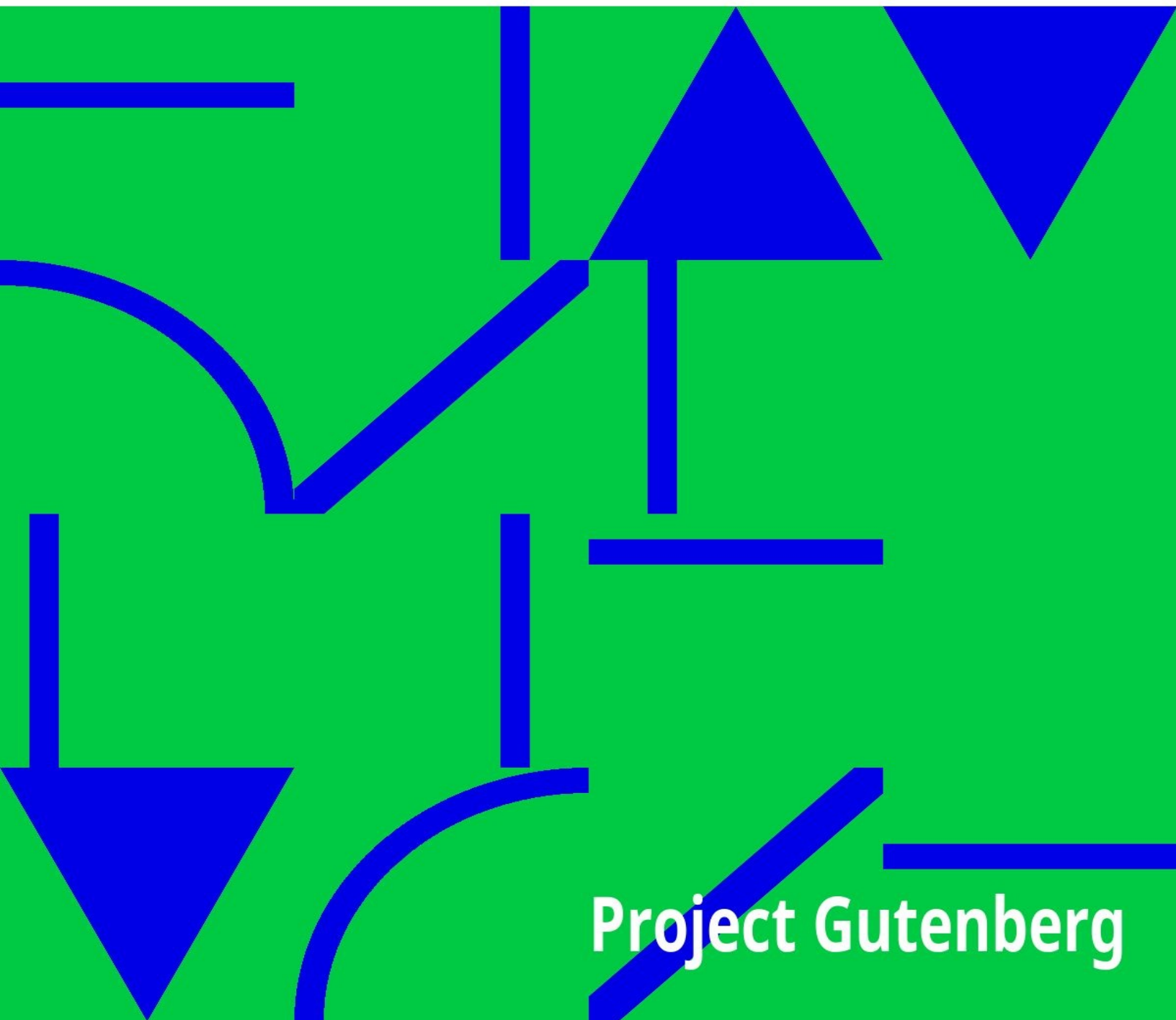


# Chasing the Sun

R. M. Ballantyne



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R.M. Ballantyne

# "Chasing the Sun"

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## Chapter One.

### Preparations for the Chase.

Fred Temple was a tall, handsome young fellow of about five-and-twenty.

He had a romantic spirit, a quiet gentlemanly manner, a pleasant smile, and a passionate desire for violent exercise. To look at him you would have supposed that he was rather a lazy man, for all his motions were slow and deliberate. He was never in a hurry, and looked as if it would take a great deal to excite him. But those who knew Fred Temple well used to say that there was a great deal more in him than appeared at first sight. Sometimes a sudden flush of the brow, or a gleam of his eyes, told of hidden fires within.

Fred, when a small boy, was extremely fond of daring and dangerous expeditions. He had risked his life hundreds of times on tree-tops and precipices for birds' nests, and had fought more hand-to-hand battles than any of the old Greek or Roman heroes. After he became a man, he risked his life more than once in saving the lives of others, and it was a notable fact that many of the antagonists of his boyhood became, at last, his most intimate friends.

Fred Temple was fair and ruddy. At about the age of nineteen certain parts of his good-looking face became covered with a substance resembling floss-silk. At twenty-five this substance had changed into a pair of light whiskers and a lighter moustache. By means of that barbarous custom called shaving he kept his chin smooth.

Fred's father was a wealthy Liverpool merchant. At the period when our tale opens Fred himself had become chief manager of the business. People began, about this time, to say that the business could not get on without him. There were a great number of hands, both men and women, employed by Temple and Son, and there was not one on the

establishment, male or female, who did not say and believe that Mr Frederick was the best master, not only in Liverpool, but in the whole world. He did not by any means overdose the people with attentions; but he had a hearty offhand way of addressing them that was very attractive. He was a firm ruler. No skulker had a chance of escape from his sharp eye, but, on the other hand, no hard-working servant was overlooked.

One day it was rumoured in the works that Mr Frederick was going to take a long holiday. Since his appointment to the chief charge, Fred had taken few holidays, and had worked so hard that he began to have a careworn aspect, so the people said they were “glad to hear it; no one in the works deserved a long holiday better than he.” But the people were not a little puzzled when Bob Bowie, the office porter, told them that their young master was going away for three months to chase the sun!

“Chase the sun, Bob! what d’ye mean?” said one. “I don’t know wot I mean; I can only tell ye wot I say,” answered Bowie bluntly.

Bob Bowie was an old salt—a retired seaman—who had sailed long as steward of one of the ships belonging to the House of Temple and Son, and, in consequence of gallantry in saving the life of a comrade, had been pensioned off, and placed in an easy post about the office, with good pay. He was called Old Bob because he looked old, and was weather-worn, but he was stout and hale, and still fit for active service.

“Come, Bowie,” cried another, “how d’ye know he’s goin’ to chase the sun?”

“Cause I heerd him say so,” replied Bob.

“Was he in earnest?” inquired a third.

“In coorse he wos,” said Bob.

“Then it’s my opinion,” replied the other, “that old Mr Temple’ll have to chase *his* son, and clap him in a strait-jacket w’en he catches him—if he talks such stuff.”

The porter could not understand a joke, and did not like one, so he turned on his heel, and, leaving his friends to laugh at their comrade’s jest,

proceeded to the counting-room.

There were two counting-rooms—a small outer and a large inner one. In the outer room sat a tall middle-aged man, lanky and worn in appearance and with a red nose. Opposite to him, at the same desk, sat a small fat boy with a round red face, and no chin to speak of. The man was writing busily—the boy was drawing a caricature of the man, also busily.

Passing these, Bob Bowie entered the inner office, where a dozen clerks were all busily employed, or pretending to be so. Going straight onward like a homeward-bound ship, keeping his eyes right ahead, Bob was stranded at last in front of a green door, at which he knocked, and was answered with a hearty “Come in.”

The porter went in and found Fred Temple seated at a table which was covered with books and papers.

“Oh! I sent for you, Bowie, to say that I want you to go with me to Norway to-morrow morning.”

“To Norway, sir!” said Bowie in surprise.

“Ay, surely you’re not growing timid in your old age, Bob! It is but a short voyage of two or three days. My little schooner is a good sea-boat, and a first-rate sailor.”

“Why, as for bein’ *timid*,” said the porter, rubbing the end of his nose, which was copper-coloured and knotty, “I don’t think I ever knowed that there feelin’, but it does take a feller aback to be told all of a sudden, after he’s reg’larly laid up in port, to get ready to trip anchor in twelve hours and bear away over the North Sea—not that I cares a brass fardin’ for that fish-pond, blow high, blow low, but it’s raither sudden, d’ye see, and my rig ain’t just seaworthy.”

Bowie glanced uneasily at his garments, which were a cross between those of a railway-guard and a policeman.

“Never mind the rig, Bob,” cried Fred, laughing. “Do you get ready to start, with all the underclothing you have, by six to-morrow morning. We shall go to Hull by rail, and I will see to it that your top-sails are made all

right.”

“Wery good, sir.”

“You’ve not forgotten how to make lobsouse or plum-duff, I dare say?”

Bob’s eyes brightened as he replied stoutly, “By no manner o’ means.”

“Then be off, and, remember, sharp six.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” cried the old seaman in a nautical tone that he had not used for many years, and the very sound of which stirred his heart with old memories. He was about to retire, but paused at the threshold of the green door.

“Beg parding, sir, but if I might make so bold as to ax—”

“Go on, Bob,” said Fred encouragingly.

“I heerd ye say to our cashier, sir, that you was goin’ for to *chase the sun*. Wot sort of a chase may that be, sir?”

“Ha! Bowie, that’s a curious chase, but not a wild goose one, as I hope to show you in a month or two. You know, of course, that in the regions of the earth north of the Arctic Circle the sun shines by night as well as by day for several weeks in summer?”

“In coorse I do,” answered Bob; “every seaman knows that or ought for to know it; and that it’s dark all day as well as all night in winter for some weeks, just to make up for it, so to speak.”

“Well, Bob, I am very desirous to see this wonderful sight with my own eyes, but I fear I am almost too late of setting out. The season is so far advanced that the sun is setting farther and farther north every night, and if the winds baffle us I won’t be able to catch him sitting up all night; but if the winds serve, and we have plenty of them we may yet be in time to see him draw an unbroken circle in the sky. You see it will be a regular chase, for the sun travels north at a rapid pace. D’you understand?”

Bob Bowie grinned, nodded his head significantly, retired, and shut the

door.

Fred Temple, left alone, seized a quill and scribbled off two notes,—one to a friend in Scotland, the other to a friend in Wales. The note to Scotland ran as follows:—

**“My Dear Grant,**—I have made up my mind to go to Norway for three months. Principal object to chase the sun. Secondary objects, health and amusement. Will you go? You will find my schooner comfortable, my society charming (if you make yourself agreeable), and no end of salmon-fishing and scenery. Reply by return of post. I go to Hull tomorrow, and will be there a week. This will give you ample time to get ready.

“Ever thine, **Fred Temple.**”

The note to Wales was addressed to Sam Sorrel, and was written in somewhat similar terms, but Sam being a painter by profession, the beauty of the scenery was enlarged on and held out as an inducement.

Both of Fred’s friends had been prepared some time before for this proposal, and both of them at once agreed to assist him in “chasing the sun!”

That night Frederick Temple dreamed that the sun smiled on him in a peculiarly sweet manner; he dreamed, still further, that it beckoned him to follow it to the far north, whereupon Fred was suddenly transformed into a gigantic locomotive engine; the sun all at once became a green dragon with pink eyes and a blue tail; and he set off in chase of it into the Arctic regions with a noise like a long roar of the loudest thunder!

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## Chapter Two.

### The Storm and the First Adventure.

A storm raged on the bosom of the North Sea. The wind whistled as if all the spirits of Ocean were warring with each other furiously. The waves writhed and tossed on the surface as if in agony. White foam, greenish-



grey water, and leaden-coloured sky were all that met the eyes of the men who stood on the deck of a little schooner that rose and sank and staggered helplessly before the tempest.

Truly, it was a grand sight—a terrible sight—to behold that little craft battling with the storm. It suggested the idea of God's might and forbearance,—of man's daring and helplessness.

The schooner was named the *Snowflake*. It seemed, indeed, little heavier than a flake of snow, or a scrap of foam, in the grasp of that angry sea. On her deck stood five men. Four were holding on to the weather-shrouds; the fifth stood at the helm. There was only a narrow rag of the top-sail and the jib shown to the wind, and even this small amount of canvas caused the schooner to lie over so much that it seemed a wonder she did not upset.

Fred Temple was one of the men who held on to the weather-rigging; two of the others were his friends Grant and Sam Sorrel. The fourth was one of the crew, and the man at the helm was the Captain; for, although Fred understood a good deal of seamanship, he did not choose to take on his own shoulders the responsibility of navigating the yacht. He employed for that purpose a regular seaman whom he styled Captain, and never interfered with him, except to tell him where he wished to go.

Captain McNab was a big, tough, raw-boned man of the Orkney Islands. He was born at sea, had lived all his life at sea, and meant (so he said) to die at sea. He was a grim, hard-featured old fellow, with a face that had been so long battered by storms that it looked more like the figure-head of a South-Sea whaler than the countenance of a living man. He seldom smiled, and when he did he smiled grimly; never laughed, and never spoke when he could avoid it. He was wonderfully slow both in speech and in action, but he was a first-rate and fearless seaman, in whom the owner of the schooner had perfect confidence.

As we have fallen into a descriptive vein it may be as well to describe the rest of our friends offhand. Norman Grant was a sturdy Highlander, about the same size as his friend Temple, but a great contrast to him; for while Temple was fair and ruddy, Grant was dark, with hair, beard, whiskers, and moustache bushy and black as night. Grant was a Highlander in

heart as well as in name, for he wore a Glengarry bonnet and a kilt, and did not seem at all ashamed of exposing to view his brown hairy knees. He was a hearty fellow, with a rich deep-toned voice, and a pair of eyes so black and glittering that they seemed to pierce right through you and come out at your back when he looked at you! Temple, on the contrary, was clad in grey tweed from head to foot, wideawake included, and looked, as he was, a thorough Englishman. Grant was a doctor by profession; by taste a naturalist. He loved to shoot and stuff birds of every shape and size and hue, and to collect and squeeze flat plants of every form and name. His rooms at home were filled with strange specimens of birds, beasts, fishes, and plants from every part of Scotland, England, and Ireland—to the disgust of his old nurse, whose duty it was to dust them, and to the delight of his little brother, whose self-imposed duty it was to pull out their tails and pick out their eyes!

Grant's trip to Norway promised a rich harvest in a new field, so he went there with romantic anticipations.

Sam Sorrel was like neither of his companions. He was a little fellow—a mere spider of a man, and extremely thin; so thin that it seemed as if his skin had been drawn over the bones in a hurry and the flesh forgotten! The Captain once said to Bob Bowie in a moment of confidence that Mr Sorrel was a “mere spunk,” whereupon Bob nodded his head, and added that he was no better than “half a fathom of pump water.”

If there was little of Sam, however, that little was good stuff. It has been said that he was a painter by profession. Certainly there was not a more enthusiastic artist in the kingdom. Sam was a strange mixture of earnestness, enthusiasm, and fun. Although as thin as a walking-stick, and almost as flat as a pancake, he was tough like wire, could walk any distance, could leap farther than anybody, and could swim like a cork. His features were sharp, prominent and exceedingly handsome. His eyes were large, dark, and expressive, and were surmounted by delicate eyebrows which moved about continually with every changeful feeling that filled his breast. When excited his glance was magnificent, and the natural wildness of his whole aspect was increased by the luxuriance of his brown hair, which hung in long elf-locks over his shoulders. Among his intimates he was known by the name of “Mad Sam Sorrel.”

When we have said that the crew of the schooner consisted of six picked men besides those described and our friend Bob Bowie, we have enumerated all the human beings who stood within the bulwarks of that trim little yacht on that stormy summer's day.

There was, however, one other being on board that deserves notice. It was Sam Sorrel's dog.

Like its master, this dog was a curious creature. It was little and thin, and without form of any distinct or positive kind. If we could suppose that this dog had been permitted to make itself, and that it had begun with the Skye-terrier, suddenly changed its mind and attempted to come the poodle, then midway in this effort had got itself very much dishevelled, and become so entangled that it was too late to do anything better than finish off with a wild attempt at a long-eared spaniel, one could understand how such a creature as "Titian" had come into existence.

Sam had meant to pay a tribute of respect to the great painter when he named his dog Titian. But having done his duty in this matter, he found it convenient to shorten the name into Tit—sometimes Tittles. Tittles had no face whatever, as far as could be seen by the naked eye. His whole misshapen body was covered with long shaggy hair of a light grey colour. Only the end of his black nose was visible in front and the extreme point of his tail in rear. But for these two landmarks it would have been utterly impossible to tell which end of the dog was which.

Somehow the end of his tail had been singed or skinned or burned, for it was quite naked, and not much thicker than a pipe-stem.

Tittles was extremely sensitive in regard to this, and could not bear to have his miserable projection touched.

How that storm did rage, to be sure! The whole sea was lashed into a boiling sheet of foam, and the schooner lay over so much that it was impossible for the men to stand on the deck. At times it seemed as if she were thrown on her beam-ends; but the good yacht was buoyant as a cork, and she rose again from every fresh blast like an unconquerable warrior.

"It seems to me that the masts will be torn out of her," said Temple to the

Captain, as he grasped the brass rail that surrounded the quarterdeck, and gazed upward with some anxiety.

“No fear o’ her,” said the Captain, turning the quid of tobacco in his cheek; “she’s a tight boat, an’ could stand a heavier sea than this. I hope it’ll blow a wee thing harder.”

“Harder!” exclaimed Fred.

“You must be fond of wind, Captain,” observed Grant with a laugh.

“Oo ay, I’ve no objection to wund.”

The Captain said this, as he said everything else, more than half through his nose, and very slowly.

“But do you not think that more wind would be apt to carry away our top-masts, or split the sails?” said Temple.

“It’s not unlikely,” was the Captain’s cool reply.

“Then why wish for it?” inquired the other in surprise.

“Because we’re only thirty miles from the coast of Norway, and if the wund holds on as it’s doin’, we’ll not make the land till dark. But if it blows harder we’ll get under the shelter of the Islands in daylight.”

“Dark!” exclaimed poor Sam Sorrel, who, being a bad sailor, was very sick, and clung to the lee bulwarks with a look of helpless misery; “I thought there was no dark in Nor—.”

The unhappy painter stopped abruptly in consequence of a sensation in the pit of his stomach.

“There’s not much darkness in Norway in summer,” answered McNab, “but at the south end of it here there’s a little—specially when the weather is thick. Ay, I see it’s comin’.”

The peculiar way in which the Captain said this caused the others to turn their eyes to windward, where it was very evident that something was

coming, for the sky was black as ink, and the sea under it was ruffled with cold white foam.

“Stand by the clew-lines and halyards,” roared the Captain.

The men, who were now all assembled on deck, sprang to obey. As they did so a squall came hissing down on the weather-quarter, and burst upon the vessel with such fury that for a moment she reeled under the shock like a drunken man, while the spray deluged her decks, and the wind shrieked through the rigging.

But this was too violent to last. It soon passed over and the gale blew more steadily, driving the *Snowflake* over the North Sea like a seamew.

That evening the mountains of Norway rose to view. About the time that this occurred the sky began to clear towards the north-west and soon after a white line of foam was seen on the horizon right ahead. This was the ocean beating on the great army of islands, or skerries, that line the west coast of Norway from north to south.

“Hurrah for old Norway!” shouted Fred Temple with delight, when he first observed the foam that leaped upon these bare rocky islets.

“It seems to me that we shall be wrecked,” said Grant gravely. “I do not see an opening in these tremendous breakers, and if we can’t get through them, even a landsman could tell that we shall be dashed to pieces.”

“Why not put about the ship and sail away from them?” suggested Sorrel, looking round with a face so yellow and miserable that even the Captain was *almost* forced to smile.

“Because that is simply impossible,” said Fred Temple.

Poor Sam groaned and looked down at his dog, which sat trembling on the deck between his feet, gazing up in its master’s face sadly—at least so it is to be supposed; but the face of Tittles, as well as the expression thereof, was invisible owing to hair.

“/s there an opening, Captain?” inquired Fred in a low, serious tone.

“Oo ay, no fear o’ that,” replied the Captain.

There was, indeed, no fear of that, for as the schooner approached the islands, numerous openings were observed. It also became evident that the gentlemen had mistaken the distance from the broken water, for they were much longer of reaching the outer skerries than they had expected, and the foam, which at first appeared like a white line, soon grew into immense masses, which thundered on these weather-worn rocks with a deep, loud, continuous roar, and burst upwards in great spouts like white steam many yards into the air.

“Captain, are the islands as numerous everywhere along the coast as they are here?” said Fred.

“Deed ay, an’ more,” answered the Captain, “some places ye’ll sail for fifty or sixty miles after getting among the skerries before reachin’ the main.”

They were now within a hundred yards of the islands, towards a narrow channel, between two of which the Captain steered. Every one was silent, for there was something awful in the aspect of the great dark waves of the raging sea, as they rolled heavily forward and fell with crash after crash in terrific fury on the rocks, dashing themselves to pieces and churning the water into foam, so that the whole sea resembled milk.

To those who were unaccustomed to the coast, it seemed as if the schooner were leaping forward to certain destruction; but they knew that a sure hand was at the helm, and thought not of the danger but the sublimity of the scene.

“Stand by the weather-braces,” cried McNab.

The schooner leaped as he spoke into the turmoil of roaring spray. In ten seconds she was through the passage, and there was a sudden and almost total cessation of heaving motion. The line of islands formed a perfect breakwater, and not a wave was formed, even by the roaring gale, bigger than those we find on such occasions in an ordinary harbour. As isle after isle was passed the sea became more and more smooth, and, although the surface was torn up and covered with foam, no great rollers heaved the vessel about. The tight little craft still bent over to the

blast, but she cut through perfectly flat water now.

A delightful feeling of having come to the end of a rough voyage filled the hearts of all on board. Sam Sorrel raised his head, and began to look less yellow and more cheerful. Tittles began to wag the stump of his miserable tail, and, in short, every one began to look and to feel happy.

Thus did the *Snowflake* approach the coast of Norway.

Now, it is by no means an uncommon occurrence in this world that a calm should follow close on the heels of a storm. Soon after the *Snowflake* had entered the islands the storm began to abate, as if it felt that there was no chance of overwhelming the little yacht now. That night, and the greater part of the following day, a dead calm prevailed, and the schooner lay among the islands with her sails flapping idly from the yards.

A little after midnight all on board were asleep, save the man at the helm and Captain McNab, who seemed to be capable of existing without sleep for any length of time when occasion required. The schooner now lay in a latitude so far north that the light of the sun never quite left the sky in clear weather. A sweet soft twilight rested on the rocky islands and on the sea, and no sound disturbed the stillness except the creaking of the yards or the cries of seamews.

Yes, by the way, there was another sound. It proceeded from the cabin where our three friends lay sleeping on the sofas. The sound was that of snoring, and it issued from the wide-open mouth of Sam Sorrel, who lay sprawling on his back, with Tittles coiled up at his feet.

It is probable that Sam would have snored on for hours, but for a piece of carelessness on his part. Just before going to rest he had placed a tin can of water close to his head in such a way that it was balanced on the edge of a shelf. A slight roll of the schooner, caused by the entrance of a wave through an opening in the islands, toppled this can over and emptied its contents on the sleeper's face.

He leaped up with a roar, of course. Tittles jumped up with a yelp, while Grant and Temple turned round with a growl at having been awakened, and went off to sleep again.

But sleep was driven away from the eyes of Sam Sorrel. He made one or two efforts to woo it back in vain, so in despair he jumped up, put his sketch-book in his pocket, seized a double-barrelled fowling-piece, and went on deck, followed by Tittles. The little boat was floating under the quarter, and a great mountainous island lay close off the starboard bow. Getting into the boat, Sam rowed to the island, and was soon clambering up the heights with the activity of a squirrel.

Sam paused now and then to gaze with admiration on the magnificent scene that lay spread out far below him; the innumerable islands, the calm water bathed in the soft light of early morning, and the schooner floating just under his feet like a little speck or a sea-gull on the calm sea. Pulling out his book and pencil, he sat down on a rock and began to draw.

Suddenly the artist was startled by the sound of a heavy pair of wings overhead. Thousands of seagulls flew above him, filling the air with their wild cries, but Sam did not think it possible that they could cause the sound which he had heard. While he was still in doubt an enormous eagle sailed majestically past him. It evidently had not seen him, and he sat quite still, scarce daring to draw his breath. In a moment the gigantic bird sailed round the edge of a precipitous cliff, and was gone.

Sam at once rose and hurried forward with his gun. He was much excited, for eagles are very difficult to approach—they are so shy and wary. Few men who go to Norway ever get the chance of a shot at the king of birds.

Judge, then, of the state of Sam Sorrel's mind when, on turning a corner of rock, he suddenly beheld the eagle standing on the edge of a great precipice about a hundred yards in advance of him.

But his hopes were much cast down when he observed that between him and the eagle there was a space of open ground, so that he could not creep farther forward without being seen. How was he to advance? What was he to do? Such a chance might not occur again during the whole voyage. No time was to be lost, so he resolved to make a rush forward and get as near as possible before the bird should take to flight.



No sooner thought than done. He rushed down the mountain-side like a madman. The eagle sprang up in alarm just as he reached the side of a rounded rock. Halting suddenly, he took aim, and fired both barrels. The eagle gave a toss of its head and a twirl of its tail, and, sailing slowly away round a neighbouring cliff, disappeared from view.

A deep groan burst from the poor artist as he exclaimed, "Oh dear, I've missed it!"

But Sam was wrong. He had *not* missed it. On climbing to the other side of the cliff he found the eagle stretched on the ground in a dying state. Its noble-looking eye scowled for a moment on him as he came up, then the head drooped forward and the bird died. It measured six feet four inches from tip to tip of its expanded wings, and was as magnificent a specimen of the golden eagle as one could wish to see.

With a triumphant step Sam carried it down to the yacht, where he found his comrades still sound asleep; so he quietly fastened the eagle up over Grant's bed, with the wings expanded and the hooked beak close to the sleeper's nose!

The day that followed this event continued calm, but towards evening a light breeze sprang up, and before midnight the *Snowflake* cast anchor in the harbour of Bergen.

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## Chapter Three.

### **Bergen—Talking, Supping, and Sleeping Under Difficulties.**

The city of Bergen is a famous and a strange old place. In ancient days it was a stronghold of the Vikings—those notorious sea-warriors who were little better than pirates, and who issued from among the dark mountains of Norway in their great uncouth galleys and swept across the seas, landing on the coasts everywhere, to the terror of surrounding nations.

They were a bold, fearless set, the Norse Vikings of old. They voyaged far and wide in open boats round the coasts of Europe, and across the stormy sea, long before the mariner's compass was invented, and they

discovered Iceland and America long before Christopher Columbus was born. They had free spirits, these fierce Norwegians of old, and there was much good as well as evil in them. They had good and wise laws when nearly all the rest of the world was lawless; and many of the laws and customs which prevailed among them a thousand years ago exist at the present day. The bold Vikings were great colonisers; among other parts of the world they overran and settled in a large portion of Great Britain, and much of their blood—more than many people are aware of—flows in our own veins.

But I am wandering from my subject. Let me return to it by repeating that Bergen, this ancient stronghold of the Vikings, is a famous and a strange old place.

It is built at the foot of a steep mountain-range which is so close to the margin of the sea that the city has barely room to stand. One might fancy that the houses were crowding and jostling each other and squeezing themselves together, in order to avoid on the one hand being pushed up the mountain-side, and, on the other hand, being thrust into the sea. Some of the smaller cottages and a few villas seem to have been beaten in this struggle for standing-room, for they appear to have been obliged to clamber up the mountain-side, and perch themselves on spots where there does not seem to be standing-room for a goat. From such elevated positions they look down complacently on their crowded brethren.

The houses near the sea have not fared so well. They are built *in* the water on piles, and are all of them warehouses with projections in front, from which hang blocks and hoisting tackle. These projections resemble heads; the piles look like legs; and it does not require a very strong effort of imagination to believe that the warehouses are great living creatures which have waded into the sea, and are looking earnestly down into the water to observe how the fish are getting on.

The houses are all built of wood; all are painted white, and all have red-tiled roofs. They are peaked and gable-ended to an extraordinary degree, so that the general aspect of the city is confused and irregular—all the more interesting and picturesque on this account.

A thought strikes me here, and when a thought strikes one, I think we

ought always to pay that thought the compliment of jotting it down. It is this—regularity in small details is pleasing; regularity on a grand scale is disagreeable. For instance, a chair with one leg turned, another square, and a third ornamentally carved, would be a disagreeable object. The two front legs at least must be regular, and the two back legs regular. A chair is a small matter. But proceed to a grander subject—a city. If every house is similar to its neighbours, if every street is parallel to the rest, the effect is bad; regularity here is disagreeable. This is a deep subject requiring much study and philosophical inquiry. If I were to go farther into it, our friend Fred Temple's adventures would have to be cast overboard. I will, therefore, cut it short with the remark that the subject is well worthy the attention of even deeper-thinking men than are ever likely to read this book.

When the three friends, Temple, Grant, and Sorrel, found themselves in the quaint old city of Bergen their first thought was *supper*; their second thought *bed*.

Now this may seem to some minds a dreadfully low and contemptible state of things. "What!" a romantic reader may exclaim, "they had arrived in that celebrated city, from which in days of old the stalwart Vikings used to issue on their daring voyages, in which the descendants of these grand fellows still dwell, and in which are interesting memorials of the past and quaint evidences of the present. Did your heroes, Temple, Sorrel, and Grant, think of supper and of bed when their feet for the first time trod the soil of Old Norway?"

Even so! Romantic reader, I am bound to tell you that romance is all very well in its way, but it has no power whatever over an empty stomach or an exhausted brain.

When our three friends landed in Bergen it was past midnight. Their admiration of the scenery had induced them to neglect supper and to defy sleep, so that when they landed they felt more than half inclined to fall upon their boatman and eat him up alive, and then to fall down on the stone pier and go off to sleep at once.

In this frame of mind and body they entered the house of Madame Sontoom, and called for supper.

Madame Sontoom was the owner of a private hotel. Moreover, she was the owner of a plump body and a warm heart. Consequently, she at once became a mother to all who were fortunate enough to dwell under her roof.

Her hotel was by no means like to a hotel in this country. It was more like a private residence. There were no hired waiters. Her amiable daughters waited; and they did not look upon you as a customer, or conduct themselves like servants. No, they treated you as a visitor, and conducted themselves with the agreeable familiarity of friends! Of course they presented their bill when you were about to leave them, but in all other respects the idea of a hotel was banished from the mind.

“Supper,” cried Temple, on entering the house.

“Ya, ya,” (yes, yes), in cheerful tones from two of Madame Sontoom’s daughters.

Then followed a violent conversation in the Norse language, in which there was much that was puzzling, and more that was amusing, for the Norwegian ladies were talkative and inquisitive.

Fred Temple had studied the Norse language for three months before setting out on this voyage, and, being a good linguist he understood a good deal of what was said, and could make his own wants known pretty well. Grant had studied the language also, but not for so long a time, and, being an indifferent linguist, he made little headway in conversation. As to Sam Sorrel, he had no talent for languages. He hated every language but his mother-tongue, had not studied Norse at all, and did not intend to do so. It may be supposed, therefore, that he was dumb. Far from it. He had picked up a few phrases by ear, and was so fond of making use of these, and of twisting them into all shapes and out of all shape, that he really appeared to be a great talker of Norse, although in reality he could scarcely talk at all!

Supper consisted of coffee, rolls, eggs, “gamleost” (old cheese), lobster, and smoked salmon. The viands were good, the appetites were also good, so the supper went off admirably.

“Ver so goot,” said one of the young ladies, handing Mr Sorrel a plate of

smoked salmon.

“Tak, tak,” (thanks, thanks), said our artist, accepting the salmon, and beginning to devour it.

“I say, what d’ye mean by ‘ver so goot’? You’re never done saying it. What does it mean?”

The fair waitress laughed, and bowed politely, as much as to say, “I don’t understand English.”

“Can you explain it, Fred?” said Sam.

“Well, yes, I can give you a sort of explanation,” replied Fred, “but it is not an easy sentence to translate. ‘Ver so goot’ (another claw of that lobster, please. Thanks),—‘ver so goot’ is an expression that seems to me capable of extension and distension. It is a comfortable, jovial, rollicking expression, if I may say so. I cannot think of a better way of conveying an idea of its meaning than saying that it is a compound of the phrases ‘be so good,’ ‘by your leave,’ ‘good luck to you,’ ‘go it, ye cripples,’ and ‘that’s your sort.’ The first of these, ‘be so good,’ is the literal translation. The others are more or less mixed up with it. You may rely on it, Sam, that when a Norwegian offers you anything and says ‘ver so goot,’ he means you well, and hopes that you will make yourself comfortable.”

“You don’t say so, Fred; I’ll adopt the phrase from this hour!”

Accordingly Sam Sorrel did adopt it, and used it on all and every occasion, without any regard to its appropriateness.

Little was said at supper. The whole party were too tired to converse.

“Now for bed,” cried Sam, rising. “I say, Fred, what’s the Norse for a bed?”

“Seng,” replied Fred.

“Seng! what a remarkable name! Now, then, my good girl, *ver so goot* will you show me my *seng*? Good night, comrades, I’m off to—ha! ha! what a musical idea—to seng.”

“More probably to snore,” observed Grant.

“Oh, Grant,” said Sam, looking back and shaking his head, “give up jesting. It’s bad for your health; fie for shame! good night.”

Norwegian beds are wooden boxes of about three feet wide, and five and a half long. I have never been able to discover why it is that Norwegians love to make their beds as uncomfortable as possible. Yet so it is.

Grant had a room to himself. Temple and our artist were shown into a double-bedded room.

“Is that a bed?” said Sam, pointing to a red-painted wooden box in a corner; “why, it’s too short even for me, and you know I’m not a giant.”

“Oh! then what must it be for me?” groaned Fred Temple.

On close examination it was found that each bed was too short for any man above five feet two, and, further, that there was a feather-bed below and a feather-bed above, instead of blankets. Thus they lay that night between two feather-beds, which made them so hot that it was impossible to sleep at first. Sorrel, being short, managed to lie diagonally across his box, but Fred, being long, was compelled to double himself up like a foot-rule. However, fatigue at last caused them to slumber in spite of all difficulties. In the morning they were visited by a ghost!

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## Chapter Four.

### A Ghost and a Custom—A Fish-Market and a Norse Lover.

There was no night in Bergen at this time. At the midnight hour there was light enough to see to read the smallest print, and at an early hour in the morning this sweet twilight brightened into dawn.

This being the case, Fred Temple was not a little surprised to see a ghost make its appearance about six o’clock—for ghosts are famous for their hatred of broad daylight. Nevertheless there it was, in the form of a woman. What else could it be but a ghost? for no woman would dare to

enter his bedroom (so he thought) without knocking at the door.

The ghost had in her hand a tray with a cup of coffee on it. Fred watched her motions with intense curiosity, and kept perfectly still, pretending to be asleep. She went straight to the box in which Sam Sorrel slept, and going down on her knees, looked earnestly into his face. As our artist's mouth happened to be wide-open, it may be said that she looked down his throat. Presently she spoke to him in a soft whisper—"Will de have caffè?" (Will you have coffee?) A loud snore was the reply. Again she spoke, somewhat louder: "Vill de have caffè?"

A snort was the reply.

Once more, in a tone which would not be denied:

*"Vill de have caffè?"*

"Eh! hallo! what! dear me! yes—ah—thank you—*ver so goot*," replied Sam, as he awoke and gazed in wild surprise at the ghost who was none other than the female domestic servant of the house, who had brought the visitors a cup of coffee before breakfast.

Sam's exclamations were wild at first, and he stared like a maniac, but as consciousness returned he understood his position, and being naturally a modest man, he hastily drew on his nightcap and gathered the bedding round his shoulders. Accepting the coffee, he drank it, and the girl crossed the room to pay similar attentions to Fred Temple.

This presentation of a cup of coffee in bed before breakfast is a custom in Norway, and a very pleasant custom it is, too, especially when it breaks upon you unexpectedly for the first time.

"Now for the fish-market, Sam," cried Fred, leaping out of bed when the girl had left the room.

"Who cares for the fish-market?" said Sam testily, as he turned round in his bed, and prepared to slumber.

"I care for it," retorted Fred, "and so do you, old boy, only you are lazy this morning. Come, get up. I have resolved to spend only one day in this

queer old city, so you *must* not let drowsiness rob you of your opportunities of seeing it. The fish-market, you know, is famous. Come, get up.”

Temple enforced his advice by seizing his companion by the ankles and hauling him out of bed. Sam grumbled but submitted, and in a short time they were ready to start.

“Hallo! Grant,” cried Fred, as they passed his door, “will you come with us to ramble over the town?”

“No,” said Grant, in a deep bass voice.

“Why?”

“Because I won’t.”

“A most excellent reason; one much in use in this world,” replied Temple, laughing. “By the way, will you remember to order two sheep to be killed for our voyage north?”

“Yes,” in a sulky tone from Grant.

“Now mind, I trust this to you.”

“Go away, and don’t bother!”

Thus dismissed, Temple and Sorrel went out and sauntered towards the fish-market.

Now, fish-markets are famous all the world over for noise, riot, and confusion. The fish-market of Bergen is no exception to the rule; but there is this peculiarity about it, that the sellers of fish are all men, and the buyers all women; moreover, the noise is all on the side of the buyers! The scene of the market is the pier, alongside of which the fishermen’s boats are ranged; and here the fish are sold direct from the boats by the men to all the servant-girls of the town, who assemble each morning to purchase the day’s dinner.

The men, standing in the boats, are considerably below the level of the



pier, so that they have to look up at the girls, who look down at them with eager, anxious faces. The men, sure that their fish will be sold in the long-run, are quiet sedate, silent. The women, anxious to get good bargains and impatient to get home, bend forward, shouting, screaming, and flourishing arms, fists, and umbrellas. Every one carries an umbrella in Bergen, for that city is said to be the rainiest in the world. Of gay colours are these umbrellas too. Pink and sky-blue are not uncommon. There is a stout iron rail round the pier, which prevents the eager females from tumbling headlong into the boats. Over this they lean and bargain.

Fierce were the pretty blue eyes of these Norse females, and flushed were their fair faces, and tremendous was the flourishing of their umbrellas and the shaking of their fists, at the time when Temple and Sorrel approached. The fishermen were used to it; they only smiled, or paid no attention whatever to the noise. And what was all the noise about? You shall hear.

Look at yonder flaxen-haired, pretty-faced, stoutish little girl, leaning so far over the iron rail that it seems her desire to tumble over it, and plunge into the arms of a rough old fisherman, who is gazing quietly up at her with a sarcastic smile. He has put up a lot of fish for which she has offered "sex (six) skillings." A skilling is about equal to a halfpenny.

He thinks this too little, but he won't condescend to say so. He merely pays no attention to the girl's violent entreaties. The language of the girl bears so strong a resemblance to our own that it scarcely requires translation.

"Fiskman," she cries, "vill du have otto skillings?" (will you have eight skillings?)

No, the fiskman won't have that; it is not enough, so he makes no reply, but pretends to be washing his boat.

"Fiskman, fiskman, vill du have ni?" (will you have nine?)

Still no reply. The fisherman turns his back on the market, gazes out to sea, and begins to whistle.

At this the girl becomes furious. She whirls her umbrella in the air

desperately. If that umbrella were only a foot longer the fiskman's head would certainly feel its weight!

Presently the girl forces herself to become calm and deeply earnest; she has made up her mind to make a liberal offer.

“Fiskman, vill du have ti (ten) skillings?”

The fiskman, who wears a red nightcap, with a tall hat on the top of it, takes off his head-gear, exposes his bald pate to view, and wipes it with a fishy cotton handkerchief; but he takes no notice whatever of the girl, who now becomes mad—that is to say, she stamps, glares, shakes her pretty little fist at the hard-hearted man, and gasps.

Suddenly she becomes reckless, and makes a wild offer of “tolve (twelve) skillings.”

Ha! the mark is hit at last! The fiskman can hold out no longer. Without saying a word, he turns quietly round and hands up the fish. The girl, without a word, stoops down and pays for them, and then goes off in triumph, for her energy has been successful; she *has* got the fish a little cheaper than she had expected.

Suppose twenty or thirty such scenes going on at once, and you have a faint idea of the Bergen fish-market.

It was just before the termination of the bargain which has been described that Fred Temple and Sam Sorrel arrived on the scene. The artist was busy with his sketch-book in one minute.

“Sam,” said Fred, touching his friend's arm, “look here, sketch me yonder girl, like a good fellow.”

“Which girl; the one with the nose?”

“If you see one *without* a nose,” retorted Fred, “I'll be glad to have a portrait of her too.”

“Nay, but really, I do see one with such a long red nose that—”

“Well, well,” interrupted Fred impatiently, “it’s not *her*. Do look to where I am pointing; see, the stout pretty little woman who is talking so fiercely to that fisherman.”

“Oh, I see!” exclaimed Sam, who began to take her portrait without delay.

Meanwhile Fred was observant. At first he was much amused by the scene before him, and continued to gaze with interest at one group after another. In a short time his curiosity was awakened by a handsome Norwegian youth, whose gaze was fixed with intense earnestness on the maiden whom Sam was sketching. When the girl had concluded her bargain and gone away, he observed that the youth, who appeared to be a fisherman from his dress, went after her.

Without well knowing what he did, and without any very definite intentions, Fred Temple followed them, and left his friend busy with his pencil.

The Norwegian youth soon overtook the girl, who at once received him with a bright smile, and held out her hand. The two then went on together, turned to the left, and followed a winding road, which led up the side of the mountain. They appeared to converse earnestly as they went. Fred still followed them, but in a few minutes they paused in front of a small white house, with a green door, so he was now compelled to pass them. As he did so, it suddenly occurred to his mind that he was acting a mean, contemptible part in following them thus. He blushed as he thought of this, and passed quickly forward, intending to deny his curiosity and take a ramble. He could not help observing, however, that the girl was weeping, and that the youth did not look happy by any means.

Having gained the brow of an eminence which overlooked the city, Fred sat down behind a rock to admire the beautiful scenery and to ponder what he had seen.

While he was thus engaged, he heard the voices of two men who approached on the other side of the rock, and did not observe him. They talked loud, in the Norse language. Fred understood enough of it to make out their meaning pretty well.

“I tell you what it is, Hans,” said one, “give her up. You have no chance of gaining the required sum for many years, and it’s a hard case to keep a poor girl waiting. Give her up, man, and don’t go on like a silly love-sick boy.”

“Give her up!” cried he who was called Hans,—“give her up! Ah! my friend Olé, I did not expect such counsel from thee. But I tell thee flatly I will *not* give her up. She loves me; I love her! Sweet Raneilda! nothing but death shall separate us!”

“A very pretty sentiment,” retorted Old, “but pray, what do you mean to do?”

“I have decided that,” replied Hans; “I will fish all winter in the deep sea, and all summer I will—”

“Well, what will you?”

“Alas! I know not. Would that I were a pilot, but I am not.”

“But you know the coast as well as any pilot,” said Old.

“True, but who would trust me—an unknown boy?” replied Hans sadly.

There was silence for a few minutes; then Olé said: “How much money do you require to pay for your father’s farm and set yourself up?”

“Two hundred dollars,” (The dollar is equal to about 4 shillings and 6 pence sterling) answered Hans.

“A goodly sum,” said Olé despondingly. “No, no, Hans, give her up, boy, give her up. It is the advice of an oldish man and a true friend.”

“It is the advice of an ass,” retorted Hans fiercely. “Go, my true friend,—when I want your advice I will ask it.”

The youth flung off from his friend, and came suddenly on Fred Temple, who rose and saluted him.

“This is a splendid city of yours, Hans,” said he. “You know my name, and

you speak Norse,” exclaimed the youth in surprise.

“I know your name, Hans, because I heard your friend mention it, and I can speak a little Norse because I have studied it. I have come to stay in Old Norway for a few months, and would like to get a little information about it from some one. Are you a busy man just now?”

“No, not very busy,” said Hans, with a disconcerted look.

“Then, could you call on me this afternoon? I live in Madame Sontoom’s house.”

“I will come,” said Hans, whose face beamed with good-humour.

“Good; I shall expect you. Farewell.”

“Farvel,” replied Hans.

Fred sauntered down the hill that morning with a very peculiar smile on his countenance. There was something quite sly about his aspect, and more than once his companions caught him chuckling at breakfast in a way that surprised them much, for Fred Temple was not given to secrets, or to act in an outrageous manner without any apparent reason. But Fred had his own peculiar thoughts that morning, and they tickled him to such an extent that more than once he burst into a fit of laughter.

“Come, Fred, you’re meditating something. Out with it,” said Grant. “It is selfish to keep all your good thoughts to yourself.”

“Not yet, not yet,” replied Fred, with a mysterious look. “You shall know before our excursion comes to an end.”

Further conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Hans Ericsson, who was impatient to get employment of any kind in order to earn a few dollars, and lay them up with a view to the future. Fred took him aside, and said in a low tone—“Hans, are you very anxious to wed Raneilda?”

The young Norseman’s face flushed, and he started as if he had received a blow.

“Don’t be angry, Hans,” continued Fred; “I ask the question because I think I can help you in the matter if you will allow me. I do not ask it out of idle curiosity. Come, tell me your troubles like a good fellow, and I’ll put you in the way of getting out of them.”

Hans was inclined to repel Fred’s kind intentions at first, but the Englishman’s open, honest manner won upon him so much that he related to him all his sorrows.

He was the son of Eric, who dwelt in a valley at the head of the Nord Fiord. His father was too old to manage his farm, and Hans wished to take it up and work it on his own account. But, in order to do so, he must buy up the shares of the other members of his family. This would require 500 dollars. He had worked hard for two years to make this sum, but there was still 200 dollars to pay. He could make this in the course of time, but he had been engaged to Raneilda long, and he wished now to make her his wife. In short, he was tired of waiting.

“So, then, you would be glad to get some sort of work with good pay,” said Fred.

“Ya,” said Hans, with a nod of his head.

“Can you pilot a schooner from this to the Nord Fiord?”

“Ya, I know every island on the coast.”

“Good; then be ready to start this evening. I shall send my vessel there in your charge, and I myself with my friends will travel overland and meet you there. Farewell!”

Hans went off to tell Raneilda, his handsome face beaming with joy.

“Now,” said Fred, returning to his friends, “I have made arrangements with a pilot to take the *Snowflake* round to the Nord Fiord, and we will travel overland to the same place and meet it. The journey will be a very charming one of several days, through wild magnificent scenery. By the way, Grant, did you order the two sheep to be killed and sent aboard immediately?”

“Of course I did. Have I not always proved myself a trustworthy messenger? I told the man, in my best Norse, to have two ‘Kos’ killed without delay.”

“Two what?” exclaimed Fred, with a look of alarm.

“Two Kos,” returned Grant; “did you not tell me that Ko is the Norse word for a sheep?”

“Why, as I live, you have ordered two cows to be killed. Quick, come with me to the butcher’s!”

The two friends rushed out of the house, and reached the shop of the man of meat just in time, fortunately, to arrest the fatal blow. The order was of course countermanded, and they were thus saved the necessity of setting up a butcher’s shop in Bergen to get rid of their superabundant beef!

That night the *Snowflake* set sail for the far north, and next morning our three adventurers were galloping through the wilds of Norway.



## Chapter Five.

### **Cariole Travelling—Miserable Lodging and Poor Fare—Native Peculiarities—A Night Battle.**

As I am now about to drag my reader through the wild interior of Norway, let me try to describe it. Don't be alarmed, dear reader, I do not mean to be tedious on this point, but I candidly confess that I am puzzled as to how I should begin! Norway is *such* a jumble of Nature's elements. Perhaps a jumbled description may answer the purpose better than any other. Here it is, then.

Mountains, and crags, and gorges, and rocks, and serried ridges; towering peaks and dark ravines; lakes, and fords, and glens, and valleys; pine-woods, and glaciers, (For a full description of glaciers, see "Fast in the Ice," page 86, volume 3 of this *Miscellany*) streamlets, rivulets, rivers, cascades, waterfalls, and cataracts. Add to this—in summer—sweltering heat in the valleys and everlasting snow and ice on the mountain-tops, with sunlight all night as well as all day—and the description of Norway is complete. No arrangement of these materials is necessary. Conceive them arranged as you will, and no matter how wild your fancy, your conception will be a pretty fair idea of Norway. Toes these elements into some chamber of your brain; shake them well up,—don't be timid about it,—then look at the result, and you will behold Norway!

Having said thus much, it is unnecessary to say more. Rugged grandeur is the main feature of Norway.

On a lovely summer's evening, not long after the departure of the *Snowflake* from Bergen, our three travellers found themselves trotting through a wild glen on each side of which rose a range of rugged mountains, and down the centre of which roared a small river. The glen was so steep, and the bed of the torrent so broken, that there was not a spot of clear water in its whole course. From the end of the lake out of which it flowed, to the head of the fiord or firth into which it ran, the river was one boiling, roaring mass of milk-white foam.



Fred Temple and his friends travelled in the ordinary vehicle of the country, which is called a *cariole*. The Norwegian cariole holds only one person, and the driver or attendant sits on a narrow board above the axle-tree.

Of course it follows that each traveller in Norway must have a cariole and a pony to himself. These are hired very cheaply, however. You can travel post there at the rate of about twopence a mile! Our friends had three carioles among them, three ponies, and three drivers or "shooscarles," (This word is spelt as it should be pronounced) besides a small native cart to carry the luggage.

Their drive that day, and indeed every day since starting, had been emphatically up hill and down dale. It was, therefore, impossible to cross such a country in the ordinary jog-trot manner. When not ascending a steep hill, they were necessarily descending one; for the level parts of the land are few and far between. In order, therefore, to get on at all, it was needful to descend the hills at a slapping pace, so as to make up for time lost in ascending them.

There was something delightfully wild in this mode of progressing, which gladdened the hearts of our travellers, each of whom had a strong dash of recklessness in his composition. There was a little danger, too, connected with it, which made it all the more attractive. Frequently the roads were narrow, and they wound along the top of precipices over which a false step might easily have hurled them. At the foot of many of the roads, too, there were sharp turns, and it was a matter of intense delight to Sam Sorrel to try how fast he could gallop down and take the turn without upsetting.

The Norwegian ponies are usually small and cream-coloured, with black manes and tails or white manes and tails; always, from some incomprehensible reason, with manes and tails different in colour from their bodies. They are hardy, active animals, and they seem to take positive pleasure in the rattling, neck-or-nothing scamper that succeeds each toilsome ascent.

The shooscarle is usually the owner of the pony. He may be a man or a boy, but whether man or boy he almost invariably wears a red worsted

nightcap. He also wears coarse homespun trousers, immensely too long in the body, and a waistcoat monstrously too short. He will hold the reins and drive if you choose, but most travellers prefer to drive themselves.

During the journey Fred Temple usually led the way. Norman Grant, being a careless, easy-going, drowsy fellow, not to be trusted, was placed in the middle, and Sam Sorrel brought up the rear. Sam's duty was to prevent straggling, and pick up stray articles or baggage.

On the day of which I write the three friends had travelled far, and were very sleepy. It was near midnight when they came to a steep and broken part of the road, which ran alongside of the foaming river already mentioned, and, turning at a sharp angle, crossed it by means of a rude wooden bridge.

Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, the sky was almost as bright as at noon.

"Mind yourself here," shouted Fred, looking back at Grant, who was almost asleep.

"Hallo! oh, all right!" cried Grant, gathering up the reins and attempting to drive. Fortunately for him Norwegian ponies need no driving. They are trained to look after themselves. Fred went down the hill at a canter. Grant followed at a spanking trot, and both of them reached the bridge, and made the turn in safety.

Sam Sorrel was some distance behind. Both he and his shooscarle were sitting bolt-upright, more than half-asleep, with the reins hanging loose on the pony's back. The first thing that awakened Sam was the feeling of going down hill like a locomotive engine. Rousing himself, he seized the reins, and tried to check the pony. This only confused it, and made it run the cariole so near to the edge of the river, that they were almost upset into it.

When Sam became fully aware of his position, he opened his eyes, pursed his lips, and prepared for "squalls." Not being a practised driver, he did not make sufficient allowance for a large stone which had fallen from the cliffs, and lay on the road. He saw what was coming, and gathered himself up for a smash; but the tough little cariole took it as an

Irish hunter takes a stone wall. There was a tremendous crash. Sam's teeth came together with a snap, and the shooscarle uttered a roar; no wonder, poor fellow, for his seat being over the axle, and having no spring to it, the shock which he received must have been *absolutely* shocking! However, they got over that without damage, and the river was crossed by all three in safety.

The next hill they came to was a still worse one. When they were half-way down the leader came to a sudden halt; Grant's cariole almost ran over it; Sam and the luggage-cart pulled up just in time, and so, from front to rear, they were jammed up into the smallest space they could occupy.

"Hallo! what's wrong?" shouted Grant.

"Oh! nothing, only a trace or something broken," replied Fred. "Mend it in a minute."

It was mended in a minute, and away they went again on their reckless course over hill and dale.

The mending of the trace was a simple affair. The harness of each pony consisted of nothing more than the reins, a wooden collar, and a wooden saddle. The shafts were fastened to the collar by means of an iron pin, and this pin was secured in its place by a green withe or birch-bough twisted in a peculiar manner, so as to resemble a piece of rope. This was the only part of the harness that could break, so that when an accident of the kind occurred the driver had only to step into the woods and cut a new one. It is a rough-and-ready style of thing, but well suited to the rough country and the simple people of Norway.

Fred, being anxious to see as much as possible, had compelled his guide to turn out of the usual high-road, the consequence of which was that he soon got into difficulties; for although each shooscarle knew the district through which they were passing, they could not quite understand to what part of the country this peculiar Englishman was going. This is not surprising, for the peculiar Englishman was not quite sure of that point himself!

On this particular night they seemed to have got quite lost among the

hills. At every stage of ten or twelve English miles they changed horses and drivers. The drivers on this particular stage were more stupid than usual, or Fred Temple was not so bright. Be that as it may, about midnight they arrived at a gloomy, savage place, lying deep among the hills, with two or three wooden huts, so poor-looking and so dirty that a well-bred dog would have objected to go into them. Fred pulled up when he came to this place, and Grant's pony pulled up when his nose touched the back of Fred's cart. Grant himself and his man were sound asleep. In a few seconds Sam joined them.

There was a brilliant, rosy light on the mountain-tops, but this came down in a subdued form to the travellers in the valley. The place scarcely deserved the name of a valley. It was more of a gorge. The mountains rose up like broken walls on each side, until they seemed to pierce the sky. If you could fancy that a thunderbolt had split the mountain from top to bottom, and scattered great masses of rock all over the gorge thus formed, you would have an idea of the sort of place in which our belated travellers found themselves. Yet even here there were little patches of cultivated ground, behind rocks and in out-of-the-way corners, where the poor inhabitants cultivated a little barley and grass for their cattle.

It was a lovely calm night. Had you been there, reader, you would have said it was day, not night. There was no sound to break the deep stillness of all around except the murmur of many cataracts of melted snow-water, that poured down the mountainsides like threads of silver or streams of milk. But the rush of these was so mellowed by distance that the noise was soft and agreeable.

"I say, Grant, this will never do," said Fred gravely.

"I suppose not," returned Grant, with a yawn.

"What say you, Sam,—shall we go on?"

"I think so. They can have nothing to give us in such miserable huts as these except gröd (barley-meal porridge), and sour milk, and dirty beds."

"Perhaps not even so much as that," said Fred, turning to his driver. "How far is it, my man, to the next station?"

“Ten miles, sir.”

“Hum; shall we go on, comrades?”

“Go on; forward!” cried Grant and Sorrel.

So on they went as before, over hill and dale for ten miles, which poor Sam (who was very sleepy, but could not sleep in the cariole) declared were much more like twenty miles than ten.

The sun was up, and the birds were twittering, when they reached the next station. But what was their dismay when they found that it was poorer and more miserable than the last! It lay in a wilder gorge, and seemed a much more suitable residence for wolves and bears than for human beings. Indeed, it was evident that the savage creatures referred to did favour that region with their presence, for the skin of a wolf and the skull of a bear were found hanging on the walls of the first hut the travellers entered.

The people in this hamlet were extremely poor and uncommonly stupid. Living as they did in an unfrequented district, they seldom or never saw travellers, and when Fred asked for something to eat, the reply he got at first was a stare of astonishment.

“We must hunt up things for ourselves, I see,” cried Sam Sorrel, beginning to search through the hut for victuals. Seeing this, the people assisted him; but all that they could produce was a box of barley meat and two large flat dishes of sour milk.

This sour milk is a favourite dish with the Norwegians. During summer the cattle are sent to the pastures high up in the mountains, in order to spare the small quantity of grass grown in the valleys, which is made into hay and stored for winter use. These mountain pastures are called saeters, and the milk required by each family for daily use is carried down from the saeter by the girls. The milk is put into round flat tubs, varying from one to two feet in diameter and four or five inches deep. It is then allowed to stand, not only until it is sour, but until it is thick throughout like curd, with a thick coat of cream on the top. In this form it is eaten with a spoon, and a very pleasant sight it is to behold three or four sturdy herdsman, and, perchance, one or two boys, squatting round one of

these large dishes, and supping away to their hearts' content.

Grant seized the first dish of milk he discovered, and at once sat down on a stool and began to devour it.

"Hold on, let us start fair!" cried Sam Sorrel, catching up a spoon, and sitting down opposite his comrade on another stool.

The hut was built of rough logs, and the only furniture in it was of the rudest description; a couple of box-beds, two or three stools, and a bench, a gaily-painted chest in one corner, and a misshapen table was all that it contained. There was a very small door at one side, a particularly small window at the other, and a raised stone fireplace at one end.

"Well, while you two are stuffing yourselves with sour milk, I'll go and search for better fare," said Fred, with a laugh as he left the hut.

"Good luck go with you," cried Grant; "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Now, then, old boy," he continued, turning to the owner of the hut, "could your goodwife make us a little porridge; I say, Sam, what's the Norse for porridge?"

"Gröd, (Gröd is pronounced *groot*) I believe," said Sam, who was still busy with the sour milk.

"Ah yes! gröd, that's it," said Grant, turning again to the old man; "gröd, gröd, get us some gröd, gröd, gröd,—d'ye understand?"

"Ya, ya," answered the man. It would have been very strange if he had *not* understood, for though Grant addressed him in English the word *gröd* bawled so frequently into his ear was sufficiently comprehensible.

A fire was quickly kindled by the goodwife, a pleasant-looking elderly woman; and the black family-pot was soon smoking. The old man was smoking too, in less than five minutes, for Grant, in the fulness of his heart, gave him a pipe and a lump of tobacco.

This man was a fine specimen of a hale old Norseman. He wore a complete suit of brown homespun—excepting the jacket, which hung on a rusty nail in the wall. Knee-breeches and worsted stockings showed

that even in declining years he had a good pair of legs. His grey hair hung in long straight locks over his shoulders, and on his head was the invariable red nightcap. The only weakness for finery displayed by this old hero was in the matter of buttons and braces. The buttons were polished brass of enormous size, and the braces were red. These were displayed to great advantage in consequence of a space of full four inches intervening between the bottom of his vest and the waist-band of his breeches.

While the gröd was being made, Fred Temple put up his fishing-rod and rambled away in search of a stream. He had not to go far. In about five minutes he found one that looked tempting. At the very first cast a large fish rose so greedily that it leaped quite out of the water and missed the fly. The next cast the fish caught the fly and Fred caught the fish. It was a splendid yellow trout of about a pound weight. In quarter of an hour Fred had three such trout in the pockets of his shooting-coat; in half an hour more the three fish were consigned by the three friends to the region of digestion!

And now the question of bed had to be considered. Grant settled it as far as he was concerned by throwing himself down on a pile of brushwood that lay in a corner, pillowing his head on a three-legged stool, and going off to sleep at once. Fred and Sam looked at the two beds. They were extremely dirty, and it was evident that straw was the bedding.

“Come, travellers must not be particular,” cried Fred, as he tumbled into his box.

“I couldn’t hold my eyes open five minutes longer to save my life,” muttered Sam, as he rolled over into the other.

In a minute the three friends began to breathe heavily. Two minutes more and they were snoring, a trio in happy forgetfulness of all their toils.

Now, it must be told that this pleasant state of things did not last long. Fred Temple and Sam Sorrel were not the only occupants of these beds. Truth, however disagreeable, must be revealed. There were living creatures which not only slept in those beds, but which dwelt there when perfectly wide awake; and these creatures waged unceasing war with

every human being that lay down beside them. In a very short time the sleepers found this out. Fred began to grow restless and to groan. So did Sam. In the course of an hour or so Fred uttered a fierce exclamation, and rose on his hands and knees. So did Sam. Then Fred and Sam began to fight—not with each other, but—with the common enemy.

The battle raged for more than an hour, during which the foe, although frequently routed, returned again and again to the charge. Their courage and determination were tremendous. It cannot be said that Fred and Sam were actually put to flight, but a regard for truth compels me to state that they continued *fleaing* the greater part of that morning, and it was not until the sun was high in the heavens—pouring down a flood of light into that wild glen—that they gained the victory, and lay down to repose on their laurels and straw—not to mention the bodies of the dead and dying!

They hoped now to be rewarded for their exertions with a few hours' repose. Vain hope! Scarcely had they closed their eyes when the door opened, and an old woman, with nose and chin of the nutcracker type, entered the room. This was the grandmother of the family; she had come to look at the strangers.

Grant's face, with the eyes shut and the mouth wide-open, was the first object that met her view. She bent over him and looked into his mouth, as if anxious to examine his teeth. Having looked him over, and felt the quality of his clothes with her shrivelled fingers, she turned to the beds and stared at the other strangers.

Fred had gone off into a sort of doze, so he bore the inspection well, but Sam was only pretending to sleep, and when he peeped up at the old face that looked down on him with kindly interest and curiosity, he found it difficult to check a smile.

Having looked at them well, and touched everything belonging to them, to see what it could be made of, the old woman moved quietly towards the door. She shut it with a bang, however, and roused them up with a start—excepting Grant, who slept through everything, and in spite of everything.

They were just dropping off again when the old woman returned. She had forgotten something, and was moving across the floor, when she



accidentally knocked over a bench, which upset a heavy stool. The crash was followed by a scream of alarm, and once more the sleepers were awakened—always excepting Grant. Scarcely had this happened when a strange sound was heard outside. It gradually became louder and more alarming.

“What *can* it be?” cried Fred, leaping out of bed, and rushing to the door. As he threw it open, there was a roar like the sudden discharge of artillery, and at the same moment a huge mass of rock, many tons in weight, bounded close past the door, went crashing through a wooden shed as if it had been a sheet of paper, and, carrying shrubs and small trees along with it, finally found a resting-place at the bottom of the glen. The huge mass had fallen from the cliffs above, and fortunately swept through the hamlet without doing further damage. It was followed by a shower of smaller stones, some of which struck and shook the house, and produced a commotion that caused even Grant to wake up and run out in alarm.

The whole valley was covered with rocks of every shape and size, which had at various times fallen from the cliffs on either side; and one could not look at them without wondering that the little cluster of huts had not long ago been destroyed. There are many such scenes in Norway, and accidents do sometimes occur, but not so frequently as one might expect.

It is needless to say that our travellers did not again court sleep in that wild spot. Before another hour had passed they were over the mountains and far away on their journey to the far north.

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## Chapter Six.

### **Deceptive Appearances—Perpetual Day—Perplexities about Bed-Time—Confusion of Mind.**

The scene is changed. We are on board the *Snowflake* and out once more among the thousands of islands off the coast far beyond the Arctic Circle now.

This is the region where the sun does not set night or day for several

weeks in summer, and where he never rises night or day during several weeks in winter. But Fred Temple has not gained his point yet. He is behind time. Had he arrived at this latitude a week sooner, he would have seen the sun sweep an entire circle in the sky. But calms have delayed him, and now the sun just dips below the horizon at midnight. A good stiff, southerly breeze of a few hours would take him far enough north; but he cannot command the winds to blow, although Bob Bowie, the steward, evidently thinks he can make it blow by whistling! The sea is like a sheet of glass. Meanwhile, Fred and his friends are enjoying all the delight of daylight which is perpetual. Every thoughtful reader will at once perceive that where the sun only sets for a few minutes there can be no diminution of the light worth speaking of—nothing approaching even to twilight. The night before the arrival of the yacht at this place the sun set a little after midnight, and in twenty minutes afterwards it rose again to pursue its brilliant course through the northern sky.

It is scarcely possible for a Christian to look on such a scene without recalling those striking passages in God's Word, which, in describing heaven, tell us that "there shall be no night there," and speaks of a "sea of glass like unto crystal," before the throne of God. Well may the heart of man in such a scene exclaim with the Psalmist, "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches."

The islands in this particular place were positively uncountable. They lay scattered over the calm sea in hundreds. Some were no bigger than a boat—others were towering jagged mountains of more than four thousand feet high. Most of them were barren, and over the smaller islets, as well as round the cliffs of the larger ones, myriads of gulls and other sea-birds flew with clamorous cries. But for this, the scene would have been one of deep solitude as well as intense calmness. The sea-birds, however, filled the air with life, ay, and with melody, for the plaintive cry of wild-fowl when mellowed by distance is inexpressibly sweet and agreeable.

One thing that puzzled our voyagers very much was the deceptive appearance of land, so that they found it extremely difficult to judge correctly of distance. On one occasion, when sailing towards one of the large islands, Fred went up to Bob Bowie, who was leaning over the side

watching the ripples caused by the *Snowflake*, and meditating, as he himself said, “on things in gin’ral, and nothin’ in particular.” It may be remarked in passing that this was not an uncommon state of mind with Bob Bowie.

“Well, Bob,” said Temple, “we’re going along nicely with this breeze. I expect we shall pass that island before many hours go by.”

“How far d’ye think it’s off, sir?” inquired the steward.

“About three miles,” said Fred.

“Three miles, sir, w’y, it’s not more than one mile—if it’s that.”

“What say you, Captain?” asked Fred.

“Ye better try,” suggested McNab, with a quiet grin.

“So I will, ho! stand by to heave the log there. Now, Captain, steer straight as the crow flies for the island.”

The yacht’s course was altered, the log was hove, and, observing the moment of starting, they awaited the result. Bob thought it was a smallish island with little bushes on it. The time they took in drawing near to it first led him to doubt the correctness of his own opinion. But when the bushes began to turn into trees, and the cliffs to tower into the sky above his head, and throw a dark shadow over the vessel, he was obliged to give in. The distance which he had imagined was not more than one mile turned out to be *five*.

On another occasion a similar case of the deceptive appearance of distance occurred. They were sailing up a certain fiord, which most of the people on board supposed was only about a mile broad. One of the sailors, Bill by name, insisted that it could not be more than three-quarters of a mile; and thereupon an animated discussion, amounting almost to a dispute, began. But Bill was not to be put down. “He was an old salt. *He* wasn’t to be taken in by these molehills, not he!” He had sailed round the world, according to his own account had been shipwrecked half a dozen times, and drowned once or twice, besides being murdered occasionally; so he thought himself a weighty authority,

and entitled to great respect!

Well, to settle this point the yacht was sailed straight across the fiord, and the breadth, measured by the log, was found, as in the former case, to be about five miles.

The calms, although frequent in this latitude, did not last long. Light breezes sprang up now and then, and for several days carried our travellers to the north. But not fast enough, for the sun still kept ahead of them. During this period, they saw great variety of wonderful scenery, had several small adventures, and enjoyed themselves extremely.

Fred Temple usually began each calm day by jumping out of bed, rushing upon deck and going over the side, head-foremost into the water. He was generally followed by Sam Sorrel; but Sam was inclined to be lazy, and did not always follow his friend's lead. Grant never followed it. He was inveterately lazy in the morning, although at all other times he was as active as a mountain goat.

Our Highlander was particularly successful about this time with his gun. The number of birds that he shot and stuffed was enormous. Whenever a calm prevailed, he took the light little Norse boat that had been purchased at Bergen, and went off to the nearest island with his gun. On these occasions he was usually accompanied by Sam, whose love for sketching was quite equal to that of his companion for bird-shooting and stuffing. Fred, of course went to keep them company, and was wont to carry with him a rod, as well as a gun, for he was passionately fond of fishing. On these occasions, too, they took Hans Ericsson with them, to assist in rowing, and to pilot them when they felt inclined to leave the yacht out of sight behind.

One day they were out on an excursion of this kind, and had rowed towards the mainland, and up a fiord. Fred and Sam were reclining in the stern of the boat; the former smoking a meerschaum pipe, the latter making a drawing of a range of hills which were so rugged that the tops appeared like the teeth of a saw. Grant and Hans were rowing.

"Do you know what o'clock it was when we left the yacht?" inquired Fred.

"What o'clock?" echoed Sam; "no; well, let me see. We went to bed last

night at five o'clock this morning."

"You mean that we turned in for our *night's rest* at five this morning, I suppose," said Temple.

"My dear Fred," retorted Sam, "never mind what I mean; only attend to what I say. Don't be too particular. It's a bad habit being too particular. I once had a friend who was too particular in his attentions to a young lady, and the result was that he was obliged to marry her."

"Then, Sam," returned Temple, "I should say that the habit of being too particular is a good one, if it leads to such a good thing as marriage. But to return to the point, what time of day or night do you think it is *now*?"

"Have not the least idea," said Sam; "I think it's some time or other in the evening, but this perpetual daylight confuses me. You know that when you and Grant were away last week after the gulls, I went to bed on Thursday forenoon at ten o'clock by mistake, thinking it was ten at night. How I ever came to do it I can't tell, but I suppose that I had sat so long stuffing that great eagle for Grant that my brains had got obfuscated. It was cloudy, too (not unlike what it is just now), so that I could not see the sun. Whatever was the cause, there is no doubt of the fact that I lost a day somehow, and my ideas have got such a twist that I fear they will never recover it."

"A most unfortunate state of things, truly," said Fred, laughing. "Perhaps you'll recover when we return to low latitudes. If not, there are plenty lunatic asylums. But we must not spend more than a few hours longer on this excursion, for I've a notion that we are somewhere about Saturday just now, and you know it's against our rules to run the risk of shooting or fishing into Sunday."

"Very true," replied Sam, as he continued his sketch. "I say, Grant, do you happen to have your watch with you?"

"Not I," cried Grant from the bow of the boat. "Since day and night took to being the same I let it run down. I have no regard for time now."

"D'ye know what day it is?"

“No.”

“Humph, it’s lucky that we can depend upon the Captain for keeping us right in regard to Sunday. Well, let’s go ashore and try the mouth of yonder stream. I’ll warrant me there are sea-trout there, perhaps salmon, and the ground hereabouts seems a likely place for grouse and ptarmigan. Pull hard, Hans, thou son of Eric, and shove the boat into yonder creek.”

Hans Ericsson bent his strong back, and a bright smile crossed his sunburnt face as the head of the boat flew round.

“Hallo, Hans! steady, my lad!” cried Grant, giving his oar a pull that sent the head of the boat spinning round in the opposite direction. Then the sturdy Norseman and the stalwart Scot gave a pull together with all their might, and sent the boat like an arrow into the creek, where, in a few seconds, her keel grated on the shore.

For several hours after that the three friends were busy with their favourite pursuits. Grant soon bagged several brace of grouse. Fred caught a basket of splendid sea-trout, some of which were over three pounds’ weight, and a small salmon of about ten pounds; while Sam Sorrel sat down on a rock and painted an elaborate picture of the scenery. Of course their different occupations separated them from each other, but Hans kept close to Fred’s elbow—for he had not only conceived a strong friendship for the young Englishman, but he was immensely delighted with fly-fishing, which he had never before witnessed. The astonishment of Hans was great when he beheld heavy trout landed by means of a slender rod and an almost invisible line. But when Fred hooked the salmon the excitement of the Norseman knew no bounds. After nearly half an hour’s playing of the fish, Fred drew it close to the bank, and told Hans to strike the gaff-hook into it, and lift it out of the water. Hans in his excitement missed his aim, and the terrified fish darted away. But Fred was prepared for this, and let out line. Soon he brought his fish once more to the side, exhausted and rolling over. Hans made a second attempt and was successful in landing the silvery salmon on the bank.

When they returned to the schooner after that excursion, Captain McNab

was leaning over the side with a grim smile on his wooden countenance. Bob Bowie was beside him with a beaming smile on his jolly red face.

“Good-day, Captain,” cried Fred, as the boat drew near. “Well, Bowie, we’re desperately hungry, I hope you’ve got supper ready for us.”

“I’ve got breakfast, sir,” replied the steward.

“Eh? ah! well, call it what you like, only let us have it soon.” (They clambered up the side.) “Why, Captain, what day is it, and what time of day?”

“It’s Friday mornin’, sir, and eight o’clock.”

Fred opened his eyes in astonishment.

“Why, then, comrades, it seems that we have been shooting, sketching, and fishing all night by daylight, and the sun has set and risen again without our being aware of the fact! So much for perpetual day and a cloudy sky. Come, Bob Bowie, look alive with break—, ah! supper, I mean, for whatever it may be to you, it is supper to us. Meanwhile, I’ll have a bathe to refresh me.”

So our hardy adventurers bathed that morning, over the side, then they supped, after which they turned in and slept all day, and rose again at six o’clock in the evening to breakfast!

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## **Chapter Seven.**

### **A Sunday on Shore.**

Only once during their voyage along the rugged coast of Norway did our three friends go to church! It must not be supposed, however, that therefore they were heathens. Far from it. Fred and his companions were truly Christian men. That is to say, they not only called themselves Christians, but they made it their earnest aim to walk after the example of Christ, and to exhibit their Christianity by their deeds. But only once during their trip had they the opportunity of visiting a church on a Sunday

forenoon when service was going on.

It happened to be on a bright calm Sunday. There was just enough of wind to urge the *Snowflake* through the water at the rate of two miles an hour. Fred's usual custom was to get to a secure anchorage on Saturdays, so as to be able to spend the Sabbath as a day of rest. But this was not always practicable, because the water was so deep close inshore that no bottom could be found in many places, and often they were obliged to continue their voyage on Sunday. This, however, was a matter of small importance, because the working of the yacht required so little attention—especially in fine weather—that it did not interfere with the services or the rest of the day. Fred made a point of assembling the crew and reading the Church of England service every Sunday forenoon, and a chapter or two from the Bible in the evening.

On the present occasion they were all assembled on the quarterdeck joining in the morning service. The breeze was steady, and the steersman was the only man on duty, but he was not thereby prevented from attending to what was being read. The vessel was gliding along close under a precipice which towered high above the mast, and, at a short distance ahead, extended out in a bold promontory or headland. Elsewhere mountainous islands hemmed them in.

When they reached the promontory Fred was reading that beautiful Psalm, the 95th,—which appeared somewhat appropriate to the occasion.

“O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.

“Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and shew ourselves glad in Him with psalms.

“For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

“In His hand are all the corners of the earth: and the strength of the hills is His also.

“The sea is His, and He made it: and His hands prepared the dry land.



“O come, let us worship and fall down: and kneel before the Lord our Maker.”

Fred happened to look up at the last words, and an exclamation of wonder broke from him as he pointed towards the shore. The schooner had just doubled the towering promontory, and a new scene had been suddenly opened up to view.

Just beyond the promontory the coast-line took an abrupt bend to the right, at the end of which was a sequestered little bay, with a beach of yellow sand, and a cluster of grassy mounds behind, of the brightest emerald green. The bay and the green mounds and the strip of yellow sand were all exceedingly small, and were surrounded by a mass of rugged rocks of a cold, whitish-grey colour. Beyond these were the great purple mountains of the mainland. Ahead and in front towered the islands of the coast. The whole of the surrounding scenery was wild, rugged, and barren. This one little spot alone was soft and lovely; it shone out like a bright jewel from its dark setting. All round the bay were clustering cottages, with white walls and red roofs,—some on the sides of the mounds, others perched on rocks that projected out into the sea. On the highest of these mounds stood a church, and in the bay floated a large Norwegian vessel and numerous small boats.

The promontory round which the *Snowflake* had just passed completely sheltered this bay, so that the water was like a sheet of glass, in which everything—boats, rocks, mounds, cottages, and church—was clearly reflected.

The church-bell was ringing. It was a small bell, and its sweet sound came floating softly over the sea to the ears of our voyagers like an old familiar hymn. The interest of this scene was further enhanced by the assembling of the people to church. Boats were seen pushing off from every island, issuing from every creek, rowing over the calm water, and all converging towards the little bay with the yellow strand. Each boat was crowded with men, women, and children; and as the men wore red caps, and the women white kerchiefs on their heads, their appearance was quite brilliant. In other respects, their clothes being all homespun and of one dark colour, their aspect was sombre enough. So numerous were the boats, and so suddenly did they make their appearance, that it seemed

as if the land were being invaded by a foreign host.

All this was taken in at a glance by the yacht party as they doubled the promontory, and glided slowly into the bay.

“This is our anchorage,” said the Captain.

“Very well, let go the anchor, and we will finish the service after it is down,” said Temple, rising and taking up the telescope to examine the groups of people on shore.

As each boat discharged its load on the little stone pier, the males and females separated into two distinct bands and walked slowly and sedately towards the church, at the door of which the whole congregation assembled, still keeping in two separate bands, to await the arrival of the clergyman.

In a few minutes the rattle of the chain announced that the anchor was down. The sails were dewed up, and service was continued.

“Now,” said Fred, when he had concluded, “lower the boat, Captain—I will go to church. Will any one of you join me?”

“What’s the use of my going?” said Sam Sorrel; “I won’t understand a word.”

“You’re not sure of that,” said Grant. “Besides it is so long since we’ve been to church, that I feel as if I should enjoy it whether I understand it or not.”

“If it don’t do you no good, sir, it can’t do you no harm,” urged Bob Bowie, who was evidently anxious to get ashore.

“Come along,” cried Fred, jumping into the boat, and taking his seat in the stern-sheets.

He was quickly followed by his companions and by honest Bob, whose delight in a ramble on shore was only equalled by his love for a voyage on the sea!

“Ain’t it an xtroar’nary church, sir?” said Bob, sidling up to Temple and touching his hat, as they ascended the green mound on which the building stood.

“It is, Bob, most remarkable,” replied Fred.

To say truth, there could not be two opinions on this point. The church was of very peculiar and curious form. It was more like a number of dove-cots placed together than anything else; those dove-cots, I mean, which have sloping roofs, and are frequently seen nailed against the sides of houses in country places. Take four such dove-cots and place them back to back so as to form a sort of square; on the top of these place three more dove-cots, also back to back; above these set up two more dove-cots, and one on the top of all, with a short steeple above it, and a spire with an enormous weathercock on the top of that, and the building will not be a bad model of a Norwegian church, especially if you paint the sides white, and the gabled roofs blackish-red.

Inside, this church was found to be exceedingly plain, but very clean. The pews and galleries and walls were of unpainted fir, and the ceiling was whitewashed. The entire building was utterly devoid of ornament, except round the altar, above which there was a large crucifix and a few candles, and other things somewhat resembling those used in Roman Catholic worship.

The service had begun some time before the arrival of our friends. It was a Lutheran church, and the ceremonial resembled that of the English Church in some respects, that of the Roman Catholic in others.

The entrance of so many strangers of course created some sensation, even although they entered as quietly as possible and sat down on the first seats they found vacant. The people seemed to have native politeness in them. They could not, indeed, resist the temptation to look round, but they did it modestly, and only indulged in glances, as if they felt that it was rude to stare at strangers.

Unfortunately Bob Bowie had not been warned that it is the custom in Norway for the men to sit together on one side of the church and the women on the other side, and, being rather a stupid man in some

matters, he did not observe that the door by which he entered led to the women's pews. Being by nature a modest man, he cast down his eyes on entering, and did not again raise them until he found himself seated beside a Norwegian female in a black gown and a white head-dress, with a baby in her arms, which also wore a black gown and a white head-dress. Bob sat with a solemn look on his bluff visage, and wiped his bald forehead gently for some time ere he discovered that he was the only male being in the midst of a crowd of two hundred women and girls and female infants!

On making this discovery honest Bob's body became exceedingly warm and his face uncommonly red. He glanced round uneasily, blew his nose, rose suddenly, and, putting on his hat with the back to the front, went out of the church on tip-toe as quietly as possible, and was not again seen, until, an hour afterwards, he was discovered seated on the sunny side of a rock near the boat calmly smoking his pipe!

Bob was somewhat ashamed of this little adventure, and did not like to have it spoken of. As a matter of course his comrades did not spare him; but, being the steward of the ship, and having supreme command over the food, he so contrived to punish his messmates that they very soon gave up joking him about his going to church with the Norse girls!

It cannot be said that any of the three friends made much of the sermon that day. Fred understood only a sentence here and there, Grant understood only a word now and then, and Sam Sorrel understood nothing at all; but from the earnestness of the preacher, especially when the name of our Saviour was mentioned, they were inclined to believe that a good work was going on there.

In this opinion they were further strengthened when, on afterwards visiting the pastor, they found him to be a man of singularly kind and earnest disposition, with agreeable and unaffected manners. He wore a long loose robe of black material, and a thick white frill round his neck similar to that usually seen in the portraits of the great Reformer Martin Luther.

His family consisted of a wife and four children—a sturdy boy, and three flaxen-haired girls, all of whom vied with each other in paying attention to

their visitors. Coffee was instantly produced, and cakes made by the fair fingers of the goodwife. The pastor could speak a little French, so that his visitors were able to converse with him, but the other members of the family could speak nothing but their native tongue. However, this did not prove a great stumbling-block, for, while Grant talked French with the pastor, Fred entertained his hostess in his best Norse, and Sam Sorrel, not to be behindhand, got the children round him, and made such wonderful use of *ver so goot* and his other pet phrases, that he succeeded in getting the boy on his knee, and in setting the girls off into giggles of laughter.

They spent that Sunday and the following Monday at this pleasant place, and were taken by the pastor all over his house and grounds and village, after which he conducted them to the summit of a mountain, whence they obtained one of the finest views they had yet seen in Norway.

Here, for the first time since leaving England, they regarded a fair wind with disfavour; they bade adieu to the pastor and his family with a little of that sad feeling which one experiences when parting, perhaps for ever, from dear friends.

But time and the sun would not wait. The anchor was tripped; the sails were spread; in half an hour the place had dwindled away to a bright green spot in the far distance; then they rounded the beetling crags of an island—and it vanished from their view.

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## Chapter Eight.

### Visit to a Strange People—The Midnight Sun.

One day the *Snowflake* lay becalmed in one of those long narrow fiords by which the whole of the west coast of Norway is cut up, and some of which extend from seventy to a hundred miles inland.

There was no prospect of a breeze, so another boat excursion was talked of. Hearing this, Hans Ericsson informed his master that there was a small settlement of Laplanders about thirty miles or so inland, and that he would be very glad to guide him and his friends to it if they chose.

They jumped at the proposal at once, and in less than half an hour they were on their way to it. Bob Bowie also went on this expedition.

No carioles could be procured in that wild region, but at a poor fishing-village on the coast they got two of the country carts. These are small rough machines, with a seat on wooden springs. They can hold only two persons, and are light and serviceable, well suited to the rough roads. Fred and Sam led the way; Grant and the steward followed. Hans acted the part of shooscarle to the former, and the owner of the carts drove the latter.

The first start was up the side of a hill at least two thousand feet, and the road was so steep that it was all that the ponies could do to drag up the empty carts. Having gained the top of the first hill, they came upon a level plateau, resembling the bleak Scottish moorlands, which terminated in a range of wild snow-capped mountains. After resting the ponies a few minutes, they set off at a brisk trot, and were soon across the level ground. Ascending to another plateau, they crossed it, and finally reached the higher mountain-range of the interior. Here they crossed several patches of snow which the summer heat had not yet been able to melt away.

As soon as they were fairly amongst the mountains, the roads became horrible, and it was a matter of wonder that the springs of the carts were not broken. Toiling up hills, and dashing down on the other side,—crashing over fallen rocks, and shaving the edge of yawning gulfs and precipices,—thus they advanced till evening, through a country which was the picture of barrenness and desolation.

Rocks were the chief feature of the scenery. They had got to such a height above the level of the sea that there were no pines, only a few stunted birch-trees. There was little soil, but that little was well clothed with vegetation. Rocky mountains, rocky masses, and rocky glens everywhere; but as they went farther inland the scenery improved a little.

Soon they found that instead of travelling inland they had been only crossing one of these broad necks of high land which separate the fords of Norway from each other, and ere long they came in sight of the sea, with precipitous mountains dipping into it.

Here, on a green slope facing the fiord, were seen the conical tents of the strange people whom they had travelled so far to visit.

The inhabitants of Lapland are a distinct race from their southern neighbours the Norwegians, in size, intelligence, civilisation, and manner of life. They are as near as may be *savages* in appearance, and in some of their habits, insomuch that on first visiting them a stranger might be apt to set them down as *real savages*. Yet they are many degrees higher than the savage, such as the Red Indian of North America. The Lapp is as dirty as the Indian, and dwells in as poor a hut, and lives in as simple a style; but he is rich in *property*—his property being herds of reindeer, while the Indian depends entirely on the chase for wealth and subsistence. Then again, although the Lapp has nothing worthy of the name of a house, he is an educated man, to a small extent. He can read, and, above all, he possesses the Word of God in a language which he understands.

In bodily size, however, the Red Indian beats him; for as a race the Lapps are particularly small, though they are well proportioned and active.

They are seldom visited by strangers; and it is not improbable that when the two carts dashed into their village our friends were the first Englishmen they had ever seen.

It happened to rain heavily during the last part of the journey to the Lapp village. To the surprise and amusement of the travellers, Bob Bowie drew forth from his cart a huge red cotton umbrella which he had purchased at Bergen, and which, seeing the sky cloudy, he had brought with him in the hope that he might have occasion to use (that is, to display) it.

The rain, however, did not depress the spirits of the party a whit. Nothing in the shape of water could damp their enthusiasm.

If any one wants to see a poor, ragged, diminutive, wizened, yet jolly race of human beings,—a race of beings who wear hairy garments, sup reindeer's milk with wooden spoons, and dwell in big bee-hives,—he has only got to go to Lapland and see the Lapps.

Quitting the carts at the outskirts of the village, the travellers advanced into the centre of it just as the natives were driving a herd of reindeer into

an enclosure to be milked.

There could not have been fewer than three hundred reindeer-stags, does, and numerous fawns; and these, they afterwards learned, constituted the entire wealth of three families of Lapps.

As Fred and his friends strode into the enclosure, and came upon these good people rather suddenly, their amazement was unspeakable at finding they had bagged a party of giants along with their deer. Even scraggy Sam Sorrel looked quite big compared with them.

After the first gaze and shout of surprise, they crowded round the strangers, and they all—men, women, and children—began to eye and paw them over, and to examine their costumes with deep interest. The diminutive size of the Lapps became very apparent as they were thus engaged. None of the men were much, if at all, above five feet, several were considerably under that height, and the women were short in proportion.

If the bosoms of these Lapps were small, their hearts must certainly have been very large, for they received their visitors with great warmth and delight. Altogether they were a jovial and hearty, though uncommonly ill-dressed race of mortals.

The men were clothed partly in deer-skin, partly in coarse cloth, and these garments were reduced by long service to a uniform dirty-brown colour. They showed signs of being slept in by night as well as worn by day.

There was a schoolmaster amongst them. Only fancy, a Lapp schoolmaster, four feet nine or ten inches high! Sam Sorrel took a sketch of this gentleman on the spot, with his wife and child. What the schoolmaster taught, or whom he taught, or when or where he taught, are questions to which Fred could obtain no answer. To look at him, one would have imagined that eating, sleeping, and herding reindeer were the only lessons that he was able to teach. Yet it was found on inquiry that some of them could read Norse; and Sam actually discovered an old man in one of the huts poring over a New Testament in that language. There seemed something strangely incongruous in all this. They were dirty and



uncouth; they had no houses, no tables or chairs, no civilised habits of any kind; yet they could read, and they had a schoolmaster! A very dirty one, to be sure, and not very deeply learned, I dare say; still a dominie, without doubt. On the strength of their acquirements, Fred presented the tribe with a Norse New Testament.

Besides being four feet ten, the schoolmaster was comical and quizzical. He was evidently the wit of his tribe. His face was yellow and dirty; his nose was short and red, in addition to which it was turned up at the point; his eyes were small, and sloped downwards at the inner corners towards the nose, like those of the Chinese. His dirty leathern tunic was belted so low down, and his little legs were so short, that there was considerably more of him above the belt than below it. On his head he wore a cap, somewhat like that of a jockey in shape, and his lower limbs were encased in tight but ill-fitting leggings. Altogether, this man was the most disreputable-looking schoolmaster that was ever seen either at home or abroad.

While both parties were making acquaintance with each other, the rain fell more heavily.

“You’d better put up your umbrella, Bob Bowie,” said Fred.

Bob, who had forgotten the umbrella, in consequence of being so much taken up with the Lapps, at once put it up. Being extremely proud of this curiosity, he was glad of the opportunity to display it. A shout of surprise and delight greeted its appearance. It was clear that the Lapps had never seen one before. The schoolmaster at once seized it out of Bob’s hand, and strutted about with it over his head, to the inexpressible joy of the children, who ran after him and crowded round him. Undoubtedly he must have been a kind schoolmaster. For some time the earnest attention of old and young was entirely given to this umbrella, while they tried to find out how many could get under it at once.

The costume of the women was as rude as that of the men. The schoolmaster’s wife wore a sort of cloth helmet, and a rough yellow cloth gown, which was not by any means too long. Her little girl wore a tight-fitting skull-cap, and another youngster had on a thing much too large for it—like a huge extinguisher, which seemed to be its father’s nightcap.

They were extremely ugly, all of them, but very happy-looking and good-natured.

Of course Fred had taken a few trinkets with him, such as beads, thimbles, scissors, sugar-plums, knives, etcetera; and as every one in the village received something, the whole place resounded with exclamations of joy.

Despite the rain, Sam Sorrel pulled out his sketch-book and began to take portraits. Here was another source of wonder to the Lapps. For some time they knew not what to make of it, but crowded round Sam with looks of inquisitive surprise, and, getting on tip-toe, peeped at his book. When one or two lines had been drawn, exclamations of interest were uttered by one and other; and when in a few minutes, the small youth with his father's extinguisher on his head became clearly defined on the paper, there was a regular burst of laughter.

Sam instantly received a far greater number of "orders" than he could execute. The stout little woman in the cloth helmet placed herself in an attitude which was no doubt meant to be irresistibly attractive. Several of the youngsters plucked the artist by the sleeve, and thrust forward their pert little faces, as if to say, "Do me!" or "Here's a chance for you!" and the schoolmaster, promptly clearing a space in front of Sam, placed himself in an attitude, and by his commanding look ordered him to begin at once. He did begin, on the spot and finished the portrait in five minutes—rather a long sitting, considering the state of the weather, and the impatience of the schoolmaster to see himself on canvas!

While this was going on in one quarter, Bob Bowie had attracted round him a circle of warm admirers, whose souls he captivated by showing and explaining to them the interior of his watch. As the lecture was delivered in English, it is not to be supposed that the audience profited much by means of their ears, but their eyes did double duty that day; at least one might reasonably suppose so, from the immense size to which they were constantly expanded!

They evidently did not know whether to regard the watch as a mechanical contrivance or a living creature. In the study of this mysterious thing they were somewhat distracted by the presence of their first love the umbrella,

which the lecturer had erected over his head in order to shield his timepiece from the rain. Fred and Grant went about everywhere, looking at everything, and talking, as they best could, to everybody.

Meanwhile the three hundred deer, in the midst of which they had been standing all this time, kept moving about the enclosure, emitting a peculiar grunting sound, and making a strange clicking noise with their ankle-joints. This is a well-known peculiarity of the reindeer. Every time they lift or set down their feet, the ankle-joints crack as do the knuckles of a man when he pulls his fingers. As these deer were constantly getting up and lying down, the twittering rattle of their ankle-joints was unceasing.

Presently the schoolmaster's wife took a small wooden cup, milked one of the does, and handed the proceeds to Fred. He was surprised to find the milk as thick and as pleasant to the taste as the richest cream; and he was still more surprised to be told that all that could be got from a doe at any one time was about half a tea-cupful.

The deer varied in colour from dark brown to almost white. The stags stood about three feet eight inches high at the shoulder, and the antlers were about three feet long, following the curve.

Quitting the enclosure, the party next visited several of the huts,—which were made of moss, turf, sticks, etcetera, put together in such a confused way, that it was difficult to make out how they had been formed. A hole in the side was the only door to each hut, and a hole in the top was the window and chimney. In one of these they found an extremely old woman seated on a pile of dirty deerskins. Sam Sorrel said he was convinced she was the schoolmaster's great-grandmother. She looked like a living mummy, so small and wrinkled and brown and dried up was the poor old body. Yet she was lively enough to show signs of pleasure when Fred patted her back gently and presented her with a pair of scissors and a pair of worsted gloves.

It was a late hour before the curiosity of our friends was satisfied; the sun was dipping low on the horizon when at last they bade adieu to the Lapps, and harnessing their ponies, set out on the return journey. The way was long, and their eyes were heavy. They tried by means of

conversation and song to keep themselves awake, but were unsuccessful. Despite their utmost efforts their heads *would* nod, and brief little dreams kept perpetually reminding them of Laplanders, dirty little schoolmasters, and reindeer.

Now, while Fred was nodding in his cart, and trying to keep awake that night, he little thought that he was so nearly attaining the great object for which he had come to Norway. Yet so it was. They came, in course of time, to the summit of a ridge from which could be had a splendid view of the fiord, and the sea with its thousands of islands beyond, and the *Snowflake* floating like a white speck on the blue water far below. Here Hans pulled up and touched Fred on the shoulder.

“Well, Hans, anything wrong?” said Fred starting and looking round.

“Sun not set here,” replied Hans with a grin.

“What!” cried Fred, jumping out of the cart, rubbing his eyes, and staring at the great luminary which was dipping close to the sea. “Impossible! we are not yet far enough north. You must be mistaken, Hans.”

To this Hans replied that he was *not* mistaken. That he had been on that same spot at the same time of the year long ago, and had noticed that the sun had not descended below the horizon. Pointing to the sharp top of a hill that rose some six or eight hundred feet close beside them, he said that from that point the sun would be seen complete, while from the place where they then stood the lower part of it would be hid below the horizon.

“Hallo! Grant Sam, d’ye hear that?” shouted Fred with enthusiasm. “We’ve no time to lose, quick, follow!”

Away Fred Temple went up the mountain-side like a deer, followed by Sam and Grant, who having been more than half-asleep when aroused by their comrade’s shout, scarce knew what they were about. Even Bob Bowie’s spirit was stirred, and he went stumbling after his friends rubbing his eyes and yawning as he went.

The highest peak was soon reached. Here they sat down to watch. The sun was close upon the horizon now, and Fred’s heart beat fast with

anxiety lest it should descend below it.

“There’s but a narrow line of sky between the sea and the lower edge of the sun now,” said Fred. “It looks no more than an inch broad, and it is narrowing, I think.”

“No, it is growing broader,” said Grant.

“No, narrower,” whispered Sam.

“Broader it is!” said Fred eagerly.

For a few seconds they remained uncertain and silent, gazing earnestly at the sun. At last there could be no doubt of it. The line of sky was evidently broader: *the sun had begun to rise without having set.*

“Huzzah,” shouted Fred Temple, springing up, tossing his cap into the air, and cheering as enthusiastically as if he had just discovered a new gold-field! Infected with the same spirit, the others joined him, and then they expended their energies in building a *cairn* of stones on the hill-top to commemorate the event!

“Hans, thou son of Eric,” said Fred, grasping the hand of his pilot and guide when this was finished. “I like thee, man; thou hast done me good service this day. But for you I should have missed this chance, so I consider myself thy debtor, lad; mark me well, I will discharge this debt when we return to the south. So now, let us be gone.”

How Fred discharged this debt remains to be seen. Meanwhile the party descended the hill, and returned once more to their floating home.



## Chapter Nine.

### Miscellaneous Adventures—The Value of Language—Salmon-Fishing.

The main object of the voyage having now been gained, Fred Temple did not care to push northward with the earnest haste that he had hitherto exhibited. He did, indeed, avail himself of a fine southerly breeze which sprang up, and succeeded in reaching latitude 67 and a half degrees, where he saw the sun all night from the deck of his little yacht; but he devoted himself henceforth to enjoying the country fully.

He no longer sailed against baffling winds, but went quite contentedly in any direction in which the wind chose to blow him. The consequence was that he visited many curious out-of-the-way places, and saw many strange sights; besides having a considerable number of peculiar adventures. The week following that in which he first *saw the sun all night* was particularly full of small adventures. Let me briefly relate a few.

One day, having left the schooner becalmed close to the mainland, they took the boat and rowed towards the land. While they were pulling along-shore under a tremendous cliff that rose out of the sea like a wall, they heard voices on the top of the cliff. The top was lined with bushes, so that they could see no one, but the sounds led them to suppose that some persons were disputing there. Presently a crash was heard, and, looking up, they beheld a dark object in the air. They had just time to observe that this object was a pony and cariole, which had evidently fallen from the top of the cliff, when they were drenched with spray, and a mass of foam indicated the spot not three yards off, where the whole affair had disappeared beneath the waves! In a few seconds the pony came kicking to the surface. It had broken loose from the cariole, and, strange to say, reached the shore unhurt and in safety.

Another day they saw a whale. It may not, perhaps, have occurred to many people that, although a whale is a very well-known fish, and his picture extremely familiar to us, the sight of a live whale about six or eight yards under one's feet is an uncommonly startling and impressive vision.

Such a sight our voyagers saw while sailing up the Skars Fiord.

It was a calm day, and a pleasant day withal; and I think it right to state that, although they did at times grumble at prolonged calms, their grumbling was more than half feigned; while their gratitude for good weather, bright days, not to mention nights, and pleasant scenes, was sincere. But, to return to the point, it was a calm day, and they were doing nothing—that is, nothing worthy of mention. The waters of the fiord were deep and blue and clear, so that, looking over the side of the yacht, they could see very far down in reality—countless fathoms in imagination—into the mysterious abyss.

Presently some one cried, “Hullo! look there!”

“Hullo! look where?” inquired all the rest.

“There, close astern, it’s a—a—”

“Whale!” shouted the whole ship’s company.

That it really was a whale, and a big one too, became very apparent three minutes later, for it thrust a great blunt nose, like the end of a large boat, out of the water, and gave a prolonged puff. A few minutes later, and the nose appeared close off the starboard bow, then it came up not far from the larboard quarter; so they were convinced that the creature was taking a survey of the yacht. Perhaps it took it for another whale, and felt inclined to be social. After one or two circuits it drew nearer, and at last the huge fish could be seen as if in the depths of a bad looking-glass, swimming round and round the yacht, ever and anon coming to the surface, and showing the whole length and depth of its bulky body.

They were considerably excited, as may be supposed, at such an unexpected visit, and the near approach of such a visitant. As they gazed at him with eager eyes, he suddenly turned his head straight towards the side of the vessel, and, sinking down sufficiently to clear the keel, dived right under it, and came up on the other side.

So clear was the water, and so near was the fish to the surface, that they saw its great fins driving it along, and observed its comparatively little eyes looking inquisitively up at them. On clearing the yacht he came to

the surface not more than thirty yards from the side. In fact he had shaved it as near as possible without actually touching. "Familiarity breeds contempt," saith the proverb. The longer this whale played round them, the more did he exhibit a growing tendency to play *with* them, and as there was no saying what fancies he might take into his great head, Fred resolved to give him a shot.

Accordingly, the rifle—a double-barrel—was brought up, and, watching his opportunity, Fred put two leaden balls into the back of his head. The insulted monster wisely took the hint, gave a final flourish of his tail, and disappeared for ever!

On another occasion they landed at the head of a remote fiord, where the natives seldom had the chance of seeing strangers, and were, therefore, overjoyed to receive them. Here Sam Sorrel had a small adventure. His companions had left him to sketch. While thus engaged, a fat, hearty, good-natured fellow found him and insisted on his paying a visit to his cottage. The houses of the people in Norway, generally, are built of wood, and are roofed with red tiles. Floors, walls, ceilings, tables, chairs, beds, etcetera, all are of wood, and usually unpainted. All have iron stoves for winter use; no carpets cover the floors, and no ornaments grace the walls, save one or two prints, and a number of large tobacco-pipes, for the Norsemen are great smokers and chewers of tobacco.

The language here perplexed our artist not a little. Being a lazy student, he had left Fred to do all the talking, but now he found himself for the first time alone with a Norwegian! fairly left to his own resources. Well, he accompanied his fat friend, and began by stringing together all the Norse he knew (which wasn't much), and endeavoured to look as if he knew a great deal more; but his speech quickly degenerated into sounds which were quite unintelligible either to his new friend or himself; at last he terminated in a mixture of bad Norse and broad Scotch! Having dwelt many years in Scotland, Sam found his knowledge of Lowland Scotch to be of use, for there is great similarity between it and the Norwegian tongue.

For instance, they call a cow a *ko* or a *coo*. *Bring me meen skoe* (I spell as pronounced) is, Bring me my shoes. *Gae til land* is, Go ashore. *Tak place* is, Take place, or sit down. If you talk of bathing, they will advise



you to *dook oonder*; and should a mother present her baby to you she will call it her *smook barn*, her pretty bairn or child, *smook* being the Norse word for *pretty*. And it is a curious fact, worthy of particular note, that *all* the mothers in Norway think their bairns *smook*, *very smook*! and they never hesitate to tell you so; why, I cannot imagine, unless it be that if you were *not* told, you would not be likely to find it out for yourself.

Well, Sam and his fat friend soon became very amicable on this system. The Norseman told him no end of stories, of which he did not comprehend a sentence, but, nevertheless, looked as if he did; smiled, nodded his head, and said “Ya, ya,” (yes, yes), to which the other replied “Ya, ya,” waving his arms, slapping his breast, and rolling his eyes as he bustled along towards his dwelling.

The house was perched on a rock, close to the water’s edge. It was very small, quite like a bandbox with windows in it. Here the man found another subject to rave about and dance round, in the shape of his own baby, a soft, smooth copy of himself, which lay sleeping like a cupid in its cradle. The man was evidently very fond—perhaps even proud—of this infant. He went quite into ecstasies about it; now gazing into its chubby face with looks of pensive admiration; anon starting and looking at Sam with eager glance, as if to say, “Did you ever, in all your life, see such a magnificent cherub?” His enthusiasm was quite catching. Sam afterwards confessed that he actually began to feel quite a fatherly interest in the cherub.

“Oh!” cried the father in rapture, “dat er *smook barn*” (that’s a pretty baby).

“Ya, ya,” said Sam, “*smook barn*,” though it must be confessed that if he had called it a smoked bairn he would have been nearer the mark, for it was as brown as a red herring.

In proof of his admiration of this baby our artist made a sketch of it on the spot, and presented it to the delighted father, after which he was introduced to the Norseman’s wife, and treated to a cup of coffee. When Sam returned from this visit, he told his companions that he was quite amazed at having got on so well with the language, and was warm in praise of his host, who, he said, laughed more heartily than any man he

had ever met with. It is just possible that the Norseman may have had more occasion afforded him for laughter than usual, for Sam had waxed very talkative, and had been particularly profuse in the use and abuse of his pet phrase, *ver so goot*.

Soon after this the yacht's head was turned into the Nord Fiord, at the head of which dwelt the father and mother of Hans Ericsson. Here Hans, to his unutterable delight, found the fair Raneilda on a visit to her mother; for Raneilda was a native of that remote valley, and had gone to Bergen only a year before this time.

Here, too, Sam Sorrel found splendid scenery to paint, and Grant obtained numerous specimens of birds for his museum.

This reminds me, by the way, that our naturalist, who was amiable and eccentric, on one occasion nearly drove his comrades out of the yacht. One day he shot a young unfledged gull or puffin, or some such creature, whose brief existence had only conducted it the length of a down coat, a little round body, and a pair of tremendously long legs. Well, this object was laid carefully past (sic) in a spare berth of the yacht, in which they used to stow away all manner of useless articles—chairs and stools that had broken their legs, etcetera—and which went by the name of the infirmary in consequence. About a week after, there was a most unaccountable smell in the infirmary. Several stuffed birds hanging there were suspected and smelt, but were found to be quite fresh. One or two of them were put out to air, but still the smell grew worse and worse, until the most obtuse nose did not dare to go near the infirmary. At last they became desperate. A general and thorough investigation was instituted, and there, in a dark corner, under a hair mattress, and flat as a pancake, lay the poor puffin, alive!—but not with the life wherewith it had lived before it was shot—and emitting an odour that is indescribable, a description of which, therefore, would be quite unprofitable. The puffin was pitched overboard, and it was half insinuated that they ought to pitch the naturalist overboard along with it!

At the head of this fiord, also, Fred Temple, to his inexpressible joy, found a mighty river in which were hundreds of salmon that had never yet been tempted by the angler with gaudy fly, though they had been sometimes wooed by the natives with a bunch of worms on a clumsy cod-hook. Thus

both Fred and Hans found themselves in an earthly paradise. The number of splendid salmon that were caught here in a couple of weeks was wonderful; not to mention the risks run, and the adventures. Space will only permit of one or two examples being given.

On the day of their arrival, Fred seized his rod, and taking Hans to gaff the fish and show him the river, sallied forth, accompanied by about a score of natives, chiefly men and boys, who were eager to see the new style of fishing. They soon came to a fine-looking part of the stream, and Fred put together his rod. He was much amused at the looks of the men when they saw the thin supple point of the rod. They shook their heads gravely, and said, "He cannot hold a big fish with that." They were right so far, but they did not understand the use of the reel and the running line. Presently Fred cast, and almost immediately a large salmon took his fly, the rod bent like a hoop, and the reel whizzed furiously as the line ran out.

Sam Sorrel, who was there at the time, afterwards said that he was divided between interest in the movements of the fish, and amusement at the open mouths and staring eyes of the natives.

This fish was a very active one; it dashed up, down, and across the river several times, running out nearly the whole of the line more than once, and compelling Fred to take to the water as deep as his waist. At last, after a fight of half an hour, it was brought close to the bank, and Hans put the gaff-hook cleverly into its side, and hauled it ashore, amid the shouts of the astonished people, for the salmon weighed eighteen pounds.

After a time the natives began to understand the principles of fly-fishing with a rod, and regarded Fred Temple with deep respect. On all his fishing excursions in that fiord, he was attended by a band of eager admirers, to whom he gave most of the fish; for he caught so many of all sizes that his friends and his crew were not able to eat the quarter of them. The catching of his largest salmon was a stirring incident.

It happened on the evening of a very bright day. He had been unfortunate. The sun being too bright, the fish would not rise. This annoyed him much, because on that particular day he had been

accompanied by the Captain and Bob Bowie, as well as his two companions, all of whom were anxious to see him catch fish, and learn a lesson in the art. Fred was up to his middle in a rough part of the river. It was all he could do to retain his foothold, the water was so strong.

“It won’t do,” said he, “the sun is too bright.”

His friends on shore looked grave and disappointed.

“I sees a cloud a-comin’,” said Bob Bowie glancing upwards.

“Hallo! hey!” shouted Grant, who observed that at that moment Fred’s legs had been swept from under him, and he was gone!

Before any one could speak or act, Fred reappeared a little farther down the river, holding tight to the rod, and staggering into shallower water.

“None the worse of it,” cried Fred, bursting into a laugh.

Just as he said this, and while he was paying no attention to his rod, a salmon rose and seized the fly. In an instant Fred and his comrades utterly forgot all about the ducking, and were filled with the excitement of the sport.

Fred’s rod bent like a willow wand. His eyes seemed to flash, and his lips were tightly pressed together, for he felt that he had on a very large fish. Suddenly it darted up stream, and did what the large fish seldom do—leaped quite out of the water.

“A whale! stand by!” roared Bob Bowie.

There was a cry from the others, for at that moment the salmon set off down stream,—a most dangerous proceeding at all times. Fred made for the bank, and let out line as fast as possible. When he gained the bank he ran down the stream, leaping over bushes and stones like a wild goat. The places he went over in that run were terribly rugged. It seemed a miracle that he escaped without broken bones. Presently he came to a steep rock that projected into the water. There was no getting round it, so in he dashed. It took him only up to the knees. This passed, he came to another place of the same sort. Here he put a strain on the fish, and tried

to stop it. But it was not to be stopped. It had clearly made up its mind to go right down to the sea. Fred looked at the pool, hesitated one moment, and then leaped in. It took him up to the neck, and he was carried down by the current fifty yards or so, when his feet caught bottom again, and he managed to raise his rod, fully expecting to find that the salmon had broken off. But it was still on, and lively. Meanwhile, his comrades on the bank were keeping pace with him, shouting and yelling with excitement as they ran.

“The rapid, mind the rapid!” roared Grant.

Fred saw a foaming rapid before him. He became anxious. It was dangerous to venture down this. If he should touch a rock on the way down, the chances were that he would get a limb broken. The banks here were so thickly covered with bushes that it was impossible to pass. The fish still held on its headlong course. “What shall I do?” thought Fred. “If I stop he will break all to pieces, and I shall lose him. Lose him! no, never!”

“Don’t venture in, Fred,” shrieked Sam Sorrel.

But the advice came too late. Fred was already in the foaming current. In a moment he was swept down into the comparatively still water below the rapid. His friends lost sight of him, for they had to run round through the bushes. When they got to the foot of the rapid, they found Fred on the bank, panting violently, and holding tight to the rod, for the salmon had stopped there, and was now “sulking” at the bottom of a deep hole. For a full hour did the fisher labour to pull him out of that hole in vain; for in this kind of fishing nothing can be done by main force. The great beauty of the art consists in getting the salmon to move, and in humouring his movements, so that you tire him out, and get him gradually close to your side.

At last the fish came out of the deep pool. Then there was another short struggle of quarter of an hour, and the fisher’s perseverance and skill were rewarded. The salmon at last turned up its silvery side. Fred drew it slowly to the bank (in breathless anxiety, for many a fish is lost at this point). Hans struck the gaff in neatly, and with a huge effort flung it floundering on the bank, amid the hearty cheers of all present.

This salmon weighed 34 pounds, and was about four feet long! It was a magnificent fish, and it may well be believed that Fred Temple did not grudge the two hours' battle, and the risk that he had run in the catching of it.

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## Chapter Ten.

### Conclusion.

"Sam Sorrel," said Fred Temple one day to his friend while they were seated at breakfast in the house of a farmer of the Nord Fiord, "we have been here more than a fortnight now; we have enjoyed ourselves much, have had good sport of various kinds, and have laid in a stock of health and wisdom, it is to be hoped, that will last us for some time to come."

"That sounds very much like the beginning of a formal speech," said Grant.

"Hold your tongue, Grant," retorted Temple, "I have not yet done. As I have said, we have been successful in gaining the ends for which we came here. We have seen the sun rise without setting. Sam Sorrel has filled a large portfolio with beautiful sketches of, perhaps, the finest scenery in Europe. Grant has shot and stuffed I am afraid to say how many birds of all kinds, besides making a large collection of rare plants; and Fred Temple has caught about five hundred pounds' weight of salmon—not to mention hundreds of trout—"

"Good," said Sam, "and very correctly stated. You are fit for the House of Commons, my friend."

"Sam, be silent!—Now this being the case, it is time that we should think of returning to our native land. I will, therefore, make arrangements for setting sail in two or three days. But before leaving I will bring to a point a little plot which I have been hatching ever since I landed in Norway. I won't tell you what it is just yet, but I must have your help, Sam."

"Command my services, sir," said Sam, with a wave of his hand. "I am your servant, your Eastern slave, ready, if need be, to prostrate myself in

the earth and rub my nose in the dust.”

“Good. I accept your offer,” said Fred, “and my first command is, that you take your brushes and paint me a Norwegian bride in the course of this forenoon!”

“Why, your orders cannot be obeyed,” cried Sam in surprise. “Where am I to find a bride on such short notice? You are more unreasonable than the most tyrannical of sultans.”

“Nevertheless,” replied Fred calmly, “I issue my commands, and in order to relieve your mind of anxiety, I will find a bride for you.”

“Where, then, is this bride, O wizard?” asked Sam with a laugh.

“Behold her!” cried Fred, starting up and throwing open the door, from which could be seen the shore and the fiord with its background of noble hills.

Sam and Grant started up with sudden exclamations, and stared at the object which met their gaze in speechless wonder. And truly there was cause for astonishment; for there, on the shore, close to the water’s edge, stood the fair Raneilda, clothed in the gorgeous costume of a Norwegian bride.

“Assuredly you are a wizard,” cried Grant, glancing at his friend.

“Not so,” replied Fred. “I met sweet Raneilda last night at her father’s cottage, and begged of her to come here at a certain hour this morning in the costume of a bride, in order that my friend the artist might paint her. She hesitated and blushed a good deal at first, but at length she agreed, and, as you see, is punctual in keeping her appointment.”

Fred now went down to Raneilda, and brought her up to the house; Sam Sorrel at once placed her in a good position, seized his brushes, and began the portrait.

He was delighted with the dress, for it glittered with gold and silver ornaments. The crown was of pure silver covered with gold. The breastplate was red cloth ornamented with silver-gilt brooches, beads of

various colours, silver chains, and small, round looking-glasses. There was also a belt ornamented with gold and silver. Altogether Raneilda looked much more like the Queen of Norway than a poor peasant girl!

It is necessary to inform the reader that the greater part of this costume did not belong to the girl. In fact it did not belong to any one in particular. It is the custom in Norway for each district to have a marriage-dress for general use. The crown, the breastplate, and the belt are public property, and may be hired out by the girls who are about to be married at a few shillings for each occasion.

While Sam was busy with his portrait, Grant went out to search for plants, and Fred went off to search for Hans and to carry out the remainder of his plot. He soon found the young pilot.

“Hans,” said he, “follow me, I wish to speak with you.”

Hans was quite willing to follow Fred to the moon if he had chosen to lead the way.

“I am going to show you a very pretty sight, Hans; step this way. Here, in this room.”

He threw open the door and led him in. The young Norseman entered with a smile, but the smile suddenly vanished, his blue eyes opened to their utmost width, and he stood rooted to the floor, unable to speak!

“Tuts! what means this?” cried Sam in disgust at being interrupted.

“Raneilda!” gasped her lover.

The bride covered her face with her hands.

“Very good! excellent!” exclaimed Grant who chanced to pass at the moment, and peeped in at the open window.

“Hurrah!” cried Bob Bowie, who just then came up to announce that the *Snowflake* was ready for sea.

“She won’t be wanted for some days yet,” cried Fred bursting into a fit of



laughter as he seized Hans by the arm, dragged him into another room, and shut the door.

“Now, Hans,” said he earnestly, “I am going to pay you off. Nay, man, be not cast down, I did not take you into yonder room to mock you, but to show you how pretty Raneilda looked in her bridal dress.”

Fred paused for a moment, and the Norseman sighed and shook his head.

“You must know,” resumed Fred, “that I wish to dance at your wedding, Hans, and in order that I may do so, I mean to have you married at once. (Hans stared.) You told me in Bergen that you wanted some sort of work that would bring you good pay. (Hans nodded his head.) Well, I will give you a hundred dollars for the time you have been with me.”

Hans’ face brightened, and he shook hands with Fred, according to Norwegian custom when a gift is presented, or a generous payment made.

“Now,” continued Fred, “did you not tell me that two hundred dollars would enable you to take your father’s farm off his hands? (Hans nodded again.) And is Raneilda willing to marry you when you can afford to ask her? (Hans nodded this time, very decidedly.) Well, Hans, I have been very much pleased with the way in which you have conducted yourself while in my service; you have done your duty well. (Hans smiled and looked happy.) But you have done more than that. (Hans looked surprised.) You have been the means of enabling me to see the sun all night at a time when I should otherwise have missed it. I owe you something for that. Moreover, you pulled me out of that rapid by the neck when I caught the twenty-eight pound salmon, and so, perhaps, were the means of saving my life; and certainly you saved me that salmon. For all this, and for many other good deeds, I owe you a debt of gratitude. Now, Hans, you must know that it is impossible to pay a debt of gratitude *in full*, for, however much you may pay, there is always something more owing. (Hans looked puzzled.) This debt, then, I cannot pay up at once, but I can prove to you that I consider myself your debtor by making you a present of another hundred dollars. Here is the money, my lad, so go and tell Raneilda to get ready as soon as possible!”

Hans stared in wonder and unbelief, first at the money, then at Fred. Then a look of triumph gleamed in his eyes, and he seized Fred's hand and wrung it. Then he uttered a shout, and ran to Raneilda and kissed her. Fred kissed her too. Sam Sorrel and Grant, not knowing exactly what to do, kissed her also; and Bob Bowie, who was under the belief that they were all mad, made a grasp at the poor girl but missed her, for Raneilda was overwhelmed with confusion, and ran nimbly out of the room, leaving her crown behind her! Hans Ericsson hastily picked it up and ran after her, leaving Fred Temple to explain things to his astonished friends as he best could.

So that was the end of *that* matter.

But that was by no means the end of the whole affair. Before the *Snowflake* left the fiord, Hans and Raneilda were married, as all true lovers ought to be.

The fair bride was once again decked out in the queen-like garments which had formerly filled Sam and Grant with so great surprise and admiration; and Fred, as he had promised, danced at the Norseman's wedding. And not only did Fred dance, but so did his friends—ay, and his whole ship's crew. And it would have done your heart good, reader, to have seen the way in which the Jack-tars footed it on that occasion on the green grass, and astonished the Norsemen. But it must also be told that the Norsemen were not a whit behindhand, for they showed the tars a number of capers and new steps which they had never before seen or even dreamed of!

Just before the ball began there was heard a sound resembling the yells of an exceedingly young pig in its dying agonies. This was a violin. It was accompanied by a noise somewhat like to the beating of a flour-mill, which was found to proceed from the heel of the fiddler, who had placed a wooden board under his left foot. Thus he beat time, and a drum, as it were, at once. He also beat Paganini and all other fiddlers hollow. Round this manufacturer of sweet sounds did the lads and lasses flock and soon gave evidence of their sympathy with the rest of mankind by beginning to dance.

Certainly elegance is not a characteristic of the Norwegian peasantry!

Having formed a ring, they went to work with the utmost gravity and decorum. Scarcely a laugh was heard! nothing approaching to a shout during the whole evening. The nature of their dances was utterly incomprehensible. The chief object the young men had in view seemed to be to exhibit their agility by every species of bound and fling of which the human frame is capable, including the rather desperate feat of dashing themselves flat upon the ground. The principal care of the girls seemed to be to keep out of the way of the men, and avoid being killed by a frantic kick or felled by a random blow.

But the desperate features in each dance did not appear at once. Each man began by seizing his partner and dragging her recklessly round the circle, ever and anon twirling her round violently with one arm, and catching her round the waist with the other, in order apparently to save her from total destruction. To this treatment the fair damsels submitted for some time with downcast eyes and pleased yet bashful looks. Then the men seemed to fling them off and go at it entirely on their own account, yet keeping up a sort of revolving course round their partners, like satellites encircling their separate suns. Presently the men grew furious; rushed about the circle in wild erratic courses, leaped into the air, and while in that position slapped the soles of their feet with both hands!

Then they became a little more sane, and a waltz, or something like it, was got up. It was quite pretty, and some of the movements graceful; but the wild spirit of the glens seemed to re-enter them again rather suddenly. The females were expelled from the ring altogether, and the young men braced themselves for a little really heavy work; they dashed, flung, and hurled themselves about like maniacs, stood on their heads and walked on their hands; in short, became a company of acrobats, yet always kept up a sort of sympathetic attempt at time with the fiddler, who went on pounding his wooden board with his left heel and murdering an inconceivable multitude of young pigs with a degree of energy that was only equalled by that of those to whom he fiddled.

But not a man, woman, or child there gave vent to his or her feelings in laughter. They smiled, they commented in a soft tone, they looked happy; nay, they *were* happy, but they did not laugh! Once only did they give way a little, and that was when an aspiring youth, after having nearly leaped down his own throat, walked round the circle on his hands.

Even Tittles danced that day! He danced in and out among the feet of the dancers in a most perplexing manner, and got his unhappy toes and his unfortunate tail trod upon to a terrible extent. But Tittles did not seem to mind. It is true that he gave a yelp of pain on each occasion, but he instantly forgave the offender if he looked at all sorry. Upon the whole Tittles was the cause of much noise, no little confusion, and great amusement at that celebrated wedding.

Thus did Fred Temple and his friends spend their last day in Norway.

At midnight they set sail for Old England. On rising next morning they found themselves far out among the islands of the coast. Soon after that they were out of sight of land,—heaving on the swell of the ocean, thinking over the varied and stirring scenes of the past three months with a sort of feeling that it must have been all a dream, and wishing heartily that they were still away in the far north, enjoying the endless daylight and—*Chasing the Sun*.

## The End.

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| [Chapter 1](#) | | [Chapter 2](#) | | [Chapter 3](#) | | [Chapter 4](#) | | [Chapter 5](#) | | [Chapter 6](#) | | [Chapter 7](#) | |  
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