sharp run he darted towards the precipice, then leapt into space, and quicker and quicker his body cut through the air.

At first he seemed to be falling head first, but ere he reached the ground, his body turned, and, with a rushing sound, he fell on his back in the snowdrift.

"He must be killed!" gasped Bertie, who felt a deep friendship towards this brave young warrior.

"Bedad! then he's not!" cried Pat. "Look! He's struggling out. Eels aren't in it!"

"Those Copper Indians are blind," said Hade, who seemed none the worse for his fall. "I knew the snow would be deep there. Come! Our hunting is over. Next time I hunt it shall be them. We must return to my people, for we four cannot fight all those."

The journey back to the Ojibway encampment, although a long one, was attended with no fresh dangers. The Copper Indians made no attempt to follow in that direction, as they knew they might meet their foes at any moment in overwhelming odds.

The chief's return was greeted with much rejoicing, and the white men met with every kindness at their fierce friends' hands.

CHAPTER VII.

A PERILOUS VENTURE—BERTIE MEETS HIS FATHER—THE FLIGHT—CONCLUSION.

A few days, which were spent in hunting and feasting, passed by; then Hade conducted his white friends westward.

Crossing the hills which lie between the Ojibways' territory and that of the Copper Indians, he led them towards the encampment of the latter.

"My white friend has saved my life," said Hade, placing his hand on Bertie's shoulder. "The chief of the Ojibway nation never forgets an injury, nor does he forget a good action. Unless my eyes are much deceived, I can bring the young warrior to his father."

"Hade! what do you mean?" cried Bertie breathlessly. "Do you really think my dear father lives?"

"Listen to my words," said Hade. "Some years ago I was sorely wounded, and taken prisoner by the Copper Indians. A white man, who, I believe, had also been taken prisoner, and whom, doubtless, they kept that he might cure their ills, brought me back to life that they might put me to the torture. His face was so like yours that I was surprised the first time I saw you in the store."

"I have heard it said that my father was to have been a doctor!" exclaimed Bertie eagerly.

"I have little doubt that the white captive of the Copper Indians is your father, and no doubt he is still alive."

"Cannot you let your warriors rescue him, Hade?"

"That is not possible. Were my warriors twice their number they could never storm the Copper Indians' encampment. There is only one way to rescue him, and that I will attempt for your sake."

"Faith, I would like to know how you escaped from the bloodthirsty imps!" exclaimed Pat.

"Unarmed, they chased me down lines of armed warriors," said Hade. "The white man pleaded for my life, but they would not listen to his words. Watching my opportunity I seized one of my enemies' battleaxes, and then—well, then they feared to face the chief of the Ojibways. I passed through their lines, and many warriors fell. Now we must leave our mustangs amongst these trees, for we are nearing the enemies' encampment."

Hade and his white friends were mounted; but, securing their horses to trees, they now proceeded on foot.

It was necessary to use the utmost vigilance, because at any moment they might come upon a Copper scout, and Hade stepped so lightly upon the ground that he did not make the slightest sound. His companions followed as noiselessly as they were able, but several times the young chief raised his hand to enjoin silence.

They had climbed a steep hill, which was covered densely with undergrowth, when beneath them lay the encampment of the Copper Indians, with an enormous fire in the centre, round which vast numbers were assembled.

Suddenly the most mournful wail arose from the savage throng.

"It is their death-song," explained Hade. "They grieve for their warriors who have not returned. Now let my young friend come with me, and his father, if he be such, shall be rescued."

"But had we not better come also?" inquired Andrew.

"No. We need be very silent. We shall not be long."

Hade cautiously descended the side of the valley, and then he made his way to a hut that stood some little distance from the rest. A savage was standing close to the entrance; but he seemed to be paying greater attention to the proceedings of the throng around the fire than to the care of his prisoner.

Hade drew his tomahawk, then, rising from his crouching position, he boldly approached the sentry; but now the moonlight threw the young chief's shadow on the ground. The Copper Indian saw it, and, uttering his warcry, fled towards the centre of the encampment. Once he turned and hurled his spear; but when he recognised the dreaded chief of the Ojibways, he continued his flight.

In a second Hade sprang into the hut, and, as he had expected, the white captive was there.

"Come!" cried Hade. "I take you to your son."

The wretched father needed no second bidding. As he ran from the hut, the yells of the savages sounded on every side. Hade glanced at his friends, and saw that the long captivity had so weakened the prisoner that he would be no match for their agile foes.

"Go on as quickly as you can," he said. "I will join you soon."

Then he turned and fled in a different direction. The savages had not yet seen the brave young chief, but in a

very few moments they did so, and, uttering their warcry, immediately gave chase. The speed at which they ran was tremendous; but Hade was as swift as they. Once he turned, then a spear flew from his hand, and the foremost pursuer fell to the ground.

Dodging round the huts, Hade crossed the encampment; then the late prisoner and Bertie hurried up the side of the ravine, though they had not been seen by the savages, and consequently were not followed.

Presently father and son stopped.

"Bertie, my dear boy," exclaimed Arnold, "do you remember me?"

"Yes, quite well. Oh, I thought you were dead! You can never know how I have grieved all these years. Dear father, that young chief has been very good to me, and so have some other friends, who are waiting for us now, if we can only find them."

"You must tell me all about them presently, my son, and I will tell you of my captivity. I thought all happiness in life was over, but I have never felt greater joy than I feel at meeting you."

When they reached the top of the encampment, Bertie ventured to call to Andrew and Pat, who soon came hurrying towards them.

"I shall find a more fitting opportunity of thanking you for your goodness to my son, my friends," said Arnold, grasping their hands. "I trust that brave young chief will not get captured. He has certainly risked his life for me!"

They now passed some very anxious moments, and, judging by the furious yells of the savages, they had great fear that they were close upon Hade. Presently those shouts grew more distant, but for quite half an hour they could hear them.

"I greatly fear that he will be captured," said Arnold. "He is marvellously brave, but what can one man do against that horde?"

"They will not capture Hade, chief of the Ojibway nation," said a deep voice that caused Pat and Andrew to level their rifles. "Would my white friends take my life?" added Hade, stepping forward.

"By the powers, I would never forgive myself if I did!" said Pat, grasping his hand. "I never expected to see you alive again. Tell us how you escaped those yelling wretches."

Hade suddenly motioned Pat to remain silent, and as they stood in the black shadows cast by the trees they could hear the roar of the camp-fire, but that was now the only sound that disturbed the silence of the night.

Hade's keen ears, however, heard another sound, so slight that it was inaudible to the white men, and, with head thrown back, for some moments he listened intently. Presently he drew a spear, then inch by inch raised it. There was a rushing sound, and an arrow tore its way through the bushes, grazing Hade's upraised arm in its course. Then he hurled the spear, and a cry of pain echoed through the forest.

"I have missed my mark," he said. "Quick! no time is to be lost. Our horses!"

"But I think you hit someone," said Arnold.

"True; but he has escaped. I hear him even now pushing through the bushes. Follow me!"

With rapid though noiseless strides Hade moved towards the place where their horses were tethered; then all mounted, the young chief taking Bertie on his horse.

They had scarcely reached the open ground and emerged into the moonlight, when a fierce shout warned them that their foes were near at hand.

All urged their horses on, and over the snowy ground they flew, while the yells from their pursuers were appalling. When Bertie looked round, he saw a hundred or more fierce warriors dashing after them, amidst showers of glistening snow, as the hoofs of the galloping horses flung it into the air.

"I am afraid they are overtaking us," he said.

"Yes," replied Hade. "They have fresh horses, while ours are tired. Soon they must overtake us."

He spoke with a calmness that showed his bravery, for he must have known that capture meant certain death for him.

A quarter of an hour's ride brought the enemies so near that they hurled many a spear at the fugitives.

"If there were no moon we could escape even yet," said Hade. "But they shall see how the chief of the Ojibways can fight for his life! See yonder hills? If we once reach those, we may yet escape."

Several times he glanced anxiously at the horses, who, although going well, showed great signs of fatigue. What he feared most was that one of those whizzing spears should strike either horse or rider.

As they drew near the snow-clad mountain, winding up the steep side appeared a narrow pathway, and Hade directed the horsemen to ascend this, he and Bertie bringing up the rear.

At first it was easy enough to ascend, although there was only sufficient room for one horse to go at a time; but soon the

pathway narrowed so much that it was necessary to slacken the horses' speed to a walking pace.

On one side of the pass there was a steep ravine, which grew deeper as they ascended, until it became a perpendicular cliff, while the height of the pass was so great that Bertie shuddered as he looked down it.

A false step on the part of one of the horses must have hurled the rider down the chasm; but the sure-footed mustangs picked their way cautiously.

Hade turned from time to time, and hurled a spear at the foremost pursuers; but they also had been compelled to slacken their speed up the dangerous pass.

They had almost reached the top of the pathway, when there was a sharp corner to turn. All got round in safety, until it came to Hade's turn. Just as the narrowest and most dangerous part a spear struck his mustang. The terrified animal uttered a fearful scream, and commenced to plunge violently. Every moment Bertie expected the wounded animal would dash them over the abyss, and, indeed, but for Hade's superb horsemanship, this must have been their fate.

Another spear pierced the horse, and it leapt into the air. Hade raised his tomahawk and struck its head; then it sank on its knees, and sank lifeless to the ground, while Hade lifted Bertie from its back.

Now, with one foot on the horse's body, Hade waited round the bend for his foes; but for some time they feared to face the formidable young chief.

At last one of the savages came round the corner. He was of enormous size, and in the weird glow of the moon looked even greater. With knife and tomahawk he attacked Hade, who, standing firmly on the narrow and slippery ledge, guarded every blow that was dealt him.

Waiting his opportunity, Hade struck at his adversary with a strength that hurled his weapon from his hand. Uttering a cry of rage, the Copper Indian leapt upon the young chief, and they grappled with terrible fierceness.

Others of the savages now came round the dangerous corner, and hurled their spears at the white men, who immediately opened fire, and the savages beat a hasty retreat.

Although the two combatants scarcely moved, it was evident that they were straining every nerve for the mastery. Hade knew that defeat would not only signify his own death, but death to the whole party, for amongst those hills they could never escape from the savages without a guide. The two warriors were pretty evenly matched in strength, and at first it seemed only too probable that both would be hurled over the fearful abyss. But presently the Copper Indian showed signs of distress. Hade's terrible grip was crushing in his sides. Uttering a cry of rage, the savage warrior dashed himself upon the young chief, who, turning sideways, hurled him clean over his head.

The Copper Indian fell heavily on the ledge close to the brink of the precipice. With a frantic effort, he tried to save himself; but his struggles only expedited the end, and, with a cry of terror that echoed round the snowy hills, to be dashed to death a thousand feet below.

At the sight of their comrade's fearful death the remainder of the savages feared to round the bend, and now Hade directed his white friends to continue their flight, while Andrew or Pat fired each time one of the savages appeared round the corner.

This kept them at bay until the little party reached the top of the pass, and now what Hade had been longing for occurred. Thick clouds began to sweep across the heavens, obscuring the moonlight, and bringing quantities of snow.

"We must turn our horses loose," he said. "It will be impossible to take them the way I am going. I think we are safe now."

"But if we are unmounted," said Andrew, "will not the enemy be able to overtake us directly it is daylight. Our trail will be quite distinct in this snow."

"My white friend forgets that more snow is falling," replied Hade, pointing to the black heavens. "Before day breaks a foot of snow will cover our trail. Besides, no horse could follow where I shall lead."

The comrades soon saw that Hade was correct. At each step that they advanced the ground became more rugged, and at times they had to clamber over huge snow-clad boulders.

The cold was so intense that their limbs were nearly numb; besides this, they all needed food. But to stop would mean certain capture, and no complaints were uttered by any of the party.

Bertie bore his sufferings with splendid fortitude, and his father asked him many questions concerning the life he had led at school.

"That Dr. Bletchley must be a great scoundrel!" Arnold exclaimed. "I left a large sum of money in his hands, so that you were by no means living on charity, as he declared. Indeed, he owes me a very considerable amount, though, from what you tell me of this man, who professed to be my friend, I do not expect I shall ever see a penny of it. However, I still have some property, and with that capital I hope to start in the

fur business, as was my original intention; and you shall help me, Bertie."

"The Ojibways shall bring you many furs," said Hade, "for I know that my white friends will deal fairly with my people."

"Indeed we will, Hade," said Arnold. "You have proved yourself a true friend and hero to us. Rest assured your noble conduct will not be forgotten."

"By the powers, then, we'll turn hunters, Andrew!" exclaimed Pat. "We ought to be able to get a living."

"No; we will all be partners in the concern. I do not forget my son's friends," said Arnold.

By break of day the snow had ceased, and now the party found themselves on the level ground the other side of the hills. A frozen lake lay on their left, along whose banks some pine-trees grew. There was no living thing in sight; nor did there seem to be the slightest chance of getting any game.

"If my white friends will light a fire I will bring them food."

"But how can you get it, Hade?" inquired Bertie. "I see no animals—not even a bird."

"Let my young friend come with me, and I will show him," said Hade, leading the way on to the frozen lake.

With his tomahawk he cut a hole through the ice, then waited, with upraised spear; and before they had been there many minutes a large fish rose to the surface. In an instant Hade's spear had transfixed it.

"They come for air," he explained. "Many can be caught this way."

This proved to be the case, and by the time the fire was well alight Hade had caught four large fish.

Cutting these in slices, he hung them over the fire, and the little party were soon enjoying a very excellent meal.

Little time, however, could be spent, and although all needed rest greatly, Hade declared it would be unsafe to take it until they were well out of the enemy's territory.

The journey to the coast was a very trying one, because of

the scarcity of food. Hade, however, guided them safely; and he took some of his warriors, who scoured the forests through which they passed.

They were proceeding along the banks of the river on which Andrew's vessel had met her doom, when Hade ordered a halt; and now some of his warriors went ahead.

About half an hour elapsed; but, although it was night, Hade did not build a camp-fire. At last he motioned his friends to follow him, and now, when they gained the more open ground, flames shot up into the blackness of the night.

"It is the store," explained Hade. "That is the vengeance of my people."

"Faith, I haven't much cause to like the storekeeper!" exclaimed Pat; "but I trust your warriors' vengeance has not extended to him."

"No," answered Hade, after having spoken to one of his warriors; "the white man fled. His whisky is burning. It is all that it is fit for. If my white friend opens another store, I hope he will not sell firewater to my people."

"Certainly not, Hade," said Arnold.

"We shall exchange serviceable goods with you for furs, and you will be dealt with honestly. In time to come I hope to build up a great business, and ever to call the red warrior my friend."

Arnold was not too sanguine. On placing a lawyer on Dr. Bletchley's track, that worthy suddenly disappeared with his son Silas. Then Arnold sold what property he had left, and invested the proceeds in building a store, which, under his able management, and that of Andrew and Pat, to say nothing of Bertie, has grown into a gigantic concern, and promises to make the fortunes of all concerned in it.

Hade is a frequent visitor, and he always brings Bertie some present, while they always find him honourable in his dealings with them.

THE END.

THE BLACK SEAL

OR THE QUEST OF "ZUB" THE DOG DETECTIVE

CHAPTER XVI. (continued).

The aperture was vault-like, nearly square, utterly empty, with the water as a flooring; but up one side ran a zigzag stairway, broken, dirt-clogged, and slimy. The staircase led to a wooden trapdoor in the roof, partly rotted away, and so ill-fitting that light gleamed all round three sides, while a bright ray shot through a vacant knot-hole in the centre.

Ah! this meant safety; extraction from the river, at all events. But Jack was in no haste to commence exploration. He still felt somewhat weak and nerveless, and desired to allow his gathering powers time to mature.

The ray from the hole, streaming like a white ribbon through the darkened vault, was caught and reflected on the dark water beneath. It passed close by his shoulder, and Jack, remembering the fateful fragment of the silk scarf picked up by Zub, determined to utilise the light in examination of the find.

Drawing from his pocket the sodden scrap, now crushed into a round ball, Fairfax carefully spread it out upon his palm, as he had seen the woman do upon the bridge. He undid its folds, smoothed its wrinkles flat; then carefully scrutinised it under the ray of light. Blank! There was nothing there. Had the water washed out the name? Surely not. Ah! Looking closely, and brushing away the adhering dirt-specks, the detective discovered some faded, minute impressions that looked like letters. They were indecipherable. Bah! they were written the reverse way. He was looking at the wrong side of the silk.

Quickly reversing the fragment, Jack flattened it out afresh, and wiped it clean. Now the letters showed more boldly; he could decipher them now.

For a moment the detective dropped his hand. What name was written there? Probably that of the murderer of Viola Norris. At least, the scarf had been stained with her blood, which even yet tinged one side of the rag with a dull, rusty hue.

What name—Mortimer or Norris? Much depended upon the result, and the detective shot the scrap under the bull's-eye-like light.

He started violently: a nervous shrill ran through his every limb, a dull pain seized upon his heart. He seemed to have solved the mystery, yet that solution filled him with dire dismay. He read the word "Norris."

Was Jessie, then, the murderess, after all? Had she been fooling and hoodwinking him all the time? No, he could not believe it—would scarce credit such a thing if the girl herself admitted it. But stay, the name might apply to the victim: the scarf might have belonged to Viola. Was there no initial letter there? Feverishly, yet very carefully, Jack examined the faint, blurred characters again.

Hurrah! He almost shouted aloud for joy. He had entirely misread the writing. The word was not Norris, but Norna. Delightedly Jack stared at the thing, examined the rag all over for further characters, but found none. Still, he was well satisfied. Jessie, at least, was not implicated. But who was this Norna? That added a new piece to the puzzle. So much the better. The more pieces he collected the greater chance had he to fit them together.

But now, feeling strong and fit again, Jack Fairfax decided to leave his watery dungeon.

Creeping up the steps, he tried the wooden trapdoor; it yielded to his pressure, and, throwing it back, the detective leaped through the hole, followed instantly by Zub.

Jack found himself in a small apartment, brilliantly lighted. It appeared like the taproom of a low-class public-house; and, giving colour to the idea, three men sat drinking by a battered wooden, beerstained table. Two were strangers—one a big, flabby, drink-sodden fellow, the other a smaller and lighter man, bearing the stamp of crime on his evil features. The third? The third was the Jew pilferer, the rascal who had carried off the wax model from the burning depository.

The sudden appearance of the detective created the utmost consternation amongst the three frowzy occupants of the evil den.

The Jew started up, wild-eyed, and, after a fixed glare, fled from the room. The flabby, drink-sodden fellow (who proved to be the landlord of the house) muttered through his bloated, bloodless lips, "The River Police," and sank back in

his chair, completely overcome, his swollen limbs quivering like a jelly.

The third man, the most pugnacious of the three, pausing in the act of setting down a pewter pot, from which he had just drunk, shouted, "A cop! by Gob!" then, gripping his tankard afresh, hurled it at the interloper with the force of a cannon-ball, following up his shot by making a wild charge himself, murder in his eye.

Deftly Jack dodged the missile, the pot crashing against the wooden wall, and falling through the open trapdoor; then, quickly recovering, lissom as a bullfighter, watchful as a gladiator, Fairfax met the man.

Jack's fist shot out with the force of a pile-driver; he delivered a straight left-hander—a hearty British blow—landing upon his opponent's jaw, upsetting the fellow like a cockshy figure at a fair, and sending the man crashing back into his corner.

For a full minute no one moved; the fallen man lay half-stunned, the landlord sat shaking in his chair, and Zub cocked his eye inquiringly upon his master for instructions.

So far, Fairfax felt he had the best of the encounter, had more than held his own; but he had no wish to continue the battle. He did not feel physically fit for fighting, and preferred to strive with his wits rather than his fists.

In first issuing upon this adventure, Jack had assumed the disguise of a London rough—a slouching "corner boy," of more than dubious appearance, and his subsequent movements had but perfected his disguise. His clothing was draggled and sodden, smirched and stained with river mud; his hands and face were smeared with slime. He was decidedly an ugly customer, one to be carefully avoided if encountered in a lonely place. He decided to maintain his disguise.

"Blow me, cullies!" he remarked, in a hoarse, grating voice, "if this ain't a bloomin' 'ot way to treat a pal. Wot d'ye tyke me for?"

The fat man sat up in his chair, and rubbed his eyes, while the thin fellow squatted in the corner in which he had fallen, fending his jaw.

"Be—bean't you connected with the River Police?" gasped the former.

"Wot—me?" cried Jack, with a rumbling laugh. "Now, is it likely? Do I look as if I had come from a police-galley, 'cept maybe as a prisoner? Me, a 'water-beetle'—a 'river bobbie'! Well, that's a good 'un. No, I has no truck wi' the likes o' them, nor doesn't want to, neither. I be jist a pore bloke as was larking wi' my pals, an' tumbles into the water. My dorg follows. We drifts down, an' lands at your bloomin' steps, nigh drowned, both on us; an' here we are. Now, boys, we doesn't want to fight; but if so be as ye wants a row, come on—we has nothink to lose. Totherways, all we arks is that you gives us the key of the street. Show us your front door, boss, an' we will sling our hook, an' say thank ye. Which is it to be?"

"Oh, I wants no rows here!" cried the landlord, rising as hastily as his unwieldy body would permit. "If so be as you are a true pal, ye are welcome to go. Come on! Keep yer mouth shut, an' I will let you out."

"Got the price of a pot about ye, matey? You owes me a plaster for my broken jaw. Faith, ye're a slogger, you are!" interposed the other man, scrambling to his feet.

"Ay, ay! got a few browns; good enough for a wet to a true pal," replied Fairfax, clanking four penny pieces on the table. Then, ever on the quest for information, he added:

"Who was that old bloke as slung his hook so snippily?"

"Oh," returned the other, picking up the coins, with a laugh, and jingling them together, "you means old Sammy—"

"Stash it, you fool! No call for you to turn a post-office directory!" growled the landlord, interrupting his communicative friend with a backhander on the mouth. Then, turning to Fairfax, he added: "He's a wery respectable old gent, but you has no business with he, so far as I can see. Come on, and I will let you out; but go quiet, and 'ware cops!"

Shuffling along a dark, dirty passage, the host unbarred a door at the further end, ushered his uninvited guest into the street, then closed and bolted the portal again.

"So! we're well out of it, Zub, old man!" muttered Jack, stroking his dog's head. "Let's note this address, it may be useful afterwards. Ah!—the Bargee's Berth—I'll remember that. Come along, Zub."

Emerging from some narrow lanes, Fairfax found himself in Ratcliffe Highway, and strode off westwards, an object of curiosity and suspicion to every constable encountered; while homeless and belated wayfarers gave him the breadth of the street. On reaching the City, Jack discovered an antediluvian "growler," a thing of shreds and patches, that only dared venture out in the darkness; and, entering the "boneshaker," after payment in advance of a quadruple fare, was rattled away to his chambers in the Strand.

CHAPTER XVII.

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCES.

Next morning Jack Fairfax decided to pay a surprise visit to Captain Mortimer. That mysterious and very astute individual certainly merited close attention. He appeared to be the secret spring of the whole conspiracy, if conspiracy there was, the pivot upon which the whole affair was working, the planet around which all the satellites were revolving. Could the captain but be made to speak out, by force or wile, probably the entire mystery would be unveiled.

The detective was in luck. On nearing the military dépôt he caught sight of the tall, stalwart form of Captain Mortimer, clad in mufti, entering the barrack gates, and on himself reaching the entrance saw his quarry cross the square, open the door with a pass-key, and enter his own quarters.

"Run to earth, anyhow!" muttered Jack, as he also crossed the parade.

On reaching the portal, Fairfax knocked boldly, noticing at the time that the painting and lettering on the door were much faded—indeed, the name of "Captain Mortimer" was somewhat indistinct. Ah, what was that? A small, white, oblong square appeared above the name. It was an ordinary visiting-card, tacked to the door, and it bore the words "Lieutenant Edward Glyn."

"So—ho," thought Jack, "the lieutenant makes himself quite at home in the quarters of his captain. A regular 'house of call.' But that is natural enough; Jessie told me the two were bosom friends, always together. Birds of a feather—eh?"

After considerable delay, during which Jack rapped twice more, the door was opened, and the grizzled old soldier appeared—the forbidding, repulsive fellow whom Jack had encountered during his previous visit. The man completely filled the door-frame, entirely blocking the way, and he seemed quite as unprepossessing as before. He was more like a prison-warder than an officer's servant.

"Now, then, what do you want?" was again the fellow's gruff inquiry.

"I have called to see Captain Mortimer. Take him my card; you have seen it before," was the quiet reply.

"Not at home!" was the harsh rejoinder, as the man waved the caller off, and attempted to close the door.

"That won't do for me, my fine fellow!" cried Fairfax, placing one foot over the threshold. "I do not know whether your answer is merely a polite fiction, or a deliberate lie; but, in either case, it is useless. I saw Captain Mortimer enter this door not five minutes ago."

"Stand back, you gallows-bird!" the detective continued sternly, adding in lowered, but still clear and incisive tones: "Do not provoke me, for your own sake. Know that I recognise you, you gaol-breaking felon. One word from me, and you will be sent back to prison to complete your unexpired sentence, with another term to follow for your last escapade."

The man's features grew green with mingled fear and malice, his jaw dropped, he drew back snrinkingly, and Jack was about to push past him into the hall, when an event occurred that sent the detective's energies flying in a new direction.

The vestibule was rather badly lighted, but it showed fairly, extensive quarters for one of the rank of its present tenant.

On the immediate left was the door of the sitting-room in which Jack had had his previous adventure with the captain. Further in was another door, and, the quarters being double, these two portals were faced by doors on the other side of the hall, while right at the end appeared still another door, looking, however, more the entrance to a closet or lumber-room than a regular apartment.

As the surly sentry fell back, this farthest door swiftly opened, and a woman glided out, coming to a sudden halt, however, as she saw the two men in the passage.

She was dressed entirely in black, and through the dim light Jack recognised her figure and features. Jessie Norris she seemed, yet not the Jessie Norris his clear-eyed, truthful expressed employer, but rather that will-o'-the-wisp creature, that ghoulish phantom, so frequently chased, as often escaping. Had this woman a dual existence? Was she at one moment a guileless girl, a truthful, persecuted, helpless victim, at another a vengeful demon, a malign spirit from the nether world? Was this an actual instance of the "Jekyll and Hyde" fable?

But, ghost or demon, there was substance there. Let him but clutch that thing that had so often eluded his grasp, and he would drag it to the light of day, and force the truth from those mocking lips; and, after a momentary, wonderstruck pause, Fairfax dashed forward to grasp this foul, mysterious creature.

While the detective looked, the woman eyed him with a stare as surprised and intense as his own. Her eyes contracted, yet the pupils dilated, shooting out a horrid, greenish glare, like those of a cornered tigress.

On he sprang, brushing aside the bewildered servant, while

the woman stood still as a statue, her hand on the half-opened door.

But not for long did she maintain her statuesque attitude. Swiftly she was galvanised into active, vigorous life, as by an electric shock. When the detective was still some distance off, she drew from her breast a small yellow coffer, like a snuff-box, sprang open the lid, then, with a sweeping gesture, threw its contents into the air.

Could this weird creature control the elements? Did she carry electricity on her person? It seemed so.

Instantly following the sweep of her hand a wave of steely-blue flame spread through the air, a sinister glow as when the phosphoric midnight sea is whirled by a shark's fin; and through the azure glare, the face of the woman shone, ghastly as that of a staring corpse, yet full of malignant triumph. The flare was accompanied by a heavy, oppressive odour, a stifling, languorous perfume, that while it dulled the muscles and sinews, sapping physical strength, yet quickened and irritated the mental faculties, fretting the brain to the point of madness, and, reeling, staggering, Fairfax clutched the bare wall for support.

The manifestation was but momentary; it passed like a breath of air: the odour was as transient as the flash; but, as both faded, the woman glided back within the door by which she had issued, and again Jack heard that low, musical, but mirthless laugh, the hideous, jubilant chuckle, uttered by the demon creature as she foiled his efforts for her capture.

Blowing out the narcotic fumes, shaking off the dulling depression, Jack sprang forward; yet, even as he leaped, heard a bolt shot. When he reached the door, it was fast, resisting all efforts to tear it open.

"Now, then, what ever is the matter? What's all this dreadful row about?" cried a high-pitched, querulous voice behind; and, on turning, Fairfax found himself confronted by Lieutenant Glyn, that officer appearing in undress uniform, and, rather anomalously, wearing a pair of tinted spectacles.

"Ah! it's you, Mr. Fairfax," remarked the officer, on recognising the detective; but his tones indicated no great pleasure at the meeting. "What has happened? What is the cause of this disturbance?"

"Only this, sir," replied Jack, endeavouring to steady his still reeling wits; "there is a woman, a criminal, hiding within that room. I must, and will have her! I demand her in the name of the law!"

"What?" cried the lieutenant, with a forced laugh, "a woman hiding in the quarters of my friend the captain? Nonsense, man! You must be mistaken. Such a thing would be contrary to the regulations of the service. Poof! you have been seeing double."

"And, what of this, then?" replied Jack, quickly clutching at an object that depended from the chink of the closed door. It was a black ribbon; it had been worn by the woman, but fluttering in her swift flight, had caught in the door as she shut it. "Ay, and this?" continued Fairfax excitedly, running his fingers down the streamer, then holding up the end, to which was attached some hard, black object.

It was a black seal—the well-known impression of a man's thumb—that thumb barred by a cicatrice; the weird signet of the murderer of Viola Norris.

The lieutenant started at the sight, his weak eyes sparkled behind their tinted glasses; but, controlling himself with an effort, he answered lightly:

"How should I know? Some stupid frippery or other. But you may take my word for it"—here he raised his voice authoritatively—"there is no woman hiding in that cupboard. It's only a lumber-room for odds and ends."

"I must see it, however," returned the detective quietly, but firmly; "and see it I will, even if I have to force an entrance. The door is fast."

"Nonsense, man!" repeated the lieutenant, "that door is never fastened, though it is sometimes a little stiff. Look here!" And, turning the handle, he pulled it towards him. The door opened perfectly easily.

In sprang Fairfax, like an eager terrier into a rat-pit. The place being without window, was in total darkness, save for the faint light filtering through the open door; but, feeling for his match-box, Jack promptly struck a vesta.

It was only a small, square cupboard, the breadth of the passage; and as the lieutenant had averred, seemed but a lumber-room. One or two old garments hung from pegs round the wall, a litter of rubbish lay in the corner; but there was no sign of the mysterious woman. There was nothing there sufficiently bulky to conceal her presence, nor was there any other door or aperture by which she could have escaped. Was she then a transient wraith, an unsubstantial spirit?

"Well, I hope you are satisfied now," remarked Glyn, as Jack, mightily perplexed, returned to the passage. "Take my advice, young man, and don't drink so hard so early in the morning. Mortimer told me how easily you were affected by liquor."

"Sir!" cried Jack indignantly, "do you insinuate I am intoxicated?"

The lieutenant shrugged his shoulders mockingly, and the soldier-servant looked on with an aggressive grin.

"I tell you I saw a woman disappear within that room—that ribbon is a proof of her presence!" returned Jack doggedly. "You will ask me to believe next that I did not see Captain Mortimer enter that hall door ten minutes ago?"

"Certainly I will!" replied the lieutenant, laughing; "and for the best of all reasons. Mortimer cannot be in two places at once, and at the present moment he is more than thirty miles away. He went down to Aldershot on duty this morning—I saw him off at Waterloo myself—and he will not return until this evening."

"But I saw him distinctly; I cannot be mistaken!" gasped Jack, astounded at this new assertion; "and, what's more," he added, with growing conviction, "he is in these quarters now. He cannot have left, as I have been within view of the door all the while, save the moment or two I passed in that cupboard."

"What a tiresome bore you are!" cried Glyn testily. "Still, since you have routed out that cupboard for a woman, who never was there, you had better look round the quarters for the man who is now in Aldershot. Come along."

Jack searched through every room in the place, beginning with the sitting-room, then passing into the bedroom behind, a sparsely furnished apartment, rather in a litter, with uniforms and plain-clothes scattered about. On the other side of the passage was an apartment, which Glyn stated he himself occasionally occupied as a bedroom, and it was furnished with barrack-like severity; nearer the hall door was the servant's room. Mortimer was in none of these. Certainly, the captain was not in his quarters.

"I hope you are satisfied at last, sir?" remarked Glyn, irritably, as the two returned to the passage.

"That I am not!" replied Fairfax, stubbornly. "I must search that lumber-room more fully. There must be some secret exit, and I mean to find it!"

"That you shall not!" replied the lieutenant, equally determined—"at least, not now. I cannot allow my friend's quarters to be further disturbed in his absence. If you want to continue your ridiculous search, it must be with his permission, and in his presence. He will be here at noon to-morrow, you had better call then and ask him. Now, Mr. Fairfax, you must excuse me if I say good-morning; I am rather busy. I dare not offer you any refreshment, unless, perhaps, you care for a bottle of soda. That might do you good."

Scarcely daring to trust himself to reply to the sneering innuendo, Jack, turning on his heel, left the quarters, boiling with rage, returning to his own chambers, sorely perplexed at his inexplicable experiences, yet doggedly determined to get to the bottom of the whole affair.

(To be continued in next week's number.)

THE JAVA VALLEY OF DEATH.

"The place is called the Valley of Death," explained an officer who is one of the few Englishmen who have been there, "on account of the deadly fumes there. But the natives cannot account for the poisonous odours, nor has their presence ever been explained. The deadly place is about thirty-five feet below the surrounding ground, looks like a dry bed of a stream, and is about one mile in circumference. As I approached the place I noticed a suffocating smell, and was attacked with nausea and dizziness. A belt of this fetid atmosphere surrounds the valley. I passed through it, and in purer air was permitted to view the awful spectacle—for it was awful. Before me I saw scattered all over the barren floor of the valley skeletons of men, wild hogs, deer, and all kinds of birds and small animals. The entire bed of the valley is one solid rock, and I could not discover a hole or a crevice in any place from where the poisonous fumes came. I was anxious to reach the bottom of the valley if possible, but was afraid to make the attempt, as I had been warned to give the place a wide berth. I determined, however, to see what the fumes smelled like, and started to descend. My pet Irish terrier was with me, and as soon as he saw me step over the side of the bank he rushed down ahead of me. I endeavoured to call him back, but it was too late. As soon as the little animal reached the rocky bed below he fell over on his side. He continued to breathe for ten minutes."

"AGAINST THE QUEEN." NEXT WEEK.

"QUEEN'S DAY NUMBER," NEXT SATURDAY, 1d.

Life in Hand By Viscount Y

Only two persons in the world know exactly who I am. For it were certain death to reveal more than this—that I am a viscount and an Englishman. For my name, Y, will serve. In disclosing as I am those secret dangers which I have encountered during a life of travel and adventure in all parts of the world, I run a real and very terrible risk, for I deal with stern and grim realities, and not with fiction.

There are men, be it known, moving in vastly different circles, who would rather answer for my death than allow a word of what I am about to tell you to go forth to the world.

A FIEND'S WORK.

It is no uncommon thing for poor beggars, as well as rich merchants, to be kidnapped in China.

A ghastly traffic—far exceeding the horrors of African slavery—is carried on under the very eyes of the authorities. Stories of fearful atrocities had reached the British Government, and I am betraying no trust when I add that I was sent to prove or disprove the sensational rumours then gaining currency in our island dependency of Hong Kong.

One of the current rumours described how a party of Chinese monks lured young lads aboard some of the junks in the harbour, where they were treacherously imprisoned, and transhipped to a narrow, dangerous creek on the mainland.

Separately these victims were fiendishly tortured, their skins being ripped off, and the hides of animals being grafted upon them. They were immured in reeking dungeons until they had lost all semblance to their human fellows, and looked, as they were afterwards described, animal monstrosities.

These monks, so rumour added, had made an enormous fortune by touring the country with their wretched victims, whom they exhibited to the credulous people.

I found it most difficult to obtain any proof of these atrocities, for the wily monks had bribed the mandarins, who, feigning to assist me, were bent on leading me astray. Only my official status saved me from the remorseless enmity of the men whose fiendish traffic I was bent on rooting out.

At last I was satisfied that these horrible cruelties did exist. But I saw that if I wished to secure practical evidence I must act for myself, and promptly. So, disguised as a Chinese water-carrier, I kept a careful eye on the affairs of the suspected monks.

Their temple was situated on a rising mound close to a somewhat wide river. A green lawn, unadorned by a single shrub, sloped down to the water's edge. On the other sides the grounds were enclosed by an irregular Chinese wall. On every hand the approach to the temple was open.

For more than a week I watched pilgrims come and go, without once having my suspicions roused, yet a rumour was flying about that twenty scholars belonging to a day school had been kidnapped only two days ago.

It was quite true; the lads had mysteriously and entirely disappeared. What did it mean?

I kept a closer watch than ever on the temple and its priests. Still nothing suspicious occurred. Yet meanwhile the miscreants had grown bolder, for other cases of kidnapping were reported. I was at a loss to make it out, when it occurred to me that the temple most likely possessed subterranean passages, which probably tunnelled beneath the bed of the river.

I was not mistaken. The main entrance proved to be contained in the chief mandarin's house.

How was I to obtain access?

I pondered the matter over, and finally decided on a bold coup. At nightfall I would don the dress of the sleeping mandarin. It was a risky and dangerous proceeding, but I had my suit of mail armour beneath my waistcoat, and two trusty weapons, which I hid in the gorgeous Chinese dress.

I had accomplished my first object with comparative ease. The mandarin whose clothes I had borrowed was sleeping soundly in a little closet off a large room. The closet contained no window, and its solid wooden door I shut and locked, taking the key with me.

After this all was comparatively plain sailing, although at first I was destined to receive a rude shock.

Two of my supposed servants protested strongly when I bade them unfasten the door which gave admittance to the subterranean passage communicating with the temple.

"My lord," cried one of these men, "the priests of holy Guatona have enjoined us to keep the door closed, and allow no one to pass at our peril."

"Open at once, and stand aside there!" I thundered. "I, your master, the viceroy of the mighty Emperor, have business with the brethren. I desire to pass."

The poor wretches fell back cowering and humbled, while two or three stole into the passage after me, carrying torches.

Snatching a brand from one of the cowering attendants, I bade them return and keep guard as hitherto over the door, allowing no one to pass.

Feeling secure in the rear, I marched forward, until by the ghastly signs of torture I knew that I must be nearing the goal. I began to assume my usual caution.

A low wail in the distance caught my ear. I started forward quickly. The sound grew clearer and more horribly real. It was not a single cry, but a number of anguished screams, mingling in one piercing human wail of agony.

My blood ran cold. Sick at heart, but rendered desperate by the shrieks of the tortured victims, I dashed aside a richly carved bamboo door and plunged into a large furnace-lit room.

I had no plan. I knew that, single-handed and alone, this attempt to enter the dreadful precincts of these fiendish priests was worse than madness, for it meant falling a victim to a death excelling the most hideous stories of torture the world has heard. But I was maddened by those awful shrieks of agony.

And what a sight was unfolded!

The room was immense. In the very middle roared tremendous furnace. A score of priests were busy round it.

From the low roof hung nineteen human beings, stark naked. Their wrists were fastened together, and secured by a rope to a groove in the ceiling. Iron weights attached to their feet kept them from struggling.

They were in the act of undergoing the ghastly torture of the priests. Two were dead; most of the others were dying, for their skin, from their necks downwards, had been ripped off, and to their raw backs bear, wolf, fox, dog, and cat skins were being grafted.

The moment I flung open the door I reeled back, half dead with horror.

A cry broke from the monks. They dropped their implements, and betrayed the most abject fear.

I grasped the meaning of it quickly. Before me, till lately directing the ghastly operations, stood a counterpart of myself—the mandarin!

This villain, after gazing at me in speechless horror, gave a frightful cry of fear, and bolted. In a twinkling he was followed by the cowardly torturers. Afterwards I discovered the reason for their abject flight. The sleeping man whose clothes I had borrowed was not the mandarin, but the viceregal representative of the Chinese Emperor. The wretch who fled from me was the mandarin whom I thought I was duping. My adventure checked the ghastly trade in human monstrosities.

(Another of this series next week.)

"AGAINST THE QUEEN."

By Viscount "Y."

NEXT WEEK.

From the Quarter-Deck.

BY THE SKIPPER OF THE "UNION JACK."

Come along, my hearties, tumble up, and join the UNION JACK League. A badge for each member, remember. All you have to do to become a Leaguer is to fill in the coupon given below, ask three of your friends to witness your letter, and then send it to me, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. I will then enrol you, and send you a badge of membership. Special competitions, &c., will be given for Leaguers, and every member can sign the letters "U.J.L." after his or her name. The first applicant will receive a handsome prize, so will every 50th.

UNION JACK LEAGUE.

I, ...
of.....
hereby declare my wish to be enrolled as a member of the
"Union Jack" League, and promise to do all in my
power, by means of the "Union Jack" and otherwise,
to exterminate the "penny dreadful."

A prize of half-a-guinea to the reader who sends me in the most forms signed by his friends.

Now for another really important thing. Next week, as, of course, you have noticed, the UNION JACK is commemorating the sixtieth year of the reign of Victoria the Good, by issuing a special "QUEEN'S DAY NUMBER." It will, I flatter myself, surpass every number of the paper before published. There will be a large number of prize competitions for everyone. The title of the long story is "AGAINST THE QUEEN: OR, THE SECRET TRAGEDY OF 1837."

By VISCOUNT Y.

Halfpenny only.

Halfpenny only.

Every Englishman must have seen the Union Jack, and yet, perhaps, there are thousands who do not know how it came to be adopted as our national flag. Its history is both interesting and instructive.

When Richard I. returned from Palestine, he introduced the Cross of St. George as England's battle-flag. It is a plain red cross upon a white "field."

St. George was an officer in the Roman Army under the Emperor Diocletian. He became a convert to Christianity, and felt compelled to resign his sword, because he could not find it in his heart to kill his fellow Christians as his Emperor ordered. On refusing to withdraw his resignation, he was cruelly tortured, and suffered martyrdom about 303 A.D. He is represented upon some of our coins—notably, the five-shilling piece—mounted on a horse, and attacking a dragon. This, of course, is metaphorical. The dragons he so bravely fought were "falsehood and wrong."

The Cross of St. Patrick, the apostle, or patron saint, of Ireland, was adopted by the Irish as their national flag. It is a plain red cross upon a white background. Saint Patrick was supposed to have been born in the south-west of Scotland, between Dumbarton and Glasgow. The chief account possessed of him is contained in his own writings, called "The Confession." His original name was Muir or Sautus, but was afterwards changed to Patricius by Pope Celestine in 433, when he consecrated him bishop, and sent him as a missionary to Ireland. He is reported to have founded many schools and abbeys in Ireland, and to have effected many wonderful miracles, particularly that of exterminating all venomous animals from the island. The end of his life was devoted to acts of piety and benevolence, and he is supposed to have died at an extreme old age at the end of the sixth century. It is supposed by some authorities that when he was a boy he was seized by some Irishmen, who took him as a slave to Ireland, but between the age of seventeen and twenty he regained his liberty, and returned to his native country. There he was educated, and afterwards returned to Ireland.

The national flag of Scotland was the St. Andrew's Cross—a white cross upon a blue field. It is alleged that St. Andrew was crucified upon a cross formed like the one on the Scottish national flag. At all events, a cross of the same shape as

that of St. Andrew's is preserved in the Church of St. Victor at Marseilles, France, which the priests have a tradition for asserting is the identical one on which this apostle suffered martyrdom. In the fourth century Regulus, the Abbot of Patra, where St. Andrew's body was interred, was, according to the chronicles of the time, directed, in a vision, to take an arm, three of the fingers, one of the knee-pans, the patella, and, as some say, a tooth, from the chest which contained the martyr's skeleton. Having done this, he had another vision, telling him to set out on his journey, and take the several bones with him. This was complied with, and after a wandering voyage was shipwrecked off the rocky promontory of Fife—now known as St. Andrew's. The Pictish King Hungus received the stranger and his box of relics with friendship and respect, and, having been converted by the preaching of Regulus, erected a church where he had been driven ashore, and dedicated it to the saint, whose leg, tooth, &c., had so miraculously saved their stealer from drowning. As the church increased in importance, a town gradually sprang up around the edifice, and later on St. Andrew was adopted by the Scotch as their patron saint.

In the year 1606, when England and Scotland were united, the national flags of the two countries were also united. The white line around the St. George's Cross is called the "fimbriation," or fringe. It has no significance whatever, and is merely used to divide the blue of the St. Andrew's Cross from the red of the St. George's Cross, it being a rule of heraldry that colour shall not join colour.

In 1801 Ireland entered into partnership with Great Britain, and her flag was accordingly introduced into the "Union"—and the now famous "Union Jack" was made. It is, per-



haps, scarcely necessary to give an illustration of the Union Jack; but we do so to point out a few facts concerning it.

It will be observed that the crosses of St. Andrew and St. George are reproduced in their original proportions. But the cross of St. Patrick has had to be thinned to make it fit, otherwise it would have entirely obliterated the St. Andrew's Cross. It will also be observed that in the first and third divisions of the Union Jack the white of Scotland is uppermost, and that in the second and fourth the red of Ireland is uppermost.

James I. christened our national flag the "Union Jack." He used to sign his name "Jacques," and some think that this gave the name its origin. Others think that it was derived from the Spanish word "jaco," meaning a coat, which the knights of old wore over their armour with their arms in them.

Whenever we look upon the good old flag, that has braved so many battles and weathered so many seas, let us pause and see if we cannot learn some lessons from it. In addition to the fact that it is the flag under which our forefathers have fought and won so many glorious battles, it bears upon its surface symbols which remind us of three great and good men. St. George, from whom we should learn to fight bravely the dragons of falsehood and wrong; from St. Patrick to love our enemies, and do good to all; and from St. Andrew to have true manliness.

*Yours sincere friend,
The Skipper*

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