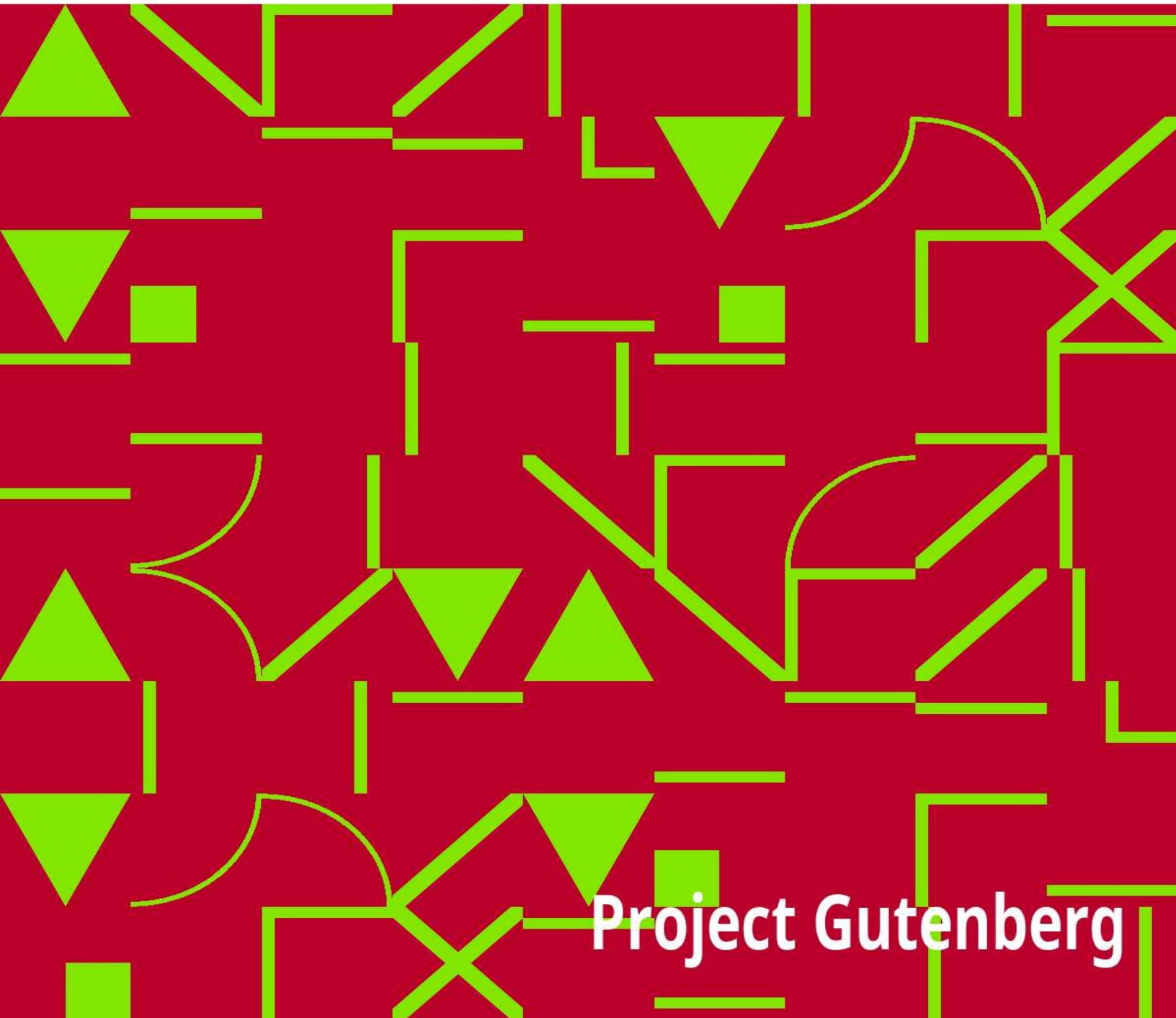
Among the Red-skins; Or, Over the Rocky Mountains

William Henry Giles Kingston



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"Among the Red-skins"

Chapter One.

Missing.

An Unexpected Return—Hugh is Absent—No Knowledge of his Whereabouts—Uncle Donald's Apprehensions—A Hurried Supper, and Preparations for a Search.

"Hugh, my lad! Hugh, run and tell Madge we have come back," cried Uncle Donald, as he and I entered the house on our return, one summer's evening, from a hunting excursion in search of deer or any other game we could come across, accompanied by three of our dogs, Whiskey, Pilot, and Muskymote.

As he spoke, he unstrapped from his shoulders a heavy load of caribou meat. I, having a similar load, did the same—mine was lighter than his—and, Hugh not appearing, I went to the door and again called. No answer came.

"Rose, my bonnie Rose! Madge, I say! Madge! Where are you all?" shouted Uncle Donald, while he hung his rifle, with his powder-horn and shot-pouch, in their accustomed places on the wall.

On glancing round the room he seemed somewhat vexed to perceive that no preparations had been made for supper, which we expected to have found ready for us. It was seldom, however, that he allowed himself to be put out. I think I can see him now—his countenance, though weather-beaten and furrowed by age, wearing its usual placid and benignant expression; while his long silvery beard and the white locks which escaped from beneath his Highland bonnet gave him an especially venerable appearance. His dress was a plaid shooting-coat, and high leggings of well-tanned leather, ornamented with fringe after the fashion of the Indians. Upright as an arrow, with broad shoulders and wiry frame, he stood upwards of six feet in his mocassins, nor did he appear to have lost anything of the strength and energy of youth.

As no one appeared, I ran round to the back of the house, thinking that

Rose and Madge, accompanied by Hugh, had gone to bring in the milk, which it was the duty of Sandy McTavish to draw from our cows, and that he, for some cause or other, being later than usual, they had been delayed. I was not mistaken. I presently met them, Madge carrying the pails, and Rose, a fair-haired, blue-eyed little maiden, tripping lightly beside her. She certainly presented a great contrast in appearance to the gaunt, dark-skinned Indian woman, whose features, through sorrow and hardship, had become prematurely old. I inquired for Hugh.

“Is he not with you?” asked Rose, in a tone of some little alarm. “He went off two hours ago, saying that he should be sure to fall in with you, and would assist in bringing home the game you might have killed.”

“Yes, Hugh would go. What he will he do,” said the Indian woman, in the peculiar way of speaking used by most of her people.

“He felt so much better in the afternoon that he was eager to go out and help you,” said Rose. “He thought that Uncle Donald would not be angry with him, though he had told him to remain at home.”

We soon got back to the house. When Uncle Donald heard where Hugh had gone, though he expressed no anger, he looked somewhat troubled. He waited until Rose had gone out of the room, then he said to me—

“I noticed, about four miles from home, as we went out in the morning, the marks of a ‘grizzly,’ which had been busy grubbing up a rotten log, but as his trail appeared to lead away up the mountains to the eastward I did not think it worth my while to chase him; and you having just before separated from me, I forgot to mention the fact when you came back. But vexed would I be if Hugh should have fallen in with the brute. He’s too venturesome at times; and if he fired and only wounded it, I doubt it would be a bad job for him. Don’t you let Rose hear a word about the ‘grizzly,’ Archie,” he hastily added, as she re-entered the room.

Both Madge and Rose were, however, very anxious when they found that Hugh had not returned with us. There was still an hour or so of daylight, and we did not therefore abandon the hope that he would return before dark. Uncle Donald and I were both very hungry, for we had been in active exercise the whole of the day, and had eaten nothing.

Madge knowing this set about preparing supper with all haste. She could not, however, help running to the door every now and then to ascertain if Hugh were coming. At length Sandy McTavish came in. He was something like Uncle Donald in figure, but though not so old, even more wiry and gaunt, looking as if he were made of bone and sinews covered with parchment.

He at once volunteered to set out and look for Hugh.

“Wait till we get our supper, and Archie and I will go too. What’s the use of man or boy with an empty stomach?” said Uncle Donald.

“’Deed an’ that’s true,” observed Sandy, helping himself from the trencher which stood in the centre of the table. “It’s a peety young Red Squirrel isna’ here; he would ha’ been a grand help if Maister Hugh’s missin’. But I’m thinkin’ he’s no far off, sir. He’ll have shot some beast likely, and be trying to trail it hame; it wud be a shame to him to hae lost his way! I canna believe that o’ Maister Hugh.”

Sandy said this while we were finishing our supper, when, taking down our rifles, with fresh ammunition, and bidding Rose and Madge “cheer up,” we three set out in search of Hugh.

Fortunately the days were long, and we might still hope to discover his track before darkness closed upon the world.

Chapter Two.

An Indian Raid.

Scene of the Story—History of Archie and Hugh—A Journey Across the Prairie—A Village Burnt by the Indians—Uncle Donald pursues the Blackfeet—Arrival at the Indian Camp.

But where did the scene just described occur? And who were the actors?

Take a map of the world, run your eye over the broad Atlantic, up the mighty St. Lawrence, across the great lakes of Canada, then along well-nigh a thousand miles of prairie, until the Rocky Mountains are reached, beyond which lies British Columbia, a region of lakes, rivers, and streams, of lofty, rugged, and precipitous heights, the further shores washed by the Pacific Ocean.

On the bank of one of the many affluents of its chief river—the Fraser—Uncle Donald had established a location, called Clearwater, far removed from the haunts of civilised man. In front of the house flowed the ever-bright current (hence the name of the farm), on the opposite side of which rose rugged pine-crowned heights; to the left were others of similar altitude, a sparkling torrent running amid them into the main stream. Directly behind, extending some way back, was a level prairie, interspersed with trees and bordered by a forest extending up the sides of the variously shaped hills; while eastward, when lighted by the rays of the declining sun, numberless snow-capped peaks, tinged with a roseate hue, could be seen in the far distance. Horses and cattle fed on the rich grass of the well-watered meadows, and a few acres brought under cultivation produced wheat, Indian corn, barley, and oats sufficient for the wants of the establishment.

Such was the spot which Uncle Donald, who had won the friendship of the Sushwap tribe inhabiting the district, had some years ago fixed on as his abode. He had formerly been an officer in the Hudson’s Bay Company, but had, for some reason or other, left their service. Loving the country in which he had spent the best years of his life, and where he

had met with the most strange and romantic adventures, he had determined to make it his home. He had not, however, lost all affection for the land of his birth, or for his relatives and friends, and two years before the time I speak of he had unexpectedly appeared at the Highland village from which, when a young man, more than a quarter of a century before, he had set out to seek his fortune. Many of his relatives and the friends of his youth were dead, and he seemed, in consequence, to set greater value on those who remained, who gave him an affectionate reception. Among them was my mother, his niece, who had been a little blooming girl when he went away, but was now a staid matron, with a large family.

My father, Mr Morton, was a minister, but having placed himself under the directions of a Missionary Society, he was now waiting in London until it was decided in what part of the world he should commence his labours among the heathen. My two elder brothers were already out in the world —one as a surgeon, the other in business—and I had a fancy for going to sea.

“Let Archie come with me,” said Uncle Donald. “I will put him in the way of doing far better than he ever can knocking about on salt water; and as for adventures, he’ll meet with ten times as many as he would if he becomes a sailor.” He used some other arguments, probably relating to my future advantage, which I did not hear. They, at all events, decided my mother; and my father, hearing of the offer, without hesitation gave his consent to my going. It was arranged, therefore, that I should accompany Uncle Donald back to his far-off home, of which he had left his faithful follower, Sandy McTavish, in charge during his absence.

“I want to have you with me for your own benefit, Archie; but there is another reason. I have under my care a boy of about your own age, Hugh McLellan, the son of an old comrade, who died and left him to my charge, begging me to act the part of a father to him. I have done so hitherto, and hope to do so as long as I live; you two must be friends. Hugh is a fine, frank laddie, and you are sure to like one another. As Sandy was not likely to prove a good tutor to him, I left him at Fort Edmonton when I came away, and we will call for him as we return.”

I must pass over the parting with the dear ones at home, the voyage

across the Atlantic, and the journey through the United States, which Uncle Donald took from its being in those days the quickest route to the part of the country for which we were bound.

After descending the Ohio, we ascended the Mississippi to its very source, several hundred miles, by steamboat; leaving which, we struck westward, passing the head waters of the Bed River of the north, on which Fort Garry, the principal post of the Hudson's Bay Company, is situated, but which Uncle Donald did not wish to visit.

We had purchased good saddle-horses and baggage animals to carry our goods, and had engaged two men—a French Canadian, Pierre Le Clerc, and an Irishman, Cornelius Crolly, or "Corney," as he was generally called. Both men were known to Uncle Donald, and were considered trustworthy fellows, who would stick by us at a pinch. The route Uncle Donald proposed taking was looked upon as a dangerous one, but he was so well acquainted with all the Indian tribes of the north that he believed, even should we encounter a party of Blackfeet, they would not molest us.

We had been riding over the prairie for some hours, with here and there, widely scattered, farms seen in the distance, and were approaching the last frontier settlement, a village or hamlet on the very outskirts of civilisation, when we caught sight of a column of smoke ascending some way on directly ahead of us.

"Can it be the prairie on fire?" I asked, with a feeling of alarm; for I had heard of the fearful way in which prairie fires sometimes extend for miles and miles, destroying everything in their course.

Uncle Donald stood up in his stirrups that he might obtain a better view before us.

"No; that's not the smoke of burning grass. It looks more like that from a building, or may be from more than one. I fear the village itself is on fire," he answered.

Scarcely had he spoken when several horsemen appeared galloping towards us, their countenances as they came near exhibiting the utmost terror. They were passing on, when Uncle Donald shouted out, "Hi! where

are you going? What has happened?" On hearing the question, one of the men replied, "The Indians have surprised us. They have killed most of our people, set fire to our houses, and carried off the women and children."

"And you running away without so much as trying to recover them? Shame upon ye!" exclaimed Uncle Donald. "Come on with me, and let's see what can be done!"

The men, however, who had scarcely pulled rein, were galloping forward. Uncle Donald shouted to them to come back, but, terror-stricken, they continued their course, perhaps mistaking his shouts for the cries of the Indians.

"We must try and save some of the poor creatures," said Uncle Donald, turning to our men. "Come on, lads! You are not afraid of a gang of howling red-skins!" and we rode on, making our baggage horses move much faster than they were wont to do under ordinary circumstances.

Before reaching the village we came to a clump of trees. Here Uncle Donald, thinking it prudent not to expose his property to the greedy eyes of the Indians, should we overtake them, ordered Corney and Pierre to halt and remain concealed, while he and I rode forward. By the time we had got up to the hamlet every farm and log-house was burning, and the greater part reduced to ashes.

No Indians were to be seen. According to their custom, after they had performed their work they had retreated.

I will pass over the dreadful sights we witnessed. Finding no one alive to whom we could render assistance, we pushed on, Uncle Donald being anxious to come up with the enemy before they had put their captives to death. Though darkness was approaching, we still rode forward.

"It's likely they will move on all night, but, you see, they are loaded, and we can travel faster than they will. They are sure to camp before morning, and then we'll get up with them," observed Uncle Donald.

"But what will become of our baggage?" I asked.

“Oh, that will be safe enough. Pierre and Corney will remain where we left them until we get back,” he answered.

I was certain that Uncle Donald knew what he was about, or I should have been far from easy, I confess.

We went on and on, the Indians keeping ahead of us. From this circumstance, Uncle Donald was of opinion that they had not taken many prisoners. At length we came to a stream running northward, bordered by willows poplars, and other trees. Instead of crossing directly in front of us, where it was somewhat deep, we kept up along its banks. We had not got far when we saw the light of a fire, kindled, apparently, at the bottom of the hollow through which the stream passed.

“If I’m not far wrong, that fire is in the camp of their rear guard. Their main body cannot be far off,” observed Uncle Donald. “Dismount here, Archie, and you hold the horses behind these trees, while I walk boldly up to them. They won’t disturb themselves much for a single man.”

I dismounted as he desired, and he proceeded toward the fire. I felt very anxious, for I feared that the Blackfeet might fire and kill him without stopping to learn who he was.

Chapter Three.

With the Red-skins.

Uncle Donald and the Blackfeet—The Chief's Speech—A Fortunate Recognition—Ponoko gives up a Little Girl to Uncle Donald—Impossible to do any more—Ponoko urges Departure—Rose is Adopted by Uncle Donald—Hugh McLellan—Madge—Story of a Brave Indian Mother—Red Squirrel—The Household at Clearwater.

I waited with intense anxiety for Uncle Donald who appeared to have been a long time absent. I dared not disobey his orders by moving from the spot, yet I felt eager to creep up and try and ascertain what had happened. I thought that by seeming the horses to the trees, I might manage to get near the Indian camp without being perceived, but I overcame the temptation. At length I heard footsteps approaching, when, greatly to my relief, I saw Uncle Donald coming towards me, carrying some object wrapped up in a buffalo-robe in his arms.

I will now mention what occurred to him. He advanced, as he told me afterwards, without uttering a word, until he was close up to the fire round which the braves were collected, then seating himself opposite the chief, whom he recognised by his dress and ornaments, said, "I have come as a friend to visit my red brothers; they must listen to what I have to say." The chief nodded and passed the pipe he was smoking round to him, to show that he was welcome as a friend. Uncle Donald then told them that he was aware of their attack upon the village, which was not only unjustifiable, but very unwise, as they would be certain to bring down on their heads the vengeance of the "Long-knives"—so the Indians call the people of the United States. That wide as was the country, the arm of the Long-knives could stretch over it; that they had fleet horses, and guns which could kill when their figures appeared no larger than musk rats; and he urged them, now that the harm was done, to avert the punishment which would overtake them by restoring the white people they had captured.

When he had finished, the chief rose and made a long speech, excusing

himself and his tribe on the plea that the Long-knives had been the aggressors; that they had killed their people, driven them from their hunting-grounds, and destroyed the buffalo on which they lived. No sooner did the chief begin to speak than Uncle Donald recognised him as a Sioux whose life he had saved some years before. He therefore addressed him by his name of Ponoko, or the Red Deer, reminding him of the circumstance. On this the chief, advancing, embraced him; and though unwilling to acknowledge that he had acted wrongly, he expressed his readiness to follow the advice of his white friend. He confessed, however, that his hand had only one captive, a little girl, whom he was carrying off as a present to his wife, to replace a child she had lost. “She would be as a daughter to me; but if my white father desires it, I will forego the pleasure I expected, and give her up to him. As for what the rest of my people may determine I cannot be answerable; but I fear that they will not give up their captives, should they have taken any alive,” he added.

“It would have been a terrible thing to have left the little innocent to be brought up among the savages and taught all their heathen ways, though they, no doubt, would have made much of her, and treated her like a little queen,” said Uncle Donald to me; “so I at once closed with the chief’s offer. Forthwith, a little girl, some five years of age, was brought out from a small hut built of boughs, close to where the party was sitting. She appeared almost paralysed with terror; but when, looking up, she saw that Uncle Donald was a white man, and that he was gazing compassionately at her, clinging to his hand, she entreated him by her looks to save her from the savages. She had been so overcome by the terrible scenes she had witnessed that she was unable to speak.”

Uncle Donald, lifting her up in his arms, endeavoured to calm her fears, promising that he would take care of her until he had restored her to her friends. He now expressed his intention of proceeding to the larger camp, but Ponoko urged him on no account to make the attempt, declaring that his life would not be safe, as several of their fiercest warriors were in command, who had vowed the destruction of all the Long-knives or others they should encounter.

“But the prisoners! What will they do with them?” asked Uncle Donald. “Am I to allow them to perish without attempting their rescue?”

“My white father must be satisfied with what I’ve done for him. I saw no other prisoners taken. All the pale-faces in the villages were killed,” answered Ponoko. “For his own sake I cannot allow him to go forward; let him return to his own country, and he will there be safe. I know his wishes, and will, when the sun rises, go to my brother chiefs and tell them what my white father desires.”

Ponoko spoke so earnestly that Uncle Donald, seeing that it would be useless to make the attempt, and fearing that even the little girl might be taken from him, judged that it would be wise to get out of the power of the savages; and carrying the child, who clung round his neck, he bade the other braves farewell, and commenced his return to where he had left me. He had not got far when Ponoko overtook him, and again urged him to get to a distance as soon as possible.

“Even my own braves cannot be trusted,” he said. “I much fear that several who would not smoke the pipe may steal out from the camp, and try to kill my white father if he remains longer in the neighbourhood.”

Brave as Uncle Donald was, he had me to look after as well as the little girl. Parting with the chief, therefore, he hurried on, and told me instantly to mount.

I was very much astonished to see the little girl, but there was no time to ask questions; so putting spurs to our horses, we galloped back to where we had left our men and the baggage.

As both we and our horses required rest, we camped on the spot, Pierre and Corney being directed to keep a vigilant watch.

The little girl lay in Uncle Donald’s arms, but she had not yet recovered sufficiently to tell us her name, and it was with difficulty that we could induce her to take any food.

Late in the day we met a party going out to attack the Indians; but, as Uncle Donald observed, “they might just as well have tried to catch the east wind. We waited to see the result of the expedition. They at length returned, not having come near the enemy. The few men who had escaped the massacre were unable to give any information about the little girl or her friends, nor could we learn to whom she belonged. All we

could ascertain from her was that her name was Rose, for her mind had sustained so fearful a shock that, even after several days had passed, she was unable to speak intelligibly.

“Her fate among the Indians would have been terrible, but it would be almost as bad were we to leave her among the rough characters hereabouts,” observed Uncle Donald. “As none of her friends can be found, I will be her guardian, and, if God spares my life, will bring her up as a Christian child.”

It was many a long day, however, before Rose recovered her spirits. Her mind, indeed, seemed to be a blank as to the past, and Uncle Donald, afraid of reviving the recollection of the fearful scenes she must have witnessed, forbore to say anything which might recall them. However, by the time we reached Fort Edmonton, where Hugh McLellan had been left, she was able to prattle away right merrily. The officers at the fort offered to take charge of her, but Uncle Donald would not consent to part with his little “Prairie Rose,” as he called her; and after a short stay we set out again, with Hugh added to our party, across the Rocky Mountains, and at length arrived safely at Clearwater.

Corney and Pierre remained with us, and took the places of two other men who had left.

Hugh McLellan was a fine, bold little fellow, not quite two years my junior; and he and I—as Uncle Donald had hoped we should—soon became fast friends.

He had not much book learning, though he had been instructed in the rudiments of reading and writing by one of the clerks in the fort, but he rode fearlessly, and could manage many a horse which grown men would fear to mount.

“I want you, Archie, to help Hugh with his books,” said Uncle Donald. “I believe, if you set wisely about it, that he will be ready to learn from you. I would not like for him to grow up as ignorant as most of the people about us. It is the knowledge we of the old country possess which gives us the influence over these untutored savages; without it we should be their inferiors.”

I promised to do my best in fulfilling his wishes, though I took good care not to assert any superiority over my companion, who, indeed, though I was better acquainted with literature than he was, knew far more about the country than I did.

But there was another person in the household whose history is worthy of narration—the poor Indian woman—“Madge,” as we called her for shortness, though her real name was Okenmadgelika. She also owed her life to Uncle Donald.

Several years before this, she, with her two children, had accompanied her husband and some other men on an expedition to trap beavers, at the end of autumn, towards the head waters of the Columbia. While she was seated in her hut late in the evening, one of the men staggered in desperately wounded, and had just time to tell her that her husband and the rest were murdered, when he fell dead at her feet. She, instantly taking up her children—one a boy of six years of age, the other a little girl, an infant in arms—fled from the spot, with a horse and such articles as she could throw on its back, narrowly escaping from the savages searching for her.

She passed the winter with her two young ones, no human aid at hand. On the return of spring she set off, intending to rejoin her husband’s people far away to the westward. After enduring incredible hardships, she had been compelled to kill her horse for food. She had made good some days’ journey, when, almost sinking from hunger, and fearing to see her children perish, she caught sight of her relentless foes, the Blackfeet. In vain she endeavoured to conceal herself. They saw her and were approaching, when, close to the spot where she was standing, a tall white man and several Indians suddenly emerged from behind some rocks. The Blackfeet came on, fancying that against so few they could gain an easy victory; but the rifles of the white man and his party drove them back, and Uncle Donald—for he was the white man—conveyed the apparently dying woman and her little ones to his camp.

The house at Clearwater had not yet been built. By being well cared for the Indian woman and her children recovered; but though the boy flourished, the little girl seemed like a withered flower, and never regained her strength.

Grateful for her preservation, the poor woman, when she found that Uncle Donald was about to settle at Clearwater, entreated that she might remain with her children and labour for him, and a faithful servant she had ever since proved.

Her little girl at length died. She was for a time inconsolable, until the arrival of Rose, to whom she transferred all her maternal feelings, and who warmly returned her affection.

But her son, whose Indian name translated was Red Squirrel, by which appellation he was always known, had grown up into a fine lad, versed in all Indian ways, and possessing a considerable amount of knowledge gained from his white companions, without the vices of civilisation. He was a great favourite with Uncle Donald, who placed much confidence in his intelligence, courage, and faithfulness.

Nearly two years had passed since Rose, Hugh, and I had been brought to Clearwater, and by this time we were all much attached to each other. We had also learned to love the place which had become our home; but we loved Uncle Donald far more.

Chapter Four.

Three Grizzlies.

The Start after Hugh—A Foot-print—Following the Trail—Archer meets a Grizzly—A Miss-fire—Discretion the Better Part of Valour—Far more Bears—Help, and a Joint Attack—Hugh up in a Tree—The Result of Disobedience.

I must now continue my narrative from the evening Hugh was missing.

The moment we had finished our hurried meal we set out. Sandy, in case we should be benighted, had procured a number of pine torches, which he strapped on his back; and Uncle Donald directed Corney and Pierre who came in as we were starting, to follow, keeping to the right by the side of the torrent, in case Hugh should have taken that direction.

Whiskey, Pilot, Muskymote followed closely at our heels—faithful animals, ready to drag our sleighs in winter, or, as now, to assist us in our search. We walked on at a rapid rate, and were soon in a wild region of forests, rugged hills, and foaming streams. As we went along we shouted out Hugh's name, and searched about for any signs of his having passed that way. At length we discovered in some soft ground a foot-print, which there could be no doubt was his, the toe pointing in the direction we were going.

"Now we have found the laddie's trail we must take care not to lose it," observed Uncle Donald. "It leads towards the very spot where I saw the grizzly this morning."

On and on we went. Soon another foot-print, and then a mark on some fallen leaves, and here and there a twig bent or broken off, showed that we were on Hugh's trail.

But the sun had now sunk beneath the western range of mountains, and the gloom of evening coming on would prevent us from tracing our young companion much further. Still, as we should have met him had he turned

back, we followed the only track he was likely to have taken.

We were approaching the spot where Uncle Donald had seen the bear, near a clump of trees with a thick undergrowth, a rugged hill riding beyond. We were somewhat scattered, hunting about for any traces the waning light would enable us to discover. I half feared that I should come upon his mangled remains, or some part of his dress which might show his fate. I had my rifle, but was encumbered with no other weight, and in my eagerness, I ran on faster than my companions. I was making my way among some fallen timber blown down by a storm, when suddenly I saw rise up, just before me, a huge form. I stopped, having, fortunately, the presence of mind not to run away, for I at once recognised the animal as a huge grizzly, which had been engaged in tearing open a rotten trunk in search of insects. I remembered that Uncle Donald had told me, should I ever find myself face to face with a grizzly, to throw up my arms and stand stock still.

The savage brute, desisting from its employment, came towards me, growling terribly, and displaying its huge teeth and enormous mouth.

I was afraid to shout, lest it might excite the animal’s rage; but I acted as Uncle Donald had advised me. As I lifted up my rifle and flourished it over my head, the creature stopped for a moment and got up on its hind legs.

Now or never was my time to fire, for I could not expect to have a better opportunity, and bringing my rifle, into which I had put a bullet, to my shoulder, I took a steady aim and pulled the trigger. To my dismay, the cap snapped. It had never before played me such a trick. Still the bear kept looking at me, apparently wondering what I was about. Mastering all my nerve, and still keeping my eye fixed on the shaggy monster in front of me, I lowered my rifle, took out another cap, and placed it on the nipple. I well knew that should I only wound the bear my fate would be sealed, for it would be upon me in an instant. I felt doubly anxious to hill it, under the belief that it had destroyed my friend Hugh; but still it was sufficiently far off to make it possible for me to miss, should my nerves for a moment fail me. As long as it remained motionless I was unwilling to fire, in the hope that before I did so Uncle Donald and Sandy might come to my assistance.

Having re-capped my rifle, I again lifted it to my shoulder. At that moment Bruin, who had grown tired of watching me, went down on all fours. The favourable opportunity was lost; for although I might still lodge a bullet in its head, I might not kill it at once, and I should probably be torn to pieces. I stood steady as before, though sorely tempted to run. Instead, however, of coming towards me, to my surprise, the bear returned to the log, and recommenced its occupation of scratching for insects.

Had it been broad daylight I might have had a fair chance of shooting it; but in the obscurity, as it scratched away among the fallen timber, from which several gnarled and twisted limbs projected upwards, I was uncertain as to the exact position of its head. Under the circumstances, I considered that discretion was the better part of valour; and feeling sure that Uncle Donald and Sandy would soon come up and settle the bear more effectually than I should, I began slowly to retreat, hoping to get away unperceived. I stepped back very cautiously, scarcely more than a foot at a time, then stopped. As I did so I observed a movement a little distance off beyond the big bear, and presently, as I again retreated, two other bears came up, growling, to the big one, and, to my horror, all three moved towards me.

Though smaller than their mother, each bear was large enough to kill me with a pat of its paw; and should I even shoot her they would probably be upon me. Again, however, they stopped, unwilling apparently to leave their dainty feast.

How earnestly I prayed for the arrival of Uncle Donald and Sandy! I had time, too, to think of poor Hugh, and felt more convinced than ever that he had fallen a victim to the ferocious grizzlies. I still dared not cry out, but seeing them again turn to the logs, I began, as before, to step back, hoping at length to get to such a distance that I might take to my heels without the risk of being pursued. In doing as I proposed I very nearly tumbled over a log, but recovering myself, I got round it. When I stopped to see what the bears were about they were still feeding, having apparently forgotten me. I accordingly turned round and ran as fast as I could venture to go among the trees and fallen trunks, till at length I made out the indistinct figures of Uncle Donald and Sandy, with the dogs, coming towards me.

“I have just seen three bears,” I shouted. “Come on quickly, and we may be in time to kill them!”

“It’s a mercy they did not catch you, laddie,” said Uncle Donald, when he got up to me. “With the help of the dogs we’ll try to kill them, however. Can you find the spot where you saw them?”

“I have no doubt about that,” I answered.

“Well, then, before we go further we’ll just look to our rifles, and make sure that there’s no chance of their missing fire.”

Doing as he suggested, we moved on, he in the centre and somewhat in advance, Sandy and I on either side of him, the dogs following and waiting for the word of command to rush forward.

The bears did not discover us until we were within twenty yards of them, when Uncle Donald shouted to make them show themselves.

I fancied that directly afterwards I heard a cry, but it might only have been the echo of Uncle Donald’s voice. Presently a loud growl from the rotten log showed us that the bears were still there, and we soon saw all three sitting up and looking about them.

“Sandy, do you take the small bear on the right; I will aim at the big fellow, and leave the other to you, Archie; but do not fire until you are sure of your aim,” said Uncle Donald. “Now, are you ready?”

We all fired at the same moment. Sandy’s bear dropped immediately, but the big one, with a savage growl, sprang over the logs and came towards us, followed by the one at which I had fired.

Uncle Donald now ordered the dogs, which had been barking loudly, to advance to the fight; but before they reached the larger bear she fell over on her side, and giving some convulsive struggles, lay apparently dead. The dogs, on this, attacked the other bear, which, made furious by its wound, was coming towards us, growling loudly. On seeing the dogs, however, the brute stopped, and sat up on its hind legs, ready with its huge paws to defend itself from their attacks. We all three, meantime, were rapidly reloading, and just as the bear had knocked over Whiskey

and seized Muskymote in its paws, Uncle Donald and Sandy again fired and brought it to the ground, enabling Muskymote, sorely mauled, to escape from its deadly embrace.

I instinctively gave a shout, and was running on, when Uncle Donald stopped me.

“Stay!” he said; “those brutes play ‘possum’ sometimes, and are not to be trusted. If they are not shamming, they may suddenly revive and try to avenge themselves.”

“We’ll soon settle that,” said Sandy, and quickly reloading, he fired his rifle into the head of the fallen bear.

“Have you killed them all?” I heard a voice exclaim, which seemed to come from the branches of a tree some little distance off.

I recognised it as Hugh’s. “Hurrah!” I shouted; “are you all right?”

“Yes, yes,” answered Hugh, “only very hungry and stiff.”

We quickly made our way to the tree, where I found Hugh safe and sound, and assisted him to descend. He told us that he had fallen in with the bears on his way out, and had just time to escape from them by climbing up the tree, where they had kept him a prisoner all day.

“I am thankful to get ye back, Hugh. You disobeyed orders, and have been punished pretty severely. I hope it will be a lesson to you,” was the only remark Uncle Donald made as he grasped Hugh’s hand. I judged, by the tone of his voice, that he was not inclined to be very angry.

Having flayed the bears by the light of Sandy’s torches, we packed up as much of the meat as we could carry, and hung up the remainder with the skins, intending to send for it in the morning. We then, having met the other two men, hastened homewards with Hugh; and I need not say how rejoiced Rose and Madge were to see him back safe.

Chapter Five.

An Expedition.

Waiting for the Messengers—Two Tired Indians—Bad News of Archie's Father—Uncle Donald Determines to Cross the Rocky Mountains—Preparations—News of the Blackfeet—Indian Canoes—The Expedition Starts.

Summer was advancing, and we had for some time been expecting the return of Red Squirrel and Kondiarak, another Indian, who had been sent in the spring to Fort Edmonton with letters, and directions to bring any which might have come for us. At length we became somewhat anxious at their non-appearance, fearing that some serious accident might have happened to them, or that they might have fallen into the hands of the savage Blackfeet, the chief predatory tribe in the country through which they had to pass.

Hugh and I were one evening returning from trapping beaver, several of which we carried on our backs. Though the skins are the most valued, the meat of the animal serves as food. We were skirting the edge of the prairie, when we caught sight of two figures descending the hills to the east by the pass which led from Clearwater towards the Rocky Mountains.

"They are Indians," cried Hugh, "What if they should be enemies?"

"It is more likely that they are friends," I answered. "If they were enemies they would take care not to show themselves. Let us go to meet them."

The two men made their way slowly down the mountains and had got almost up to us before we recognised Red Squirrel, and his companion Kondiarak ("the rat"), so travel-stained, wan, and haggard did they look.

They had lost their horses, they said, after our first greetings were over. One had strayed, the other had been stolen by the Blackfeet, so that they had been compelled to perform the greater part of the journey on foot;

and having exhausted their ammunition, they had been almost starved. They had succeeded, however, in preserving the letters confided to them, and they had brought a packet, for Uncle Donald, from a white stranger at whose hut they had stopped on the way.

On seeing the beavers we carried they entreated that we would give them some meat without delay, saying that they had had no food for a couple of days.

Their countenances and the difficulty with which they dragged their feet along corroborated their assertions. We, therefore, at once collecting some fuel, lighted a fire, and having skinned and opened one of the beavers, extended it, spread-eagle fashion, on some sticks to cook. They watched our proceedings with eager eyes; but before there was time to warm the animal through their hunger made them seize it, when tearing off the still uncooked flesh, they began to gobble it up with the greatest avidity.

I was afraid they would suffer from over eating, but nothing Hugh or I could say would induce them to stop until they had consumed the greater part of the beaver. They would then, had we allowed them, have thrown themselves on the ground and gone to sleep; but anxious to know the contents of the packets they had brought, relieving them of their guns, we urged them to lean upon us, and come at once to the farm. It was almost dark before we reached home.

Madge embraced her son affectionately, and almost, wept when she observed the melancholy condition to which he was reduced. He would not, however, go to sleep, as she wanted him to do, until he had delivered the packets to Uncle Donald, who was still out about the farm.

He in the meantime squatted down near the fire, where he remained with true Indian patience till Uncle Donald came in, when, rising to his feet, he gave a brief account of his adventures, and produced the packets, carefully wrapped up in a piece of leather.

To those which came by way of Edmonton I need not further refer, as they were chiefly about business. One, however, was of great interest; it was in answer to inquiries which Uncle Donald had instituted to discover

any relatives or friends of little Rose. To his secret satisfaction he was informed that none could be found, and that he need have no fear of being deprived of her. As he read the last packet his countenance exhibited astonishment and much concern.

“This letter is from your mother, Archie,” he said, at length, when he had twice read it through. “Your father has brought her and the rest of the family to a mission station which has been established for the benefit of the Sercies, on the other side of the Rocky Mountains. Scarcely had they been settled for a few months, and your father had begun to win the confidence of the tribe among whom he had come to labour, than the small-pox broke out in their village, brought by the Blackfeet from the south; and their medicine-men, who had from the first regarded him with jealous eyes, persuaded the people that the scourge had been sent in consequence of their having given a friendly reception to the Christian missionary. Some few, whose good will he had gained, warned him that his life was in danger, and urged him to make his escape from the district. Though unwilling himself to leave his post, he had proposed sending your mother and the children away, when he was attacked by a severe illness. She thus, even had she wished it, could not have left him, and they have remained on at the station, notwithstanding that she fears they may at any time be destroyed by the savages, while the medicine-men have been using all their arts to win over the few Indians who continue faithful. These have promised to protect them to the best of their power, but how long they will be able to do so is doubtful. Their cattle and horses have been stolen, and they have for some time been short of provisions; thus, even should your father regain his health, they will be unable to travel. He, like a true missionary of the Gospel, puts his confidence in God, and endeavours, your mother says, ever to wear a cheerful countenance. She does not actually implore me to come to her assistance, for she knows the length and difficulties of the journey; and she expresses her thankfulness that you are safe on this side of the mountains, but I see clearly that she would be very grateful if I could pay her a visit; and I fear, indeed, unless help reaches your family, that the consequences may be serious. I have, therefore, made up my mind to set off at once. We may manage to get across the mountains before the winter sets in, though there is no time to be lost. I will take Pierre and Corney, with Red Squirrel and a party of our own Indians, and leave Sandy, with Hugh and you, in charge of Clearwater.”

“May I not go, also?” I asked, in a tone of disappointment. “Surely I may be able to help my father and mother, and Hugh would be very sorry to be left behind.”

“It is but natural that you should wish to go; and Hugh, too, maybe of assistance, for I can always trust to your discretion and judgment should any difficulty occur,” he observed.

“Then you will take us, won’t you?” we both cried at once.

“Yes,” he answered. “I would not take one without the other, so Hugh may go if he wishes it.”

“Thank you, thank you!” I exclaimed, gratified at Uncle Donald’s remark; “we will try to deserve your confidence. What shall we do first?”

“We must have the canoes got ready, and lay in a stock of provisions so that we may not be delayed by having to hunt; indeed, except some big-horns, and perhaps a grizzly, we shall not find much game on the mountains,” he remarked.

That evening all our plans were completed, and Sandy and the other men received their directions. Saddle and pack horses were at once to be started off by a circuitous route, carrying only light loads however, and were to meet us at the head of the river navigation, however, while we were to go as far up the stream as we could in canoes, with as large a supply of provisions as they could convey.

The very next morning at daybreak while we were engaged in preparing the birch bark canoes by covering the seams with gum, and sewing on some fresh pieces of bark with wattap, which is formed of the flexible roots of the young spruce tree, an Indian was seen on the opposite side of the river making a signal to us that he desired to cross. One of the canoes which was ready for launching was sent for him and brought him over.

“He had come,” he said, “to bring us information that a large body of Blackfeet were on the war-path, having crossed the Rocky Mountains at one of the southern passes, and that having attacked the Sinapools, their old enemies on the Columbia, they were now bending their steps

northward in search of plunder and scalps. He came to tell his white friends to be prepared should they come so far north."

On hearing this I was afraid that Uncle Donald would give up the expedition and remain to defend Clearwater, but on cross-questioning the Indian, he came to the conclusion that the Blackfeet were not at all likely to come so far, and Sandy declared that if they did he would give a very good account of them.

Still, as it was possible that they might make their appearance, Uncle Donald considered that it was safer to take Rose with us notwithstanding the hardships to which she might be exposed.

"Then Madge will go too," exclaimed Rose; "poor Madge would be very unhappy at being left alone without me."

"Madge shall go with us," said Uncle Donald; and Rose, highly delighted, ran off to tell her to get ready.

The horses had been sent off at dawn, but we were not able to start until the following morning as it took us the whole day to prepare the packages of dried fish, pemmican, and smoked venison and pork, which were to serve us as provisions.

On a bright clear morning, just before the sun rose over the hills to the east, we pushed off from the bank in four canoes. In each were five people, one to steer and the others to paddle. Uncle Donald took Rose in his as a passenger.

Hugh and I went together with Red Squirrel to steer for us, and Corney and Pierre had each charge of another canoe.

I will describe our canoes, which were light, elegant, and wonderfully strong, considering the materials of which they were formed. They were constructed of the bark of the white birch-tree. This had been peeled from the tree in large sheets, which were bent over a slender frame of cedar ribs, confined by gunwales, and kept apart by thin bars of the same wood. The ends were alike, forming wedge-like points, and turned over from the extremities towards the centre so as to look somewhat like the handle of a violin. The sheets of bark were then fastened round the

gunwales by wattap, and sewn together with the same materials at the joinings. These were afterwards covered by a coat of pine pitch, called gum. The seats for the paddlers were made by suspending a strip of board with cords from the gunwales in such a manner that they did not press against the sides of the canoe. At the second cross-bar from the bow a hole was cut for a mast, so that a sail could be hoisted when the wind proved favourable. Each canoe carried a quantity of spare bark, wattap, gum, a pan for heating the gum, and some smaller articles necessary for repairs. The canoes were about eighteen feet long, yet so light that two men could carry one with ease a considerable distance when we had to make a “portage.” A “portage,” I should say, is the term used when a canoe has to be carried over the land, in consequence of any obstruction in the river, such as rapids, falls, or shallows.

As soon as we were fairly off Pierre struck up a cheerful song, in which we, Corney, and the Indians joined, and lustily plying our paddles we urged our little fleet up the river.

Chapter Six.

Paddling up Stream.

The First Camp—Rapids—A Portage—Indians Attack the Canoes—A Race for Life—He's Won just in Time—More Rapids in an Awkward Place—The Canoes Poled up Stream—An Upset—The Indians Again, and Hugh in Danger—Other Canoes to the Rescue.

For the first day we made good progress, stopping only a short time to land and cook our provisions. We then paddled on until nearly dark, when we went on shore, unloaded our canoes, hauled them up, lighted a fire for cooking, and pitched a small tent for Rose, in front of which Madge, as she always afterwards did, took up her post to be ready to guard her in case of danger.

As soon as supper was over, two men were placed on watch, and the rest of the party lay down round the fire with our buffalo-robes spread on fresh spruce or pine boughs as beds. Before dawn we were aroused by Uncle Donald.

The morning was calm, the stars were slightly paling, a cold yellow light began to show itself. Above the river floated a light mist through which objects on the opposite bank were dimly seen, while on the land side a wall of forest rose up impenetrable to the eye. From the dying embers of the camp fire a thin column of smoke rose high above the trees, while round it were the silent forms of the Indians, lying motionless at full length on their backs, enveloped in their blankets. To stretch my legs I walked a few paces from the camp, when I was startled by a sudden rush through the underbrush. For a moment I thought of the Blackfeet, but the movement proved to be made by a minx or marten, which had been attracted to the spot by the remains of last night's meal.

On hearing Uncle Donald's voice the Indians started to their feet, and after a hurried breakfast, the canoes being launched and the baggage stowed on board, we proceeded on our voyage. The mist by degrees cleared away, the sun mounting over the hills, lighted up the scenery, and

our crews burst into one of the songs with which they were wont to beguile the time while plying their paddles. Having stopped as before to dine we were paddling on, when we heard a low ceaseless roar coming down between the high banks. In a short time we saw the waters rushing and foaming ahead of us, as they fell over a broad ledge of rocks.

“Can we get over there?” asked Hugh.

“No,” I answered; “see, Uncle Donald is steering in for the shore.”

We soon landed, the canoes were unloaded, and being hauled up the bank, each was placed on the shoulders of two men, who trotted off with them by a path parallel to the river; the rest loaded themselves with the bales. Hugh and I imitated their example, Madge carried as heavy a package as any of the men, and Rose begged that she might take charge of a small bundle, with which she trotted merrily off, but did not refuse to let Madge have it before she had gone half-way. After proceeding for nearly a mile among rocks and trees, the canoes were placed on the banks where the river flowed calmly by, and the men returned for the remainder of the baggage. Three trips had to be made to convey the whole of the cargoes above the falls. This is what is called “making a portage.”

Re-embarking, on we went until nightfall. During the next few days we had several such portages to make. We were at times able to hoist our sails, but when the stream became more rapid and shallow, we took to poling, a less pleasant way of progressing, though under these circumstances the only one available. Occasionally the river opened out, and we were able to resume our paddles.

We had just taken them in hand and were passing along the east bank when Hugh exclaimed, “I see some one moving on shore among the trees! Yes, I thought so; he’s an Indian,” and he immediately added, “there are several more.”

I shouted to Uncle Donald to tell him, and then turned to warn Pierre and Corney.

Scarcely had I spoken than well-nigh fifty savages appeared on the banks, and, yelling loudly, let fly a cloud of arrows towards us, while one

of them shouted to us to come to shore.

“Very likely we’ll be after doin’ that, Mister Red-skins,” cried Corney.

And we all, following Uncle Donald’s example, turning the heads of our canoes, paddled towards the opposite bank.

We were safe for the present, and might, had we chosen, have picked off several of the savages with our rifles; Corney and Pierre had lifted theirs for the purpose, but Uncle Donald ordered them not to fire.

“Should we kill any of them we should only find it more difficult to make peace afterwards,” he observed.

The river was here wide enough to enable us to keep beyond range of their arrows, and we continued our course paddling along close to the western bank. After going a short distance we saw ahead of us a lake, which we should have to cross. The Indians had disappeared, and I hoped we had seen the last of them, when Corney shouted out that he had caught sight of them running alone; the shore of the lake to double round it. Their object in so doing was evident, for on the opposite side of the upper river entered the lake, rounding a point by a narrow passage, and this point they hoped to gain before we could get through, so that they might stop our progress.

“Paddle, lads—paddle for your lives!” cried Uncle Donald. “We must keep ahead of the red-skins if we wish to save our scalps.”

We did paddle with might and main, making the calm water bubble round the bows of our canoes.

Looking to our right, we every now and then caught a glimpse of the Blackfeet, for such we knew they were by their dress. They were bounding along in single file among the trees, led apparently by one of their most nimble warriors. It seemed very doubtful whether we could pass the point before they could reach it. We persevered, for otherwise we should be compelled either to turn back, or to run the risk of being attacked at one of the portages, or to land at the western side of the lake, and to throw up a fort in which we could defend ourselves should the Blackfeet make their way across the river. It was not likely, however, that

they would do this. They had already ventured much farther to the north than it was their custom to make a raid; and should they be discovered, they would run the risk of being set upon by the Shoushwaps, the chief tribe inhabiting that part of the country, and their retreat cut off. Still it was of the greatest importance to lose no time, and we redoubled our efforts to get by the point. The Indians had a greater distance to go; but then they ran much faster than we could paddle our canoes. As we neared the point, I kept looking to the right to see how far our enemies had got. Again I caught a glimpse of their figures moving among the trees, but whether or not they were those of the leaders I could not distinguish.

Uncle Donald reached the point, and his canoe disappeared behind it. Hugh and I next came up, closely followed by the other two. We could hear the savage shouts and cries of the red-skins; but there was now a good chance of getting beyond their reach.

“There goes the captain’s canoe,” I heard Corney sing out; “paddle, boys, paddle, and we’ll give them the go-by!”

We had entered the upper branch of the river; the current ran smoothly. Still we were obliged to exert ourselves to force our canoes up against it. Looking back for a moment over my shoulder, I could see the leading Indians as they reached the point we had just rounded. Enraged at being too late to stop us, they expended another flight of arrows, several of which struck the water close to us, and two went through the after end of Pierre’s canoe, but fortunately above water.

Though we had escaped for the present, they might continue along the eastern bank of the river, and meet us at the next portage we should have to make. The day was wearing on, and ere long we should have to look out for a spot on which to camp, on the west bank, opposite to that where we had seen the Indians.

We had got four or five miles up the river when the roaring sound of rushing waters struck our ears, and we knew that we should have to make another portage. The only practicable one was on the east bank, and as it would occupy us the greater part of an hour, we could scarcely hope to escape the Indians, even should they not already have arrived at the spot. On the left rose a line of precipitous rocks, over which we

should be unable to force our way. At length we got up to the foot of the rapids. Uncle Donald took a survey of them. I observed on the west side a sheet of water flowing down smoother and freer from rocks than the rest.

“We must pole up the rapids, but it will need caution; follow me,” said Uncle Donald.

We got out our long poles, and Uncle Donald leading the way, we commenced the ascent.

While resting on our paddles Corney and Pierre had overtaken us, and now followed astern of Uncle Donald, so that our canoe was the last. We had got nearly half-way up, the navigation becoming more difficult as we proceeded. The rocks extended farther and farther across the channel, the water leaping and hissing and foaming as it rushed by them. One of our Indians sat in the bows with a rope ready to jump out on the rocks and tow the canoe should the current prove too strong for us. Red Squirrel stood aft with pole in hand guiding the canoe, while Hugh and I worked our poles on either side. Corney and Pierre were at some little distance before us, while Uncle Donald, having a stronger crew, got well ahead.

“We shall soon be through this, I hope,” cried Hugh; “pretty tough work though.”

As he spoke he thrust down his pole, which must have been jammed in a hole, and his weight being thrown upon it, before he could recover it broke, and over he went; I in my eagerness, leaning on one side, attempted to grasp at him, the consequence was that the canoe, swinging round, was driven by the current against the rock. I heard a crash, the foaming water washed over us, and I found myself struggling in its midst. My first impulse was to strike out, for I had been a swimmer from childhood.

Notwithstanding, I found myself carried down. I looked out for Hugh, but the bubbling water blinded my eyes, and I could nowhere see him nor my Indian companions; still I instinctively struggled for life. Suddenly I found myself close to a rugged rock, whose sides afforded the means of

holding on to it. By a violent effort I drew myself out of the water and climbed to the top. I looked round to see what had become of the rest of the crew; my eye first fell on the canoe, to which Hugh was clinging. It was being whirled hurriedly down the rapids; and some distance from it, indeed, almost close to where I now was, I saw the head of an Indian. His hands and feet were moving; but instead of trying to save himself by swimming towards the rock on which I was seated, he was evidently endeavouring to overtake the canoe. I could nowhere see our other companion; he had, I feared, sunk, sucked under by the current. A momentary glance showed me what I have described.

Directly I had recovered breath I shouted to Pierre and Corney, but the roar of the waters prevented them from hearing my voice; and they and their companions were so completely occupied in poling on their canoes that they did not observe what had occurred. Again and again I shouted; then I turned round, anxiously looking to see how it fared with Hugh and the Indian.

The canoe had almost reached the foot of the rapids, but it went much faster than the Indian, who was still bravely following it. He had caught hold of one of the paddles, which assisted to support him. I was now sure that his object was to assist Hugh, for he might, as I have said, by swimming to the rock and clutching it, have secured his own life until he could be taken off by Corney or Pierre. Hugh still held tight hold of the canoe, which, however, the moment it reached the foot of the rapids, began to drift over to the eastern shore.

Just then what was my dismay to see a number of red-skins rush out from the forest towards the bank. They were those, I had no doubt, from whom we were endeavouring to escape. They must have seen the canoe, and were rejoicing in the thoughts of the capture they were about to make. Hugh’s youth would not save him from the cruel sufferings to which they were wont to put their prisoners, should they get hold of him, and that they would do this seemed too probable. I almost wished, rather than he should have had to endure so cruel a fate, that he had sunk to the bottom. Even now the Indian might come up with the canoe, but would it be possible for him to tow it to the west bank, or support Hugh while swimming in the same direction. Though the rock was slippery I at length managed to stand up on it, and as I did so I gave as shrill a shout

as I could utter. One of the Indians in Corney's canoe glanced at me for a moment. He at once saw what had happened, and I guessed from his gestures was telling Pierre as well as Corney of the accident. In an instant the poles were thrown in, and the Indians seizing their paddles, the canoes, their heads turned round, were gliding like air bubbles down the torrent.

Chapter Seven.

A Narrow Escape.

Hugh's Canoe Arrested by Red Squirrel just in Time—The Canoe Saved—All got up the Rapids at Last—Camp at the Top—The Blackfeet reach the Camp to find the Party gone—The Indians Pursue, and Uncle Donald lies by for Two Days on an Island—End of the Water Passage—The Horses do not Appear.

As Corney and Pierre approached I waved to them to go on, pointing to the canoe to which Hugh was clinging. They saw the necessity of at once going to his rescue, and so left me on the rock, where I was perfectly safe for the present. There was need, in truth, for them to make haste, for already Hugh was drifting within range of the Indians' arrows, and they might shoot him in revenge for the long run we had given them.

The overturned canoe seemed to be gliding more and more rapidly towards them, when I saw its progress arrested.

The brave Indian had seized it, and was attempting to tow it away from the spot where the savages were collected. But all his efforts could scarcely do more than stop its way, and he apparently made but little progress towards the west shore. Corney and Pierre were, however, quickly getting up to it. I shouted with joy when I saw Hugh lifted into Corney's canoe, and the Indian with some assistance clambering into that of Pierre. Not satisfied with this success they got hold of the canoe itself, determined to prevent it from falling into the hands of the enemy. This done, they quickly paddled over to the west shore, where a level spot enabled them to land. They had not forgotten me; and presently I saw Corney's canoe, with three people in her, poling up towards the rock on which I stood, while Pierre's was engaged in picking up such of the articles of baggage as had floated. It was not without some difficulty that I got on board. My first inquiry was to ascertain which of the Indians had assisted to save Hugh, and I was thankful to hear, as I had expected, that it was Bed Squirrel who had behaved so gallantly.

We then had to decide what to do—whether to continue our course upwards, to let Uncle Donald know what had happened, or to rejoin Pierre. Though I had managed to cling on to the rock I found my strength so much exhausted that I could afford but little help in poling up the canoe. While we were discussing the matter, what was my dismay to see an Indian on the top of the western cliff.

“Our enemies must have crossed, and we shall be attacked,” I exclaimed.

“Sure no, it’s one of Mr Donald’s men who has been sent to see what has become of us,” answered Corney.

Such I saw was the case. We could not hear his voice, but getting closer to us he made signs which his own people understood, that he would go back to Uncle Donald and learn what we were to do. In reply our two Indians pointed down to where Pierre’s party were now on shore, letting him understand exactly what had happened.

He quickly disappeared, and we had to wait some time, hanging on to a rock by a rope, until he returned with two other men. They then pointed up the stream as a sign to us that we were to proceed. We accordingly did so, poling up as before. By the time we got to the head of the rapids we saw that Pierre was coming after us, apparently towing the shattered canoe.

Above the rapids we discovered a small bay, towards which Uncle Donald’s voice summoned us. As we landed he grasped my hand, showing his joy at my escape. It was some time before Pierre arrived. Hugh came in his canoe, while the rest of the men had arrived over land with the luggage which had been saved, as also with our rifles, which, having been slung under the thwarts, had fortunately not slipped out.

We immediately began our preparations for camping, but had, besides doing what was usual, to collect materials for a stockade, which might enable us to resist a sudden onslaught of the Blackfeet should they cross the river. One of the men was also placed on watch all the time to prevent surprise.

While most of the party were thus engaged, Red Squirrel and Jock, who were the best canoe builders, were employed in repairing the shattered

canoe, and making some fresh paddles and poles; indeed there was so much work to be done, that none of us got more than a few hours' rest. We had also to keep a vigilant watch, and two of the men were constantly scouting outside the camp, to guard in more effectually from being taken by surprise.

All was ready for a start some time before daylight, when Uncle Donald, awakening the sleepers, ordered every one to get on board as noiselessly as possible. He, as usual, led the way, the other canoes following close astern. The last man was told to make up the fire, which was left burning to deceive the enemy, who would suppose that we were still encamped.

We had got some distance, the wind being up stream, when just at dawn I fancied that I heard a faint though prolonged yell. We stopped paddling for a moment, I asked Red Squirrel if he thought that the Blackfeet had got across to our camp. He nodded, and uttered a low laugh, significant of his satisfaction that we had deceived them. Daylight increasing, we put up our masts and hoisted the light cotton sails, which sent our canoes skimming over the water at a far greater speed than we had hitherto been able to move.

Another lake appeared before us. By crossing it we should be far ahead of the Blackfeet. We had brought some cooked provisions, so that we were able to breakfast in the canoes. It was long past noon before, the river having again narrowed, we ventured on shore for a brief time only to dine.

The next portage we came to was on the east bank. It was fortunately a short one, and Uncle Donald kept some of the men under arms, a portion only being engaged in carrying the canoes and their cargoes. No Indians, however, appeared.

"I hope that we have given them the go-by," said Hugh, "and shall not again see their ugly faces."

"We must not be too certain; I'll ask Red Squirrel what he thinks," I replied.

"Never trust a Blackfoot," was the answer. "They are as cunning as

serpents, and, like serpents, they strike their enemies from among the grass."

We expected in the course of two or three days more to come to an end of the river navigation at a spot where Uncle Donald had directed that the horses should meet us. We were not without fear, however, that some, if not the whole of the animals, might have been stolen by the Blackfeet should they by any means have discovered them.

Occasionally sailing, sometimes paddling and poling, and now and then towing the canoes along the banks, we continued our progress. As we went along we kept a look-out for the Blackfeet, as it was more than possible that they might pursue us. We accordingly, in preference to landing on either bank, selected an island in the centre of the stream for our camping-ground.

We had just drawn up the canoes among the bushes and formed our camp in an open spot near the middle of the island, when one of the men who was on the lookout brought word that he saw a large number of savages passing on the east bank. We were, however, perfectly concealed from their keen eyes. Watching them attentively, we guessed by their gestures that they were looking for us, and not seeing our canoes, fancied that we had passed on. Night was now approaching. We were afraid of lighting a fire, lest its glare might betray our position to our pursuers. They would, however, on not discovering us, turn back, so that we should thus meet them, and Uncle Donald resolved, therefore, to remain where we were, until they had retreated to the southward. Even should they discover us we might defend the island more easily than any other spot we could select. We had plenty of provisions, so that we could remain there without inconvenience for several days, except that we should thus delay our passage over the mountains. Hugh and I were, much to our satisfaction, appointed by Uncle Donald to keep watch, Hugh on one side of the island and I on the other, for fear lest, should the red-skins find out where we were, they might attempt, by swimming across, to take us by surprise.

None appeared, however, and two more days went by. At last Uncle Donald began to hope that they, supposing we had taken another route, were on their way back. We accordingly, seeing no one the next morning,

embarked, and the river here expanding into a lake, we were able to paddle on without impediment across it, and a short distance up another stream, when we came to a fall of several feet, beyond which our canoes could not proceed. This was the spot where we had expected to find the horses, but they had not arrived. We were greatly disappointed, for, having been much longer than we had calculated on coming up, we naturally expected that they would have been ready for us. Winter was rapidly approaching, and in the autumn before the streams are thoroughly frozen the dangers of crossing the mountains are greater than at any other period.

As the canoes could go no higher we took them up the stream and placed them “en cache,” where there was little chance of their being discovered. They were to remain there until the return of our men, who would accompany us to the foot of the mountains and go back again that autumn.

On not finding the horses Uncle Donald went to the highest hill in the neighbourhood, overlooking the country through which they had to pass, in the hopes of seeing them approach. He came back saying that he could perceive no signs of them, and he ordered us forthwith to camp in such a position that we might defend ourselves against any sudden attack of hostile Indians.

Chapter Eight.

Among the Mountains.

The Horse Party arrives at last, but with half the Horses Stolen—The Start Across the Mountains—More Blackfeet in the way oblige the Party to take a Strange Pass—It becomes Colder—Snow comes on—A Pack of Wolves—Sleighs and Snow-Shoes—In the Heart of the "Rockies"—Corney has a Narrow Escape and a Cold Bath—Snow in the Canoes—Difficulties of the Way—The Pass at Last—A fearful Avalanche.

Several days passed by. We were not molested by the Indians, but the horses did not arrive. Uncle Donald never fretted or fumed, though it was enough to try his temper. I asked him to allow me to set off with Corney and Pierre to ascertain if they had gone by mistake to any other place. We were on the point of starting when we saw a party of horses and men approaching. They proved to be those we were expecting, but there were only eight horses, less than half the number we had sent off. The men in charge had a sad account to give. The rest had been stolen by Indians, and one of their party had been killed, while they had to make a long round to escape from the thieves, who would otherwise very likely have carried off the remainder. The men also had brought a dozen dogs—our three especial favourites being among them—to be used in dragging our sleighs in case the horses should be unable to get through. We had carried the materials for forming sleighs with us in the canoes, while the harness had been transported thus far with the other packages by the horses. The poor beasts, though very thin, were better than no horses at all. There were a sufficient number to convey our stores and provisions, one for Uncle Donald, who carried Rose on his saddle, and two others for Hugh and me. The rest of the party had to proceed on foot. I offered mine to Madge, but she declared that she could walk better than I could.

We made a short day's journey, but the poor animals were so weak that we were compelled to camp again at a spot where there was plenty of grass. It was here absolutely necessary to remain three days to enable them to regain their strength.

While we were in camp Uncle Donald sent out Pierre and one of our Indians to try and ascertain if any of the Blackfeet were still hovering in the direction we proposed taking across the mountains. We did not wait for the return of our scouts, but started at the time proposed, expecting to meet them on the road we should travel.

We were engaged in forming our camp, collecting wood for the fires, and putting up rough huts, or rather arbours of boughs, as a protection from the wind—which here coming off the snowy mountains was exceedingly cold at night—while the gloom of evening was coming on, when one of the men on watch shouted—

“The enemy! the enemy are upon us!”

While some of our people ran out intending to bring in the horses, the rest of us flew to our arms.

Uncle Donald, taking his rifle, at once went out in the direction in which the sentry declared he had seen the band of savages coming over the hill.

Our alarm was put an end to when, shortly afterwards, he came back accompanied by Pierre and his companion, who brought the unsatisfactory intelligence that a large body of Blackfeet were encamped near the pass by which we had intended to descend into the plains of the Saskatchewan.

Ever prompt in action, Uncle Donald decided at once to take a more northerly pass.

The country through which we were travelling was wild and rugged in the extreme; frequently we had to cross the same stream over and over again to find a practicable road. Now we had to proceed along the bottom of a deep valley among lofty trees, then to climb up a steep height by a zigzag course, and once more to descend into another valley. Heavily laden as were both horses and men, our progress was of necessity slow. Sometimes after travelling a whole day we found that we had not made good in a straight line more than eight or ten miles.

The weather hitherto had been remarkably fine, and Hugh and Rose and

I agreed that we enjoyed our journey amazingly. Our hunters went out every day after we had camped, and sometimes before we started in the morning, or while we were moving along, and never failed to bring in several deer, so that we were well supplied with food. The cold at night was very considerable; but with good fires blazing, and wrapped up in buffalo-robes, we did not feel it; and when the sun shone brightly the air was so pure and fresh that we were scarcely aware how rapidly winter was approaching.

It should be understood that there are several passes through the lofty range it was our object to cross. These passes had been formed by the mountains being rent asunder by some mighty convulsion of nature. All of them are many miles in length, and in some places several in width; now the pass presents a narrow gorge, now expands into a wide valley. The highest point is called the watershed, where there is either a single small lake, or a succession of lakelets, from which the water flows either eastward through the Saskatchewan or Athabasca rivers, to find its way ultimately into the Arctic Ocean, or westward, by numberless tributaries, into the Fraser or Columbia rivers, which fall, after making numerous bends, into the Pacific.

We had voyaged in our canoes up one of the larger tributaries of the Fraser, and had now to follow to its source at the watershed one of the smaller streams which flowed, twisting and turning, through the dense forests and wild and rugged hills rising on every side.

The country had become more and more difficult as we advanced, and frequently we had to wind our way in single file round the mountains by a narrow path scarcely affording foothold to our horses. Sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other were steep precipices, over which, by a false step, either we or our animals might be whirled into the roaring torrent below. Now we had to force a road through the tangled forest to cut off an angle of the stream, and then to pass along narrow gorges, beetling cliffs frowning above our heads, and almost shutting out the light of day.

At length we camped on higher ground than any we had yet reached. On one side was a forest, on the other a rapid stream came foaming by. The sky was overcast, so that, expecting rain, we put up all the shelter we

could command.

The hunters having brought in a good supply of meat, our people were in good spirits, and seemed to have forgotten the dangers we had gone through, while they did not trouble themselves by thinking of those we might have to encounter. We had no longer hostile Indians to fear; but we still kept a watch at night in case a prowling grizzly or pack of hungry wolves might pay the camp a visit. The wind blew cold; not a star was visible. The light from our fire threw a lurid glare on the stems and boughs of the trees and the tops of the rugged rocks which rose beyond.

Having said good night to Rose, whom we saw stowed away in her snug little bower, Hugh and I lay down a short distance from the fire, sheltered by some of the packages piled up at our heads. Uncle Donald was not far from us. On the other side were Pierre and Corney and Red Squirrel, while Madge took her post, disdaining more shelter than the men, close to Rose's hut. Two of the men kept awake, one watching the camp, the other the horses, and the rest lay in a row on the opposite side of the fire.

Such was the scene I looked on till, completely covering my head up in a buffalo-robe, I closed my eyes. I was awakened by finding an unusual weight above me. I threw my arms about, when down came a cold shower on my face and clearing my eyes I could just see the snow on every side, while my body was completely covered up. I was perfectly warm, however, and felt no inclination to get out of my cosy bed to brush the snow away. I drew my robe again over my head; being well assured that Uncle Donald would arouse us if there was any risk of our being completely covered up. How much longer I had slept I could not tell, when I was once more awakened by a terrific howling, yelping, the barking of dogs, the trampling and snorting of horses, followed by the shouts and shrieks of our men.

I speedily drew myself out of my snowy burrow, and through the gloom I caught sight of our horses endeavouring to defend themselves by kicking out with their heels against a pack of wolves which had followed them up to the camp, and Uncle Donald with the men engaged, some with their rifles and others with sticks, in endeavouring to drive off the savage brutes, but they were afraid of firing, for fear of wounding the horses. I felt about for Hugh, who being covered up by the snow, had not been

awakened by the din.

“What is happening?” he exclaimed, sitting up. “Are the Indians upon us?”

“Only some hungry wolves, and we are all right,” I said.

“Why, I fancy it has been snowing!” he exclaimed.

“I should think so,” I answered. “Come, jump up, we’ll help put those brutes to flight.”

When the wolves found themselves encountered by human beings, they quickly turned tail, but we had some difficulty in catching the frightened horses, and I was just in time to seize one which was on the point of dashing into Rose’s hut. As it was almost daylight, no one again turned in; the fires were made up, and we began cooking our morning meal.

The snow continued to fall so heavily, that Uncle Donald decided to remain where we were, or rather to form another camp more under shelter of the trees. To proceed with the horses would have been almost impossible, and he therefore settled to send them back and to prepare the sleighs and snow-shoes for the rest of our journey. A sleigh is simply a thin board, ten feet long and about a foot broad, turned up at one end. The baggage is secured to it by leathern thongs.

To form a cariole, a cradle or framework like the body of a small carriage is fixed on a sleigh such as I have just described, and is covered with buffalo skin parchment, the inside being lined with a buffalo-robe. When the traveller is seated in a cariole with outstretched legs, he is only separated from the snow by the thin plank which forms the floor. The dogs which drag the sleighs are attached to them by leathern thongs and collars generally decorated with bead work and tassels, surmounted by arches, to which are suspended strings of small bells. We had brought a supply of snow-shoes and moccasins for all the party. The snow-shoe is an oval frame five or six feet in length, about one in width, the intermediate space being filled with network, except a hole in the centre for the heel of the wearer. It is attached to the foot by leathern thongs. All hands were busily engaged in putting the sleighs together, fitting the harness to the dogs, and arranging the cargoes. The horses were sent

back. The canoe men had taken their departure, and our party now consisted of Uncle Donald, Rose, Hugh and I, Pierre, Corney, Madge, Red Squirrel, and four Indians.

We had to wait until the snow had somewhat hardened, and the stream up which we were to proceed had been frozen over. Uncle Donald had made for Rose to sleep in a bag of buffalo-robes lined with softer furs, which kept her perfectly warm. She was the only person who was to enjoy the privilege of a sleigh, drawn by Whiskey and Pilot, and guided by Uncle Donald. The rest of us were to travel on snow-shoes, a mode of proceeding which, though fatiguing, kept us warm.

The last night of our stay in camp arrived. We were to start, should the weather be propitious, the next morning. Soon after we turned in for the night, before I had fallen asleep, I was greatly surprised to hear the sound of chopping in a wood at no great distance off. I called to Hugh, he heard it also, as did Uncle Donald.

One after the other the men expressed their wonder at the sound. Corney, who was on guard, walked a few paces in the direction from whence it came, evidently thinking that something was wrong, but he soon returned, declaring that he could see no one. Suddenly there came the crash of a falling tree. After this mysterious occurrence, nothing could induce him to go up to the spot, though it could not have been more than two hundred yards off. No one had been seen on the previous evening, and had Indians been there, they would have observed our fire, and would long ere this have gathered round it.

What Uncle Donald thought I could not tell, he certainly did not get up to try and solve the mystery, nor did any of the Indians. Night passed away without disturbance, and the next morning, though Hugh, and Pierre, and I made a circuit of the camp, we could discover no footsteps to indicate that any one had been in the neighbourhood, nor signs of chopping, nor a fallen tree, so that the mystery remained unexplained.

Breakfast over, our four Indians were sent ahead to trample down the snow with their snow-shoes, the loaded sleighs following, driven by the other men and Madge, who was as good a driver as any of them, Uncle Donald in charge of Rose bringing up the rear with Hugh and me. Such

was to be our proceeding for many a day, until we were over the mountains.

We were now in the heart of the “Rockies.” The valley of the river we were following was about a mile wide, and on either side rose high rocky peaks, covered with perpetual snow, among which big-horns could be seen watching us, the intruders into their domains, and daring us, as it were, to scale the glaciers and meet them on their own ground.

We several times met with moose, one of which was shot nearly every day to supply our camp with meat. We were anticipating getting through the pass without difficulty, when we found ourselves at the bottom of a fall a hundred feet in height, with thickly timbered hills on each side, which, rising abruptly from the water’s edge, seemed to offer no footing even for a snow-shoe, much less a practicable trail for dog-sleighs.

Uncle Donald was not to be defeated, however, and at once ordered a regular track, graded round the face of the bluffs, to be formed. By using snow-shoes as shovels, and poles and brush for bridges, we crossed the intervening gullies and reached the edge of the first fall. Going on a mile further, we found the river confined between perpendicular walls of rock, up which there was no climbing. We had to form another path, carrying it over ledges of rock, banks of ice and snow, making bridges from one huge boulder to another with the dark water boiling at our feet ready to engulf any one who might make a false step.

To our joy, the formidable obstacle being surmounted, the good ice was reached at last, when we pushed on, the dogs trotting gaily along, and we following behind.

But ere long another fall barred our progress. Before attempting to surmount it, we halted for dinner.

As I was looking up I espied a big-horn, or mountain goat, and believing that we could get near enough to shoot it, Hugh and I set off with our guns. The animal is about the size of a common sheep, with conical horns, nearly three feet long, and forming a complete circle, but so thick is the wool which covers its head and body that their full length is not seen.

“Sure, you’ll not be gettin’ up after that baste!” I heard Corney say, he having followed us.

“We’ll try,” I answered, and began ascending the steep rocks. The difficulties were greater than we expected, but still we did not like to be defeated. We had been deceived by the clearness of the atmosphere, and after climbing up and up, the goat appeared as far off as ever. Presently he saw us, and off he bounded, springing along places where it would have been madness to follow.

“I tould ye so!” cried Corney from below, for he had still followed us. “Ye must git above one of those gentlemen if you want to shoot him. Now dinner will be cooked, and we had better be after getting down to eat it.” We accordingly descended to where we had left our snow-shoes.

“Stop a moment!” cried Corney. “Just let me get a drink of water, for I see a rill dripping over a rock there.”

Corney accordingly made his way up to the perpendicular bank, but scarcely had he reached it, when, to our horror, there was a crash, and he suddenly disappeared, leaving, however, his long pole behind him.

I knew that the river was running like a mill sluice down below, so rushing forward I shoved the pole across the opening, and holding it in one hand, as I threw myself flat on the ice, I thrust down my arm. To my relief, I felt Corney’s head as he came to the surface, and seizing his hair, hauled away with might and main. Hugh now assisted me, and we managed to drag up the Irishman from his fearfully perilous position. It required caution, however, to get him on the ice, as that at any moment might give way, and we should have to share the fate from which we were trying to rescue him.

“Arrah! the spalpeens! why don’t they help us?” cried Corney. “Shout, Mr Archie! shout, Mr Hugh!”

Our cries brought Pierre, who was nearest at hand, carrying a long rope and a pole.

By resting on the poles, and lowering the rope with a bowline knot at the end, we got it under his arms, and soon hauling him upon the ice, we

hurried away from the dangerous spot.

He was none the worse for his dip, though it was no joke to be plunged head over ears in that icy cold water. Several of the other men fell in at different times, for although it was freezing hard the rapidity of the current prevented the ice forming securely in many places. We had occasionally, therefore, to leave the river and to make our way through the forest—no easy undertaking. But we could get through any places, provided they were more than two feet wide. When camping, we shovelled away the snow until we reached the moss on which we formed our beds; then we made our fire in the centre of the hole, and took our places round it.

When we went to sleep it was pretty deep, but in the morning, on getting up, I found that I could not see over the wall of snow. By beating down the edges, however, we managed to climb out.

In spite of the depth of the snow, we travelled on, though as our snow-shoes sank in places nearly a foot deep, the fatigue was very great. Rose laughed heartily as she saw us trudging on, and wanted Hugh to take her place in the sleigh and let her go on foot while he rested.

Again we came to a more mighty canyon than any we had yet encountered. This necessitated a détour, to avoid it, of about three miles overland.

A canyon, from the Spanish, is a deep gully or gorge, either with a river or stream flowing through the bottom or not, but the canyons in this part of the Rockies nearly always have a stream at the bottom.

We had again reached the river where it flowed on a more even course. It was entirely frozen over, but we were high above it, and the difficulty was to get down.

Pierre was the first to start. Away went the dogs with the sleigh, Pierre hauling it back and trying to stop its way. But all would not do, and presently he, dogs, and sleigh, went rolling over and over, until they plunged into the snow at the bottom, to a considerable depth.

“Och sure I’ll be wiser,” cried Corney; and he made fast a tail rope to a tree, thus enabling him to lower it gently for a short distance at a time. In

slipping it, however, from one tree to another, the sleigh gathered way, but scarcely had it got abreast of the dogs than it sheered off on one side of a small tree, the dogs rolling on the other. The tree—a mere sapling—bent, and the impetus carried the whole train nearly twenty feet out towards its end—the dogs hanging by their traces on one side, counterbalancing the sleigh on the other, where they swayed to and fro in the most ludicrous fashion, yelping, barking, and struggling to get free, and running a great risk of being hanged.

“Surely I’ll be afther losin’ me dogs, and the sleigh will be dashed to pieces!” cried Corney, wringing his hands in his despair.

Uncle Donald told us to take charge of Rose; then springing down the bank with the agility of a young man, axe in hand, with a few blows he cut the traces and set the poor dogs free, while the sleigh bounded down the hill into the snow at the bottom, where Pierre was trying to put his train to rights, the new arrival adding not a little to his difficulties.

Fearing that Rose might meet with a similar accident, Uncle Donald, taking her in his arms, carried her down, while Hugh and I managed the sleigh. As soon as we were all to rights, we had the satisfaction of seeing before us a clear “glare” of ice. The dogs, entering into our feelings, set off at a scamper to cross it.

In less than an hour we had got over a greater distance than we had the whole of the previous day. We had now reached the entrance to the pass. On either side rose pyramidical peaks, covered with perpetual snow, three thousand feet above the valley. Shortly afterwards we came to the foot of a magnificent glacier, which must have been scarcely less than a mile in length and several hundred feet in height. As we had made a good day’s journey, and evening was approaching, Uncle Donald was looking out for a place at which to camp. We had just fixed on a spot on the bank of the river at the edge of a thick belt of trees, which here intervened between it and the cliffs, when a roar as of distant thunder reached our ears.

“Look out! look out!” cried the Indians in chorus, and they pointed upwards.

We did look, and there we saw the whole side of the mountain, as it seemed, in movement. Huge rocks and vast masses of ice came rolling down towards the spot we were passing over, threatening to overwhelm us.

Down rushed the fearful avalanche. One huge rock was so directing its course that our destruction seemed certain, when it crashed in among the trees, tearing several up by the roots, but meeting with one of a larger size, just before it readied us, it was turned aside, and forcing its way through the remainder, it plunged into the river, not many feet from where we stood.

As may be supposed, we did not camp at that spot, but, thankful for our preservation, pushed on to where, the valley slightly widening out, we ran less risk of being overwhelmed by an avalanche.

Chapter Nine.

Lost in the Snow.

The dividing Ridge—A Mishap—More difficulty with the Snow—The Provisions run short—The Dogs begin to Succumb—Hugh, Archie, and Red Squirrel are Lost in a Snow-storm—Done up, and no Shelter.

“The first part of our difficulties are approaching an end,” said Uncle Donald the next morning, as we were starting. “It is possible that we may reach the dividing ridge by nightfall.”

The news caused every countenance to assume a cheerful expression. We pushed on in high spirits. The river, which had been growing less and less as we proceeded, at length became a small stream, fed by a fall down a steep slope, up which we had, as before, to make our way by a zigzag path.

On reaching the summit we found ourselves in an elevated valley, with mountain peaks on each side towering magnificently to the sky, the rays of the rising sun glancing on their snow-clad sides.

The surface of the lakes afforded a level and easy road. Away went the dogs at a brisk trot, the men shouting with glee as they thought our difficulties were over.

Climbing up the banks of one lake, we crossed over the ground to another, and then went on again as before. We quickly got over seven or eight miles, when we saw a stream, which, issuing from the eastern end of the last lake, ran down a gentle incline. The bright rivulet was a feeder of one of the vast rivers which flow towards the Arctic Ocean.

A joyous shout was raised; we had crossed the dividing ridge, and the vast plain through which flow the Saskatchewan and Athabasca lay below us. Several trees which grew by the lakelet were marked, to show the boundary of the North West Territory, into which we had now entered.

Having quenched our thirst from the little stream, we again set out, the ground sloping perceptibly towards the east.

The rivulet widened as we advanced, and after we had gone a short way we found it completely frozen over. The ice being of sufficient thickness to bear our weight, we at once descended on to it, and away we went at a greater speed than we had hitherto gone, every one being in the highest spirits.

We had now to make a long circuit through a dense forest, keeping away from the river, for fear of slipping down over the precipices which formed the side.

Hugh and I, while sitting on our snow-shoes, were gliding downwards, fancying that we should reach the bottom of a hill without difficulty, when presently I saw him, on coming to some object concealed by the snow, give an unintentional jump, and over he went, head first, clutching at the shrubs and trying to stop himself. I was laughing at his mishap, when I felt myself jerked forwards, and then away I went in the same fashion.

After some tumbling and rolling, with arms and legs outstretched, we were both pitched into a deep snow reef at the foot of the hill.

One of the loaded sleighs, driven by Corney, before he had time to unharness the dogs, as he was about to do, broke away from him, and away it went, the poor dogs, terribly frightened, endeavouring to keep ahead of it, but it went faster than they could. In vain Corney and Red Squirrel tried to stop it. Had it kept clear of all impediments no great harm would have happened; but, unfortunately, it came in contact with a log, turning the poor dog who had the leader’s place into a pancake, while the front part of the sleigh itself was shattered to fragments. We hurried to the spot. The poor dog lay dead, with its head and limbs fractured.

We were some time occupied in repairing the broken sledge and harness. Continuing our journey, the river level was at last reached, when, on looking up, we saw that we had stood on a projecting ledge of ice not more than two feet in thickness, which might have given way beneath our weight and carried us down to destruction.

Hitherto, when not travelling on the ice, we had to make our way over

snow seldom less than two feet deep, but as we reached the base of the mountains it suddenly disappeared. As far as we could see to the eastward, not a patch was visible. Had it not been for the frozen rivers and the leafless trees, we might have fancied that summer was returning. This phenomenon occurs along the whole base of the Rocky Mountains, where there is a belt of nearly twenty miles in width perfectly free from snow.

The ground being hard, we made good way over it, directing our course about south-east towards a stream running into the Saskatchewan.

The stream we were steering for was reached. Travelling over the ice, we were soon again in a region where the snow lay thicker than ever, and it became very trying to our dogs. Our special favourites, Whiskey, Pilot, and Muskymote, went on bravely, in spite of their hard labour by day and the intense cold to which they were exposed by night. They, knowing fellows, whenever they stopped, carefully picked out the snow which, getting between their toes, would have cut them severely; but some of the younger ones, not understanding the necessity of so doing, allowed it to accumulate, and became lame.

The snow now lay two feet in thickness over the whole surface of the country, making it fearfully heavy work to get along. We frequently had to go ahead to form a track; and even so soft was the snow, that the poor dogs would wallow through it up to their bodies, until they were well-nigh worn out with their incessant labour.

We, however, pushed on, for had we ventured to stop our whole party might have succumbed. Our provisions were well-nigh exhausted, and neither buffalo, nor deer, nor smaller game appeared to enable us to replenish our stock of food. Our object was to get on a stream with a southerly or south-easterly course, on which we could travel until we could strike a line across the country leading to the missionary station.

We made short journeys between sunrise and sunset. At the end of each day our first task was to clear away the snow, so as to have a space for our camp fire and room for the party to stretch themselves round it. The most sheltered spot was selected for Rose’s hut, which, when wood was wanting, was formed of buffalo-robes. She seemed to enjoy the journey,

and was as blooming and merry as ever. The poor dogs were the greatest sufferers. They had hard work and scanty food. First one stretched out its legs and died, and then another did the same; and one morning, when we were starting, even Pilot could not be coaxed away from the camp fire. No one had the heart to kill him, but stand on his legs he either could not or would not, so he was left to his fate in the faint hope that in an hour or so he might recover his strength and overtake us.

As we pushed forward, on one side rose the lofty peaks of the Rocky Mountains, and on the other stretched out a vast extent of comparatively level land, in some parts open prairie, in others dense forest. The boughs of the trees were thickly laden with snow, the whole country, indeed, was wrapped in a white wintry mantle. The scenery was dreary in the extreme. Our spirits sank; it seemed that we should never come to an end of our long journey.

The sky, hitherto bright, became overcast with clouds about the time that we had got over about two-thirds of the day's journey. Hugh and Red Squirrel and I were at some distance in the rear of the party, when snow began to fall and the wind to blow with unusual violence. The snow came down so thickly that it seemed as if the contents of a huge feather-bed had suddenly been emptied upon us. Thicker and thicker it fell; so great was the obscurity that we could scarcely see a yard ahead, while the tracks of our companions were almost instantly obliterated.

We shouted, expecting that they would reply, and that we should be guided by their voices, but no sound came in return. We tried to run on, hoping to overtake them, when Hugh fell and broke one of his snow-shoes. We, of course, stopped to help him up, and in so doing must have turned slightly about. Red Squirrel, ever fertile in resources, set to work to mend the shoe. This he did very rapidly; but even that short delay was serious. As soon as Hugh was on his legs we again hurried on, supposing that we were following close behind the rest of the party. We shouted and shouted, but still there was no reply. I asked Red Squirrel if he thought we were going right.

He did not answer.

It is seldom that an Indian loses his way, but at length I began to fear that

he was at fault. He acknowledged, indeed, that he was so. We unslung our guns, hoping that if we fired our friends would hear the report, and fire theirs in return, but neither Hugh's nor mine would go off. We put on fresh caps, and both again snapped. I felt in my pouch for my pricker, to try and clear out the nipple, but could not find it. I asked Hugh for his.

"I'm afraid that I dropped it yesterday evening in the camp, and I thought that I would look for it in the morning, but forgot to do so," he answered.

At last we gave up the attempt in despair. More valuable time had thus been lost. Red Squirrel urged us to go on, saying that he thought he could guide us by the wind. On and on we went. The snow fell as thickly as ever. At last Hugh declared that he could go no further. We were both suffering from fearful pains in our ankles—the *mal de raquette*, as the French Canadians call it, produced by the pressure of the snow-shoe straps.

I looked anxiously about, hoping to discover some trees or shrubs which might afford us shelter and enable us to light a fire, but a thick veil of falling snow shrouded us on every side. I consulted Red Squirrel as to what we should do. One thing was certain—that if we remained in the open, exposed to the biting blast, we should perish. I feared that such would be our fate. Poor Hugh gave way altogether, and, casting off the straps from his ankles, threw himself down on the snow, and begged us to leave him.

Chapter Ten.

Snowed Up.

Red Squirrel and Archie Dig a Hole in the Snow—The Snow Shelter—Sleep—No Food, and Buried in Snow—Efforts to Dig Out—Some Animal Scratches at the Hole—Last Efforts at Defence.

To leave Hugh was not to be thought of.

“Oh, say what we must do!” I exclaimed, addressing Red Squirrel.

“Make haste,” he answered, taking off his snow-shoes.

I took off mine also, and using them as spades, we energetically set to work to shovel up the snow until we had got down to the ground, building up a wall with what we had thrown out. There was just sufficient space to hold three. We then placed Red Squirrel’s shoes on the top, for they were the longest, and Hugh’s above them, while with mine we threw up more snow to form a roof. As soon as we had got thus far, we lowered Hugh into our burrow, that he might be sheltered from the wind, placing the guns beside him. We then continued throwing up the snow until we had completely surrounded the hole, leaving only a small aperture through which we could crawl in on hands and knees. We next covered one of my snow-shoes with snow, patted it down until it was like a board, and this served as the door of our burrow. We had just space sufficient to sit up, or lie down packed close together, for we knew that the smaller its size the warmer it would be, or, rather, the less should feel the cold.

The change from the outer biting air made us feel tolerably comfortable, and we had no great fear of being frozen to death. Hugh, from not having exerted himself in building the hut, suffered more than Red Squirrel or I, and as soon as the door was closed I set to work to rub his hands and feet to restore circulation, for I was afraid that they might have been frost-bitten.

A very faint light at first came in through the snowy walls, but this

lessened, until we could not see our hands held close to our faces.

Night we knew must have at length come on. We were very hungry, but as we had not a particle of food, there was no use in complaining.

For a long time neither Hugh nor I could go to sleep. At last Red Squirrel set us the example, and when, some time afterwards, I addressed Hugh, he did not answer, so that I knew he had forgotten his troubles, and I hoped that perfect rest would enable him to recover from the pain he had been suffering. I at last also dropped off to sleep.

When I awoke the darkness was as complete as ever, though supposing it was still night, I once more went to sleep. The next time I opened my eyes it was still dark as before. I felt warmer than I had expected, but I was desperately hungry. From this I fancied that another day must have begun. In a short time my companions awoke. Hugh said the pain in his instep had gone, but that he would give much for something to eat. Red Squirrel did not suffer as much as we did, for Indians are able to endure hunger and pain a much longer time than can white people.

“Surely it must be day,” said Hugh. “We ought to try and get out, and find our friends. Rose and Uncle Donald will be dreadfully frightened at having lost us.”

“I hope that no accident has happened to them,” I could not help saying, for the recollection came upon me that they also had been exposed to the snow-storm; but then I reflected that they were a large party, and might have reached the shelter of a wood. This was some consolation.

“Oh, how hungry I am!” cried Hugh. “We must get out.”

I took up my rifle and tried to open the door with the barrel, but, although I ran it up to the lock, on again withdrawing it I could not see daylight through the hole.

“I am afraid that the snow must be very thick,” I said. The dreadful idea now occurred to me that we were buried alive in a snow tomb. Such had happened to other people, I knew, and it might be our fate, for if the snow once froze over us we might be unable to force our way out. I asked Red Squirrel what he thought.

He answered with an ominous “Very bad! Try,” he added, and I found that he was groping about to find the door. He did not speak, but I heard him scraping away with his hands, just as a terrier does at the entrance of a rabbit burrow, with a vehemence which showed how much he feared that we were completely buried. I could feel the snow which he dug up coming down on my legs.

At last he asked for my gun. He thrust it into the hole he had formed, but still no light streamed through it. We must, however, by some means or other, force our way out or perish.

“We had better try to work upwards,” I observed. “The falling snow has surrounded the walls of our hut, and though we made the roof pretty thick, we are more likely to reach the open air through it than by working at the sides.”

The Indian followed my suggestion. Of course, we could all work together, but then we might have pulled a mass of snow down on our heads. Our object was simply to make a hole through which we could look out and ascertain if it were daylight, and if so to try and find out whereabouts we were. We might all the time be close to our party. I earnestly hoped that we were, so that we might satisfy the cravings of hunger without delay. The Indian tried to force off the snow-shoe which formed the door, but found that impossible. He then worked away above it. The snow he brought down considerably decreased the size of our hut. Still he persevered in working away, until I thought that he would never get through the roof. At last he asked me again to hand him up my gun, and having forced the barrel upwards, as he withdrew it we could feel the cold air coming down, while a gleam of daylight entered our burrow. But it would still require much labour before we could enlarge the hole sufficiently to enable us to force our bodies through it.

At last, by dint of hard work, standing on the snow he had brought down, Red Squirrel got out his head. The report he gave was unsatisfactory. Scarcely, however, listening to what he said, I jumped up and thrust out my head, eager to ascertain the state of affairs. I could see nothing but a vast plain of snow on every side without a single object to direct our steps. Snow was still falling and had already reached above the level of our hut. We could not make our way over the vast plain without our snow-

shoes, and it would take a considerable time before we could dig them out; and in the meantime we should be well-nigh frozen.

I drew in my head again, my face chilled by the cold air, and, sinking down to the bottom of the hut, consulted with Red Squirrel and Hugh as to what was to be done. Hunger made us all anxious to go on; but then arose the question, In what direction should we go? We might perish in the attempt to reach our friends. We accordingly agreed to wait until the snow had ceased.

Red Squirrel had, in the meantime, stopped up the hole to prevent the cold from getting in. Hunger and darkness soon caused us again to drop off to sleep, and thus we must have remained some hours. When at length I awoke, I had neither the inclination nor power to move.

I called to Hugh. He answered faintly. I had, however, my senses sufficiently about me to be aware of our perilous position. The acute sensation of hunger had gone off, and my only wish was to be left alone. I tried to rouse myself, and endeavour to get up, but sank again to the ground. I then asked Red Squirrel to take a look out. He at once rose and scrambled up to the hole. It was some time before he could force off the snow. He then told us that the snow had ceased, and that it was night, for he could see the stars shining overhead.

“We must wait until morning, then,” I said, thankful that I should not have to move.

Once more we all dropped off into a state of stupor rather than sleep. I don’t know how long we had thus remained, when I was aroused by a noise which came down the funnel. It seemed as if some animal were scratching away at the entrance. The idea seized me that it was a bear, and I thought how unable we were to defend ourselves. I felt about for my gun, forgetting that it had refused to go off. Just as I grasped it I remembered this, and desperately plunged my hand into my pouch, when at the bottom I discovered my pricker, which my numbed fingers had before failed to feel. Clearing out the nipple as well as I could in the dark, I put on a fresh cap. While doing so, I awoke my companions. Hugh answered faintly. Red Squirrel immediately got up, and together we managed to crawl to the opening through which I thrust my rifle, ready to

fire should the bear show himself.

The scratching continued more vehemently than before. “He’ll be upon us presently,” I whispered to Red Squirrel, as a gleam of light came down through the aperture. “Do you take the gun; I haven’t strength enough to fire;” and I sank back quite exhausted.

Chapter Eleven.

Rescued.

The Animal Proves to be One of the Dogs—Who goes off for Rescue—Help Comes at Last—How the Dog had found the Party—Effects of the Adventure—The Party reach the Block-house at last, to find Archie's Family all Safe and welcome Rest.

I fully expected the next moment to see the huge claws of a monstrous grizzly as he worked his way down to us, when, instead of a growl, I heard the whine and sharp bark of a dog. It was the voice I felt sure, of our faithful Pilot, whom we had left at our last camp, as we supposed, on the point of death. I called out his name, and he answered with a joyous bark. Presently we saw him looking down upon us, when, satisfied that we were really there, he gave another bark, and then Red Squirrel, who had clambered up to the surface, told me that he was scampering away to the southward. I tried to get out to watch him, but was utterly unable to accomplish the task, and Red Squirrel himself was too weak to help me. I felt sure, however, that the dog had gone to summon our friends. I tried to cheer up poor Hugh with the news. He seemed scarcely able to understand what had occurred, and I became greatly alarmed at his condition.

We waited and waited; it seemed as if several hours had elapsed. At last Red Squirrel, who had gone to the hole, exclaimed that he saw some dark objects moving over the snow. They came nearer and nearer. I cannot describe the joy I felt when I heard Uncle Donald's voice, and presently I saw Red Squirrel's legs disappear as he was drawn up through the hole. Directly afterwards another person came slipping down.

"Arrah! we've found ye at last, sure!" exclaimed Corney, lifting me in his arms.

"Take up Hugh," I said, "he is in a worse state than I am." He did as I requested, but he was down again in a minute, and carrying me up, wrapped me in buffalo-robes and placed me in one of the sleighs which

Uncle Donald, who was engaged in feeding Hugh from a can of broth, had brought to convey us. Some of the broth was immediately given to me. I could have gobbled up the whole of it, for the moment I felt the fresh air the keenness of my appetite returned.

“I feared, my dear lads, that you were lost!” exclaimed Uncle Donald, as he ran backwards and forwards between Hugh and me, giving us each alternately a mouthful of the food. “But through the mercy of Heaven, as I will tell you by-and-by, we were led to this spot, and now the sooner we get back to camp the better, for you require careful nursing, I suspect. It is a wonder that you have escaped.”

Red Squirrel came in for a portion of the broth, and, not suffering so much from hunger as we were, he was soon able, after he had swallowed the food, to move about and assist Corney in digging out our snow-shoes. As soon as they had been recovered, we set out for the camp, which we found under the shelter of a wood about two miles off.

How Pilot, who had been left, as we supposed, dying in the camp, had found us out, we were curious to know. It appeared that one of the Indians had left, as he confessed, a load of pemmican behind. This the dog must have scented out after we had gone, and having eaten it, had remained sheltered during the storm under the snow. His provisions exhausted, he had set out to rejoin his companions, and on his way had providentially been led to the mouth of our burrow. Finding that he could not get us out, he had gone on, and on coming up with the party, by his extraordinary behaviour attracted attention. The moment he had had some buffalo meat, he rushed back towards where he had left us, and then pulled at Corney’s and Uncle Donald’s leggings, thus leading them to believe that he knew where we were to be found.

The cold was intense, but as it had hardened the snow, and the dogs had greatly recovered by having had plenty of buffalo meat to eat, we made rapid progress. Hugh was placed in Rose’s sleigh, and I had one to myself, with some of the cargo stowed at my back, for even after two day’s rest we were unable to walk; Red Squirrel, however, was soon himself again, and was able to keep up with the rest of the men.

More than a week had passed, when, as evening was approaching, we

caught sight of a flagstaff, above a block-house, and a circle of palisades rising out of the snow on the banks of a stream backed by a lofty range of mountains, spurs of the Rockies.

Though there were no trees in the immediate neighbourhood, a thick forest was seen on either side, extending backwards, and rising up the steep slopes.

It was the station to reach which we had travelled many hundred miles. Descending to the river, which was frozen over, we dashed across it, and were met on the other side by a party who issued from the stockade as we approached. At first we could only make out a number of Indians, but presently a lady and five young people appeared among them. To my joy, I recognised the lady as my mother, the others were my two sisters and three younger brothers, but they had all grown so much that I should not have known them; and certainly they did not know me, for they looked greatly surprised at the affectionate greeting my mother gave me.

“I am grateful, most grateful to you, Uncle Donald, for having come to our assistance,” she said, as she kissed his weather-beaten cheek. “Your appearance will revive my poor husband, who is still suffering from sickness. He has not got over the fearful scenes we witnessed, and is still anxious about our safety, as the savage Indians have vowed that they will return in the spring and put us and those of their tribe who have become Christians to death, should the pest again break out among them, and I much fear, in consequence of their careless and dirty habits, that it will do so.”

“Cheer up, my good niece, we will now go into the house, and then arrange what is best to be done,” answered Uncle Donald.

I, in the meantime, was receiving the embraces of my brothers and sisters, the latter of whom immediately rushed towards Rose, and conducted her to the house. My brothers also gave a warm greeting to Hugh. My poor father had risen to receive us. He looked fearfully thin and careworn, though our arrival, it was evident, cheered him. Very soon we were all assembled round a roaring fire in the sitting-room, thankful for our preservation from the clangers of our journey, and not a little pleased to be able to throw off our heavy clothing. The Indians took good care of

Madge, Corney, and Pierre, and the rest of the party, not neglecting the poor dogs, honest Pilot especially, when the service he had rendered us was told, coming in for a large share of their favour.

Chapter Twelve.

On the Alert.

At the Station—After Buffalo—Return of Red Squirrel from a Scout with News of the Blackfeet—A Party Return—A Party sent out to bring back the Hunters to the Fort—A Strange Fire—Red Squirrel goes off again on the Scout.

My brothers and sisters, Hugh Rose, and I were very happy.

The former fancied that, now we had come, all their troubles would be over. They had, however, passed a sad and anxious time; the missionary who had accompanied my father, with his wife and two children, had died, as had several of the Christian Indians, while some hundreds of the wild Indians had been swept off by the fearful pestilence. The latter had gone away south during the winter, and it was supposed that they would not return till the spring.

Hugh and I occasionally went out with Uncle Donald, or Pierre and Corney, in search of buffalo or deer. We were generally fortunate enough to kill either the one or the other. Uncle Donald had lost no time in sending out trusty scouts to try and ascertain the whereabouts of the Blackfeet.

Red Squirrel, from being one of the most active and intelligent of our Indians, was thus constantly employed. The duty was a hazardous one, for, as he well knew, should the enemy catch him, they would to a certainty take his scalp.

As neither buffalo nor deer had for several days appeared near the station, the hunters had to go a considerable distance in search of them. As soon as an animal was killed one of the dog-sleighs was sent out to bring in the meat.

I have not described the station. It was in some respects like a fort, being entirely surrounded by palisades, both that it might be defended from an

hostile attack, and for the purpose of protecting the buildings in the interior from the cold winds in winter, and to prevent the snow from drifting round them. There was a strong gate on one side which could be securely closed with bars, and a narrow platform with a parapet ran round the upper part of the palisades, from which its defenders could fire down on their assailants. It was in this respect very different from the usual missionary stations, which are entirely without defence. It had been built as a fort by the fur traders, and being in the neighbourhood of a savage and warlike tribe, it was considered prudent to repair it in the fashion I have described. When existing as a fort, it had been more than once captured and plundered by the Indians, and on one occasion the whole of the defenders had been put to death.

I had one morning gone up to the platform to take a look out, when I espied far off to the southward a small herd of buffalo. Our hunters had, on the previous evening, gone off to the eastward, and, unless they should find game near, were not likely to return for some days. I hurried down to Uncle Donald to tell him what I had seen, and request permission to set off to try and kill a buffalo.

“I will go with you,” he said; and Hugh begged that he might accompany us. So we set off with our guns, hoping, that by keeping among the woods, we might get to leeward of the herd, and sufficiently near to shoot one or more beasts.

My brother Alec, who was nearly as old as Hugh, went also. We hurried along on our snow-shoes, eager to get up to the herd before they should move off. This they were not likely to do, as they had found a spot where the snow was less deep than in other places, and they had got down to the grass by pawing with their feet.

They did not perceive us, and the wind being north-east, we succeeded in getting round to the south of them. We then crept carefully up, and Uncle Donald, firing, brought a fat cow to the ground. Hugh and I aimed at another, which we badly wounded; but instead of running off with its head lowered, ploughing up the snow as a ship turns up the foaming water, it came charging towards us.

“Now, Alec, see what you can do!” exclaimed Hugh and I, as we rapidly

re-loaded; “but run aside as soon as you have fired, or the brute may kill you.”

I heard Alec’s shot, when, looking up, to my dismay, I saw that he had missed. The buffalo was within twenty paces of us. Alec did his best to make off on one side, which, however, could not be done very rapidly with snow-shoes on. In another instant the buffalo would have reached us, when a shot which came from behind a tree laid him low, and looking round, I saw an Indian, whom I directly recognised as Red Squirrel. The rest of the herd being thus disturbed had made off. Uncle Donald now came up and thanked Red Squirrel for his timely aid. He reported that he was on his return to the fort with somewhat alarming intelligence. He had got up one night, he said, close to the Blackfeet lodges, where he observed the chiefs seated in council. He caught the meaning of some of their speeches, from which he gathered that it was their intention, before long, to come north and avenge themselves on the white medicine man—so they called my father—for the pestilence which they asserted he had inflicted on them because they had refused to become his proselytes. Red Squirrel also stated that he had seen among them a white man, who had spoken, and tried to dissuade them from prosecuting their design. He was clothed, like them, in a dress of buffalo-robes, from which Red Squirrel argued that he had been some time among them. They seemed, however, in no way inclined to listen to the advice of the white stranger, and expressed their intention of setting out as soon as their medicine man should pronounce the time to be propitious.

“We must return at once and put the station in a state of defence,” said Uncle Donald, on hearing this. “The savages may be upon us in the course of two or three days, and will give us but a short time to prepare for them. It is unfortunate that the hunters are away, for we require their assistance; and should the Blackfeet fall in with them they will lose their scalps to a certainty.”

“I would willingly go out and try and find them,” I said. “As no snow has fallen since they started, I can easily find their tracks.”

“I would much rather send Red Squirrel or Corney; but I’ll think about it as we go along,” said Uncle Donald.

Pierre had gone with the hunters, so that only the Irishman and young Indian were available for the purpose.

We at once turned our faces homewards, going on as fast as we could move on our snow-shoes. We thought it possible that we might find on our arrival that some of the hunters had returned, but none had made their appearance. My father looked very anxious when he heard the information brought by Red Squirrel.

“We might repulse them should they attack the place, but if any are killed, what hope can I afterwards have of winning them over to the Gospel?” he said. “I talk to them of peace, and urge them to enlist under the banner of the Prince of Peace, and yet they find me and my friends allied in arms against them.”

“But if we don’t defend ourselves, they will knock us on the head and carry off our scalps,” answered Uncle Donald. “I will do all I can to preserve peace, and induce them to go back without fighting, should I be able to hold any communication with them. In the meantime, we must prepare to defend the fort. Archie has volunteered to go out in search of the hunters, who must be forthwith called in, but without your permission I do not like to let him go.”

“As it is in the path of duty, I will not forbid him,” answered my father.

“If Archie goes, let me go too,” cried Alec. “I can run as fast as he does on snow-shoes.”

After some demur, Alec got leave to accompany me, for Hugh, not being quite well, was unable to go.

We were in good spirits, pleased at the confidence placed in us, and only regretting that Hugh had not been able to come. The trail of the hunters was perfectly clear, leading away to the south-east. They had taken a couple of sleighs to bring in the meat, so that we had no difficulty in directing our course.

We had made good nearly ten miles, and had not met any buffalo tracks, which showed us that the hunters must still be some way ahead, when we heard a voice shouting to us, and, looking back, we saw an Indian

running towards us over the snow. As he was alone, we had no doubt that he was a friend, and as he came nearer we recognised Red Squirrel.

He could not, he said, allow us to go without him, and as soon as he had taken some food he had set off. He had left Uncle Donald busily engaged, assisted by my father and the remaining men in the fort, in strengthening the palisades. “If the Blackfeet come expecting to get in and plunder the fort, they will find themselves mistaken,” he added.

We were very glad to have Red Squirrel with us; although, accustomed as we were to travel over the snow-covered plains, and having the mountains with whose forms we were well acquainted to the eastward, we had no fear about finding our way back, provided that the weather should remain clear. There was, of course, the possibility of a snow-storm coming on, and then we might have been greatly puzzled.

Notwithstanding the fatigue Red Squirrel had gone through during the last few days, he was as active as ever, and kept us moving as fast as we could go.

Before sunset we came upon the tracks of buffalo, though the animals themselves were nowhere to be seen.

“We’ll soon find them,” observed the Indian; but though we went on some distance, neither buffalo nor hunters could we discover, and we were glad, just as night fell, to take shelter under the lee of a thick clump of poplars and spruce pine. To cut sufficient wood for our fire and clear away the snow was the work of a few minutes, and, with our pot boiling, we were soon sitting round a cheerful blaze discussing our supper. We continued sitting round the fire, wrapped in our buffalo-robes, with our feet close to the embers, every now and then throwing on a stick, while we talked and Red Squirrel smoked his pipe.

I proposed that two of us should lie down and go to sleep, while the third kept watch, when Red Squirrel, getting up, said he would take a look out.

Climbing up the bank, he went to the top of a knoll a short distance off. We could see his figure against the sky. In a short time he came back.

“See fire out there,” he said, pointing to the southward. “May be friends,

may be enemies, may be Blackfeet. If Blackfeet, sooner we get 'way better."

"But how are we to find out whether they are friends or foes?" I asked.

"Red Squirrel go and see," he answered. "You stay here;" and taking up his gun, he quickly disappeared in the darkness, leaving us seated at our camp fire.

Chapter Thirteen.

Attacked by the Red-skins.

Prolonged Absence of Red Squirrel—Flight—The Strangers prove to be Friends—Return to the Fort—Uncle Donald opposes the Doctrine of Non-Resistance—The Guard over the Fort—The Indians attack the Fort.

We felt very uneasy at the strangely prolonged absence of Red Squirrel. He could have anticipated no danger, or he would have advised us what course to pursue should he not return. At last, telling Alec to sit quiet, I got up, and made my way to the top of the knoll, whence I could see over the country to the southward, in the direction I supposed Red Squirrel had gone. I looked and looked in vain through the gloom of night, though I could see in the far distance the light of the fire of which he had spoken.

Could he have been captured? if so, what should Alec and I do? It would be impossible to rescue him—indeed, it was too probable that he had been immediately put to death by the Blackfeet, and that we might ourselves, should we remain in the neighbourhood, be killed. I came therefore to the conclusion that we must continue our search for the hunters to the eastward, keeping at the same time a watchful eye in the direction in which we had seen the fire of our supposed enemies. I say supposed enemies, because I still had a lingering hope that, after all, the fire might be at the hunters' camp.

Such were the thoughts which passed through my mind as I stood on the top of the knoll. I had not been there many minutes before I recollected how clearly I had seen Red Squirrel in the same position against the sky. Instead, therefore, of remaining upright, I stooped down until I reached a thick bush, behind which I crouched, as well able as before to see any objects moving in the plain below. At last I thought that it was time to go back to Alec, and was on the point of descending the knoll, when I fancied that I saw some objects moving along the ground.

I remained stock still, scarcely daring to breathe, with my eyes fixed on

the spot. They were human beings—Indians I felt sure; if so, they would soon see our fire, and we should be discovered.

While there was time I hurried down the knoll and flew to Alec. I made a sign to him to take up his rifle and buffalo-robe, with a few other articles, left on the ground, and led the way through the wood. Here we might remain concealed until the savages had gone away, and then try to get back to the fort. I had no great hopes of success, still, it was the only thing to be done.

We had reached the spot, and it was some way from the fire, but we were still able to see it by raising our heads over the bushes.

We had both knelt down behind the bush, with our rifles ready to raise to our shoulders at any minute. Alec, only the moment before I returned, had thrown some wood on the fire, so that it was now blazing up brightly, and we could see all the objects round it. Just then three figures appeared. Two were Indians—there could be no doubt about it; but the other we could not make out clearly. They advanced, looking eagerly around, but as they came more into the light, instead of savages, with scalping knives in hand ready to kill us, great was our joy to discover that one was Pierre, and the others Red Squirrel and Kondiarak. They looked very much astonished at not seeing us. We did not keep them long in suspense, and Pierre then told us that they had come on purpose to advise that we should at once return to the fort, without waiting for daylight. They had been successful in hunting, having killed three buffalo cows, with the meat of which the sleighs were already packed, and as the track was formed, the dogs would find their way without the slightest difficulty.

We reached the fort without having seen the enemy, and, as may be supposed, were heartily welcomed.

Our arrival restored the spirits of my poor father and mother, who were very anxious, not so much for themselves as for my younger brothers and sisters. They were prepared to die, if God so willed it, in the path of their duty. My father was still very unwilling to resort to force, and proposed going out himself to meet the enemy to try and induce them to turn back.

Uncle Donald, however, told him that as he was the object of their vengeance they would, to a certainty, seize and torture him, and then probably come on and endeavour to destroy the fort. Thus no object would have been gained, as we should do our utmost to defend ourselves, and his life would be uselessly sacrificed.

“But I should have done my duty in attempting to soften the hearts of the poor savages,” answered my father, meekly.

“My good nephew, it’s just this, I’m not going to let ye have your scalp taken off,” said Uncle Donald, bluntly. “I am commander here for the time being, and no man, not e’en yourself, shall leave the fort without my leave. If the savages come they must take the consequences.”

My father did not reply, but I am very sure that, had he been left to act by himself, he would have earned out his intentions, and would most probably have perished. From Pierre’s report we fully expected every minute to see the Blackfeet appear. To each man under Uncle Donald’s directions a post was assigned, which he was charged to defend with his life. Orders were, however, given that no one was to fire until the word of command was received.

Hugh, Alec, and I were stationed together, and highly proud we were at the confidence placed in us, as the post we had to maintain was one of the most important.

The day wore on, but we were still unmolested, and at last darkness came down upon us.

The winter, it will be remembered, was not yet over. To defend ourselves from the intense cold we all put on as many buffalo-robes and bear-skins as we could wear, and Hugh declared that we looked like a garrison of grizzlies.

It was cold enough during the day, but it was still colder at night; notwithstanding this, as Alec and I had had no sleep for many hours, we found it difficult to keep awake. We, therefore, rolling ourselves up in our wraps, lay down, while Hugh stood ready to call us at a moment’s notice. There were, however, sentries enough to keep a look-out, and Uncle Donald continued going round and round the fort, seeing that they were

watchful.

The dawn was approaching; it was the time the Red-skins often make their attacks, as they expect to find their enemies buried in sleep.

When morning at last came, and no enemy had appeared, we began to hope that no Blackfeet had as yet reached the neighbourhood.

Another day was drawing on. Except a few men who remained on guard, the rest of the garrison lay down to sleep, that they might be more watchful the following night.

I spent a short time with my mother and sisters and Rose, and did my best to encourage them, but I could not help feeling that possibly it might be the last time we should be together on earth. By Red Squirrel's report, the Blackfeet were very numerous, and they are noted for being the most savage and warlike of all the northern tribes.

The next night was almost a repetition of the former, except that Alec and I kept watch, while Hugh lay down to sleep. Uncle Donald, as before, went his rounds, and there seemed but little risk of our being taken by surprise. He had just left us, when Hugh, who had got up and was standing near me, whispered—

"I see something moving over the snow. There! there are others. Yes, they must be Indians."

"Wait until we are certain," I answered, in the same low voice; "and then, Alec, run round and tell Uncle Donald."

We were not left long in doubt before we all three were certain that the objects we saw were Indians, and that they were trying to keep themselves concealed.

Alec set off to find Uncle Donald. He had not been gone many seconds, when fearful yells rent the air. Before us up started hundreds of dark forms, and a shower of bullets and arrows came flying above our heads.

Chapter Fourteen.

An Old Friend.

The Blackfeet meet a Warm Reception—and Retreat—A Wounded Indian—Proves to be Ponoko, who tells of a White Man in the Indian Camp—A Friendly Conference.

The moment the war-whoop of the Blackfeet had ceased Uncle Donald's voice was heard, ordering us to fire.

We obeyed with right good will, and must have greatly astonished the savages, who, not aware of the increased number of our garrison, had probably expected to gain quite an easy victory. Many of them had muskets, but the larger number could only have been armed with bows and arrows. After they had shot five or six showers of arrows and fired their guns—fortunately, without hitting any of us, though we could hear their missiles pinging against the thick palisades—they suddenly ceased, and began to retreat, when Uncle Donald shouted to them in their own language, inquiring why they had attacked people who had done them no harm, but were anxious to benefit them.

No reply came. Our men uttered a shout of triumph. Uncle Donald stopped them.

"The Blackfeet have retired, but I know their cunning ways, and I deem it more than likely that they will be down upon us again when they think to catch us off our guard or maybe they have devised some treacherous plot to entrap us."

We waited, but, as far as we could judge by the sounds which reached our ears, the savages had really retreated, and did not intend to attack us again that night. That they would give up their object was not to be expected, and my father proposed, should we find they had gone to a distance, that, rather than cause more bloodshed, we should abandon the station and retreat to one of the company's forts to the northward, "We have sleighs sufficient to convey the women and children," he

added; “and when the anger of the misguided people has subsided, I will return by myself, and endeavour to win them over by gentle means, for such only should be employed to spread the Gospel among the heathen.”

“You are very right in that respect, but though we may get to some distance, when the Blackfeet find that we have gone, they will to a certainty follow on our trail and quickly overtake us,” answered Uncle Donald. “I cannot consent to such a plan; we must show them that we are able to defend ourselves, and let their blood be upon their own heads if they persist in attacking us. We will, however, try how negotiation will succeed. I used to be well-known among them, and I propose to-morrow, should they not again attack the fort, to go singly into their camp and invite them to smoke the calumet of peace. Should I be detained, you must promise to hold out to the last, and not any account trust to what they may say. We will, in the meantime, send a messenger to Rocky Mountain House, entreating for assistance. I feel sure that the officer in charge will send as many men and horses as he can spare to enable you to escape, or defend the fort, if necessary.”

My father and mother entreated Uncle Donald not thus to risk his life; but he was firm in his resolution. My father then proposed going with him, but to this Uncle Donald would not consent.

A considerable portion of the night was consumed in these discussions. A vigilant watch was of course kept, but no one could be seen stirring outside the fort. Having taken a brief nap, just before dawn I returned to my post on the ramparts. As daylight increased I fancied that I saw the body of a man lying under a bush some distance from the fort. Yes, I was certain of it. I pointed him out to Hugh, and we both fancied that we saw an arm move.

“He is one of the savages who was shot in the attack last night, and, unperceived by his companions, he must have fallen where we see him,” observed Hugh.

While we were speaking, some of the Indians we had brought with us—who, though faithful servants, were still heathens—caught sight of the body. Lowering themselves down without asking leave, they were rushing, with their scalping knives in their hands, towards the hapless

being.

Uncle Donald at that instant coming up on the ramparts saw them, and guessed their object. “Come back, you rascals!” he shouted. “Whether that man be alive or dead, don’t touch a hair of his head!”

As they did not stop he fired his rifle, the bullet passing just in front of the leading Indian, who now thought it time to come to a standstill.

“Archie and Hugh, you go and look after that poor fellow, and make our people bring him in,” continued Uncle Donald.

We instantly obeyed, for although the height was considerable we could manage to drop to the bottom without injuring ourselves. We then ran as fast as our legs could carry us to overtake our Indians. Having delivered Uncle Donald’s orders, we then hurried on to where the Indian lay. At a glance I saw that he was desperately wounded from the blood which flowed from both his legs, while another shot had rendered his right arm powerless. His eyes still wore a defiant expression, and he appeared to fancy that we were about to kill him. By signs and such words of his language as we could speak, we endeavoured to make him understand that we had come to carry him into the fort to try and save his life.

As there was not a moment to be lost, we first bound up his wounds, and then ordering our people to assist us we lifted him from the ground and hurried towards the fort, meeting on our way Uncle Donald, who had the gate open to admit us. Without stopping we carried the wounded man into the house, where my father, who had risen, was ready with bandages and salves to attend to him. My mother, meantime, was preparing some strong broth, which our prisoner eagerly swallowed. It had an almost instantaneous effect in reviving him. Uncle Donald, who had in the meantime been going round the fort to ascertain if more wounded had been left in its neighbourhood, now entered the room, and as his eye fell on the countenance of our captive, he exclaimed, “Ponoko! Do you remember your white friend?”

The Indian made a sign that he was the person supposed, though he was too weak to speak.

Uncle Donald then told him that although he had come as an enemy he

should be well cared for.

In a short time the judicious treatment he was receiving enabled him to utter a few words. He seemed grateful for the care taken of him, and his eyes brightened when my young sisters and Rose brought him the soup, which he received almost every hour. He especially noticed Rose, and when Uncle Donald came to see him, inquired, in a tone of evident interest, who she was.

“You are right if you think you remember her, for she is the little girl you saved when your people attacked the village in the territory of the Long-knives some years ago,” answered Uncle Donald.

“Will you now let me take her back?” asked Ponoko.

“Do you think it likely that I should consent?” said Uncle Donald. “Her ways are not the ways of your people. She would pine and die were she to be treated as your women are treated.”

“But there is one who has long lived with us whose heart would be rejoiced to see her,” said Ponoko. “You may remember when I parted from you I promised to try and save the lives of any of our pale-faced prisoners. I succeeded in saving that of one man just as he was about to be tortured and killed, but it was on condition that he would swear to remain with us, and never betray us to our enemies. He was a great hunter, and brave as the bravest among us. He also, we found, was not one of the Long-knives, but was a subject of the Queen of the Pale-faces. He has kept his promise, though he might often have made his escape. He had been many months with us, before I found how sorely his heart yearned to get away, and I would have set him free, but the other chiefs would not consent. He looked upon me as his friend. He told me that his child and all his household had died by the hands of our people, except his wife, who was away in one of the big cities in the east at the time we attacked the place. I was thus led to tell him of the little girl I had saved and given over to you, and he has ever since been hoping that she might prove to be one of his children. He has hoped and hoped until he has persuaded himself that such she is. Thus I know how it would rejoice his heart to see her.”

“I have strong doubts about that,” answered Uncle Donald. “He would rejoice to see her, but not to have her among your people, from whom she differs so greatly. The only way truly to benefit him would be to set him at liberty and allow him to return among the Pale-faces to whom he belongs.”

“But how can that be while I am sick and a prisoner with you?” asked Ponoko.

“You’ll recover, I hope, ere long, and as you have fulfilled your promise on one occasion, I feel confident that you will not disappoint us if we set you at liberty on your undertaking to restore this white stranger to his people.”

“Ponoko always keeps his word,” answered the Indian in a proud tone.

“But should the Blackfeet, in the meantime, attack us, we may be destroyed, and they may take you away with them,” observed Uncle Donald.

“If my people come, you shall carry me out on a litter; I will tell them how well the Pale-faces have treated me, and will urge them, instead of fighting, to make a lasting peace with my white father and his friends,” said Ponoko.

“I will trust you, my brother,” said Uncle Donald, pressing Ponoko’s hand. “I pray that you may soon be restored to health, and that you will teach your people that it is to their true interests to be at peace with the white men, and to trade honestly with them.”

Chapter Fifteen.

A Happy Ending.

Ponoko recovers—Time passes without further Attack—and Meat has to be Procured—Red Squirrel again sent on Scout—Returns pursued by Six Blackfeet—Timely Rescue—Poor Red Squirrel is quite Exhausted—The Blackfeet Return in large Numbers—Ponoko goes out to Meet them—Effect of his Appearance on the Tribe—He returns with a White Man—Rose finds a father—and both find a Wife and Mother—All Ends happily at Last.

Day after day went by, and the Blackfeet did not appear. Ponoko, never having indulged in the pernicious fire-water, was rapidly recovering under my father's judicious care and the attention he received from Rose and the rest of the family. We had not yet told her of the possibility that her father had escaped and might be restored to her. I suspect that she would not have understood us had we done so, for she looked upon Uncle Donald as her father, though she called him "Uncle" as Hugh and I did. Indeed, all the events of her life which had occurred before the fearful night of the massacre appeared to have faded from her memory.

At length, as the Blackfeet had not shown themselves, we began to hope that they would allow us to remain at peace, and Uncle Donald already talked of returning home. He proposed that my mother and father and the rest of the family should accompany him, but my father replied that nothing should induce him to quit his post, unless driven away by the savages, and that he would then retire, with his converts, to some spot among more friendly tribes further north.

Among others signs of returning spring was the appearance of a herd of buffalo passing in the far distance, and as our provisions were again running short, Uncle Donald was compelled to allow the hunters to set off for the purpose of killing some of the animals. Hugh and I wanted to accompany them, but he would only allow Pierre, and Corney, and four of the most active red men to go on the expedition.

As soon as they set out, he sent off Red Squirrel to try and ascertain the whereabouts of the Blackfeet camp, with directions to come back should he discover that they were on the move.

We waited day after day for Red Squirrel's expected return, but he did not appear, and we began to have serious apprehensions that he had been captured.

The hunters, however, had come back with a good supply of buffalo meat, so that we should be well prepared in case we should be besieged.

At last, one evening as I was looking out towards the south, I saw several objects moving across the prairie. At first I thought that they might be deer or wolves, or even smaller game. One was leading considerably ahead of the rest. They were coming towards the fort. Besides the first I counted six others. I called the attention of my companion to them.

"They are men!" exclaimed Ponoko. "Those six are of my tribe; they are in pursuit of the first! He must run fast, or before he can reach the fort they will overtake him. Already I see by his movements that he is fatigued."

I had little doubt but that the leader was Red Squirrel. I asked Ponoko, whose keen eyes could distinguish his dress better than the rest of us could do.

"Yes, he is your young friend," he answered. "See, see! he is increasing his speed, he may still escape, and my people will go back disappointed. They will not dare to come within range of your rifles."

"Then we will go out and meet them!" I exclaimed, hurrying down. I told Uncle Donald what Ponoko had said. Taking our rifles, and buckling on our snow-shoes, Hugh, Alec, Pierre, Corney, and I hurried out of the fort, and set off running faster, I think, than we had ever run before, to meet the hard-pressed fugitive.

Once more his pursuers were gaining on him; before long their scalping knives might be about his head. He was the first to perceive us approaching, and it seemed to add fresh nerve to his legs. Soon afterwards the Blackfeet caught sight of us. The instant they did so they

sprang forward, making a last desperate effort to overtake our friend; but perceiving that we had rifles ready, they well knew that, even should they succeed, we should make them pay dearly for the act.

Giving up the chase, therefore, they stopped, and turning round, ran off at a rate which soon placed them beyond our reach.

In a few moments Red Squirrel was up to us, but so hard-pressed had he been that he was unable to tell us what had happened. We supported him, not without difficulty, to the fort, when his snow-shoes being taken off, had he not been resting in our arms, he would have sunk fainting to the ground. We delivered him over to his mother, who chafed his limbs, and used every other means she could devise for restoring his strength. It was some time before he could speak. He had ably fulfilled his mission, having watched the enemy's camp until the previous day, when finding that they were about to move northward, he had set off to bring us tidings of their approach.

He was, however, observed, and six of their fleetest runners had pursued him. Hour after hour he had continued his flight, though he confessed that, had we not come to his assistance, he should, he believed, have fallen even in sight of the fort.

That night was an anxious one. Frequent alarms were raised that the enemy were upon us. At length the morning broke, and as the sun rose above the eastern prairie his beams fell on the plumed heads and trappings of several hundred warriors, who came on, confident in their numbers, and believing that our small garrison would easily become their prey.

They halted when considerably beyond range of our weapons, and having sung a war-song, gave utterance to one of those terrible whoops which are said to paralyse even horses and cattle. Ponoko had in the meantime, dressed himself in the costume in which he had been discovered when lying wounded, and the gate being opened, he sallied forth with feeble steps, very different from his once elastic tread. The gates of the fort were closed behind him, and he proceeded towards the warriors drawn up in battle array. We watched him as he approached them. At length he stopped and stretching out his arms, addressed his

people.

The effect on his tribe of what he said was almost electrical. They looked upon him as one restored from the dead, for they had long mourned him as lost. We watched him until he was among them, when, after some time, he reappeared, leading by the hand a person who, though dressed in Indian costume, we saw was a white man. Together they approached the fort, when the gate was opened to receive them.

The stranger gazed round with looks of astonishment, evidently endeavouring to find the words to express himself. At last he said—

“I can scarcely believe my senses. A few minutes ago I was a prisoner, and threatened by the Indians with a cruel death should they again be defeated.”

“We are truly thankful that you have escaped,” answered Uncle Donald, advancing and taking his hand.

“You owe your preservation to our friend Ponoko here.”

“I am indeed grateful to him,” said the stranger. “He preserved my life when so many of my companions were massacred. He has ever since continued my protector, but when it was supposed that he was killed, his people threatened to avenge his death by murdering me. Grateful as I am to him and to you, I am restored to liberty a ruined and a childless man, while I know not what has become of my poor wife, who was providentially absent from the settlement at the time of the massacre, but will have supposed that I, as well as our little girl, shared the common fate,” answered Mr Kennedy, for such he told us was his name.

“Should your child have escaped, do you believe you would recognise her?” asked Uncle Donald.

“Among a hundred!” answered the stranger. “I should know her, however much grown, from her likeness to her mother.”

As he spoke my sisters and Rose approached. The stranger glanced at the group, then rushing forward, gazed earnestly into Rose’s countenance.

“You would not deceive me!” he exclaimed. “Say, how did this young girl come to be with you? Rose, do you recollect me? Speak, my child, are you not Rose Kennedy?”

“Kennedy! Kennedy!” murmured Rose, looking greatly astonished and somewhat frightened. “Kennedy! Yes, that was my papa’s name.”

“You are my own child!” he exclaimed, kissing her brow and cheeks again and again while he held her in his arms.

The lookers-on were greatly moved. It was some time, however, before Rose could fully comprehend that the stranger was her father, and that she belonged to him rather than to Uncle Donald.

Mr Kennedy now eagerly inquired whether we could give him any tidings of his wife.

“Extraordinary as it may seem, I think I am able to do so,” said my father. “On stopping at the Red River settlement on our way hither, I met a Mrs Kennedy, whose husband and child had, I heard, been murdered by the Indians.”

I should like to prolong my history, but I must be brief. Ponoko, after remaining a day or two with us, went among his tribe, and persuaded them that it would be to their advantage to live peaceably with their neighbours. Not many years after they entered into a treaty with the Canadian Government, and the fearful state of warfare which for so long a period had existed in that fair northern region almost entirely ceased.

We were very, very sorry to lose Rose, but Mr Kennedy was, of course, most anxious to join his wife. As soon as he could travel he set off for the Red River. He promised to return and bring his wife and Rose with him, having accepted an invitation from Uncle Donald to settle at Clearwater.

In course of time, Hugh, Alec, and I established in its neighbourhood several fairly flourishing farms, of one of which Hugh, with Rose as its mistress, became the owner. My father laboured for many years among the heathen, greatly aided by Ponoko.

The entire country, including the Rocky Mountains over which we passed,

now forms part of the great Canadian dominion, and probably, before another generation has passed away, the whole region, from east to west, will be the home of happy and flourishing communities.

The End.

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