



Water-Animals

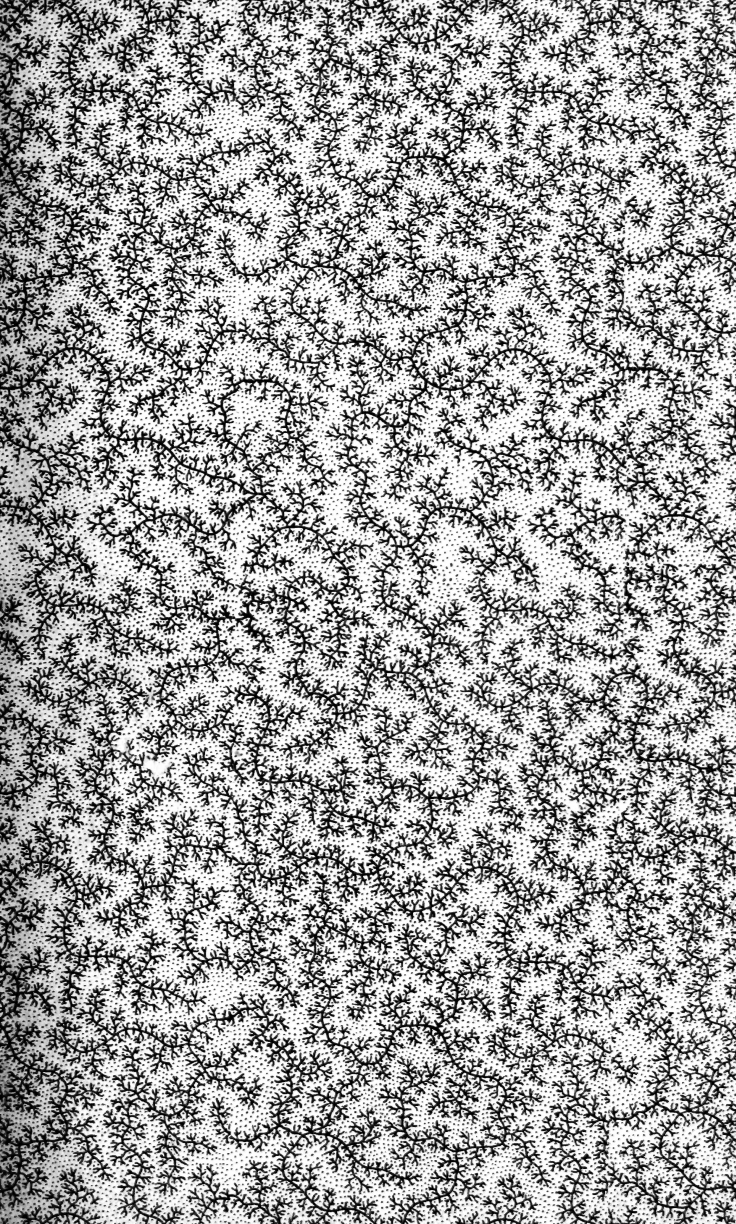


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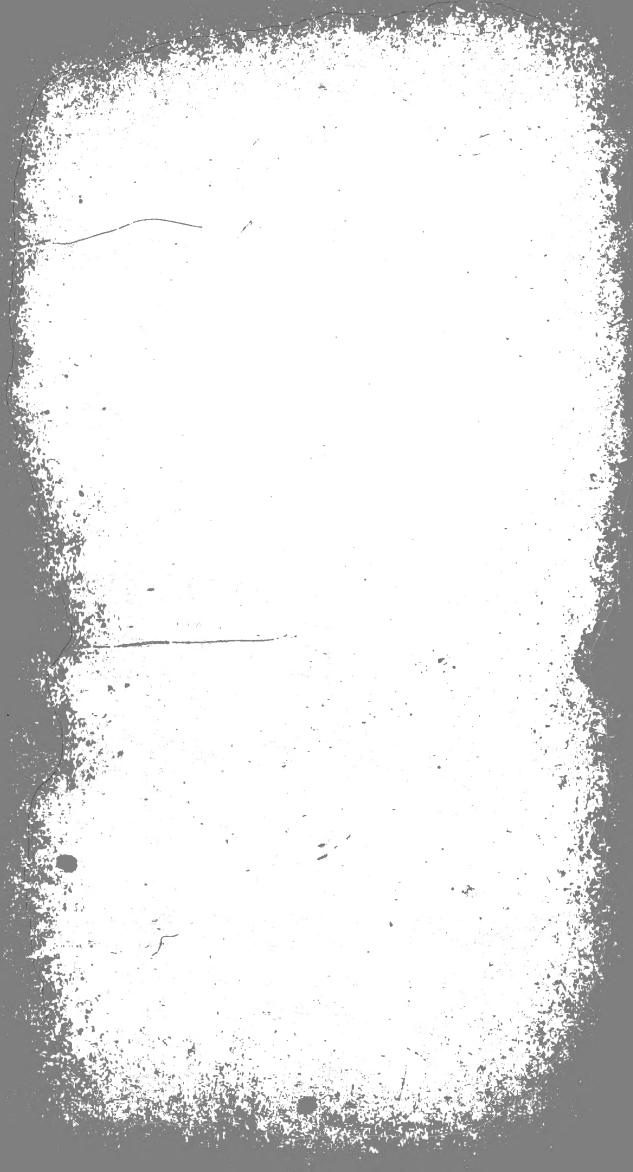
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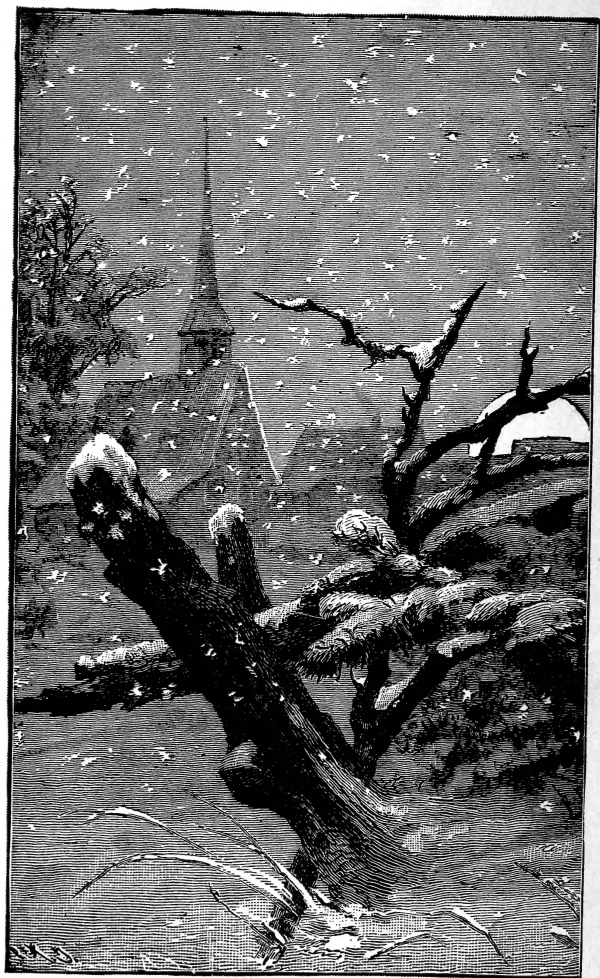












Frontispiece.

WATER-ANIMALS.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "BIRDS AND THEIR WAYS," "FLYERS AND CRAWLERS,"
"FLOWER-TALKS AT ELMRIDGE," ETC.

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PREFACE.

THE volumes of this ELMRIDGE SERIES do not claim to be scientific treatises. They are merely familiar conversations about the particular objects included in the respective books. Much information is given, however, in this chatty way. In the present volume many interesting facts are brought out concerning Water-Animals. Young people and children will enjoy reading the book, and cannot but be profited by what they learn in its pages.

It is certainly important that in the midst of the great amount of fiction that the young are now reading there should be some place also for the learning of the wonderful things of nature—our Father's handiwork.



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WATER-ANIMALS.

CHAPTER I.

ON SKATES.

EVERY one said that it was a very cold winter. Snow and ice reigned supreme, and it seemed much more convenient in going out to fall down than to stand upright. People became so accustomed to tumbling that no one thought of feeling mortified by such an accident.

In many places the unusual amount of snow did a great deal of damage, hindered travel and interfered with business; and in the cities especially it was not looked upon as a blessing. But God's blessings often come in disguise, and in some shape or other this unwelcome snow may have been one of them.

There was a great deal of shivering in poor, half-warmed houses and by poor, half-clothed children; but at Elmridge it seemed like summer within doors, while outside the gracefully sweeping evergreen trees laden with snow, and the vines and bushes coated with ice, the white hills in the distance with blue and purple shadows on them, and the clear, steel-blue sky over all, made a beautiful picture.

Malcolm, now a tall boy of thirteen, seemed really proud of the cold and announced every morning how high—or rather how low—the thermometer was; while a pond near the Elmridge property, that produced beautiful lilies and other wild-flowers along its borders in summer, was carefully watched for skating, and “lots of fun” counted on when Thomas should pronounce it all right. Malcolm had a magnificent sledge, rather than a sled, in which he often pushed Miss Harson or his sisters over the ice; but he declared that it needed a couple of Eskimo dogs to make it just the thing.

There was a great commotion down at

the pond—an excitement which had begun at the house quite early in the morning—one day near the last of January, and the principal cause of this excitement was the fact of its being Miss Harson's birthday. An immense box that had mysteriously found its way to her door during the night proved a complete surprise, not only to the young lady, but to some smaller people, in whose charge it had remained for two or three days past. When the box was opened Miss Harson looked as if she were going to cry, while Clara and Edith fairly shrieked with amazement.

Papa Kyle was at the bottom of it all, and the double surprise gave him a great deal of enjoyment.

To the little girls it seemed very old indeed to be twenty-one, and they wondered how it felt; but Malcolm said grandly,

“Pooh! that's only eight years older than *I* am!”

They all took their first glance at Miss Harson on that eventful morning with some awe, as if they expected to see quite a change in her appearance; but she looked

just as young and smiling as ever, and laughed and bore her sentence of sixty-three kisses, twenty-one apiece, as well as she could.

“What can there be in this famous box?” she asked as with flushed cheeks and somewhat tumbled hair she finally emerged from the tangle of children. “And where has it come from?”

Malcolm proceeded to untie it, and there lay a beautifully-folded brown mass, while a dainty card announced that it was “For dear Miss Harson, on her twenty-first birthday, from her loving pupils.” A beautiful sealskin sacque was taken out; and underneath were two smaller ones, with the label, “Clara and Edith, from Papa.”

“Why, we’re not grown up,” exclaimed Clara, as no one else seemed able to say anything. “I thought that only young ladies had sealskin sacques.”

There was a knock at the door, and Jane entered with a round, long box, which she set down before Miss Harson as she tried not to laugh: “Mr. Kyle’s compliments, ma’am.”

Out came three dainty sealskin muffs that just matched the sacques.

Jane retired only to return again with another box, which she announced with "Master Malcolm's compliments, ma'am;" and this time there were jaunty-looking caps, or turbans, to match the other things. The paper said, "From Malcolm to the three young ladies—all ready for the ice."

"Why, Malcolm!" exclaimed his governess in dismay, "how could you do this?"

"It was easy enough, ma'am," replied the laughing boy. "Papa gave me a lot of money one day, and said that I could do as I liked with it, but he thought the best thing to do was to get you three young ladies a sealskin cap apiece, to go with the sacques and muffs, and then you could go out with comfort in very cold weather. Papa went with me, and I chose the caps, so you see it was really *my* present, after all."

"I never doubted it, my dear boy," said Miss Harson, affectionately, "but this really is too much."

Two little figures were now fully arrayed to their intense satisfaction, and there was

a general chorus for Miss Harson to do the same. The soft sealskin caps were very becoming, and Malcolm admired and complimented them all.

"Papa," said Edith as the two sisters made their way to their father just as he was starting for the city, "we're ever so much obliged for these lovely sacques and muffs, and we've thanked Malcolm for the caps; but Miss Harson says there's too much. I believe she's crying, too."

"Oh, Edie!" exclaimed Clara. But before she could get any further Mr. Kyle said, with a very funny look in his eyes,

"If there is too much of it, we can have some taken off. Do you think she meant the sacque?"

"Why, it just fits her," replied Edith in a perplexed tone, "and so does everything. But she did not laugh a bit. And oh, papa, she does look *so* sweet!"

Mr. Kyle laughed, if Miss Harson hadn't, for this curious jumble of Edith's, who was very much in earnest, sounded more amusing than she meant it to be. And then papa became in a minute quite grave

again, and asked Edith in a very sober way if she thought Miss Harson, when she said there was too much, wanted them to take back the muff or the cap, or both?

Then Edith made a rush at her father, and, burying her head in his overcoat, said, "*Now, papa!*" in a very plaintive tone.

"There! there, little girl!" with several pats and a hearty kiss; "be off with your nonsense.—And now, Clara, for 'a bear-hug,' and then make Miss Harson smile, if you can, over her misfortune, and get her down to the pond."

Miss Harson did smile, for this command, repeated by Clara and the earnestness with which she delivered it, amused her very much; but she replied quite firmly,

"*After lessons,*" and had the fascinating sealskin garments put out of sight for the present. She said, laughingly, that she could not help being twenty-one and having a birthday, but she *could* help neglecting her duties. There was a shorter session than usual, but the lessons were very thoroughly attended to, and after lunch a merry party started for the pond.

There was a cold sting in the air, but that did not matter much to the figures wrapped in sealskin, as it only painted their cheeks with the brightest carnation and made their eyes dance more brilliantly than before. Malcolm declared that *he* was dressed in gossamer in comparison, and drew vivid pictures of a frozen boy to be carried home when the fun was over; but a glance at his sturdy figure and heavy overcoat, his thick gloves and fur ear-flaps to the Glengarry cap, was quite reassuring.

Miss Harson skated very gracefully, and the little girls were past their first fear of the ice; Malcolm felt very proud of his party, whom he considered entirely under his protection; and perhaps he showed this a little too plainly. At least, some rough, unpleasant-looking boys, who were doing what Malcolm called "cutting up shines" at the other end of the pond, appeared to think so, for they called out mockingly, "Stuck up!" and said something about "girls dressed in bear-skins," not being acquainted with seals.

Malcolm did a great deal of scowling in

reply, and matters were getting rather serious when suddenly there was a shriek from Edith, who had twisted her ankle, and down she went upon the ice. Several of the boys scampered off, as though afraid of being punished for the accident, but two or three of the larger ones came up in a shamefaced way and offered their help. It ended in their carrying the little girl home in a very gentle and tender fashion, while Malcolm ran on before to stop at the doctor's.

It was only a slight twist, not a sprain, and the patient would be "as good as new" in two or three days; meanwhile Thomas could carry her up and down stairs, and every one would help to make her as happy as possible.

Miss Harson did not forget the boys, who had shown themselves so much better than they appeared at first, but, taking them into the warm kitchen, she had some hot lemonade made for them, to which Kitty added generous slices of pie and cake that seemed to give great satisfaction. Having found out their names and where they lived, the young

lady said a few kind words to each and then returned to her little flock.

The boys pronounced her prettier than a picture; Kitty assured them that she was as good as she was pretty; and as to being "proud," people that hadn't a thing to be proud of were a great deal prouder. When the visitors left Elmridge, it was with the feeling that "stuck-up quality" were not so stuck up, after all; except Malcolm: they had not forgiven his scowl.

Miss Harson was talking to him about that very thing, and warning him that his quickness to resent an offence would get him as well as others into trouble. But for Edie's fall, it might have done so that very afternoon.

"Poor little Blossom!" he said, kissing his sister tenderly; "I'm sorry you got hurt, and I'd feel worse if I had anything to do with it. But, Miss Harson, you did not see the fellows as I did, and you don't know how aggravating they were—that Sim Jute especially, who grins from ear to ear at every one who is dressed at all decently."

“Wasn’t he one of the three who carried Edie home?” asked his governess.

Malcolm looked a little confused as he “believed he was,” and Miss Harson continued: “I do not excuse rudeness, as you know of old, but there is great allowance to be made for such boys. They are not brought up to respect the rights of others, and when a party of warmly-dressed, prosperous-looking people come to invade what they probably consider their own domain, it reminds them of their own scanty clothing and perhaps empty stomachs, and they feel angry and injured. I do not say that this feeling is right, because it is not, but it only adds fuel to the fire to meet it with threatening looks.”

“I don’t believe,” said Malcolm, still rather unsubdued, “that we can have any more fun on the pond because of those loafers; and I think it’s a shame!”

“The three ‘loafers’ who carried Edith home,” replied the young lady, “behaved very well in the kitchen, where they seemed very grateful for some refreshments; and I do not think we shall have any more trou-

ble with them. But Kitty, you see, didn't look a bit cross when I took them in."

"Somebody else didn't either," was the prompt reply. "Oh, Miss Harson, why can't I smile like you, instead of scowling like me?"

"You are an absurd boy," said his governess, laughing at this nonsense, "but I do not despair yet of your learning the power of the 'soft answer' in look as well as in word."

Meanwhile, Edith was comfortably settled on the sofa, with Clara hanging over her in a very devoted way. She rather enjoyed being a sort of invalid, without feeling ill and having disagreeable doses to take.

"Well," said Miss Harson, kissing the rosy cheek that was turned to the fire, "what is all this thinking about?"

"I don't see," was the reply, "why they're *sealed* skins. Are they all sealed up, like letters, when they make 'em into *sacques*?"

"You funny little thing!" cried Malcolm, while every one looked very smiling.

But Edith did not like being called "a little thing" when "she was nine, *any way*,"

as she said with some triumph, and it seemed to be getting on very respectably toward twenty-one.

“Don’t hurry, dear, to get old,” said her governess, affectionately; “and ‘little thing’ is a pet name, you know. If you were really big, I couldn’t take you on my lap.”

This seemed to be some consolation to the child, but the “sealed skins” needed further inquiring into, and Miss Harson continued:

“The name is ‘sealskin,’ Edie, not ‘sealed skin;’ and the seal is a very interesting animal that lives most of the time in the water.”

“Oh!” said the little girl, in great surprise, “I should think it would spoil the pretty fur to be in the water. How does it ever get dry?”

“Why, that is quite a long story,” was the smiling reply, “and it *does* seem strange for a fur animal to live in the water. But I promised to tell you in our next talks about some water-animals, and how would you like me to begin to-night with our friend the seal?”

“It seems an excellent plan,” said Mr. Kyle, who appeared just then in the doorway, “but would there be any objection to dining first?”

And, picking up Edith in his arms, he led the laughing party into the dining-room, where they were soon all very busily engaged.

CHAPTER II.

ABOUT SEALS.

“**D**OES the seal look like a whale?” asked Edith with great interest when the little party were assembled again for the promised “talk.”

“No, dear,” was the reply, “it does not look in the least like it, and only resembles that huge mammal in being an animal instead of a fish. These pictures will give you a very good idea of it; and you see, for one thing, that the seal has a queer little round head, while a whale’s head is sometimes half the size of its whole body.”

“And it has such great big round eyes!” said Clara.

“And a kind of moustache,” said Malcolm; “isn’t that funny?”

“Are these *wings* in front?” said Edith; “they don’t look like legs.”

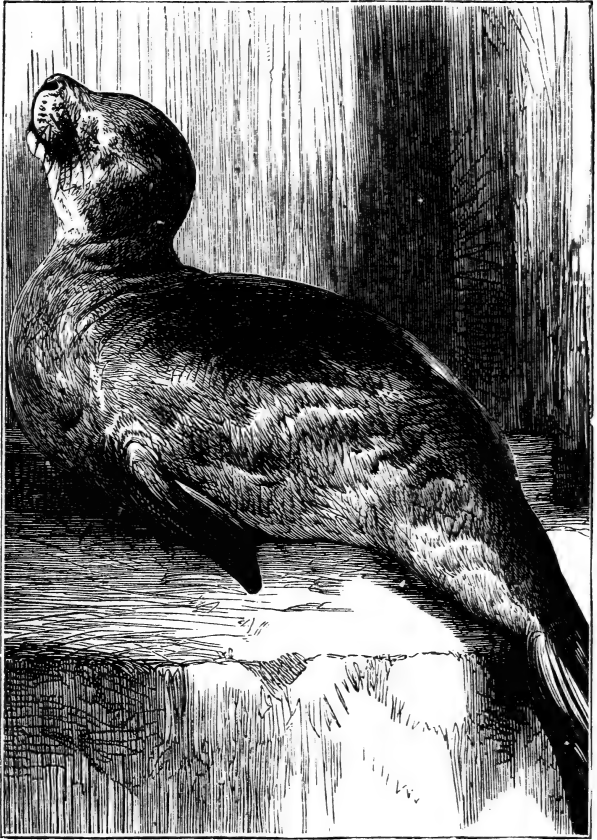
“No, Edie, they are not wings, for the seal doesn't fly. They are more like paws, but they are often called ‘flippers.’”

“There's a tail,” said Clara, “like a fish.”

“No, dear; not a tail, but just another pair of flippers. Only fishes have tails of that kind, and the seal is not a fish.”

“But the seals live entirely in the water, don't they, Miss Harson?” asked Malcolm.

“Not entirely,” was the reply, “although their chief amusements are swimming and diving; but they can also get along, after a fashion, on land. These queer flippers, which look very much like flat gloves without any hands in them, are really arms and legs; and a very interesting modern naturalist says that, in looking at the drawings of the bones in a seal's flipper and an animal's fore leg you will find that you can match every bone of the one by a similar bone of the other. The shapes of the bones, to be sure, are altered to suit the varied uses of swimming in the water and walking on the land, but all the parts of the arm and hand (or fore foot) of any other mammal are seen also in the flipper of our



SEAL.

subject—only there they are shortened, thickened and covered with a membrane which converts them into a paddle instead of a paw.”

This had a very comical sound, as if a seal were a live boat provided with all the necessary belongings for skimming through the water.

“He is a very curious animal,” continued Miss Harson, “and to become properly acquainted with him we shall have to travel thousands of miles and follow him into the cold, dreary waste of ice and water where he loves to dwell, or meet him on some barren shore where, if not so forbidding as this, it is desolate enough.”

The children were delighted with the prospect, and declared themselves ready to travel anywhere.

“We will first see what we can learn about seals at home,” was the smiling reply; “and, first, tell me what you think of them from the pictures.”

“They’re *slippery*-looking,” said Edith, “and fat.”

“They *are* slippery-looking because they

are fat and have such wonderfully smooth skins ; and their eyes are immense in proportion to those of other animals. They have too a very soft expression, and seals are said to shed tears like human beings."

"I wonder if any one ever really *saw* them cry?" said Clara.

"What do they cry for," asked Malcolm, "when they look so comfortable?"

"They have a great many troubles," replied his governess, "which *we* should think well worth crying for. They don't like, for instance, to be wounded and killed, or to have their little ones knocked on the head and carried away before their eyes."

"But that is cruel and wicked," said Edith ; "only bad people do such things."

"The people who do it, dear, are not bad because of that, for they want the skins and sometimes the flesh ; and little girls, as well as big ones, who like sealskin sacques and muffs and caps, are really the ones to blame."

Edith laughed a little as she patted the soft muff that lay beside her, and Malcolm said that she was fairly caught.

“Are the big round eyes brown?” asked Clara; “they look so in the pictures.”

“They are often described as brown,” replied her governess, “and sometimes they are said to be ‘of the greenish hue of the sea.’ The seal has a moustache and whiskers like a cat, and its fur coat is, as we know, wonderfully soft and silky. Were it not for this pretty coat the animals would not be so continually hunted and killed. We are told that a great many years ago seals were found all along our shores, and were quite common in New York Bay; but they have been hunted far beyond the coast of Maine, and are getting farther away all the time. How much it would add to the pleasure of a voyage down the bay, or a ramble along the wave-polished beach, if we could see, here and there, trim brown animals creep up from the water on some projecting rock and gaze at us with no fear in their mild eyes while shaking the drops of water from their coats!”

Of course the little Kyles thought so too, and they felt very much aggrieved that the seals had been driven out of sight.

“Seals have a great many enemies besides the hunters,” continued the young lady; “sword-fish and sharks and polar bears are all fond of seal-meat, and as our smooth brown friends would be drowned if they remained long under water, these enemies have a fine chance to capture them when they come up to breathe.”

“Why, Miss Harson,” said Malcolm, “isn’t it very funny that animals which live in the water can get drowned?”

“Not when you remember that all mammals—to which class the seals belong—breathe air as we do, instead of breathing water as fishes do. A seal can scarcely hold its breath over fifteen minutes, and even that is not comfortable. It is necessary, therefore, for these creatures in the Arctic seas, where mainly is their home, to be able to reach the air, even in spite of the sheet of thick ice which for half the year covers the whole ocean. But in large bodies of ice there are always some holes, no matter how cold the weather may be, and these holes afford the seals of that region an opportunity to come to the surface

to breathe. There are some species, however, that keep round, smooth-edged air-holes open for themselves by continually breaking away the young ice as fast as it is formed: these holes are never very large at the surface, sometimes only large enough to let one animal poke his nose up through; they are much like chimneys, indeed, for the ice may sometimes be a hundred feet thick."

"*A hundred feet!*" exclaimed Clara; "why, that's thicker than this whole house!"

"It certainly is," was the smiling reply, "for it is about twice as thick as this house is wide. Just think of being way down *under* such a mass of ice; and then when the poor seal concludes that he cannot wait another minute for some fresh air to breathe, and gets his head through the hole, thinking how delicious fresh air is, he suddenly catches sight of a dreadful mouth with great fangs in it, ugly little red eyes and a white fur collar, and knows, often when it is too late, his cruel and persevering enemy the polar bear! If only he could get away! but he *must* breathe. If



POLAR BEAR AND SEAL.

it isn't a bear, it's a shark or a sword-fish, which is just about as bad. The sword-fish has a very pleasant way of tipping over a cake of ice when he sees a seal on it, so that the poor animal slips off, and then the cruel sword-fish soon makes an end of him."

"I wish *he* could be made an end of!" exclaimed Edith, indignantly.

"He is, dear, quite often; and his bad manners prevent him from being much regretted in ocean society. Sometimes he meets his end by running his sword into the side of a ship and leaving it there, for his usual habit is to attack any obstacle that comes in his path."

"Well," said Malcolm, "I'm glad the ugly fellow gets killed that way."

"But he doesn't always: sometimes he just breaks his sword off and goes on again. The poor seal really has a very hard time of it, for the Arctic wolves and foxes, the raven, and probably also the great snowy owl, attack the young before they are able to defend themselves or escape. These enemies are so active that the heavy and

awkward parents have hard work to defend their babies."

"Oh, Miss Harson!" said Edith, "do please tell us about the little baby seals—they must be *so* fat and cunning!"

"All seals are fat, dear—'as fat as a seal' is a well-known expression—but the baby seals are not so fat in proportion as their parents. They are, however, very pretty and playful little creatures, and the young of the harp seal—which is found in great numbers on the coasts of Greenland and Newfoundland—are white and woolly-looking, sometimes with a tinge of gold. But they are allowed to keep this pretty dress only a few weeks, and their next coat is of gray, coarse fur. Then they are called 'ragged jackets' by the inhabitants, while the youngest babies are 'white coats.' By the time they are two or three years old they have turned brown, and have black marks like crescents or harps on their backs, from which they get the name of 'harp seals.' They are now quite grown up."

"The dear little white ones must be ever

so much prettier," said Clara, regretfully; "I wish we could see one."

"I do not think," replied her governess, "that there has ever been a baby seal on exhibition; and these Arctic infants might find our coldest winters too warm for them. They are born on floating fields of ice, only one baby to a family, but with plenty of little woolly companions all around them, and their chief amusement seems to be squealing and barking. They keep up a constant commotion in this way, and can be heard by passing ships a long distance off. When the babies are very young, the mothers leave them on the ice and go off in search of food, coming back frequently to look after the little ones; and although there are thousands of the small white, squealing creatures, which to you and me would seem to be precisely alike, and all are moving about more or less, the mother never makes a mistake nor feeds any bleating baby until she has found her own."

"But how can she tell which one is hers?" asked Edith.

"She seems to know by a sort of in-

stinct, and her constant care for her woolly baby is something wonderful. There are dreadful storms in the cold regions where the seals are found—storms that scatter great masses of ice and jam them violently against anything with which they come in contact; and many large and small seals are drowned or crushed to pieces. On such occasions it is touching to watch a mother seal struggling to get her baby to a safe place, either by trying to swim with it between her fore flippers or by driving it before her and tossing it forward with her nose.”

“Don’t the little ones swim themselves,” asked Malcolm, “as soon as they are born?”

“Not a bit of it,” was the reply; “on the contrary, they are very much afraid of the water, and cling to their ice-nurseries as long as their mothers will let them. But you see they have got to learn to protect themselves in the water, and a baby’s mother often pushes him off the ice when he is ten or twelve days old. He screams with fright, and scrambles out as fast as he

can. The next day he tries it again, but finds himself very awkward and soon tired; the third day he does better; and before long he can dive and leap, turn somersaults (if he is a bearded seal) and vanish under the ice the instant danger threatens. But he had to learn how, to begin with, like any other mammal."

"Miss Harson," asked Edith, with a very puzzled face, "what is a *bearded* seal?"

"A ferocious species, Edie," replied her governess, "which is very large and has a particularly thick skin. The Greenlanders make their boats of it, and also very durable soles for their boots, as well as harness for their dogs. It will fight the hunters when pursued, and whenever it has a chance will inflict a terrible bite. There are several kinds of seals, you see, but the most valuable are the small fur-seals of Alaska, with which we shall try to become better acquainted."

CHAPTER III.

THE SEAL COUNTRY.

“**W**HY, it's *thousands* of miles away!” exclaimed Malcolm, as the children were eagerly looking over a map of the Western Territories and Alaska; “how do you ever get there, Miss Harson?”

“*I don't get there at all,*” was the laughing reply; “and I should be very sorry to undertake it for all the sealskin sacques that ever were made. But if you are bent on going to Alaska, Malcolm, you must step down to California, a short journey by rail of a week or so; then you take a steamer from San Francisco, go up the Straits of Fuca, and through a broad channel, with Washington Territory on one side and Vancouver Island on the other. Finally, you get to Sitka, one of the largest towns of Alaska, and from Sitka to the Seal Islands. ‘All the way,’ says a traveler

who does not seem to admire the climate, 'you may generally find it raining about as easily as it could possibly do if care had been taken to make it oil instead of water.' The fogs too are described as thick as molasses, through which it is almost impossible to steer a vessel."

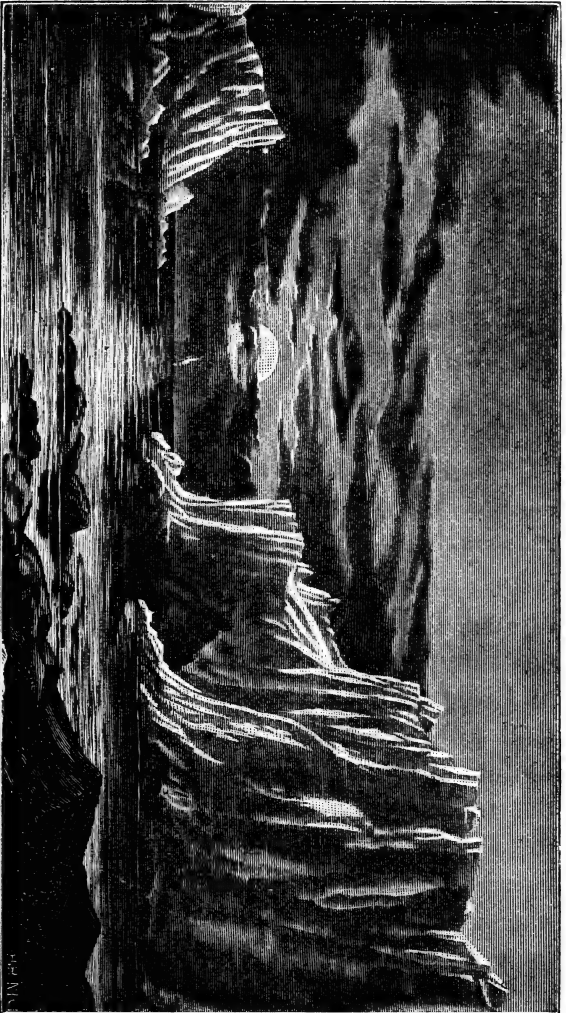
"What a horrid place it must be!" said Clara in great disgust; "*I* don't want to go to Alaska."

"Nor I, either," added Edith.

"Well, *I* do," said Malcolm stoutly; "I want to catch seals and things. But I can't go alone, you see—there's no fun in that; and if you don't all come with me, you'll get none of the furs."

"I think," said Miss Harson, "that we shall have to go, at least in imagination; and when things seem very bad indeed, we can comfort ourselves with the thought that we are not really there. We can understand our subject so much better if we explore Alaska a little."

"Well," said Edith, "I shall put on my sealskin sacque and cap and muff to travel in."



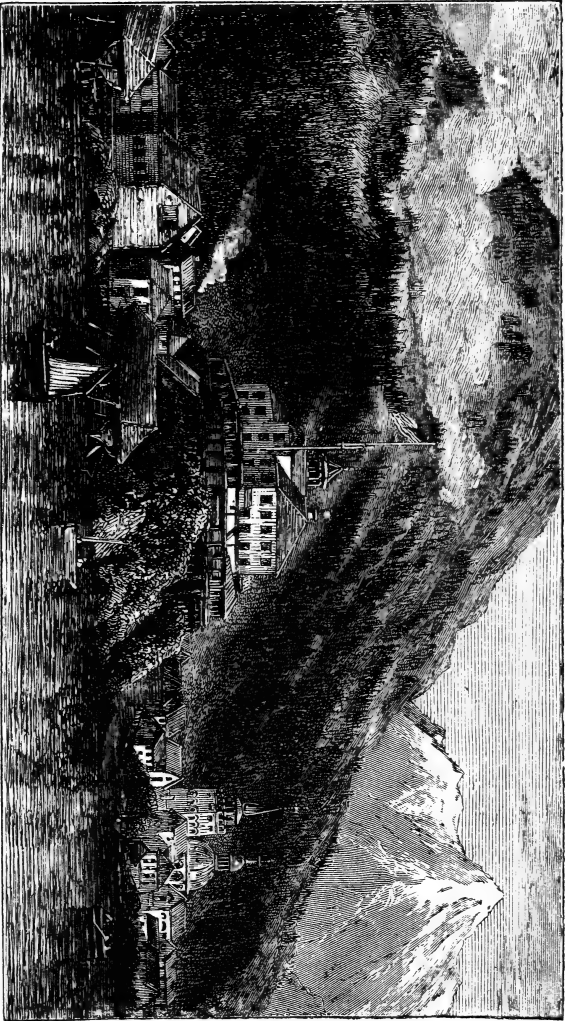
MOONLIGHT SCENE: NORTHERN ALASKA.

H. M.

“And have all the seals after you,” replied Clara, “claiming their skins. Don’t you remember Miss Harson’s story of *Borrowed Plumes?*”

“The best way,” observed Malcolm, “would be to dress up in all these things, and then go and sit in the summer-house, where there is plenty of snow on the roof and all around, while Miss Harson is telling us about Alaska. It would make it seem so real.”

“There is not always snow in Alaska,” replied his governess, smiling; “how can there be when it is raining? Alaska is a large place, with a great many islands around it, and one of these, Kodiak, has trees and grass on it, also native potatoes and wild cranberries. Both vegetables and fruit are very small, but much better than nothing. The mountains of Kodiak, says the traveler, ‘rise into view at fifty miles’ distance from the harbor, presenting an exceedingly rugged and picturesque appearance. The foreground is barren and cold-looking, with sharp ridges and peaks of snow in the rear. As we approach, forests



SITKA.

of scraggy spruce become visible, and we are told to take a good look at them, because we will see no timber to the west and north. Sitka, the old Russian capital of Alaska, is situated upon a swampy island having the sunless, very wet climate common to this coast; which does not sound like a region of perpetual snow."

"Why is it the *Russian* capital?" asked Malcolm.

"Because Alaska formerly belonged to Russia, and it is only separated from that country, as you see on the map, by Behring's Strait. The United States bought it from Russia in 1867, and some one said that 'we got enough land, or water and rocks, for the money.' The land is represented as being 'mostly set up on end,' and yet it is supposed that there are at least 561,000 square miles of it."

"Are the people who live there nice?" asked Clara.

"You would scarcely think them so, dear, in any sense of the word. There are several kinds of people in Alaska: the Aleuts, who live on the long chain of islands known

as the Aleutian Islands, the Indians in the neighborhood of Sitka (meaning not our North American Indians, but a species of Eskimo) and those of Alaska proper. Be-



ALASKAN GIRL, TATTOOED.

sides these there are a few hundred white people, such as traders and agents, and half-breeds. Shall I tell you what these Aleutians look like, and how they live?—Remember, Clara, as a general thing they

are not clean, and therefore cannot be 'nice' companions."

This did not frighten Miss Harson's audience at all; and, if the truth must be told, they looked very much interested.

"I suppose they are heathens?" said Malcolm.

"No," was the unexpected reply; "they are not heathens at all, as most of them profess the faith of the Russian-Greek Church. But they are careless and superstitious, and much given to feasts and dances on Sunday afternoon and evening. The native Aleuts are not handsome, being, like all Eskimos, of low stature, with small dark eyes far apart, broad and high cheekbones, coarse, straight black hair, brownish-yellow complexion and small hands and feet.

"When first discovered, these people were living in large dirt-houses partly underground, like 'root-cellars,' with the difference only of having the entrance through a hole in the top and centre, going in and out on a rude ladder or notched timber post. Some of the houses were very large; one of them being eighty-

seven yards long and forty yards wide; and an old woman said that when her people lived there they called it 'a handsome house.' Sometimes a hundred Aleuts would live in one of these holes in the ground, all crowding together for warmth, as it is so hard to get any kind of fuel in Alaska.

"The 'barabkie' is a great improvement on this cellar residence, as it is only partly underground, and is walled up on the sides and roofed over with dirt and sods and thatched with grass, a small window placed at one end and a small door at the other, which opens first into a low, dark alley, which in turn communicates with the living-room by another small door. This living-room is not large, seldom over ten or twelve feet square, and generally has a hard earthen floor; the walls are neatly boarded up, and sometimes painted and embellished with pictures. In this room the Aleut spends the greater portion of his time when at home and not engaged in hunting; he shuts himself up in it with his family, and builds at irregular intervals

a brief hot fire in the little Russian stove, and either drinks cup after cup of tea all day, or else stupefies himself with 'quass,' a sort of native beer, and lies back on his bed in dull, stupid enjoyment for hours, and even days. Many of these huts are dry and cleanly, but the greater number are damp and filthy, reeking necessarily with strong smells."

Malcolm declared that the tip of Clara's nose was plainly curled up as she said in great disgust, "They are not nice at all, and I don't like to visit them. Let us go away, Miss Harson, please."

"Presently, dear," was the reply; "we need not, at least, make a very long call inside the 'barabkie.' You will probably like this little frame house better, as it looks as though it might have been built almost anywhere around us. Such houses are found only on the Seal Islands, where they have been erected by the Alaska Commercial Company, a cottage to each family. There are only about four hundred people altogether on the islands. These Seal Islanders, who work for the company and have a fair

proportion of the profit on sealskins, are so much better off than the other inhabitants of Alaska that they are called the 'rich Aleuts' by their less fortunate neighbors. They are not at all barbarous, and are civil and polite to one another as well as to the traders. It is only when under the influence of beer or liquor that they lose their naturally amiable dispositions and fall into bad repute."

"But why do the white people who take care of them and build them houses," asked Malcolm, "let them have things to drink?"

"They do not 'let' them," said Miss Harson, "as they try their best to prevent it, both for the sake of the natives and for their usefulness in catching the fur animals from which they derive a large income. But the Aleuts manufacture their intoxicating drinks very slyly from sugar, flour and other unpromising materials, so that it seems almost impossible to prevent it. Matters have improved, however, with better houses and greater cleanliness, and it is hoped that in time this vice will entirely disappear."

"Do they have anything nice to eat?" asked Edith.

"We should not think it nice, for there is no wood or coal to cook with; and instead of making bread, they depend on crackers, which they can buy at the company's stores. They have little besides, except tea and sugar, but they can catch fish and water-fowl, **and** then they are quite contented."

"But how can they make fires in stoves, Miss Harson," said Clara, "if there is nothing to burn?"

"I see," replied her governess, smiling, "that you are thinking of what I said about that living-room. It is just this way, Clara: the only fuel in Alaska, except what is brought there in vessels, is driftwood, which floats to them on the sea from the northward, and a viney sort of shrub called 'chik a-snik.'"

"I should never guess that meant *wood*," said Malcolm; "it sounds as if some one was sneezing."

Every one thought it a particularly funny word, but Miss Harson said that there were

probably a great many others in the same language just as funny.

“Native women go up to the mountains, where they gather the ‘timber,’ which is rolled into bundles like hay and carried down upon their backs. These women may be seen coming over the hills in single file loaded down with ‘chik-a-snik,’ like pack-trains in the mines. They boil tea-water with chik-a-snik for fuel, as that is the principal part of their cookery. Their fish also is prepared over it when not eaten raw.”

“Oh!” exclaimed Clara and Edith; “how *can* they eat raw fish?”

“Because they have been brought up to it from babyhood,” was the reply; “we should do the same thing if we had their training. You will be glad to hear that, much as you disapprove of the habits of the Aleuts, they do not eat grease and oil like the Eskimos. Besides, they are the most courageous and enduring of hunters, facing the roughest sea in a slight boat called a ‘bidarkie,’ and boldly attacking whatever game comes in their way.”

“Is the boat made of sealskin?” asked Malcolm.

“Partly, but it has a more substantial foundation than that. A frame, fifteen or twenty feet long, is made of narrow, light strips of wood lashed together with thongs of sealskin, and this frame is covered with skins of sea-lions from which the hair has been scraped. The seams are closed with grease, and as the entire frame is covered over, with the exception of one or two round hatches or holes for the paddlers to sit in, they have a craft tight and seaworthy. One or two and sometimes three men will go to sea in one of these frail barks, and, though the waves may dash over them, no water is shipped so long as the frame holds together. In addition to the paddlers who sit in the hatches, their wives and children are sometimes stowed away in the hold, so that they are entirely out of sight within the boat, lying between the feet and legs of the men. Fish and furs are similarly transported.”

The long, narrow boat, partly under the waves, did not look very attractive in the

picture which Miss Harson showed them ; but Malcolm thought it must be "great fun" to battle with the gale at sea as the two Aleuts were doing.

"Strange as it seems," continued the young lady, "there is on these islands 'a string,' as a traveler says, 'of smoking, grumbling volcanoes which stretches over fifteen hundred miles.' Some of these are constantly casting out fire, ashes and stones, but earthquakes have not been known there for a long time. There are other high mountains in Alaska which are not volcanic, and one grand river, the Yukon. Millions of the finest salmon run up this river in June."

"Aren't we going to hear about the other people, Miss Harson?" asked Edith, as the narrative seemed to have come to an end.

"Yes, dear," was the reply ; "you will hear a great deal about them when we have finished with the seals, for I suppose you mean the Eskimos, who live in the northern part of Alaska. We had a slight acquaintance, you will remember, with the Arctic Eskimos when we were learning

about those wonderful dogs in our talks on *Home Animals*. But those of Alaska are said to be a much finer race of men, and instead of having short, dumpy figures, they are taller and larger in every way. Their faces have more expression, and they seem to be full of fun and enjoyment; yet, with all this, there is a terrible lack about them.

“This is expressed in the words of one who has lived among them: ‘They have a decided and independent bearing, and are remarkably free and unconstrained in their meeting with white men; but they have proved utterly intractable in the hands of the missionaries, who have not been able, after years of persistent effort, to convert even a single family of them to enduring Christianity.’

“Was it not wonderful that they could look happy? Because they were not even like the heathens who have never heard of the true God.”

The little Kyles could not understand their being satisfied with such a miserable life.



AN ALASKAN CHIEF.

“They do not know that any other is better,” said Miss Harson; “and probably they pity the missionaries for spending their time in reading and praying when they might enjoy the delightful and profitable excitement of plunging through the waves after walruses and seals, with an occasional whale. For whale’s blubber and walrus-meat are their main dependence for food during the winter months; in June they begin to eat various kinds of fish, hair-seal meat, geese, ducks, auks and their eggs. But the seal- and whale-oil which they use freely with their food is always strong and rancid when it is poured out on their meat and mixed with their berries.”

“What nasty people they must be!” said Clara, looking as though she had been invited to an Eskimo dinner.

“Are they black?” asked Edith, a question she had been treasuring up ever since “their meeting with white men” was mentioned.

“No, dear,” replied her governess; “they are not black; yet neither are they quite white, as their complexions have a yellow

ESKIMOS WATCHING FOR SEALS.



tinge. They are very peculiar-looking, as the men and boys have a curious fashion of shaving the tops of their heads and combing the fringe of hair left in front over their foreheads like 'bangs.' The Aleuts dress like white men, but these Eskimos wear the dresses of bird and reindeer skins which they have always worn. The principal garment is a sort of frock-coat, or 'parkie,' as it is called; and this parkie, which is also worn by the women, is often very elegant, being made of fur and trimmed with white deerskin, which is often ornamented with colored feathers and embroidery. An ordinary one will have collar and cuffs of white dogskin, and for winter outdoor wear there is a hood of the same white fur, which gives the wearer a queer, fantastic appearance.

"An Eskimo summer-house is rather an odd affair, and not at all like our idea of going out of town. About the first of April the Eskimo hunter leaves his winter encampment, taking his family and few bits of furniture on his dog-sledge, and goes to some locality where he expects to find

seals abound. Arrived there, he cuts out square blocks of hard snow, piles them up into a round hut with a domed roof, clearing away the snow from the inside down to the hard ground or ice surface. Over this hut he throws water, which in freezing cements all the blocks together, and then he has a good tight house, as warm as though made of stone as soon as he has built his fire. This done, he and his family are as comfortable as if they were at their winter home; and if his hunting is successful, he is contented and happy.

“Miss Harson,” said Malcolm, with great enthusiasm, “I’ll be an Eskimo hunter and build a snow-house for us all to live in down by the pond.”

“I have no objection to your being an Eskimo hunter,” replied his governess, laughing, “so long as you hunt within a safe distance of Elmridge; but I have a decided objection to living in a snow-hut.”

“We’ll all get on fire,” said Edith.

“From the snow?” asked her brother.

“Edith supposed that you meant to make a fire in the hut,” said Miss Harson; “but

this would be worse than the risk of taking cold."

"I should think it would," said Malcolm, "as the house would melt down if it didn't burn down. But, Miss Harson, I've been thinking of something."

"What is your thought like?" asked the young lady, with a smile at the boy's beaming face.

"Why," rather hesitatingly, "I thought that—perhaps— Well, the boys down there at Long Meadow might act better if they had a little fun sometimes, and so—"

"I see," as a soft hand was laid caressingly on his shoulder; "and my boy wants to do a little missionary work on the pond, and let those less-favored boys have the benefit of it."

"They'd like the snow-hut," said Malcolm, looking up brightly, "and perhaps you could think of something to make it nicer."

"I like those boys who carried me home," said Edith; "*they* weren't bad."

In spite of Edie's certainty, however, Miss Harson could not get very good

characters of Sim Jute and his companions; but when she saw their wretched homes she did not wonder much at this.

Poor Sim felt so much ashamed of himself and his rags that he tried to slink away when he caught a glimpse of the young lady from the doorway against which he was leaning; but she was too quick for him, and spoke to him so pleasantly that the boy felt almost at his ease with her.

“You will be glad to hear,” said she, “that the little girl whom you so kindly helped to carry home last week is quite well again.”

“Is she?” replied Sim; “thank you.”

He thought this was doing pretty well, and Miss Harson smiled very pleasantly as she continued: “Mr. Malcolm would like to see you in his tool-house to talk about a little plan of his for you and the other boys. He will tell it to you himself if you will come this afternoon.”

Sim couldn't express his admiration of the young lady in words, but it actually led him to wash his face and hands and smooth down the locks of hair which seemed

desirous of pointing to all the points of the compass, and looking, as his mother said, "quite like a dandy," he walked over to the tool-house in a sheepish frame of mind that was partly shared by Malcolm himself. Both thought of the scowl and the jeering words of that afternoon on the pond, and both wished for a moment that they were at separate poles.

But Malcolm did his governess a great deal of credit as he said: "You didn't like me the other day, Sim, and I didn't like you till you carried my sister home so nicely. Let's forget the first part, and see if we can't do something to make the pond pleasanter. Now, what I've been thinking of is this."

Then Malcolm told his amazed visitor about the snow-house, and also about a shed in which there was to be a small stove, on which coffee could be made and kept hot for the benefit of the skaters, who would gladly pay for it, and where half-frozen toes could be thawed out. Hot lemonade, popped corn and molasses candy could be added to the stock, and the young gentleman proposed to advance the necessary

money himself and take his pay from the profits.

Sim was delighted, and his two or three helpers were no less so. The enterprise prospered wonderfully, and "the pond loafers," as they had been called, were tasting the pleasures of industry and independence. Their conduct improved with their prospects, and having taught them to help themselves was, as Miss Harson felt, a good foundation for other instruction.

CHAPTER IV.

SEALS AT HOME.

“**H**URRAH!” said Malcolm, tumultuously, “for the Seal Islands! We’re going in the first steamer, aren’t we, Miss Harson?”

“If you can be bound over to keep the peace, you naughty boy; but I am not sure that it wouldn’t be a wise plan to drop you on one of the uninhabited islands. To think of frightening poor Jane in that way!”

“It was just fun to see her,” said the mischievous boy, “when I told her we were all going ever so far beyond California, to an island in the ocean where there were nothing but seals and ice. And first she said she wouldn’t go with us; and then she said we’d all be eaten up and killed; and then she threw her apron over her face and cried.”

“And you thought it *fun*,” replied his governess, “to make a fellow-creature unhappy? for Jane is so much attached to us all, and so afraid of strange, unknown things, that it was equal misery to her to stay or to go. I am ashamed of you, Malcolm; you are not ‘my knight’ at all when you conduct yourself in this manner.”

Malcolm humbly begged pardon and promised amendment, getting down gracefully on one knee, as he had seen knights bend in pictures; and the scene was becoming so ridiculous that Miss Harson could scarcely keep a sober face. But suddenly there was a knock at the door, and up sprung Malcolm as Jane entered with suspiciously red eyes.

“I don’t know, ma’am,” said she, plunging into the middle of things at once, “that I’d mind so much eatin’ the fat and the oil and wearin’ that horrid fur next to me, but livin’ under a pile of snow, with just a hole in the top to breathe—”

“Oh, Malcolm! Malcolm!” said the young lady reproachfully, “tell Jane the truth at once.”

It was with a very red face that the young gentleman stammered: "This is the way it is, Jane; we're only going to Alaska and the seals and all through a book, and I told you about it just for fun. You'll forgive me, won't you? I'm sorry I teased you."

The girl was angry, for a moment, to have had her feelings worked upon for nothing, but she declared that Malcolm was every inch a gentleman, after all, and went to sound his praises to Kitty in the kitchen. Miss Harson, however, who was very fond of "her boy," as she called him, assured him that he lacked a number of inches of being a gentleman in her estimation, and hoped that there would be no more practical jokes about their travels on paper.

"You see, Malcolm," remarked Edith, with an air of great wisdom, "that if I was a little girl, as I used to be, I'd been frightened too. But I'm nine, you know."

"Will you ever be anything but a funny little midget, I wonder?" said her brother, as he caught her up and kissed her in spite of herself.

"All on board for the Seal Islands!" said

Miss Harson, comically; "the last bell is ringing."

The children laughed and scrambled as if for desirable seats, and Clara and Edith were finally settled close to their beloved teacher, while Malcolm declared that he was left out in the cold.

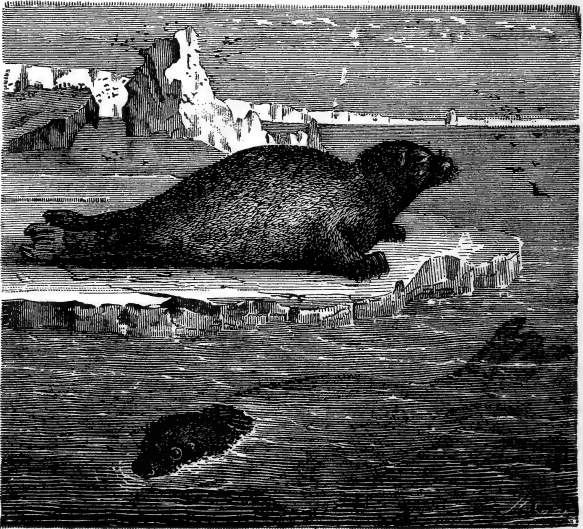
"You can be more useful to me there," replied the young lady, smiling at his desolate air, "for I shall want you to hand me books and wait upon me generally."

This was some consolation, and the group looked contented and expectant.

"In order to understand these valuable animals better," said Miss Harson, "you must know that the fur-seal is migratory, moving from north to south in the autumn, and back again to the north in the spring. These creatures hate sunshine and heat, and like to spend their summers where they can be sure of cool, foggy weather. When the thermometer rises to about fifty degrees they suffer as much as we do when it is at ninety, and they try to cool themselves off, in a very human sort of way, with their fan-like flippers."

The children burst out laughing.

“It must be such a funny sight,” said Clara, “to see them fanning themselves with their own paws!”



A COOL SPOT.

“It is,” was the smiling reply, “but it is a sight to which there are very few witnesses in that lonely region. There are four seal islands in Behring’s Sea, off the west coast of the peninsula of Alaska, as you can see on the map, but two of them are only

rocks; and of the two others, St. Paul and St. George, the first is said to be the greatest resort for seals in the whole world. Here the seals gather from the cooler region of Behring's Sea and beyond to enjoy the delightful fog-banks and rest after their journey. The first to arrive are the fathers of the families—great, fat, quarrelsome fellows, who pick out the choicest places among the rocks for a summer residence, and fight with any other seal who comes near to dispute it. They wish to be all settled at housekeeping before any of the Mrs. Seals arrive; but getting settled is not an easy matter when the stronger seals are continually driving the weaker ones from their places.

“Each seal mounts guard over a spot about ten feet square, and here he stays for several weeks without food or water, often engaged in deadly combat with some rival who is resolved to have that particular piece of ground. In these fights the combatants, with teeth clenched in each other's hides or flippers, struggle in savage though alert unwieldiness, their roars of rage and

defiance being half stifled by the violence of the conflict."

"Why, I thought," said Edith, in a disappointed tone, "that seals were nice little soft things that didn't fight!"

"No, dear; they seem to be quite the contrary; and as to being 'little,' the male seals are six or seven feet long, and weigh from three to five hundred pounds. The females really are amiable, and only about one quarter the size of their partners. They are of a different color too, for you must know that these animals are provided with two coats, the outer one being of short, coarse hair, while the under one is the pretty fur which we see before us now. The male seals are of a rusty black, with a gray patch over the shoulders, while the females have steel-colored tints on the back, with pure white on other parts.

"When the seals have fully arrived, acres of ground are as closely covered with them as they can possibly be. They have traveled two or three thousand miles, and they never make a mistake, but always at this time of the year get to the same place.

They get over the ground very well, for the fur-seal never sprawls out and flounders when moving on land, as might be supposed from observing the progress of the common hair-seal: on the contrary, this animal carries its body clear and free from the ground, with head and neck erect, slipping forward with its fore feet and bringing the hinder ones up to fresh positions after every second step forward. When exerting itself it can spring into a lumbering, shambling gallop, and for a few rods run as fast as a man, but will sink quickly to the earth, gasping, panting and palpitating."

"But don't they like better to be in the water?" asked Malcolm.

"Yes, they always travel by swimming *under* the water, which they do very swiftly, the fore flippers acting as propellers, while the long, thin hinder ones are used to guide their course. Every little while a seal will raise his head and neck from the sea to snort and look around him. Often when playing, or if suddenly startled, these animals will leap entirely out of the water, like so many dolphins. They delight too

in turning somersaults in the swell of the waves ; then they will float, and scratch and rub themselves with their flippers ; and they even go to sleep in the water, but take care to leave a very small portion of their bodies in sight."

"I should think they'd get killed when they are asleep in the water," said Clara.

"They are never entirely asleep, or they wake very easily, for they are by no means the dull, heavy animals they are generally supposed to be. It is said that a healthy seal is never seen sleeping without an involuntary nervous muscular twitching and flinching of various portions of its body, usually an uneasy folding out and back of its flippers, with quick, crawling movements of its skin, the eyes being, however, always tightly closed.

"Over twenty miles of seals are seen along the shores of their favorite islands, where about four hundred thousand are born every year. The young ones are droll little creatures, full of fun, and very fond of getting together in large squads, all the way up from a hundred to ten thou-

sand, to frolic and gambol among themselves, until a common impulse leads them to sleep. By the middle of August those of them that may be nearest the water essay to swim; for a fur-seal pup's first attempt is most laughably awkward, and did it not begin in some shallow eddy near the shore it would certainly drown. But while the little animals are ridiculously clumsy at their first trial in the water, they continue to splutter, flounder, flop and paddle in and out, until by the time they are ready to leave the islands, in October and November, they can move with great freedom, and at the age of one and two years they become the champion swimmers of their species."

"I like to hear about the *little* seals," said Edith; "they're so cunning! I wish you could tell us ever so much more about 'em, Miss Harson."

"That will scarcely be possible, Edie, as there is really nothing more to tell. They do not grow very fast, and so many enemies, both in and out of the water, are watching to pounce upon them that thou-

sands never get beyond their first summer."



ESKIMO SPEARING SEAL.

"I suppose, Miss Harson," said Malcolm, "that a great many hunters go to Alaska to kill seals for the sake of their skins?"

I shall, when I am a man, and bring you all piles of them for sleigh-robcs and everything."

"I don't think you will, sir," was the amused reply, "for the Seal Islands are not public hunting-grounds. The seals would soon disappear if they were. They belong to the United States government, and are leased to a company that has the care of the islands and enjoys all the privileges of the seal business. A portion of the money received for the valuable skins is paid each year to the government, and only the people who belong to the islands are allowed to be there and take part in the work and profit. These people are carefully looked after and made comfortable. No intoxicating drinks are permitted to be brought there, and an agent who sets a bad example in any way is immediately dismissed."

"I'm so glad," said Clara, "that they try to make them good, as well as to get their sealskins!"

"I know what you mean, dear," said her governess kindly, "so never mind Malcolm's laughing.—But you must remember,

sir, that you were going on your own responsibility to shoot seals on the Seal Islands, which you would soon be requested to leave."

"The government can keep its old seals, then!" said Malcolm in disgust; "*I* don't want 'em!"

"The government *will* keep its old seals, and its young ones too," was the laughing reply, "until the proper time comes for killing them. This is done by the people of the islands, who carry on the business rapidly and skillfully according to the terms of the lease. Only one hundred thousand young males, not less than a year old, are allowed to be killed in one season, and this is accomplished in a few weeks by the natives, who receive forty cents a skin, thus dividing forty thousand dollars every year among themselves, or a little over four hundred dollars to each working man and boy. The company sells to the natives an extensive assortment of goods, embracing all the necessaries of life and many of the luxuries, at the wholesale prices of the San Francisco market; and as all widows

and orphans are cared for and supported voluntarily by the company, it will be seen that these people are better off than any similar class of working-men in our country, or perhaps in the world.

“But I know,” continued the young lady, “that you care more for hearing about the seals, and how the poor things are captured and killed. It is a very easy thing, and four or five men can manage thousands of them without danger, as you may suppose from this description of the animals’ indifference to the presence of human beings:

“‘A walk of half a mile down from the village to the reef on St. Paul Island, any time during September, will carry you to the parade-grounds of over two hundred thousand pups, among whom you can slowly make your way while they clear out from your path ahead and close again in your rear, you only interrupting them in their sleep or play for a few moments. This reef-ground in September and early October is a strange spectacle as you walk through legions of semi-indifferent seals, some timid, others boldly defiant, though all give you

room enough to move safely over the length and breadth of the mighty breeding-ground, the summer haunt of a million of animals universally deemed wild. Creatures which will fight one with another to the death rather than forsake their stands on the rookeries, will yet permit you to approach them to within almost reaching distance without injury; old bulls which will die before they will leave their posts, yet lie down and sleep while you stand by to sketch or observe them scarcely ten feet distant. No other wild animals in the brute world will permit this immediate attention from man, but the fur-seal is in no way whatever concerned if not purposely harassed or driven from its position.' ”

“I shouldn't want to walk through them,” said Clara, as Miss Harson showed them a picture of a large drove of these animals.

“But there's a cunning *little* one,” said Edith, delightedly; “it looks like a lamb.”

“But the poor little lamb will not be spared by the butcher,” was the reply, “for the drove of seals is on its way to the village; and if the ground is hard and the

weather cool and foggy, the animals will travel at the rate of about half a mile an hour. They have frequent resting-spells, yet many of them fall down senseless on the road, getting up again, perhaps, after some hours, while some die on the spot. They are driven to the salt-houses near the village, and the animals move on with very little trouble to their drivers, except when they drop down from exhaustion. They have an odd way of stringing themselves out in long files as they travel, and it is said that a drove of four or five thousand will stretch over a path more than a mile in length."

"What are salt-houses, Miss Harson?" asked Malcolm; "and do the seals eat salt?"

"No; the salt-houses are for the benefit of the skins. The seals are easily killed with a blow on the head, and they are skinned as soon as possible by the natives, for if left on the animal even for a few hours they lose much of their value. The skins are taken up to the salt-houses of the company, where they are spread out on

benches or bins, one upon the other, with salt profusely sprinkled over and on the fleshy sides, which are turned uppermost; and after lying in this pickle for a week or two, they are taken up from the bins, fresh salt is scattered over them and they are bundled up for shipment."

"And those are our pretty sealskins, then?" said Clara, thoughtfully, "and that is the way we get them?"

"They are not quite our pretty sealskins yet," replied her governess; "and to see them in their natural condition you would not recognize them. The over-coat of hair is pulled out and the soft close fur is dyed a rich dark brown before the skins are ready for use. It is a great art to dress seal-fur properly, and only a few furriers are able to do it. This, in addition to the bleak and distant regions where the animals are found, keeps sealskin dearer than most other furs."

"What do the rest of the seals do?" asked Edith; "do they go back to the places where they came from?"

"Yes, dear; most of them have left the

islands by the middle of November, and the stragglers are soon driven off by ice and snow, on which they do not like to lie. They live in the water all winter, passing down south and out over the vast expanse of the North Pacific Ocean, where they fish and sleep and lead a generally free and easy life."

"Do they eat fish, Miss Harson?" asked Clara.

"Small fish and crabs are their principal food; they are also said to swallow a great many pebbles, as hens eat gravel, to help the digestion. These queer animals do not look as if they could be expert at catching any live thing."

"Why, they haven't got any ears!" exclaimed Edith. "Just look at 'em in the picture!"

"The ear of a seal is very small, and, instead of being open, it is rolled up like a scroll. It cannot raise and lower its ears, like cats and dogs; but from their shape, it is evident that they serve to protect the internal ear from the water pressure should the animal dive deeply and stay down long

in quest of food or to avoid enemies. The sense of hearing is exceedingly keen, and although, by taking great care, a seal may be approached while asleep near enough to touch it without its notice, yet the least noise will arouse the animal, which will rise erect with a single motion and look confusedly around for the cause of the disturbance. If it is an old bull, it will roar at the intruder in loud, prolonged, angry tones; if a young male or female, it will snort with amazement and immediately shuffle off to a safe distance."

"They must look comical then," said Malcolm; "I'd like to see one snorting and shuffling."

"It is just possible," was the laughing reply, "that you might do a little shuffling yourself—or perhaps something faster. In spite of its small ears—and the *hair-seal* has no visible ears at all—this animal has shown a fondness for music. A traveler to Spitzbergen says that at the sound of a violin which was played on board the vessel a large number of seals would surround the ship and follow it for miles, apparently

enjoying every scrape of the bow. A great Scotch poet mentions this peculiarity in the lines :

‘ Rude Heiskar’s seals, through surges dark,
Will long pursue the minstrel’s bark.’ ”

“ Did he mean our Alaska seals ? ” asked Clara.

“ No, dear ; he was speaking of the seals found on the coasts of the Shetland Islands, to the north of Scotland. I will tell you something about those islands to-morrow ; but now it is bedtime for all people under five feet and two inches high.”

Malcolm proudly measured himself, inch for inch, with his laughing young governess, but he only received a pinch on the cheek with his good-night kiss, and took up his line of march in the family procession.

CHAPTER V.

SLIPPERY PETS.

“**I** REMEMBER the Shetland ponies,” said Edith as she nestled up to Miss Harson.

“There are several other things to remember about Shetland,” was the reply; “Shetland-wool shawls are really beautiful in their lace-like texture, and were very much worn some years ago, while Shetland stockings were equally famous, and men, women and children would knit industriously all day long, even while employed in doing other things. But when stockings were made by machinery knitting was no longer profitable, and Shetland became the poorer for it.”

“It was poor enough before, wasn’t it?” asked Malcolm.

“Yes; the northern coast of Scotland, where the ninety islands called Shetland

are to be found, is particularly desolate and barren-looking—just the place for seals and sea-creatures. The country itself is so poor that scarcely a tree can be seen in all the length and breadth of it, and the birds have to live on the ground, as they can find neither trees nor hedges in which to set up housekeeping. The crows build their nests of fish-bones, for want of twigs.”

“Isn’t that funny!” said Clara; “I shouldn’t think they’d know how to build any nests at all without trees.”

“Does it not plainly show that they are taught of God?” asked her governess. “We know that he cares for the sparrows, and here, in this desolate part of the world, the needs of the humblest creatures he places there are all provided for.”

It was indeed wonderful, and the children were silent for a moment, until Malcolm exclaimed:

“I can’t think, Miss Harson, what a place looks like without any trees at all.”

“You can think of the seashore, can you not? It looks like that, only worse. A visitor to one of the Shetland Islands said:

‘The tallest and grandest tree I saw during my stay on the island was a stalk of rhubarb nearly seven feet high, which had run to seed and waved its head majestically in a garden below the fort, looking quite shady and ornamental.’ ”

How the little audience laughed at this rhubarb shade-tree, with their own magnificent elms, now coated with icicles and glittering in the sunshine, in full view all around them! They were beginning to see that their lines had been cast in pleasant places.

“Don’t they have anything there but ground?” asked Edith, sympathizingly.

“Oh yes, dear; they have grass and rocks. But you will think this not much better. The whole region is so rocky that walking in Shetland is very hard work, and only the heaviest shoes can stand it. An old gentleman there used to say that he wore in the morning three rows of nails on the soles of his shoes, but when he was in full dress he had only two. Shetland is preferable to Alaska, because it is not so cold and so far away; but the people are

almost as poor, and they have to work harder. Like the Aleuts, they drink a great deal of tea, which they care far more for than they do for bread; and they are very kind to each other and hospitable to strangers. They will share their last mouthful with a hungry person, and no one is ever allowed to starve unless all perish together."

"Then the poor things don't even have enough to eat!" exclaimed Clara. "Oh, Miss Harson! can't they do anything to make some money?"

"Very little, Clara," was the reply, "and that little is so terribly dangerous that many lives are lost in doing it. The high steep rocks which fringe these islands are full of sea-birds' nests, and men and boys are constantly occupied in gathering the eggs, which are thickly deposited in the most inaccessible places. Fatal accidents are so frequent among these rocks that the Shetland people sometimes say to each other, 'Your grandfather fell, your father fell and you must follow, too.' Others boast over their companions on account of

these very accidents by saying, 'Your father died in his bed, but mine went off like a man.'

"That isn't so wonderfully kind," said Malcolm. "I thought the people were so good to each other?"

"It is not intended for unkindness, but they like to boast a little now and then. These egg-gatherers are often suspended over projecting cliffs of many hundred feet by a single rope, which is so rubbed and cut by the sharp edges of rock that it sometimes breaks, and the unfortunate climber falls headlong to the immense depth below."

"Oh!" was the general exclamation.

"It is very dreadful to us," continued Miss Harson, "who know nothing of such dangers by experience; but in Shetland, where violent deaths are not uncommon, the survivors find comfort in the thought that at least 'he went off like a man.' Traveling among these islands, from one to another, is very difficult and dangerous, and a minister who had charge of two different churches that were separated by a broad

and dangerous ferry was often rowed by six men, who vainly tried to get him across. After pulling incessantly for three or four hours, and coming in sight of his church and the assembled congregation, he has been obliged to relinquish all hope of landing, while it was about equally difficult to reach the opposite shore."

The children wondered that any one would live in such a place; but presently Malcolm added:

"I suppose, though, Miss Harson, that it's just what seals and such creatures like?"

"The rocks and the wild waters are certainly like the places they inhabit," replied his governess, "and seals are frequently seen on the coasts of Shetland. Seal-hunting has always been one of the most profitable occupations among these barren islands, notwithstanding the superstition that the *selkies*, or *hoff-fish*, as the islanders call them, are fallen spirits, and that evil will certainly happen to him who kills one. They think that when the blood of a seal touches the water, the sea begins to rise and swell. Those who shoot them notice

that gulls appear to watch carefully over them, and a Scotch naturalist declared that 'he had seen a gull scratch a seal to warn it of his approach'!"

"What funny things animals do!" said Edith, in great amusement over this performance.

"These harbor-seals, as they usually are," continued the young lady, "have very human faces, and it is supposed that these have given rise to the absurd stories of mermaids which are so common in this region. Ignorant people declare that they can easily be caught with the rather curious bait of a comb and looking-glass."

"Were there ever such things as mermaids?" asked Clara.

"Never, dear; but years ago, when people were very ignorant of natural history, a strong imagination could turn a seal's head, just seen above the water, into something of this sort. The large brown eyes are quite different from those of an ordinary animal, and a harbor-seal clasping its young one with its fore flipper is very human indeed. They are easily tamed, and

in Shetland a domestic seal is quite a common sight. They are frequently caught in the caves which abound there, and in a short time they are so perfectly at home that they will shuffle along with any of the family who go to milk the cows, that they may get a drink. Sometimes they will take to the water and forage for food, but nearly always return."

"I should think they'd *have* to hunt up something for themselves in such a poor place as Shetland," said Malcolm.

"A naturalist had one which, he says, 'was taken by myself from a cave when only a few hours old, and in a day or two became as attached as a dog to me. The varied movements and sounds by which he expressed delight at my presence and regret at my absence were most affecting: these sounds were as like as possible to the inarticulate tones of the human voice. I know no animal capable of displaying more affection than he did, and his temper was the gentlest imaginable. I kept him for four or five weeks, feeding him entirely on warm milk from the cow; in my temporary

absence buttermilk was given to him, and he died soon after.’”

“What a pity!” exclaimed the children.

“But how could buttermilk kill him?” asked Clara; “it doesn’t hurt pigs.”

Miss Harson smiled at this excellent reason as she replied:

“It may be good for pigs, but evidently it is not good for young seals; and I suppose, dear, that it killed him by disagreeing with him. Whether he had cramps or cholera morbus we are not able to tell.”

“We won’t give *our* seals buttermilk, then,” said Malcolm;—“so remember, Clara.”

His sister laughingly promised to bear it in mind, and their governess asked, quite gravely, if they wanted any more stories about seals. Any more? when that was the first approach to a story they had heard!

“Well, then, this same naturalist captured another young seal, who soon became familiar with the household, but would allow no one to touch her except her master. She had an amusing habit of exploring the house,

and was evidently bent on examining every room, going up the stairs for this purpose with surprising ease. Her going down was even faster if she met any one who pretended to be angry at seeing her there.

“‘She was fed from the first,’ says her owner, ‘on fresh fish alone, and grew and fattened considerably. We had her carried down daily in a handbarrow to the seaside, where an old excavation admitting the salt water was abundantly roomy and deep for her recreation and our observation. After sporting and diving for some time, she would come ashore, and seemed perfectly to understand the use of the barrow. Often she tried to waddle from the house to the water or from the latter to her apartment; but finding this fatiguing and seeing preparations by her chairman, she would of her own accord mount her palanquin and thus be carried as composedly as any Hindu princess. By degrees we ventured to let her go fairly into the sea, and she regularly returned after a short interval; but one day, during a thick fall of snow, she was imprudently let off as usual, and, being

decoyed some distance out of sight of the shore by some wild ones which happened to be in the bay at the time, she either could not find her way back or voluntarily decamped. She was, we understood, killed shortly afterward in a neighboring inlet. We had kept her about six months, and every moment she was becoming more familiar; we had dubbed her "Finna," and she seemed to know her name."

"Oh!" exclaimed Edith, sighing almost as if *she* had lost a seal, "how sorry they must have been! And how funny it must have looked to see a seal going up and down stairs!"

"I should think she would have tumbled down every time she tried it," said Malcolm; "how could such a slippery creature get up stairs, Miss Harson, when she hadn't anything to hold on with?"

"You forget her flippers," was the reply; "and I have really seen *two* seals go up and down stairs, so I know that it can be done."

Three amazed pairs of eyes were staring as hard as they could at the speaker, while

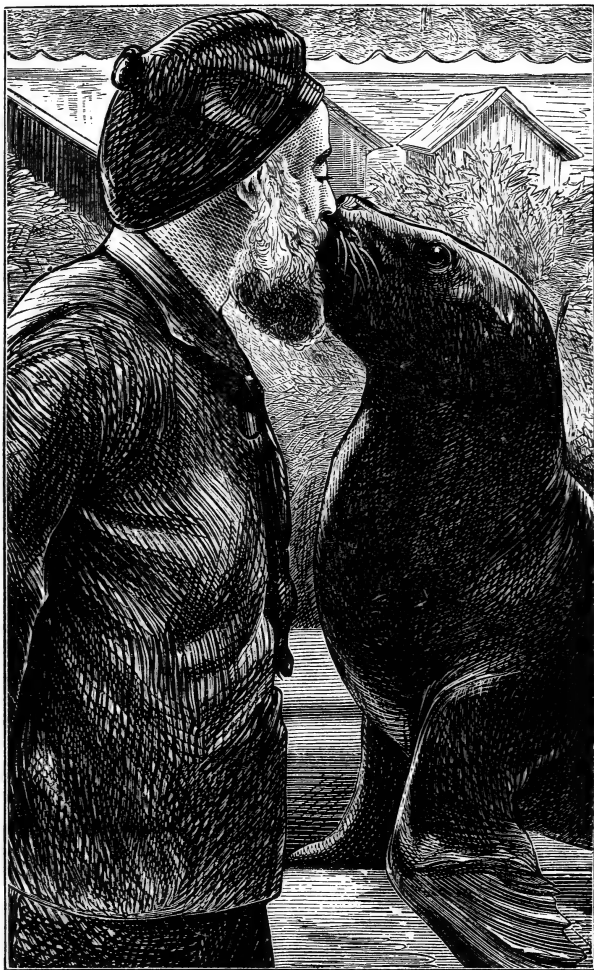
their owners wondered where Miss Harson could have been when this took place.

“These seals were on exhibition at the New York Aquarium,” continued the young lady, “ever so many years ago, when I was a little girl, and they were named ‘Ned’ and ‘Fanny.’ Both would walk up a short flight of stairs to a platform—such funny, floundering walking as it was!—when called by name, and Fanny, who was the more accomplished of the two, would ring a bell for dinner, bow to the spectators and then eagerly catch and devour the pieces of fish thrown by the keeper from a pail in his hand. She was a most intelligent-looking creature, and evidently took great pride in ‘showing off;’ but when Ned tried to put himself forward she always pushed him aside. She seemed really jealous of any attempt on his part to attract public attention.”

The children were so much amused with Fanny that they “wished there had been more of her;” and then Miss Harson remembered reading about two seals in the zoological garden at Amsterdam which were

so fond of their keeper that they could recognize his voice a long way off, and would run to meet him.

“These seals also became attached to an old gentleman and his little granddaughter, who often went to see them in company with a little woolly dog, and who always took the seals something nice to eat. These animals were kept in a large pond, and they would come out of the water on seeing their friends, and sit down with them to have a good time on the sand. The small dog was very lively on these occasions, and he and the seals would frolic together as though they belonged to the same family, and shared the fruit and cakes from the little girl’s basket. One day, however, in the midst of their fun, the dog fell into the pond, and after struggling for a moment in the water he sank. The seals uttered a cry of dismay as he disappeared, and then, shuffling to the pond, they plunged in. In an instant the larger one had seized the half-drowned dog, and, carrying him very tenderly in his mouth, placed the dripping animal at his little mistress’s feet.”



AN AFFECTIONATE SEAL.

“That was splendid!” said Malcolm. “They’re the best seals we have had yet.”

“One who has visited the London zoological gardens speaks of several interesting seals which he saw there,” continued Miss Harson. “He says:

“‘They would climb out of the tank and stand upon the stone ledge, leaning against the iron railing begging for food, and then, quick as lightning, throw themselves into the water, splashing us well if we were not on the lookout for their pranks. In the water they would dive, twist, turn and roll with wonderful grace and swiftness. Their keeper was an old Frenchman whom they well knew, and whose kind treatment attached them to him. He put a chair within the railing and sat on it. At his call the seals would climb to his side; then, at his word, they would dive into the water again. They clambered into his lap, and *kissed him* with their wet noses at his bidding. He left the chair, and in response to his command a seal took his place on it, to plunge again, when bidden, into the water.’”

It was, of course, a great sorrow that

these charming animals could not be seen ; but Miss Harson comforted her eager little flock by telling them that just as wonderful seals might be in store for them in the future, when they could better appreciate them from having learned so much about them beforehand.

“It is *said*,” continued the young lady, “that a very highly-educated seal, exhibited in Paris, could utter some words quite plainly, so that visitors could easily distinguish such words as ‘cake,’ ‘coffee,’ ‘eat,’ ‘thank you ;’ and even short sentences, like *Vive le roi ! Bonjour, monsieur, and Je suis Français !* But this seems an impossibility, and the nearest approach to words was probably like the sounds made by the young seal that died of buttermilk.”

CHAPTER VI.

SOME BIG COUSINS.

“**W**HAT *dreadful*-looking creatures!” exclaimed everybody generally; and they certainly were not pretty in the picture.

Edie said that the biggest one in front was *awful*—it looked like an old man and a monkey, and it had tusks like an elephant; but here Miss Harson stopped her:

“It is not ‘awful,’ dear, for it is a very harmless creature unless attacked; and you know I have told you how seldom that word can be used. It *does* look something like an old man and a monkey when you see the full face, but its tusks are not much like those of an elephant, as we shall see presently. This very ungainly-looking animal is a big cousin of the seal, and it is known by the various names of *walrus*, *morse* and *sea-horse*. It is seldom found

out of the Arctic regions, although an occasional one has been killed off the coast of Shetland. Like the polar bear, however, the walrus has evidently been formed by its Creator for a life among icy seas, and there it is now found, often in large herds. It is described as 'somewhat resembling an enormous pig, with coarse whiskers, a pair of huge tusks descending from the upper jaw, flippers instead of legs, and no tail whatever. A full-grown walrus weighs from twenty-five hundred to three thousand pounds, and his skin, blubber and tusks constitute his attractions in the eyes of the hunter.' "

"I should think," said Malcolm, "that his tusks would be always in the way when he tries to eat."

"On the contrary, they are of great use to him in scraping up from the rocks and out of the sand the mussels and other shellfish on which he loves to feed, and also to grapple and get along with, for they help the animal in raising itself on the ice. They are also powerful weapons of defence against its enemies, especially the

fierce, prowling polar bear. The elephant's tusks generally grow outward, but those of the walrus slant in an opposite direction, but can, in spite of this, be used like great swords.

“Although the walrus seldom attacks men, even when they are swimming among the fragments of a crushed boat, he is by no means cowardly. He will readily fight any animal which he does not suspect of having a harpoon concealed about it. Not only do the bulls fight savagely among themselves, but a walrus will often engage and defeat the polar bear. The latter finds it comparatively useless to hug an animal which is defended by an unusually tough hide lined with layers of elastic blubber, while, on the other hand, the walrus inflicts painful, and frequently fatal, wounds on the bear with his sharp curved tusks. If the walrus happens to have plenty of leisure on his hands, he will sometimes strike his tusks deep into the bear and drag him down to the bottom. Then, while the bear is drowning, the walrus tears his body into fragments with great dexterity and

leaves the pieces for the benefit of casual sharks."

The children could not feel sorry for the polar bear, while the walrus rose considerably in their estimation.

"He seems to have real *paws* in front," said Clara, looking at the picture; "don't they come out a great deal more than the seal's flippers?"

"Yes," replied her governess; "this animal gets along much better out of water than its smaller cousin, as it can support its great body quite clear of the ground. Its movements, however, are very awkward, its hind limbs shuffling along as if enclosed in a sack. Walruses have been found that were twelve, and even fourteen, feet long and nine feet around. These creatures were so heavy that it was almost impossible to turn them over. They are quite playful, in spite of their clumsiness, when at home in the icy sea, and in fine weather herds of them may be seen on large pieces of ice, where they roll and frolic about and bellow like so many bulls. After a period of these antics they all go to sleep, with the excep-

tion of one who acts as a sentinel to warn them of any danger. They are very cautious animals, and the sentinel watches faithfully, but the only warning he gives when an enemy approaches is to rush to a place of safety; and as the sleeping herd lie huddled on one another, the motion of one is felt by all the others, who 'instantly tumble, one over the other, into the sea—headforemost if possible, but failing that, anyhow.' ”

Malcolm thought it must be great fun to see them go over; but when his governess explained to him what travelers had to endure in the perils of an Arctic voyage to see this fun, he was not quite so enthusiastic about it.

“Nova Zembla and Spitzbergen,” continued Miss Harson, “where the walrus particularly loves to dwell, are not attractive places to human beings, and the only men ever found there are some ship’s crew or an exploring-party in search of the Northwest passage. Here the walrus revels, for as a general thing his enemies do not pursue him thus far; but some time ago he is

said to have been found near the Shetland Islands and on the whole extent of the Norway coast. He went farther and farther as the hunters encroached upon him, until he came to a halt in the icy seas around Spitzbergen.

“Even here, however, his active enemy the polar bear is perfectly at home, and when hungry he is always on the watch for animals asleep upon the ice, and tries to steal on them unawares as they dart through their breathing-holes. ‘One sunny day,’ says a traveler, ‘a walrus nine or ten feet in length rose in a pool of water not very far from us, and after looking around drew his clumsy body upon the ice, where he rolled about for a time, and at length laid himself down to sleep. A bear which had probably been observing his movements crawled carefully upon the ice on the opposite side of the pool, and began to roll about also, but apparently more with design than amusement, as he gradually lessened the distance between him and his prey. The walrus, suspicious of his advances, drew himself up for a hasty retreat

into the water in case of a nearer acquaintance with his playful but treacherous visitor ; on which the bear was instantly motionless, as if in the act of sleep, but after a time began to lick his paws and clean himself, occasionally encroaching a little more upon his intended victim.

“ ‘ But even this artifice did not succeed ; the wary walrus was far too cunning to allow himself to be entrapped, and suddenly plunged into the pool, which the bear no sooner observed than he threw off all disguise, rushed toward the spot and followed him in an instant into the water, where, I fear, he was as much disappointed in his meal as we were in the pleasure of witnessing a very interesting encounter.’ ”

“ I’m glad he got away from that horrid bear,” said Edith, with great relief.

“ But think how hungry the poor bear was ! ” said her brother, teasingly. “ Suppose, now, that when you wanted your dinner the oysters and chickens and all the rest of the things took to running away ? ”

“ Well, they aren’t alive,” was the per-



A SCENE IN THE ARCTIC OCEAN.

1850

plexed reply. "But I know you're laughing at me, Malcolm."

"Well, you're 'nine, *anyway*,'" said this tease of a brother; and then Miss Harson had to take him in hand.

"What does the walrus eat?" asked Clara.

"Very much what the seal does; and, huge as the creature is, he seems to live on shellfish and sea-weeds. He is said, however, to be fond of young seals, and he frequently swallows pebbles larger than walnuts. In captivity he has been fed on oatmeal and vegetables."

"Do walruses act like seals?" asked Malcolm; "I mean when caught and tamed."

"They are not so intelligent," replied his governess, "and are quite too heavy to indulge in tricks, but young ones have occasionally been taken and exhibited. Of one of these it is said that 'though quite young, it was nearly four feet in length, and when the person who used to feed it came into the room it would give him an affectionate greeting in a voice somewhat resembling the cry of a calf, but considerably louder. It walked about, but, owing to its weakness,

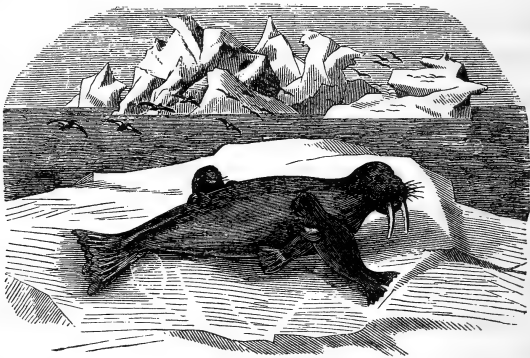
soon grew tired and lay down.' A young walrus is a very funny-looking object, being nearly as broad as it is long, and it seems to get from one place to another by a series of tumbles. Three of these comical creatures were caught some years ago by a yachting-party in the Arctic regions and kept in a pen on deck, where they were carefully fed, like babies, from a bottle. They soon became tame, and spent most of their time in sleeping, clamoring for food and grunting and squealing like so many pigs."

Edith said she wouldn't care to have such pets, and the others fully agreed with her.

"Little walruses, however, are considered by their mothers very charming," continued the young lady, "and they will protect them from danger at any risk to themselves. A voyager to Spitzbergen says:

"We were greatly amused by the singular and affectionate conduct of a walrus toward its young. In the vast sheet of ice which surrounded the ship there were occasionally many pools, and when the

weather was clear and warm animals of various kinds would frequently rise and sport about in them, or crawl from the water upon the ice to bask in the warmth of the



· WALRUS AND YOUNG.

sun. A walrus rose in one of these pools close to the ship, and, finding everything quiet, dived down and brought up its young, which it held to its breast by pressing it with its flipper. In this manner it moved about the pool, keeping in an erect posture and always directing the face of the young toward the vessel. On the slightest movement on board, the mother released her flipper and pushed the young

one under water, but when everything was quiet brought it up as before, and for a length of time continued to play about in the pool, to the great amusement of the seamen, who gave her credit for abilities in tuition which, though possessed of considerable sagacity, she hardly merited.' ”

“It must be great fun,” said Malcolm, rather wistfully, “to see such queer things up there among the icebergs. Wish it wasn't so cold.”

“If it wasn't,” replied his governess, “the ‘things’ wouldn't be there; besides, it is not only the cold that keeps us from going to Spitzbergen. So I think you will have to content yourself at Elmridge for a while longer; the rest of us do not care to hunt walruses.”

“What do people hunt them for, Miss Harson?” asked Clara. “Do they have fur, like seals?”

“No, dear; they have not fur, but they have very tough, valuable skins, which are used for a variety of purposes, principally for harness and sole leather. Between the skin and the flesh there is a great mass of

blubber, which is made into oil; while the ivory of the tusks is used for a great many small articles. When a walrus is killed he is dragged on the ice and stripped of his valuables. The skin, with the blubber adhering to it, and the tusks are brought to the sloop, where the blubber is separated from the skin and stowed away in tanks without being 'tried out.' The skins are packed in salt and the tusks are carefully laid away. The blubber is generally sold for about forty dollars, the skin for fifteen and the ivory for ten, so that a full-grown walrus, when killed, is worth sixty-five dollars."

"I shouldn't think a walrus would be easy to catch," said Malcolm, "if he is so cunning in getting away from the polar bear and has a sentinel to watch while he is asleep."

"He is neither easy to catch nor easy to kill," was the reply; "not that he is a dangerous animal in himself, but because of the terribly cold, bare regions where he chooses to dwell. The walrus-sloops are often wrecked on the rocks that belt the

coast of Spitzbergen, or are walled up in some fiord or cave, into which they may have ventured, by the sudden packing of the ice. In the former case the crew may take to their boats, and either steer for Norway or try to fall in with some other vessel of the walrus fleet. When, however, the Arctic pack sweeps down and imprisons an incautious sloop, her people are compelled to winter in the frightful cold of Spitzbergen, where the thermometer often sinks to 45° below zero, and even lower."

"What *did* it feel like to be so cold?" the children wondered; but Miss Harson said that the danger lay in not feeling at all, as those who were exposed to such bitter cold often froze to death.

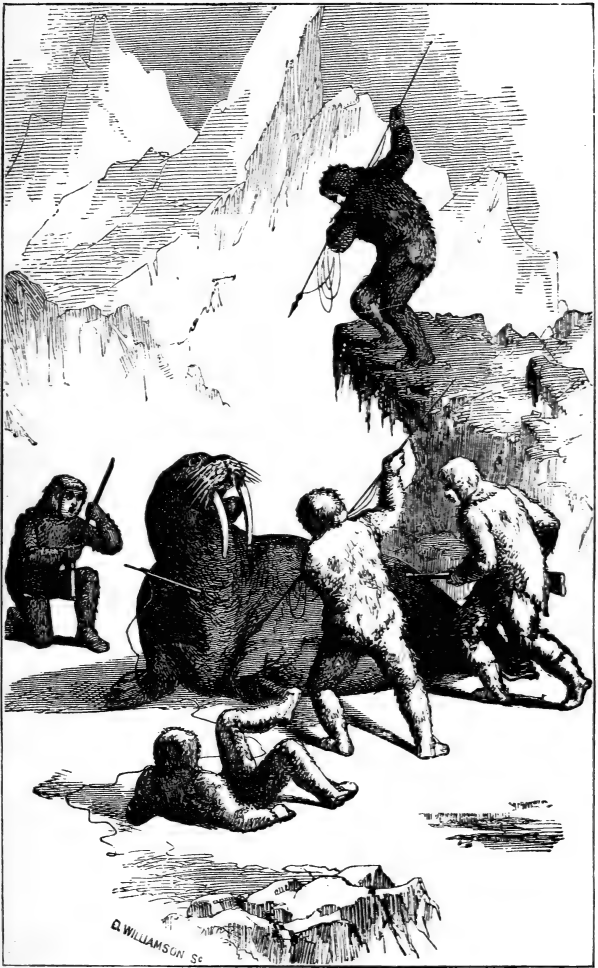
"The walrus-hunters are chiefly Norwegians, who are better accustomed to intense cold than we are; and the two walrus-boats attached to each vessel are very strongly built and painted white, so that they will not be noticed amid the ice, thus giving the cautious animal warning and a chance to escape before he is attacked. A peculiar kind of harpoon is used for secur-

ing the prey, and lances are carried with which to kill him after he is harpooned.

“But the walrus, it seems, is not an easy beast to kill. The hunters usually try to steal on him in their boats while he is sleeping on an iceberg, in what he considers a warm and sunny spot. He sleeps so lightly that it is probably easier to catch six, or possibly eight, weasels asleep than it is to approach one sleeping walrus without waking him; and it is necessary to be near the animal in order to harpoon him. There are also difficulties in the way of shooting a walrus. If he is not killed outright at the first shot, he will certainly roll into the water, sink to the bottom and die where he can be of no possible use to any one.”

“Well,” said Edith, quite indignant at this view of the matter, “I should think they might care a little about the poor walrus!”

“I am afraid they never do that, dear; hunters are apt to be quite unfeeling. It is well known to walrus-hunters that a mother will not desert her calf, but will carry it under her flipper or keep close to it, and that

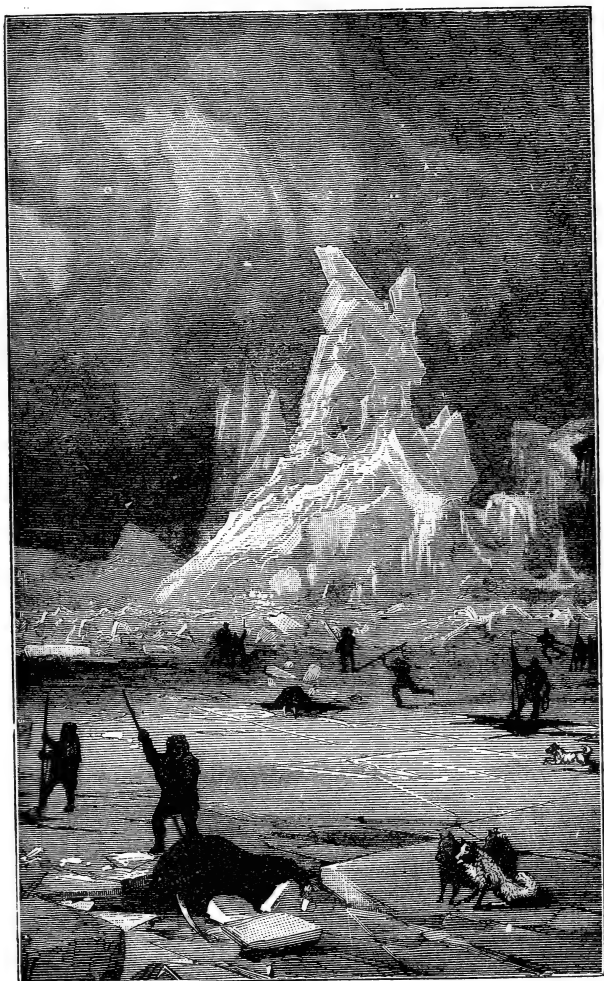


A WALRUS HUNT.

the rest of the herd will stay beside her. The harpooner will therefore attack a baby-walrus, if he sees one, rather than the largest grown animal, for he knows that its cries will keep the mother from escaping, and that her companions will not desert her. Sometimes, however, the walruses have become indignant at such unfeeling conduct, and turned upon their pursuers and torn the boat to pieces. But this was all the harm they did, and instead of attacking their enemies, they only improved the chance for getting out of their way. It is said that a Norwegian skipper was once seized by a cow-walrus and dragged three times down to the bottom; but the skipper declared that the animal took him for her calf, and meant to be affectionate instead of revengeful."

"I don't see how he got away from her," said Clara; "and it was wonderfully good of those other walruses not to eat up the hunters after they got them into the water."

"My dear child," was the laughing reply, "they probably had no more desire to eat



COOL SPORT.

them up than we should have, as the walrus is not carnivorous, except in the matter of young seals and shellfish. At least he has never been known to feed upon human flesh."

"Does any one feed on *his* flesh, Miss Harson?" asked Malcolm.

"Yes, I believe the Norwegians will eat it, and the heart is considered quite a delicacy. But the Eskimos are its greatest admirers. To them there is no greater treat than a kettle well filled with walrus-blubber, and to the natives along Behring's Strait this quadruped is as valuable as is the palm to the sons of the desert. Their canoes are covered with its skin; their weapons and sledge-runners and many useful articles are formed from its tusks; their lamps are filled with its oil; and they themselves are fed with its fat and its fibre. So thick is the skin that a bayonet is almost the only weapon which can pierce it. Cut into shreds, it makes excellent cordage, being especially adapted for wheel-ropes.

"You see, then, that walrus-hunting is not carried on from love of cruelty to

harmless animals, but because without this valuable aid the poor people whose lot is cast in frozen regions would scarcely be able to live at all."

CHAPTER VII.

SOME MISSION-WORK.

EDITH'S twisted ankle was now quite well again, and she was skating away as merrily as ever, in spite of frequent tumbles. Teasing Malcolm suggested that she should have one long skate made to fit her back, as that was the position she seemed to like best on the ice.

But Edie only laughed at this with rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes, and Sim Jute and his friends thought the merry little lady, who always seemed so good-natured, about the prettiest picture to be seen anywhere—excepting, perhaps, Miss Harson, for whom their admiration had never cooled—while Clara was pronounced “a regular beauty” and Malcolm “a tip-top fellow.” It is so easy to win with a little well-directed kindness! and some very troublesome boys had been judiciously set

to work and kept out of the mischief that is sure to go hand in hand with idleness.

It was a funny enough little shanty that had sprung up on the side of the pond farthest from Elmridge, and in the line of quite a stream of travel; for it was near the station, and so, besides the skaters, there were other people who liked the comfort of a cup of hot coffee in cold weather. Gentlemen who had several miles to drive after leaving the cars would stop and patronize Sim, and even Mr. Kyle had tasted his coffee and said that it did him credit.

How that wooden box with a roof and with a stove-pipe sticking out at one side had ever got together it would be hard to say; but the carpenter did a little and the boys did a great deal; somebody gave an old stove; Mr. Kyle gave a ton of coal; Miss Harson gave several pounds of coffee; and Sim worked out the milk and sugar in odd jobs. Then the pennies began to come in, and this very original coffee-room was doing a good business.

It was a proud and happy moment for the young proprietor when Miss Harson

stood there drinking a cup of coffee and telling him how well he had done; and the young lady smiled as her glance fell on a box of peanuts and a jar of candy. Sim evidently had an eye to the children from the district-school, many of whom passed his "store" on their way back and forth, and who were not likely to be attracted by cups of coffee.

"Why, Sim," said Miss Harson pleasantly, "you are a born merchant! Have you thought of what you are going to do with your money when the skating season is over?—I mean after paying your mother for her trouble in making the coffee?"

For Mrs. Jute, after calling the plan "a pack of silly nonsense," had finally consented to make the coffee, which she did very well, and she was now quite proud of Sim and his success. For no one in their family had accomplished so much before, and respectable, well-to-do people avoided the Jutes, who bore anything but a good name. The father had been idle and shiftless, and died a miserable drunkard; the others lived as best they could, having

their wretched little house rent free and working and begging alternately.

But Sim had begun to long for better things, and this money which he earned by honest labor was very precious to him. He had looked upon it as entirely his own, and he now replied, rather unwillingly,

“How much must I give her?”

“Why not give her *all*?” was the unexpected reply. “This seems the better way, for a son is bound to take care of his mother.”

Not very long ago Sim Jute would have whistled at such a proposition as this; but now, meeting the steady smiling eyes that were looking into his, he promised to let his mother decide as to what should be his portion.

Poor woman! she had been so little used to kind or pleasant acts that when Sim poured his money into her lap she threw her apron over her head and cried.

“It’s the coffee-money, mother; and now you’ll have a decent shawl and go to church of a Sunday, as Miss Harson has wanted us to do.”

“No, Sim,” was the reply; “I’ve not been much of a mother to you, but now you’ve shamed me into it. Take you the money and buy some shoes and a warm coat to your back.”

Then Sim objected, for he was now quite bent on his mother having it all, those unexpected tears having melted him completely.

Perhaps Miss Harson had anticipated this, for just in the midst of the unusual scene there arrived a parcel from Elmridge for Mrs. Jute, and in it were found a warm blanket shawl, a partly-worn dress and a very respectable bonnet, with coat, shoes and hat for Sim.

“Praise the Lord, and thank Miss Harson!” exclaimed Mrs. Jute, gratefully. Then, gathering herself energetically together again, she arose a new woman, twisted back her hair and put Sim’s money into a teapot on the closet-shelf.

“Now go on with the store,” said she, “and I’ll make the coffee better than ever.”

She was as good as her word; and before long some very nice sandwiches

were added to the stock, so that the funny little shanty on the edge of the pond, where skaters and wayfarers could get coffee and sandwiches and peanuts and candy, became quite famous.

Malcolm took it upon himself to instruct Sim in regard to seals and walruses, and it is scarcely necessary to say that these instructions were not quite so clear as Miss Harson would have made them. The result was a vague idea in Sim's mind that these animals somehow grew with the ice, and that if he watched long enough at any opening on the pond he would be rewarded with a prize.

"Sixty-five dollars," said the boy to himself, "is a big heap of money, and that's what the young gentleman said a walrus 'd bring."

So Sim waited patiently for a walrus, with no very clear idea as to how he was to dispatch the great animal when it appeared; but he took no one into his confidence, and he even wished that people wouldn't want so many cups of coffee when he was occupied with something more profitable.

It all came out one day when the disappointed boy ventured to ask Miss Harson "if she *know'd* that them animals really come up through the ice;" and after wondering for a moment what he meant, the young lady decided that Malcolm was at the bottom of this curious notion. A sort of primer on natural history gave Sim great pleasure in his leisure hours, while Malcolm was advised, for the present, to learn instead of teaching.

"Do you know, Miss Harson," said Edith, in a very coaxing way, "that you haven't told us a story, except little bits of ones, in *ever* so long?"

"Yes, Miss Harson," added Clara; "you owe us one about seals, and another about walruses."

"And I am going to read you one," replied their governess, smiling, "that is not in the least about either. I wrote it myself, and I hope you will enjoy it as well as if it were about seals or walruses. Shall I proceed?"

As there were no serious objections, Miss Harson read the story, which she called

PLANTING IT OUT.

When the Waynes first moved into their new house it seemed perfectly delightful. It was such a pleasant change from the crowded city and a tall, narrow brick house to this pretty suburb, where they had plenty of garden-room and a wide house with numerous doors and windows, and what Lily called "all sorts of unexpected places in it." They seemed to be constantly making discoveries, and so far the discoveries had all been pleasant ones.

The move was made in early autumn, when trees and vines and flowers were looking their very prettiest; and the family, which consisted only of Mrs. Wayne and Lily, Mrs. Wayne's old school-friend Miss Goldsby, with the two maids Rosa and Becky, were soon quite settled and comfortable, when suddenly they were introduced to some very unpleasant neighbors.

The neighbors on each side of them were very nice, but there were some just beyond the end of the garden on whom they had not counted; and Lily, who was just fifteen, and a little disposed to take

matters into her own hands, came running in one day with flushed cheeks and flashing eyes, exclaiming that "two horrid boys were sitting on their fence, and would not get down. And they threw things at her!"

The little lady looked very angry indeed; and when her mother asked quietly, "What did you say to them, daughter?" she replied in great indignation, "I told them they had no right there on our fence, and if they didn't go away I'd send a policeman after them."

"And what then?"

"Why, then," bursting into tears, "they made faces at me and called me names; and I don't like it a bit, there now!"

Mrs. Wayne looked quite troubled at this state of affairs as she said to her friend,

"I have been a little uneasy about that ugly little street back of us, which they call Poor Man's lane, and I am afraid that 'my duty to my neighbor' has been too long delayed. What can we do, Sarah?"

Miss Goldsby was a very energetic-looking lady, with a shrewd, pleasant face, and

she was never idle a moment, although she appeared to do very little work for herself. She was sewing now very diligently, and, clipping off her thread, she replied as briefly,

“*Plant them out.*”

Lily looked up in amazement, and even Mrs. Wayne was puzzled.

“I have heard,” continued Miss Goldsby as she selected the right shade of silk from the brilliant tangle before her, “of planting out unsightly views with a thick trellis-work of vines.—Do you understand my meaning?”

“But they’d tear ’em all down, Aunt Sarah,” replied Lily, who did not in the least understand; “they’d just sit on ’em, and it wouldn’t do any good.”

Miss Goldsby laughed quietly, and Mrs. Wayne said with a smile,

“I begin to see a little light. The vines, I think, are figurative, and the screen we are to put up is one of kind deeds and Christian training—something like a mission-school, for instance?”

“Very much like it, indeed,” was the

reply ; "I know of no better way of transforming ignorant, vicious neighbors into decent members of society. I really pine after the two boys who treated Lily so rudely, and must have them for my own special scholars."

"And the Epiphany season is the very time to tell them of the dear Lord, about whom perhaps the poor things have never heard," said Mrs. Wayne, softly.

It seemed to little Miss Lily a very funny way of getting rid of ill-behaved neighbors; but it was not long before she thoroughly entered into the spirit of this strange "planting out," and even smiled benevolently upon her two fence enemies. This did not come about, however, without some trouble.

Such a miserable, dirty, hopeless-looking place as Poor Man's lane was! Two or three families living in one little house that was scarcely big enough for two people; most of the men out of work, and sitting or lying around talking of hard times and railing against rich men; while the women gossiped with each other and left the chil-

dren to take care of themselves. The poor little things did this wonderfully well, considering, and they were constantly "seeing after" the younger ones.

When the ladies began their visits to collect scholars for a mission-school, a fierce-looking woman said to them,

"I s'pose you've come to complain of my Tommy, if you're the folks that moved into the big house beyond there. But there's no use in tellin' tales, for I'm just sick of hearin' 'em, and I can't do nothin' with him. He gets a beating every day to make him behave, but the more I whip him, the worse he acts. You're welcome to beat him, too, whenever you can ketch him."

This was not likely to be very often; but Miss Goldsby turned kindly to Tommy, who was latching and unlatching the door while his mother gave this unflattering account of him, and said,

"We want you next Sunday afternoon to come and bring some other boys to our mission-school and help us sing. Will you come, Tommy?"

"Dunno," replied the young gentleman as he rushed out of the house.

"He's bad!" said his mother as she gazed after him with threatening eyes, "but he does sing first-rate. Sings hymns too, though you wouldn't believe it; he's for ever screechin' 'I want to be an angel,' and actin' like the Old Scratch all the time."

Poor Tommy! the visitors thought he had very little chance to "behave;" and when he appeared, on the very next Sunday, with his especial crony "Bangs," he was given a seat of honor and treated so politely that he felt quite uncomfortable. But Miss Goldsby knew just what to do with him, and she soon decided that sitting still was not one of Tommy's strong points. He must have active employment to work off his constant propensity to get into mischief, so he was made librarian, to the great admiration of the others, although this only meant carrying the books around.

But Tommy was a sight as he carried them, gathering up a huge pile that reached to his chin, and took more strength to

manage properly than he possessed, while he looked as if no work could possibly be so important; and his queer, ill-fitting coat and the rags at his knees would have been laughed at had not many of the other children looked even queerer. But the funniest part of Tommy was his head, on the back of which the hair grew just like feathers, sticking up and spreading out in a way that made Miss Goldsby think of an Indian chief.

She smiled pleasantly, however, at the little fellow tugging his burden along, and told him that she should call him "the willing one." Tommy looked sheepish, and felt a pleasant glow of contentment that made him forget to behave badly.

"Bangs," who got his name because of his front hair, that curled up and stuck out like a girl's, carried a burden too, but it was one that he brought with him. It was in the form of a small girl who looked cross and heavy and answered to the name of "Tilda Jane." "Bangs," otherwise Dan, was her brother and nurse, and he seldom thought of moving without her. She was a

large armful for two years old, and she was generally crying—for no reason, that any one could see, but because she liked it. Dan was as good to her as possible, and at home she had things quite her own way; but still she cried.

Tilda Jane's mouth was drawn down at the corners now, but there were no tears to be seen, and her round eyes were wide open with wonder at the doings of the mission-school. She liked all the faces and the singing, and whenever her brother held up his hand and promptly answered some question, she looked at him quite approvingly.

He was a bright little fellow, this "Bangs," queer as he looked in a girl's sacque that clothed him to the waist and a shabby old pair of knickerbockers below. But there had been great scabbling in Poor Man's lane to find clothes of *any* sort that were fit to go to school in, and no one was particular about having things to match.

It seemed strange enough to these little waifs to hear so much about the blessed

Saviour and his caring for them, and at first they could not understand it at all. Their idea of coming to mission-school was to be "dressed up like folks" and to be amused; but this strange new story came to them in all its freshness and filled their minds with wonder.

Week after week the good work went on, and before long there was a mothers' meeting and a sort of club for men. Poor Man's lane woke up by slow degrees, and the children, with their hymns and what they learned at school about the Lord and Saviour, had much to do with this. Work was found for some of the men, and dirty houses and loud, scolding voices grew to be less common.

Mrs. Wayne's garden fence was no longer used to climb on; and one memorable afternoon, in return for a sweet smile, Tommy told Miss Lily, in a shamefaced way, that he was "downright sorry he'd sassed her so."

"And *I* am sorry I lost my temper," was the frank reply; "we'll both try to do better in future, Tommy."

“The ‘planting out’ is beginning to tell,” said Miss Goldsby, “and the unsightly view of Poor Man’s lane as it *was* now scarcely shows at all.”

The story seemed to give great satisfaction, except, as Edie complained, “it wasn’t long enough;” but Miss Harson laughingly declared that she couldn’t remember ever telling this little girl a story that *was* long enough.

“I see!” said Malcolm in great delight, after a moment or two of deep thought. “Don’t you mean the story, Miss Harson, for us and Sim and the rest of them down there at the pond? And aren’t *we* trying to plant *them* out?”

“I think we *are* doing something of that sort, Malcolm, and we have already seen most encouraging results. Now let us see what other species of Arctic water-animals are left for us to explore.”

“Isn’t Sim Jute a kind of Arctic water-animal?” asked Clara. “We found him down on the ice, where he always seems to be.”

Every one laughed at this idea, and Miss Harson said,

“We will put him in that class, Clara, and then he will not seem out of place in our present talks.”

CHAPTER VIII.

SEA-LIONS.

“THIS evening,” said Miss Harson, “we will fancy ourselves in San Francisco.”

There were various exclamations of surprise at this announcement, for it did not seem reasonable to expect water-animals to be frisking about in such a thickly-populated place.

“We are there, if you say so,” responded Malcolm; “and now, ma’am, may we know what we are to do next?”

“Go somewhere else,” was the smiling reply. “But I have mystified you long enough. Take the large map, and see here, close to San Francisco, this group of dots marked *Farallon Isles*. They are really twenty miles west of the city, and we cannot very well get to them without going to San Francisco. Not always then,

for they are the hardest to reach and the least worth reaching, perhaps, of any known islands.

“Then why do people go there, Miss Harson?” asked Edith, not altogether fancying the journey, even in imagination.

“It is very rarely that any one goes there, dear; and we are going there to-night only to see some still bigger cousins of the walrus, which we can scarcely find in such numbers anywhere else. These huge creatures are called *sea-lions*, and they appear to have things all their own way at the Farallon Islands.”

“Does no one live there?”

“Only the lighthouse-keeper and his family. Think of it, Clara—*one* solitary family in that wild, lonesome place! These islands are a mere group of picturesque rocks, and on the highest point of the most southern island, three hundred and forty feet above the sea, is a lighthouse with a fine revolving light which can be seen for many miles. The islands are said to consist of broken rocks, mostly barren and bare, with plenty of sharp peaks, several caves, and here

and there a few weeds and a little grass. At one point there is a small beach, and at another a depression, but the fury of the waves makes landing at all times difficult and for the most part impossible."

"I don't see, then," said Edith, "how we are going to get there."

"The difficulty seems to have been provided for, and some one who knows has told us all about it. The gulls and sea-lions are not disturbed by strangers, for travelers seldom brave the dangers of a visit to the Farallon Islands, where the wind blows fiercely most of the time and the ocean is so rough that it is impossible to get there without being seasick. There are a great many curious things to be seen there, however, and first of these is the lighthouse.

"Farallon Island light is one of the most important and powerful on our Western coast, and the fog-whistle there is a very curious contrivance. It is a huge trumpet that is blown by the rush of air through a cave or passage connecting with the ocean, the mouthpiece of the fog-whistle being

fixed against the aperture in the rock ; and the breaker, dashing in with venomous spite, or the huge bulging waves which would dash a ship to pieces and drown her crew in a single effort, now blows the whistle and warns the mariner off. The sound thus produced has been heard at a distance of seven or eight miles."

"That's just splendid!" exclaimed Malcolm—"to make the wicked old waves work and do some good, instead of killing people! If they were really alive, as they seem to be, wouldn't they be mad at having to blow that whistle?"

Miss Harson laughingly thought that they would, and said that it seemed particularly comical to make these instruments of destruction work against themselves.

"This very original fog-whistle," continued the young lady, "depends for its blowing upon the irregular coming in of the waves, and also upon their irregular force, so that it is blown somewhat as an idle boy would blow his penny trumpet. The lighthouse-keeper's family lead a very lonely life, cut off, as they often are in winter,

from all communication with other human beings, even the vessel that brings their food and other supplies not being able to reach them for weeks at a time."

"And don't they get anything to eat?" asked Edith in dismay.

"Not from outside, dear; but they probably provide for just such delays by keeping a supply of necessaries on hand. People so peculiarly situated must always be prepared for a siege of bad weather."

"And there are the sea-birds and sea-lions," added Malcolm: "I suppose they can eat *them* if they are starving."

"Yes, if they can catch them," was the reply. "An animal larger than an ox is not very easily turned into food, especially as he keeps clear of places in which it would be convenient to capture him. The house in which this solitary family live seems to be in the midst of a perpetual storm: 'The ocean roars in their ears day and night; the boom of the surf is their constant and only music; the wild scream of the sea-birds, the howl of the sea-lions, the whistle and shriek of the gale, the dull,

threatening thunder of the vast breakers,—are the dreary and desolate sounds which lull them to sleep at night and assail their ears when they wake.’”

“Ugh!” exclaimed Clara in a very disgusted tone; “I wouldn’t live in such a horrid place!”

“I know, dear,” replied her governess, smiling, “that you have a great aversion to disagreeable things, and that you like everything about you to be dainty and delicate; but if you were the lighthouse-keeper’s daughter, instead of Mr. Kyle’s, you would have to live in just such a horrid place. It is pleasant to think that it does not seem to the people who are accustomed to it nearly so dreadful as it does to us; yet they must often suffer many inconveniences and discomforts.”

“I suppose the sea-lions have a good time of it?” said Malcolm.

“They certainly do not suffer for want of society, as they are gathered by thousands on the cliffs of the Farallon Islands, which they have selected as a favorite place of residence; and here they enjoy them-

selves by barking, howling, shrieking and roaring in the caves and on the steep, sunny slopes. They resemble seals in appearance, but are much larger, often measuring eleven feet and weighing twelve hundred pounds. They are not so numerous, however, as the seals, nor so valuable.

“It is said to be an interesting sight to see these marine monsters at play in the surf, and to watch the superb skill with which they know how to control their own motions when a huge wave seizes them and seems likely to dash them to pieces against the rocks. They love to lie in the sun upon the bare and warm rocks, and here they sleep crowded together and lying upon each other in inextricable confusion. The bigger the animal, the greater his ambition appears to be to climb to the highest summit; and when a huge, slimy beast has with infinite squirming attained a solitary peak, he does not tire of raising his sharp-pointed, maggot-like head and complacently looking about him.”

The children could scarcely understand how a creature like an immense seal could



SEA-LIONS.

climb a peak, and Miss Harson laughing-ly said that it was a fact in natural history which must be believed without being understood :

“ These sea-lions, it appears, are not very lovable creatures in any way ; and a traveler describes them as ‘ a rough set of brutes—rank bullies, I should say ; for I have watched them repeatedly as a big fellow shouldered his way among his fellows, reared his huge front to intimidate some lesser one which had secured a favorite spot, and first with howls, and, if this did not suffice, with teeth and main force, expelled the weaker from his lodgment. The smaller sea-lions, at least those which have left their mothers, appear to have no rights which any one is bound to respect. They get out of the way with an abject promptness which proves that they live in terror of the stronger members of the community ; but they do not give up their places without harsh complaints and piteous groans.’ ”

“ What hateful things ! ” exclaimed Edith.
“ I don’t think sea-lions are nice at all. ”

“ They cannot be called pleasant or

amiable," replied her governess; "and you must remember that these same little ones which you pity so much now are just as bad when they get their size and strength. It seems to be like struggling for a front window, for these animals evidently want the places where they can see the most."

This made them all laugh, it seemed so ridiculous for animals who live in the water to scramble for high places on land, where they could look around and view the country.

"How do they *catch* sea-lions, Miss Harson?" asked Malcolm.

"They are often caught with a lasso, which, strange as it may sound, is really the easiest way of getting at them. The best sea-lion catcher is a Spaniard, to whom the lasso is like a fifth hand or like his trunk to the elephant. Stealing up to a sleeping herd, he fastens his eye on the biggest one of the lot, and, biding his time, at the first motion of the animal with unerring skill flings his loose rawhide noose, and then holds on for dear life."

"Can't the sea-lion drag him into the

water?" said Clara; "for, of course, he wants to run away."

"He could," was the reply, "if the Spaniard went alone. But he knows too much about sea-lions to do this, and there are plenty of men at hand to help him. The creature tugging so desperately at the other end of the rope has the strength of at least half a dozen men, and would certainly get away if the lasso could not be turned around a solid rock. Another difficulty in catching this huge seal is the tenderness of its skin, which has been made very soft by its life in the water, and is easily cut by the lasso. A very moderate pressure too will break its bones, and, large as the creature is, rough handling will soon kill it."

"Don't they want it killed?" asked Edith.

"Not usually, dear, for when taken in this way it is intended for exhibition. We read that 'as quickly as possible the captured sea-lion is stuffed into a strong box or cage, and here, in a cell too narrow to permit movement, it roars and yelps in helpless fury until it is transported to its

tank. Wild and fierce as it is, it seems very rapidly to reconcile itself to the tank-life. If the narrow space of its big bath-tub frets it, you do not perceive it, for hunger is its chief passion; and with a moderately full stomach the animal does well in captivity if supplied with sufficient water.'"

"I don't think much of sea-lions," said Clara; "all that they do is to quarrel and make a noise. I do wonder, Miss Harson, if you are going to give us a story to-night?"

"About sea-lions, of which you do not think much? They are not very interesting, certainly, but they are curious and worth learning something about. I am afraid that my story, if I told one, would have to be about a lighthouse; and how can I tell whether you would like that?"

The young lady seemed to be enveloped, for a moment, in a perfect cloud of children, who evidently thought that a series of overwhelming caresses would be the best way of removing her doubts.

"I know that it's nice," said Edith, "whatever it is; but I shall like it a great

deal better if you say it all out of your own head."

"Would you mind my reading it?" was the smiling reply; "it would not sound half so well if I had to make it up as I went along."

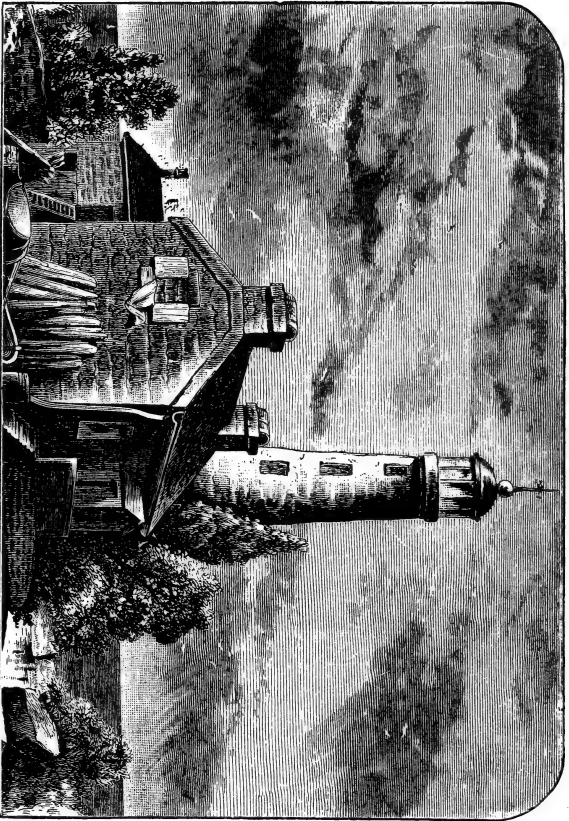
"She's got it all ready," exclaimed Malcolm triumphantly as Miss Harson produced a paper, "and I know it's just splendid!"

"A thing may be 'resplendent' with light or with jewels," replied his governess, "but such a term will not apply to my little story."

AN EVENING IN A LIGHTHOUSE.

The lighthouse was lonely, as all lighthouses are, but it was not so desolate as the one we have just read about at the Farallon Islands. Mr. James, the keeper, lived in a neat cottage with his wife and daughter, and the tower was connected with it by a covered passage-way. It was a very comfortable place, and a mile away there was a small village where Nellie James went to school.

IN A LIGHTHOUSE.



Mr. James often said that his fifteen-year-old daughter was "his right-hand man," and he scarcely knew how he could get along without her. Mrs. James was so often ill that a great deal in the house and out of it fell upon Nellie. She was so bright and fearless that nothing seemed too hard for her to attempt, and she could manage the lighthouse lamp nearly as well as her father. She had often lighted it, and it was a real pleasure to send the beautiful revolving light flashing over the water to warn and guide those who go down to the sea in ships.

Nellie's most intimate friend at school, Mattie Blake, was her exact opposite, and people often wondered what drew them together. Mattie was a delicate, timid girl, with two or three rough brothers who were fond of calling her "'fraid cat;" and she certainly was a great coward. Her mother said of her that she was frightened at her own shadow, and there were few things that she was not afraid of. She often cried over this in secret, and would have given anything to be brave like Nellie, but it

seemed as if she could not change herself. She was sweet-tempered and useless—"worse than no one," people declared, in an emergency.

A visit at the lighthouse cottage was one of the greatest pleasures that Mattie had; she loved and admired her friend so enthusiastically that it was delightful to be with her, and she often wished that courage were catching, like measles and scarlet fever. But it is always easier to get things that you don't want than those that you do.

"There'll be considerable wind after a while," said Mr. James, who was going several miles away on important business for the lighthouse, "and I may be kept at Crook's Point till late in the evening. But I can trust the lamp with *you*, Nellie; light it in good season, my girl, for the clouds are settling themselves for a rough night."

Nellie smilingly promised that the first star wouldn't have a chance to show its face before Bend Island Light put it out of countenance; and, tenderly kissing his wife, who was in bed with one of her bad

neuralgic attacks, Mr. James gave a parting embrace to his girl and drove rapidly off.

It happened very pleasantly that Mattie came in soon after, saying that she could stay all night if they wanted her; and as there was never any doubt of this, she and Nellie and Mrs. James settled down for a cozy evening.

"I'll make some short-cake for tea, mother, if you don't mind," said Nellie in her active, bustling way, "and *you* can have a beautiful brown piece of toast, if you'd rather. Mattie likes short-cake."

Mrs. James smiled her consent; and Nellie began her preparations, in which Mattie helped, enjoying every minute of her visit, as she always did. She often wondered if any sitting-room was ever so pleasant as this one, which was sitting-room and kitchen combined, with the bedroom opening out of it. Some pink coloring had been put into the whitewash, which gave the walls a lovely glow in the firelight; and the crimson lounge, neat white curtains and pretty carpet, pieced from a choice selection of rags by Nellie's busy fingers,

made a very attractive room of it. Things were different at the Blakes'. Mr. Blake kept a small store, and when he was away or very busy his wife had to wait upon customers, besides doing the work of her family; and she said that she had no time for pretty things.

Nellie had plenty to do, with her school and her sick mother and the lighthouse, but somehow she seemed to find time for everything. As she stood now in the fire-light with her flushed cheeks and bright brown hair, deftly turning over the nicely browned cake in the spider, Mattie declared to herself that she was "as pretty as a picture."

Some fragrant tea was made and a slice of bread daintily toasted for Mrs. James; baked apples and gingerbread were added to the table, and tea was pronounced ready. After the small tray had been carried to the invalid's bedside, the two girls sat down to their meal in broad daylight and chatted over it a long time. Mrs. James seemed better, and joined in the talk; Mattie declared that the short-cake was the

nicest she had ever tasted. Mattie liked nice things and pleasant times, and she would take a great deal of trouble to avoid those that were not nice and pleasant.

Outside, an October gale was coming up, as Mr. James had predicted, and at the approach of twilight Nellie quietly left her friend putting away the dishes, and, saying that she would be back soon, slipped away to the lighthouse. The lamp should be lighted earlier than usual to-night, for fear of its being forgotten until past the hour, and thus bringing the dear father into trouble and perhaps endangering the lives of others.

Mattie finished the dishes, put the room in order and then sat down by Mrs. James to tell her about some matters in the village that interested her. The talk went on cheerfully and the twilight deepened, but Nellie did not appear. Once or twice her mother wondered at her absence, as it never took so long to light the lamp; but Mattie said that she would come soon, and tried to make the sick woman forget how the time was passing. She felt just a little

uneasy herself, for something told her that had she done as she would be done by, Nellie would not have gone alone to the tower. But then she reasoned that Nellie often went alone, and did not care to have her unless she enjoyed going; which she never did, for she had a terror of the narrow, winding staircase and the close tower with its glass sides.

Suddenly Mrs. James gave a sort of shriek.

"It is getting dark," she cried, "quite dark; and look! look, Mattie! *There is no light in the tower!*"

A window at the foot of the bed permitted a view of the lighthouse, and Mattie saw that these words were only too true. What *had* become of Nellie? And oh, terrible thought! what *would* become of the vessels out at sea on that wild night? And, by way of help in this terrible emergency, down sank Mattie by the bedside and began to cry.

"Mattie Blake," said the invalid with unusual energy, "get up this instant and stop crying! Take the lantern, and go

directly to the tower and light the lamp; then see what has become of Nellie."

"Oh!" sobbed Mattie, with a white face of terror, "I *can't* go, Mrs. James; I'm afraid! Suppose that Nellie is killed?"

"Don't *dare* to tell me such a thing!" cried the excited woman, "but go *at once*, if you don't wish to be a murderer and wreck all the vessels off the coast. Mark my words, Mattie: if you wait any longer, you will rue this night's work as long as you live. If only I could go myself!" she added, as she fell back with a groan.

"I'll go," said the trembling girl, starting to her feet; "I didn't mean to be wicked, but I'm so—so frightened!"

"Don't think of that, child; *remember that God is everywhere, and do your duty.* May he bless and keep you, and bring me back my Nellie!"

Whispering a hasty prayer and trembling in every limb, Mattie started with the lantern, and went shudderingly through the dark passage and up the twisted staircase, not daring to peer into the corners, and too much afraid of the sound of her own

voice to call Nellie. She remembered the story of a brave girl who cured herself of cowardice by going all over the house alone in the dark, and, calling to mind Mrs. James's words that "God is everywhere," she planted her feet more firmly and resolved to do her best. Once in the queer little room, she had the lamp lighted almost before she knew it, and she stood gazing at the dazzling light with almost as much awe as if the sun had suddenly risen before her.

But where was Nellie?

Out again on the little balcony that encircled the tower, she seemed to be impelled, in spite of the wind, to walk around it; and there, on the farther side, lay a motionless heap which she recognized at a glance as her friend. Was it Nellie dead, or only insensible? She fainted easily, but what was she doing *there* in a fainting fit? And why had she not lighted the lamp? Not far off, a dead sea-bird of immense size had evidently killed itself by dashing against the wall of the tower; and, wondering if it had first attacked Nellie, Mattie

began to chafe her cold hands and try to rouse her back to life.

Presently in the tower-room, where Mattie had managed to drag her, the bewildered girl opened her eyes and put her hand to her head.

"I believe it aches," said she, sitting up; "it came against me so hard that it knocked me down, and then, you know, I forgot everything. What would I have done without *you*, Mattie? It was so very brave and good of you to come!"

"Brave and good!" This was a new idea to Mattie, and, remembering her unwillingness, she hung her head for very shame.

"I was not brave and good," she replied with a hot face, "for I didn't want to come, I was so afraid. I thought you had been killed. But your mother said I *must* come if I didn't want to be a murderer, because of the lamp; so of course I had to come. But I was frightened all the way."

"It was all the more brave of you to come, then," said Nellie, affectionately; "and I suppose I had been out in the cold

long enough. That great bird, you see, flew right in my face—frightened himself, I suppose—and down I went, like the silly thing I am. It was so early for the lamp that I walked around the balcony to see the waves tossing and foaming in the wind, and that's the way it happened. But next time I'll light the lamp *first*, if it's the middle of the day."

Poor Mrs. James was now wondering what had become of *both* the girls; the magnificent light was flashing in her eyes, so *that* was all right; but where were Nellie and Mattie? She had almost decided to wrap the blanket around her and hobble off after them when in they both came, and Nellie lay down beside her to tell her adventures.

"I have a word for you, Mattie," said the sick woman as she kissed her good-night: "you have quietly done a great work this evening in perhaps saving Nellie's life and the lives of many of whom you will never know; you have, besides, made a woman of yourself."

This "word" was very sweet to Mattie,

who felt as if she never could be a coward any more; and, after all, it was not so hard to be brave. It was only to remember that *God is everywhere*, for this thought had helped her to do her duty.

There were a great many exclamations over the story when Miss Harson had finished, and the children pronounced both Nellie and Mattie to be "just lovely!"

"It was so nice of her," said Edith, "to go to that dreadful tower when she was afraid; and how *could* that girl walk all through the house in the dark?"

"Edie dear," was the affectionate reply, "we can all do a great many things which we thought we couldn't possibly do, by trying with a right motive; and the best motive of all is the love and fear of God."

CHAPTER IX.

A SEA-BEAR.

“THERE is one more sea-animal,” said Miss Harson, “found among the seals and walruses and sea-lions, but it is less common and more valuable than any other of them. This is the *sea-otter*, a queer-looking black quadruped, about three and a half feet long from the tip of its short tail to its nose. It is not at all related to the seal family, for instead of ‘flippers’ it has regular fore and hind legs, like any other quadruped.”

“Isn’t it a little black bear?” asked Edith: “that’s what the picture looks like.”

“Why, so it does!” added Clara; “its head is exactly like a bear’s.”

Malcolm declared that the picture of an otter in the book they gave Sim Jute was not a bit like this one.

“No,” replied their governess, “for that was an English otter, and quite a different animal. You are quite right about the resemblance to a bear, which has caused this otter to be called the *sea-bear*. The shape of its body is like that of the beaver, and the skin lies in loose folds, so that when it is taken hold of in lifting the otter out of the water, it draws up like the hide on the nape of a young puppy-dog. This skin is covered with the richest of all fine, deep fur, a jet black, with silver-tipped hairs scattered here and there. This fur is so valuable that it is used principally for trimming, as it is too heavy and expensive for making full garments.”

“Is it handsomer than sealskin?” asked Malcolm slyly, for he knew that great satisfaction prevailed in regard to certain garments of that popular fur.

“I like the *color* of sealskin better,” replied Miss Harson, “and it must be far more agreeable to wear than so heavy a fur; but I suppose that people generally would call the sea-otter fur handsomer, because it is more rare and expensive.

Sealskin, however, is quite good enough for *me.*”

“And me,” “And me,” added Clara and Edith, the latter of whom “didn’t believe that the sea-otter was pretty, a bit.”

“It is not a *pretty* animal, dear,” was the laughing reply, “but the fur, from all accounts, is really beautiful. As we have all the fur we need, however, for the present, this need not trouble us. The sea-otter is very shy, and particularly dislikes the neighborhood of a human being. Any unfamiliar odor, it seems, will send it off where there is no possible chance of getting at it, and it requires the most patient watching ever to catch one. A sea-otter’s skin is worth, when taken from the animal, from thirty to sixty dollars, which is more than double what a seal skin brings; and to secure so valuable an animal the natives around Alaska will suffer the greatest hardships.

“Sea-otters are found more plentifully around the Saanack islets and reefs, and here the native hunters gather from the west and north and fix their camp on the main island, venturing out to sea fifteen or

twenty miles in every direction, with no greater protection against the rough waves than their little 'kyacks,' or 'bidarkies,' which seem to be tossed about like so many corks. But they are perfectly watertight, and the Eskimos plunge in them through mountains of water without getting at all wet. Indeed, they are scarcely so uncomfortable on the water as when they are waiting and watching for their prey on a barren rock in cold, wet weather, as they often do for a month at a time, with no fire, no beds, nothing but a little coarse food to keep them alive."

"Why can't they have a bonfire on the rock," asked Malcolm, "and dance around it to get warm?"

"You forget," said his governess, "how very scarce fuel is with the Aleutians: I doubt if they know what a bonfire is. Besides, the blaze and the jumping figures would drive any respectable otter to the depths of the ocean, and thus cut off all hope of carrying away his precious skin. Care is taken never to leave any signs of food on the beaches, for one of these

cautious animals on seeing it would be sure to say, '*Here's* something wrong—I'll go and warn the rest of 'em;' and never an otter would show his pointed nose for many a day.

“A traveler among these people says:

“The natives, when they go to Saanack on a hunting-trip of this character, usually make up a party of from forty to fifty men. They travel in their light skin bidarkies, two men in each, and are gone from three to four months at a time before returning to their families. They haul their kyacks out from the water every night as they bivouac along the coast, and sleep in gales of wind which are always loaded with rain, sleet and fog, without the least covering, and almost invariably without a fire. Ah! rude indeed is the country of the Aleut; but he is as rugged, and the bleak, precipitous islands stamped with his name are all the world to him. He wants no other, and he is happy where we would be supremely miserable. They are certainly as hardy a set of hunters, patient and energetic, as can be found in the world.’”

It was a great surprise to the children that people should really *like* to live among such hardships, and they wondered that these hard-working natives didn't emigrate, like many who are far better off.

"They think it delightful," was the reply, "and would look upon our way of living as very tame in comparison. If we would be wretched there, they would be equally wretched here; and a good yield of sea-otter leaves them nothing to be desired. They really enjoy the shrewd and skillful artifices by which alone they can capture the watchful and suspicious creature, and the pleasure of outwitting it is almost equal to the profit."

"Miss Harson," asked Edith with great interest, "are the baby otters pretty?"

"I doubt their being particularly pretty, dear, but they are what you would call 'very cunning.' They are as wild, however, as their parents, and although they have often been captured alive, all attempts to rear them have been utterly useless. No matter what dainties were offered them, the frantic little creatures always starved them-

selves to death. It is said to be an interesting sight to see the sea-otter mother asleep in the water on her back, with her young one clasped between her tiny fore paws."

"I don't see how she can go to sleep in the water without drowning," said Malcolm.

"I 'don't see,' either," said Miss Harson, "but it is stated as a fact on good authority, and therefore we must take it on trust, especially as we are not likely to be so situated that we *can* see it."

"It must be very funny to live in the water," said Clara, "and I should think it would be nice, too; for when we were at the seashore and went in bathing I never wanted to come out again."

"If you had webbed feet and a furry skin," replied her governess with a smile, "you might have stayed in the water as long as you liked. But then, you see, I should have had no girl about your size to love; and as for papa—"

Things now became, as Malcolm said, "affecting," and Clara laughingly promised to stop wishing that she could be an otter,

especially as Edith contributed the rather alarming idea that she might wear her own sister's fur and not know it.

"There is another species of otter," continued Miss Harson, "found in the temperate regions of Europe and America, which does not look much like its Arctic cousin. It belongs to the weasel family, who are famous hunters and remarkably bloodthirsty and persevering. The otter is very much persecuted by man, and were it not so much at home in the water, where it is most secure, there would scarcely be an animal of the species left.

"It has a very small head compared with the size of its body, which is about four and a half feet long, and when the mouth is open, as it so frequently is, it suggests very unpleasant ideas of sharp bites. It seems to have been formed especially for living in the water, as its body is long and much flattened; the tail is also flattened underneath, and from its length and shape is admirably adapted as a rudder; the feet are broad and webbed; and the legs are so loosely jointed that they can be turned in



OTTERS.

any direction while the animal is swimming."

"I wish *my* legs would do that!" exclaimed Malcolm involuntarily. "Wouldn't I have just the grandest kind of time swimming if my legs were loose-jointed? But excuse me, Miss Harson; I didn't mean to interrupt."

"I thought the otter's legs would be too much for you, Malcolm," was the amused reply; "and it is not at all remarkable that, aided by these advantages, the movements of the otter while in the water are most graceful and easy, and appear to be executed without the smallest effort. The animal slips into the water quite as noiselessly as if it were oil, and emerges in the same easy manner, hardly leaving a ripple on the surface. Not the least extraordinary part of its aquatic performance is the manner in which it turns a somersault below the surface of the water without appearing to check its speed. 'I have more than once,' says a certain writer, 'seen an otter in pursuit of a fish pass under its prey, and then, by a quick stroke of its tail,

turn completely over, seizing the fish in the course of the manœuvre. In order to retain the slippery prey when it has caught it, the teeth of the otter are very long, sharp and pointed, even the back teeth being furnished with sharp points.' ”

“A weasel’s teeth are sharp too,” said Clara: “I remember your reading that to us, Miss Harson.”

“The teeth of both animals are very sharp, and the otter seems to delight in killing and carrying off more fish than it can possibly eat, as it will often bite off only the flesh at the back of the neck. The remainder, however, is not wasted, for poor people who live near rivers where otters dwell profit by this cruelty, often finding on the banks fine fish that are well worth taking home. In one place in Scotland the otters invariably left a fine salmon every morning lying on a particular spot, much to the gratification of those who found it, who did not object to eating the fish because the otters had bitten out a piece for themselves.—What does this remind you of, Edie?” asked her governess:

“I see that you are all ready to tell me something.”

“Isn't it like Elijah and the ravens?” asked the little girl. “Only—”

“I know, dear,” said Miss Harson as she stopped in some embarrassment; “the ravens were especially sent by God to feed his holy prophet, while the leaving of the fish by the otters seems accidental; then it can be taken by any one. But nothing is *really* accidental, for our heavenly Father orders all things; and some, at least, of the poor people who got that fish doubtless recognized and thanked the Giver.”

“What do people want to hunt otters for?” asked Malcolm; “are they good for anything?”

“Yes, they have very thick soft fur, which is made into gloves and caps: in cold regions these articles are very much worn. The chase of an otter is very exciting, and affords a large amount of what hunters call ‘sport,’ and dogs are specially trained for this purpose. They would not be apt to undertake it of their own accord, as the jaws of the otter are so powerful and its

teeth so strong that it has been seen to break the leg of a stout terrier at a single bite. Its own fur, too, is very thick, and in some measure defends it from the bites of its enemies.

“But sometimes the otter itself is the hunter; and not very long ago, a man in some Western State shot an otter and, supposing it to be dead, went close up to it. The animal sprung at him furiously, and the hunter ran for his life, with the otter after him. A low rail-fence offered a hope of safety, and the man went quickly over it, only to find that the otter had gone through it. Then the man sprung back again, but so did the otter. This game was kept up for some time until, completely exhausted, the hunter made several frantic leaps, and finding the animal just passing through the fence, he in desperation grasped it by the tail, and, catching its leg through another crack, it sank exhausted to the ground. The cries of the man for help, mingled with the enraged snarls and fighting of the otter, were heard at a farm nearly a mile distant, and the hunter was

soon relieved from his awkward situation ; but he was so exhausted and enfeebled by the fright that it was some time before he could walk sufficiently to get to the house."

"I shouldn't think *he'd* want to hunt any more otters," said Clara.

"No," was the reply ; "they were probably let alone, so far as he was concerned ; and it is far better to tame an otter than to shoot it."

"But how *can* such savage things be tamed?" asked Malcolm.

"It is not easy even to catch them, but a comical habit they have of sliding down banks and such places, evidently for pure amusement, is quite a help. There is a chance then of taking one in a trap. These animals have been tamed in England, and taught to catch fish for their masters."

"Do they bite 'em first," asked Edith, "like those otters that left the salmon for poor people?"

"No, dear," replied Miss Harson ; "they are taught not to do that, but it is not an easy lesson for a fish-loving animal like the otter to learn. The Hindus have been in

the habit of training them by beginning when the animals were very young, and the first step was to make the otter give up all idea of eating fish himself. Bread and milk were mixed with fish to make him eat such strange food ; then less fish was given ; and at length bread and milk alone. Having reached this step, the otter is then taught to fetch and carry like a dog ; and when it has attained a certain proficiency in that art, a leathern model of a fish is cast into the water and the otter is taught to bring it out. By degrees dead fish are used instead of the model, the otter being always chastised if it attempts to eat or even tear them. At last it is permitted to go in after living fish, which by this time it has learned to carry in its mouth without hurting them."

"I wish we had some otters here to practice on," said Malcolm : "I believe I could teach them to catch all the fish we should want to eat."

"But where would you get the fish?" asked Clara : "there are only little minnows and things in the pond, you know."

Malcolm was obliged to laugh at himself for leaving out so important a part of the programme, and Miss Harson said that she would not tell papa just yet that he need not order any more fish.

“Tame otters,” continued the young lady, “have been known to show as much affection for their masters as a dog, fawning upon them in the same way and going out to walk with them. One of these strange pets was very fond of gooseberries, and equally fond of playing with his master’s feet, just as a young puppy would do. Another one would catch fish for its own living and then return to its owner. One day the animal was taken to the river by its master’s son. It entered the water as usual, but when called it refused to obey the command and remained in the water. Some time afterward the owner of the animal, who had been away from home, returned, and upon hearing of the loss of his pet went to the river-bank and gave the accustomed call. To his great joy the otter responded to the call, and came crawling out of the water to his feet.”

“How glad he must have been!” said Edith; “but the otter wanted to stay in the water, didn’t he, Miss Harson?”

“It certainly looks as though he did, and he seemed to come out only from affection for his master. This shows that the feeling must have been a very strong one.

“Another otter was so very tame that when strange dogs appeared it would try to spring into its master’s arms for safety. It was a splendid fisherman, catching eight or ten salmon a day. When it caught them, it always tried to break the fish between the last fin and the tail, and if the fish were taken away, it instantly dived in search of more. It was equally expert in the sea, where it caught numbers of cod-fish. It would hunt in this manner until it was tired, when it refused to enter the water again. Its master would then feed it; and after it had taken as much food as it wished, it was accustomed to go to sleep on the spot, and was generally carried home sleeping.”

It seemed very funny to carry an otter about like a pussy cat, and the children felt

that a glimpse of this pet animal would have been a very high degree of happiness.

“An otter that was taught to fish for its owners,” said Miss Harson, “did not do it very willingly; but it was interesting to watch its performance. Jumping into the deep rivulet into which it was taken, it would rouse the fish with blows of its tail. When the fish thus disturbed kept close to the bank, the otter did not notice them; but if one of them darted before its pursuer, it was instantly seized and brought to the surface of the water, probably to lessen the power of its struggles. The otter caught several fish in this manner and brought them to shore, but resigned its prey with great reluctance, uttering a kind of whining remonstrance.”

“What a shame!” said Clara, “when the poor thing had taken so much trouble.”

“It was *mean*,” said Edith with great scorn, “to take the otter’s fish away.”

“If the fish was really needed by the owners, dear,” replied her governess, “and the otter had enough for its own food, it was not cruel, any more than it is to make

other animals work for us, although we know that they do not like it. And now an account of another otter, who *wouldn't* fish for her owner, must take the place of a regular story:

“ ‘When I first obtained the animal,’ says the owner, ‘there was no water sufficiently near to where I lived in which I could give her an occasional bath; and being apprehensive that, if entirely deprived of an element in which nature had designed her to pass so considerable a portion of her existence, she would languish and die, I allowed her a tub as a substitute for her native river, and in this she plunged and swam with much apparent delight. It was in this manner that I became acquainted with the curious fact that the otter, when passing along beneath the surface of the water, does not usually accomplish its object by swimming, but *by walking along the bottom*, which it can do as securely and with as much rapidity as it can run on dry land.

“ ‘After having had my otter about a year, I changed my residence to another quarter of the town, where a stream flowed

past the rear of the house. The creature being by this time so tame as to be allowed perfect liberty, I took it down one evening to the river and permitted it to disport itself for the first time since its capture in a deep and open stream. The animal was delighted with the new and refreshing enjoyment, and I found that a daily swim in the river greatly conduced to its health and happiness.

“I would sometimes walk for nearly a mile along the bank, and the happy and frolicsome creature would accompany me by water, and that, too, so rapidly that I could not, even by very quick walking, keep pace with it. On some occasions it caught small fish, such as minnows, eels, and occasionally a trout of no inconsiderable size. When it was only a minnow or small eel which it caught, it would devour it in the water, putting its head for that purpose above the water; when, however, it had made a trout its prey, it would often come to shore and devour it more at leisure.

“I strove very hard to train this otter to fish for me, as I had heard otters have been

many times taught to do, but I never could succeed in this attempt, nor could I ever prevail upon the animal to give me up at any time the fish which she had taken. The moment I approached her to do so, as if suspecting my intention she would at once take to the water, and, crossing to the other side of the stream, devour her prey in safety. The difficulty in training I impute to the animal's want of an individual affection for me, for it was not affection, but her own pleasure, which induced her to follow me down the stream, and she would with equal willingness follow any other person who happened to release her from her box.

“Although this otter failed to exhibit those affectionate traits of character which have displayed themselves in other individuals of her tribe toward the human species, she was by no means of a cold or unsocial disposition toward some of my smaller domestic animals. With an Angora cat she soon formed a very close friendship, and when in the house was unhappy if not in the company of her friend.

““I had one day an opportunity of witnessing a singular display of attachment evinced by this otter toward the cat. A little terrier dog attacked the latter as she lay by the fire, and, driving her thence, pursued her under the table, the cat spitting and setting up her back in defiance. At this instant the otter entered the apartment, and no sooner did she perceive what was going on than she flew with much fury and bitterness upon the dog, seized him by the face with her teeth, and would doubtless have inflicted a severe chastisement upon him had I not hastened to the rescue, and, separating the combatants, expelled the terrier from the room.

““When permitted to wander in the garden this otter would search for grubs, worms and snails, which she would eat with much apparent relish, detaching the latter from their shells with surprising quickness and dexterity. She would likewise mount upon the chairs at the window and catch and eat flies—a practice that I have not hitherto seen noticed by any naturalist.’”

CHAPTER X.

AT THE NORTH POLE.

“MISS HARSON,” said Clara as she came in shivering from an expedition just outside the front door to see the stars that were glittering like diamonds in the winter sky, “why do people say that ‘it’s as cold as Greenland’?”

“*What* people say it, Clara?”

“Well, Jane did this morning, and Kitty answered, ‘That’s so;’ and Thomas said it was *colder* than Greenland.”

“Which shows that they have never visited the Arctic regions,” was the smiling reply, “nor even read about them. I know that ‘as cold as Greenland’ is a favorite expression with some people, but it is not a happy one, for it is never so cold here as it is in Greenland. Suppose that we take a trip there to-night and see for ourselves how it is?”

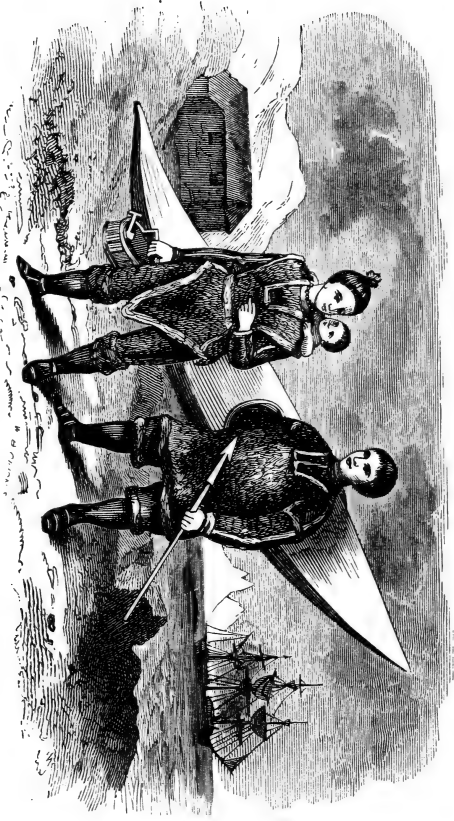
Yes, indeed! they would like it of all things; and Malcolm stipulated that they should see a polar bear—several polar bears, if possible.

“That is the principal object of our journey,” said his governess—“to make the acquaintance of this despot of the Arctic regions, as he is called. But there are many other strange things to be seen first, and it is by no means an easy matter to get to Greenland. You will see by the map how very far north we shall have to travel—much farther than to go from where we are to the most southern point of the continent. Up, and still up, from Canada, past all these bays and islands to Baffin’s Bay and the Greenland Sea, where Hudson’s Bay seems quite far south in comparison. We shall see plenty of icebergs and seals and walruses; and unless we dress ourselves properly for the trip we shall be half, if not quite, frozen.”

“Won’t our sealskin things be warm enough?” asked Edith.

“No, dear; reindeer-skins lined with thick fur are better; and we must have

NATIVE GREENLANDERS.



sealskin boots sewed with twine. These keep out cold and wet, and as they are soft and elastic, they are very pleasant for walking. Pine-wood snow-shoes two or three feet long, capable of supporting the weight of a man on the most brittle snow, and enabling him to pass over it with the rapidity of a skater on ice, can be fastened to the soles of the sealskin boots."

The children were highly amused at the queer appearance they would make in this style of dress, and when Miss Harson added that their sealskin caps might answer for mild weather, but they would need "jumpers" for the colder season, there was a universal cry for information.

"'Jumpers' are merely fur hoods fastened to the outer garment," was the laughing reply; "but why they are called by so strange a name I cannot imagine. They are an excellent protection against the cold, especially for the back of the neck, where it is always felt so keenly. Besides the cold, however, we must remember, in getting ready for our Arctic expedition, that food is very scarce in that region."

“We can take lots of good things with us,” suggested Malcolm: “cooked turkeys and chickens, and cold ham and tongue and—and—mince-pies.”

Miss Harson seemed so very much amused at this idea that Malcolm was afraid his proposition was not so good a one as he had supposed it would be when he offered it.

“This is not exactly the sort of fare,” said the young lady, “that Arctic travelers indulge in. I suppose that *anything* would keep in such a frozen region, as everything is on ice, whether it is wanted there or not; but such an outfit would add very much to the expense of a most expensive journey. ‘Pemmican’—which is, I *think*, but am not quite sure, dried and pounded meat—dried potatoes, meat-biscuits, pickled cabbage and various dried fruits and vegetables, with salt beef and pork, hard crackers and flour, do not make up a very inviting bill of fare. Besides these we must have a regular medicine-chest, to be prepared for the sickness that is sure to come in some form or other, as well as plenty of knives, needles and

other small articles which are attractive to the natives."

"It's going to be delightful," said Clara, enthusiastically, as Miss Harson consulted the map; "I'm so glad we started."

"I don't mind going in *this* way," said Edith, "but I wouldn't like to go *really*. I'd rather see the polar bears in pictures."

"That's a real *girl*," replied Malcolm, as though he had expected her to be anything else. "I wish we *could* go to Greenland and find out just how cold it is."

"I will tell you presently," said his governess, smiling, "and I think your ardor will then be very much cooled. First, about Greenland itself: it is generally supposed to be a collection of barren islands, although sometimes spoken of as a continent; and Dr. Kane, the famous Arctic explorer, says that it is connected with America by a mighty crystal bridge. He says also that it is large enough for a continent, as there are at least twelve hundred miles of it in length, and that through the centre of all this space runs a deep unbroken sea of ice. There are plenty of

fogs on the coast of Greenland, as there are on the coast of Alaska; and through these fogs, perhaps, we see our first wonder in these regions, the *midnight sun*."

"Oh, Miss Harson!" was the amazed exclamation, "does the sun really and truly shine at midnight?"

"Really and truly it does. In all those regions near the poles there is a long summer day of two months; and although, when it is midnight by the clock, the sun makes an attempt at setting, just before it reaches the horizon it begins to rise again. This is such a wonderful sight that journeys are made to the North Cape, at the farthest point of Norway, for the sake of seeing it. One traveler writes of it: 'It was after twelve at night when we came into port, and the peculiar light of the Arctic summer at this hour—which reminds one of the effect of an eclipse, so unlike our orthodox twilight—bathed everything in gray but the northern background, an Alpine chain standing out against a blazing crimson sky.' And again he says: 'On our road we were favored with a gorgeous spectacle, which

hardly any excitement of peril could have made us overlook. The midnight sun came out over the northern crest of the great berg, kindling variously-colored fires on every part of its surface, and making the ice around us one great resplendency of gem-work, blazing carbuncles, rubies and molten gold.' ”

This was very beautiful to hear about; but Clara presently wondered how people knew, in such places, when it was time to go to bed.

“There is some trouble in this way,” replied Miss Harson, “with those who are not accustomed to these far northern regions, as it is hard to believe that it is really night when apparently it is broad day. Animals that are brought from warmer places find it especially puzzling to know when to go to sleep; and there is a curious story of an English rooster that seemed to be utterly bewildered because it never came night. He appeared to think it unnatural to sleep while the sun was shining, and staggered about until he fell down from exhaustion. After a while he got into reg-

ular habits, but he was apparently so disgusted to wake up in broad daylight, instead of in the gray dawn to which he was accustomed, that he stopped crowing. Perhaps he thought he had overslept himself, and was ashamed to crow so late."

The children thought a rooster that did not crow a melancholy affair, and they would have been glad to know how he acted when he got back—if he *ever did* get back—to his native place.

"That is hardly probable, as live animals are often taken on long voyages on purpose to have them fresh when wanted for food, and the perplexed rooster was doubtless killed and eaten in the polar seas. But imagine birds tucking their heads under their wings and trying to sleep until the broad glare of sunshine made them give it up in despair. Pussy would not mind such a state of things, as she can sleep at all times and in all places, but it must be particularly inconvenient for foreign birds."

"It would be nice, though," said Clara, who was something of an owl, "to get to a

place where you wouldn't have to go to bed just when you wanted to sit up."

"If I should try keeping you out of bed for just one night," replied her governess, "I am very sure that you would beg to be allowed to sleep before morning. But people who live in these northern countries do not, as you seem to suppose, stay awake for two months. They go to bed just as we do, without paying any attention to the movements of the sun, for it is impossible to live without sleep. When the two months of daylight are passed, then come the days of twilight and darkness, a hundred and forty of them altogether.—How many months, Malcolm?"

"Four months and a half," was Malcolm's reply.

"Fully that; and it is very hard for us to realize this dismal season. Early in November the twilight deepens into night; and an Arctic traveler writes at that time: 'We still read the thermometer at noonday without a light, and the black masses of the hills are plain for about five hours with their glaring patches of snow, but all the

rest is darkness. Lanterns are always on the spar-deck, and the lard-lamps never extinguished below. The stars of the sixth magnitude shine out at noonday.' Entire darkness prevails for ninety days, and the Eskimo is said to measure his life by winters as the American Indian does by summers, because winter is the longest part of the year. He calls it 'the season of fast ice.'

"But when the day has come again, and the first thawing begins to show itself in the sunshine as winter declines before the promise of spring, he tells you that it is 'upernasak,' the time of water-drops. It is then that the snow-bird comes back and the white ptarmigan takes on a few brown feathers. His well-known heath too, the 'irsuteet,' is green again below its dried stems in the snow.

"About the end of May, or a little later, comes 'upernak,' the season of thaws. It is the Eskimo's true summer. Animal and vegetable life is now back again, the floes break upon the sea and drift in ice-rafts about the coasts, snow is disappearing from

the hill-tops and the torrents pour down from the long-sealed ravines and valleys.

“By the middle of August comes the season of ‘aosak,’ or no ice, which lasts a very short time. ‘No ice’ means only that the sea is more open than at any other season, but there is always ice to be seen around this open passage. The latter part of September is the end of this short summer. There is still a fifth season, when the water-torrents begin to freeze in the fiords and thawing ceases except at noon-day. This terminates when the young ice has formed in a permanent layer on the bays, and winter returns with its long reign of cold and darkness.’”

“Well,” said Malcolm, “they may keep their midnight sun and welcome if that’s the way all the rest of the year is there.”

“Isn’t it aw—, I mean *very* cold, Miss Harson?” asked Edith with an expectant shiver.

“Yes, dear,” was the reply: “that cannot be denied; and the old writers used to say about these regions that when the inhabitants tried to speak the words froze in

coming out of their mouths, and did not thaw until spring."

"That couldn't be true, could it?" said Clara, quite seriously. But she was soon laughing as heartily as the others at the absurdity of her question.

"An Arctic winter," continued Miss Harson, "contains a greater amount of cold than we can possibly realize. We call it Arctic weather when our thermometer is down to zero; but what should we think of fifty *below*? Of weather that freezes meat hard, and makes of a sleeper's long beard a mass of ice frozen fast to the buffalo-skin, not much that is favorable can be said; and the only wonder is that any Arctic explorers come back alive to tell the tale. With cold and darkness together, such a winter must be very dreadful to those who have lived in a temperate region, as it seems hard enough even for the natives."

"Do *they* mind the cold?" asked Malcolm.

"Not as *we* should, because they were born in this inhospitable region, and their

dress and food are a great protection against the cold. First they wear an undershirt made of bird-skins which have been chewed until they are quite soft, and some of these garments contain as many as five hundred skins of the 'auk' as one species of bird is called. Next comes the 'kapetah,' a shirt which fits very loosely; and fast to this is a close hood, called the 'nessak.' After the bearskin breeches there is a short sock of birdskin, with a grass-padded sole; and outside of this comes a bearskin leg, sewed with great skill to the natural sole of the bear, and abundantly wadded about the foot with dry, non-conducting straw."

"No wonder they are such funny-looking objects!" said Clara as Miss Harson turned to a picture of some Eskimos in "full dress." "I should think they could hardly waddle about with all that on."

"They can't feel very cold," said Edith.

"Besides all this," added their governess, "a fox's tail is held between the teeth to protect the nose in a wind, and mitts of sealskin well wadded with straw adorn the

hands. How a person so attired can move or use his limbs in any way seems a mystery; and he is described as 'a lump of



HEAVILY CLAD.

deformity waddling over the ice, unpicturesque, uncouth and seemingly helpless.' ”

“The women seem to be dressed just like the men!” said Clara in surprise. “How very queer that is!”

“It seems so to us,” was the reply; “but their idea of dress is to keep warm, and they could scarcely do this in their severe climate with any other style of clothing. It does not look so queer when one gets

accustomed to it, and on a young native girl this costume is almost pretty. I am afraid," added the young lady, "that you would not like the Eski-mo houses any better than the dress."

"That's only a hut," said Malcolm as Miss Harson placed a picture before them. "Is it the best they've got in the way of a house?"

"It is a fair representation of a native Arctic residence," replied his governess, "and it certainly does not look alluring to those who are accustomed to our handsome and comfortable houses. The hut is built, you see, of large stones in the shape of a dome, with a little outer one at the entrance, from which you go *down* into the house, instead of *up*. The stones are sodded with turf, and the door is a narrow slab of clay-slate. Inside of this 'igloë,' as it is called, things are by no means pleasant. In describing one our explorer says: 'At its farther end a rude platform, also of stone, was lifted about a foot above the entering floor. The roof formed something of a curve: it was composed of flat stones, re-

markably large and heavy, arranged so as to overlap each other. The height of this cave-like abode barely permitted one to sit upright. Its length was eight feet, its



ESKIMO HOUSE.

breadth seven feet, and an expansion of the tunneled entrance made an appendage of perhaps two feet more.'

"You will understand better," continued the young lady, "how very small this house is when I tell you that there is not a room at Elmridge which is not larger."

“Not even our dolls’ room?” asked Edith in amazement.

“Not even your dolls’ room, for that is ten feet square. The entrance to this tiny house, a long, narrow passage-way, is called a ‘tossut.’ The stone platform inside is the nearest approach to a bed that these people have, but it also answers the purpose of sofa and chairs. The temperature in one of these habitations is something dreadful—not from cold, but from heat—and the inmates sit or lie about with scarcely any clothes on, and sometimes with none at all. Dirt abounds in such crowded quarters, and also smoke, as walrus-blubber is the favorite article of fuel, being burned on the stone platform, while the ‘kotluk,’ or general cooking-vessel, is suspended over it.”

“Don’t the Eskimos eat *raw* meat?” asked Malcolm; “I didn’t suppose they ever cooked anything.”

“They *do* eat it raw, with great relish,” was the reply, “but they also eat it cooked. Little children will eat long strips of raw blubber as other children eat candy, and

this habit gives the little ones a very fat and greasy appearance. Arctic travelers always find the Eskimos very hospitable, and a stranger is taken into the hut at once as one of the family; they are also kind and polite to each other, and one of their curious customs is to cry together. Everything seems to be done in concert. They often assemble by concert for a general weeping-match; but it happens sometimes that one will break out into tears, and others courteously follow, without knowing at first what is the particular subject of grief."

"How very funny!" exclaimed the children.

"And just think," added Edith: "if we were Eskimos, you'd all have to cry whenever I did!"

"Come here," said her governess laughingly, "and let me whisper something in your ear. Don't you think that a great while ago, when you were a very little girl, we should have been kept rather busy with our pocket-handkerchiefs?"

"Yes, Miss Harson," was the brave re-

ply, with very red cheeks; "I used to cry very easily. But don't you think I've improved a little?"

"No, dear," with a loving kiss, "I don't think you have improved *a little*, but a very great deal; and I should almost expect you to meet a polar bear now without crying."

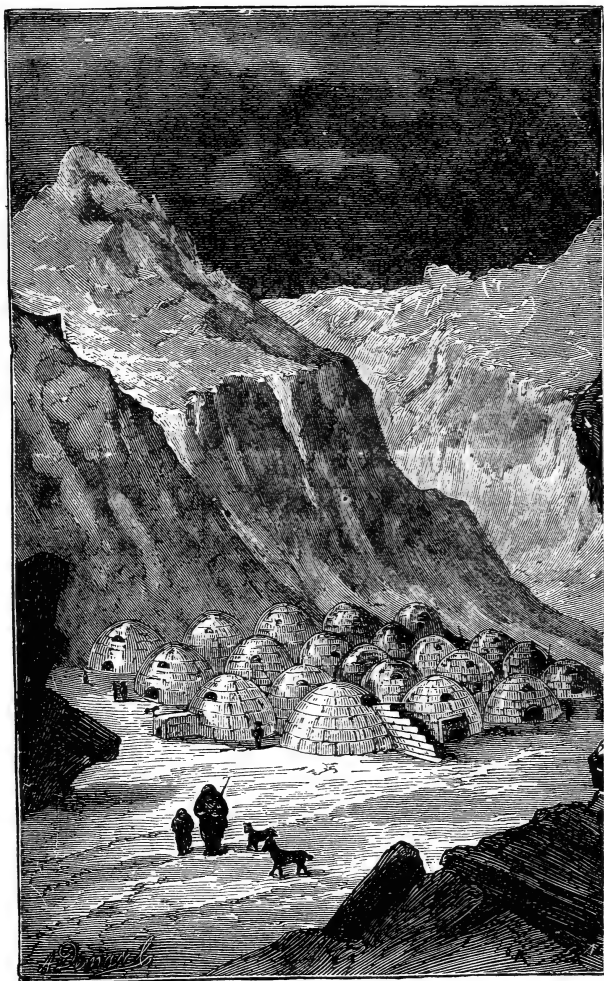
"I wish one would hurry along," said Malcolm; "*I'm* ready for him."

"Much more ready, I think," replied Miss Harson, "than you would be if there was any danger of his appearing."

The young gentleman could not deny this; and he promised, with a great show of penitence, to be patient and learn what he could in the mean time.

"Are the Eskimos heathens?" asked Clara.

"Some of them still are; but Lutheran and Moravian missionaries from Denmark have taught them of the Saviour, and they can no longer be called savages. Before these devoted men went to them with the word of God in their hands the natives of Greenland committed the worst crimes without any feeling of shame, and it was



ESKIMO VILLAGE.

not considered safe for a vessel to touch upon their coast. Nearly a hundred and fifty years ago a Dutch brig was seized by the natives and the whole crew murdered; but now such a thing would not happen in the whole length and breadth of the land.

“For the last hundred years Greenland has been safer for the wrecked mariner than many parts of our own coast. Hospitality is the universal characteristic, enjoined upon the converted as a Christian duty, but everywhere a virtue of savage life. From Upernavik to Cape Farewell the Eskimo does not hesitate to devote his own meal to the necessities of a guest. The benefits of the missionary school are not confined to the Christianized natives; and it is observable that the virtues of truth, self-reliance and generous bearing have been inculcated successfully with men who still cherish the wild traditional superstitions of their fathers. Some of these are persons of strongly-marked character, and are trusted largely by the Danish officials.”

“I should think, then,” said Malcolm, “that people who go to Greenland would

give a great deal of money to the missionary society, because if it hadn't been for their changing the people so they couldn't go at all."

"The trouble is, Malcolm," replied his governess, "that those who profit by such self-denying labors seldom think of them, but take what they find as a matter of course; and I am afraid that very few voyagers to Greenland have remembered the missionaries."

CHAPTER XI.

COLD COMFORT.

“WELL,” said Sim Jute as he rather scornfully eyed a small, dome-like structure on the edge of the pond, “if *that’s* an Eskermow house, I don’t want to set in it, and I guess folks’ll like their coffee and things better out of the old shanty. They can’t git into this thing!”

“Yes, they can,” replied Malcolm eagerly; “you just go through the ‘tossut,’ this way.”

And down went the young gentleman on his hands and knees to show how easy it was to crawl through the narrow aperture; but at the beginning of his efforts he was greeted with a loud laugh from his companion that made him pause in a state of silent wrath.

Sim stopped laughing as soon as he could, and said in a gentler voice,

“You’ve been awful good to me, Mister Malcolm, and I ain’t forgot any of it. You know a heap more than I do, and you’ve been interjuced to them Eskermows and other queer folks that I don’t know nothin’ about; but I don’t s’pose they ever tried keepin’ a coffee-stand on the ice. Anyway, they never tried it *here*, where folks don’t *crawl* into houses like that; and nobody but boys’d try to do it.”

Malcolm was disappointed; he had worked hard, ably helped by Sim, to get his “igloë” properly built, being fully persuaded that it would be a very taking idea to dispense coffee and other refreshments for skaters from a real Eskimo hut. And now here was Sim, for whose benefit it was chiefly intended, declaring that it wouldn’t do at all! The architect had not happened to think that people might object to the unusual mode of entrance, and he had only told Sim that he wanted his help in building and that he was going to surprise him when it was finished.

Sim was quite as much surprised as could have been desired, but not in the

way that Malcolm wanted. He had helped make snow-shoes, however, and had then obligingly tumbled down in them, in company with his teacher, in vain efforts to "glide over the snow at a rapid rate;" he had stuffed straw into his shoes to keep his feet warm (also under Malcolm's instruction), and privately taken it out again when he couldn't stand it another minute; and he had half swallowed something in the shape of a fox's tail to keep the wind from freezing his nose on extra-cold days. All these experiments had been meekly borne, but when it came to occupying an Eskimo hut, Sim politely rebelled.

"There is one thing," said Miss Harson, who had come up behind the boys without their knowing it, "which you have certainly forgotten, Malcolm; and that is, that Eskimo huts are intended for Eskimos."

"But isn't it *nice*?" said Clara and Edith, who were sure not to be very far off from their beloved governess: "it's made just like the pictures.—How could you do it, Malcolm?"

"I couldn't if Sim hadn't helped me,"

was the generous reply.—“Do you like it, Miss Harson?”

“Very much indeed; it looks like an excellent imitation of their queer structures. If I were only two or three feet high, I should certainly explore the inside. It is quite an ornament to the pond, and I should not be surprised if numbers of people came to look at it.”

Malcolm felt quite comforted by this time, and forgave Sim for disappointing him. The “igloë” was very much admired, and it brought more custom than ever to the young restaurant-keeper, who quite deserved it as a highly respectable and useful member of society. So that the labor was not thrown away, after all; and Miss Harson said that it had also been a great advantage to Malcolm to build it.

“It will scarcely do,” said the young lady, smiling, “to illustrate *all* our Arctic explorations in that fashion; but there is one thing we shall encounter which there is no danger of your imitating. I mean the magnificent illumination known as the *aurora borealis* or *northern light*.”

“Why, we had that *here*, Miss Harson,” said Clara. “Don’t you remember showing it to us ever so long ago?”

“Yes, dear, I remember it perfectly; and a very grand sight it was. But it is only occasionally with us, and does not compare with the fireworks which adorn the sky of Greenland and other northern regions. An ancient traveler, the first perhaps on the Arctic shores, describes it in this fashion :

“‘There arises in Greenland a light with the night, when the moon is new or on the point of becoming so, which lights up all the country as if the moon were full; and the darker the night the brighter the light shines. It takes its course on the north coast, on account of which it is called the *northern light*. It looks like flying fire, and stretches up into the sky like a high and long palisade. It passes from one place to another, and leaves smoke in the places it leaves. None but those who have seen it could give any idea of the quickness and agility of its movements; it lasts all night and disappears at sunrise.’”

“A later writer describes ‘the rays darted by the luminous meteor as of all the colors of the rainbow, red predominating. Here and there the stars seemed to be floating in blood. Glowing lines of throbbing color spread from the dark segment on the horizon, some of them passing the zenith and quenching the light of the moon in their electric waves, which oscillated and trembled as if swept by a current of air. No description could give an adequate idea of the glory which flushed the northern sky, converting it into a vast dome of fire; but after the magnificent spectacle had been enjoyed for about half an hour it suddenly disappeared, not fading gradually away after a concentration of its rays or a diminution of its splendor, but dying abruptly, as if an invisible hand had cut off the supply of electricity which gave it life.’”

“The other one said it lasted all night,” said Malcolm. “I wonder which is right?”

“Both, I suspect,” replied his governess, “as the illumination would vary according to the condition of the atmosphere, just as lightning does. But the contrast of all this

splendor with the white ground and stately ice-mountains, which are all that can be seen as far as the eye may reach, must be very fine, and it shows that there are *some* things in Greenland almost worth going to see."

"Does anything ever grow there, Miss Harson?" asked Clara.

"Oh yes," was the reply: "there is a great deal of moss and heath, and there are even some wild flowers. Our favorite explorer, Dr. Kane, speaks of finding these flowers early in June, and of finding plants green under the dried tufts of last year; but 'instead of the graceful growth which should characterize them, they showed only a low scrubby sod or turf, yet studded with flowers.'"

"But flowers get killed in the cold here," said Edith: "why don't they there?"

"Because"—to the children's great surprise—"they are protected by the snow. It is the sharp winds that kill; and Dr. Kane says that 'few of us at home can realize the protecting value of this warm coverlet of snow. No eiderdown in the

cradle of an infant is tucked in more kindly than is the sleeping-dress of winter about this feeble flower-life. The first warm snows of August and September, falling on the thickly-pleached carpet of grasses, heaths and willows, enshrine the flowery growths which nestle round them in a non-conducting air-chamber; and as each successive snow increases the thickness of the cover, we have, before the intense cold of winter sets in, a light cellular bed covered by a drift six, eight or ten feet deep, in which the plant retains its vitality.'

"A peculiar kind of moss which is found on the coast, or rather near it, gives such a deep rose-hue through the snow that the region where it grows is known as the 'Crimson Cliffs.' Old travelers supposed that the color was in the snow itself, but later discoveries brought to light these tiny moss-cups."

"How lovely crimson moss must be!" exclaimed Clara, who had a fondness for bright colors; "I have never seen any."

"You forget the sea-moss, I think," said Miss Harson, "which you thought so very

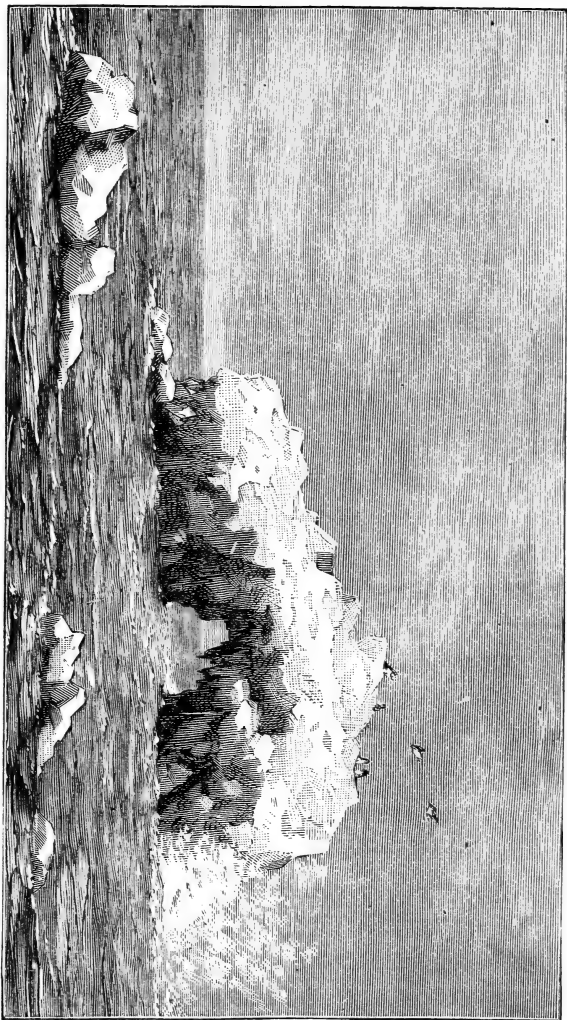
pretty when we gathered it, and which is both crimson and rose-color. The Greenland moss is, of course, different, and I am sorry that I cannot contrive a way for you to see it."

"I'd much rather see an iceberg," said Malcolm.

"Icebergs are best in pictures," was the laughing reply, "and it is not easy to see a real one without seeing more than is at all desirable. These huge moving mountains of ice are the terror of the Arctic voyager, and during an 'ice-fog,' which is often encountered at the entrance of Melville Bay—which you will please find, Malcolm, on the map—there is great danger of being wedged in by them. One volume speaks of them as though they were living creatures when it says: 'The bergs which infest this region, and which have earned for it among the whalers the title of the "Bergy Hole," showed themselves all around us: we had come in among them in the fog.'"

"Did they get out again, Miss Harson?" with great anxiety.

"Yes, after working hard all day; but it



AN ICEBERG.

was a fortunate escape. At another time, strange as it sounds, the ship was *fastened* to an iceberg for safety; and this was accomplished with great labor by planting ice-anchors. But all this trouble was for nothing, as the account says, 'We had hardly a breathing-spell before we were startled by a set of loud crackling sounds above us, and small fragments of ice, not larger than a walnut, began to dot the water like the first drops of a summer shower. The indications were too plain; we had barely time to cast off before the face of the berg fell in ruins, crashing like near artillery.'

"The most dangerous part of an iceberg is its great bulk under the water, so that it is impossible to tell its full size. Think, too, of such a sheet of water as Melville Bay being turned into a thick field of ice when the Arctic winter has fairly set in! The interior of the country bounded by Baffin's Bay is, it seems, the seat of extensive glaciers, which are constantly shedding off icebergs of the largest dimensions."

"I'm glad we don't live there," said

Edith; "and *I* don't want to see an iceberg."

"I'd like to *see* one," replied her sister, "if I could be sure that it wouldn't do us any harm."

"Perhaps there'll be one exhibited in a cage, so that it can't get out," suggested Malcolm: "then we can all go and look at it."

This idea was received with a burst of merry laughter, and their governess said,

"You thought it a very odd idea to fasten a ship to an iceberg for safety, but what do you think of such a shelter for travelers from an Arctic storm?"

It seemed impossible to think of it at all. What good could an iceberg do?

"You will see," was the reply. "There is an account of a party traveling in sledges who were overtaken by a fearful snow-storm while they were in a narrow gorge between huge icebergs, over which the storm raged with great fury. Pieces of ice, broken off by the hurricane, were hurled into the pass; partial avalanches, any one of which could have crushed the

sledges and their inmates, added to its dangers, and to press on became impossible. It was now necessary to find a shelter from the snow-drift; but this was no difficult matter to men accustomed to polar expeditions. 'To the icebergs! to the icebergs!' was the cry.

"Snow-houses were to be hollowed out of the frozen masses, or, rather, holes were to be dug in which each person could cower until the storm was over. Knives and hatchets were soon at work on the brittle masses of ice, and dens were scraped out large enough to contain two or three persons each. The dogs were left to themselves, their own instinct leading them to find sufficient shelter under the snow.

"In these very strange quarters the travelers remained for forty-eight hours, being obliged to shovel away the snow from the openings to their holes every half hour. Being provided with food, they were neither cold nor hungry, and, secure in their retreat, they could hear the wind roar in the narrow pass and tear off the tops of the icebergs. There were loud reports made by the fall

of avalanches, and other noises proclaimed the presence of bears amid the general confusion."

"Did the bears find the people in the icebergs?" asked Malcolm in great excitement; "and what did these do then?"

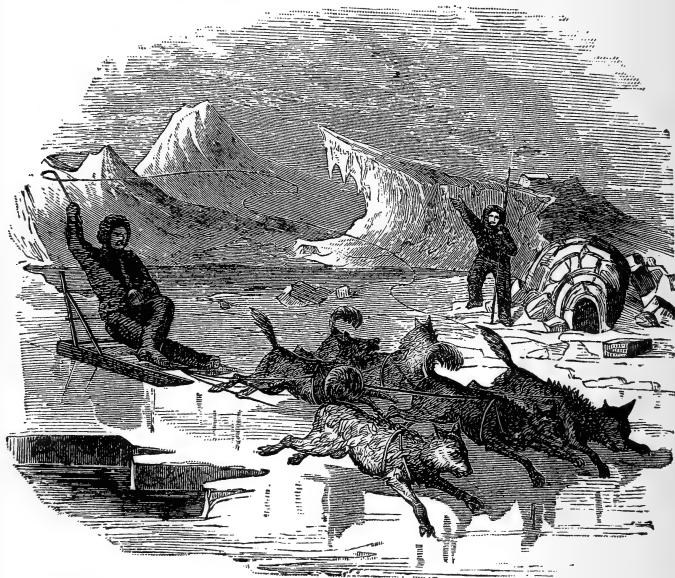
"No, they did not care to find them, for these terrible animals were too much occupied with their own concerns to discover the retreat of the travelers; neither the dogs nor the sledges buried in the snow attracted their attention, and they passed on without doing any harm."

This was a wonderful story, and the children were deeply interested. Malcolm, however, seemed rather disappointed by the peaceable conduct of the first bears that had appeared upon the scene.

"Miss Harson," said Clara presently, "were the dogs the same Eskimo dogs of which you told us when we were learning about *Home Animals*?"

"The very same, I fancy, for Arctic explorers are obliged to travel in Eskimo style. Sometimes they bring a fine team of Newfoundland dogs with them, but these

magnificent animals do not seem hardy enough to bear the rigors of the climate, and they soon have to be replaced by the less lovable animals used by the Eskimos.



TRAVELING IN ESKIMO STYLE.

These are said to eat everything they can lay their paws on or get their teeth into, even attempting a feather bed; and one of them, to the disgust of its scientific

master, devoured two large birds' nests carefully gathered for specimens: 'feathers, filth, pebbles and moss—a peckful at the least.' ”

“Oh!” said Edith, “how horrid!”

Clara was equally shocked, and Malcolm quite enjoyed their disgust.

“There is an amusing account of one of these dogs,” continued the young lady, “who was known as ‘Old Grim,’ and who gave considerable trouble to a party of explorers. ‘Old Grim,’ says the writer, ‘is missing, and has been for more than a day. Since the lamented demise of Cerberus, my leading Newfoundlander, he has been patriarch of our scanty kennel.

“‘Old Grim was “a character” such as peradventure may at some time be found among beings of a higher order and under a more temperate sky. A profound hypocrite and time-server, he so wriggled his adulatory tail as to secure every one’s good graces and nobody’s respect. All the spare morsels, the cast-off delicacies, of the mess passed through the winnowing jaws of Old Grim. He was never known

to refuse anything offered or approachable, and never known to be satisfied, however prolonged and abundant the bounty or the spoil.

“Grim was an ancient dog: his teeth indicated many winters, and his limbs, once splendid tractors for the sledge, were now covered with warts and ringbones. Somehow or other, when the dogs were harnessing for a journey Old Grim was sure not to be found; and upon one occasion, when he was detected hiding away in a cast-off barrel, he incontinently became lame. Strange to say, he has been lame ever since, except when the team is away without him.

“Cold disagrees with Grim; but by a system of careful watchings at the door of our deck-house, accompanied by a discriminating use of his tail, he became at last the one privileged intruder. My sealskin coat has been his favorite bed for weeks together. Whatever love for an individual Grim expressed by his tail, he could never be induced to follow him on the ice after the cold darkness of the winter set in; yet the dear good old sinner would wriggle

after you to the very threshold of the gangway, and bid you good-bye with a deprecatory wag of the tail which disarmed all resentment.

“His appearance was quite characteristic: his muzzle roofed like the old-fashioned gable of a Dutch garret-window; his forehead indicating the most meagre capacity of brains that could consist with his sanity as a dog; his eyes small; his mouth curtained by long black dewlaps; and his hide a mangy russet, studded with chestnut-burrs; if he has gone indeed, we ne'er shall look upon his like again. So much for Old Grim.

“When yesterday's party started to take soundings, I thought the exercise would benefit Grim, whose time-serving sojourn on our warm deck had begun to render him over-corpulent. A rope was fastened round him—for at such critical periods he was obstinate and even ferocious—and thus fastened to the sledge he commenced his reluctant journey. Reaching a stopping-place after a while, he jerked upon his line, parted it a foot or two from its knot, and,

dragging the remnant behind him, started off through the darkness in the direction of our brig. He has not been seen since.

“Parties are out with lanterns seeking him, for it is feared that his long cord may have caught upon some of the rude pinnales of ice which stud our floe and thus made him a helpless prisoner. The thermometer is at 44° C. below zero, and Old Grim’s teeth could not gnaw away the cord.

“We tracked Old Grim to-day through the snow to within six hundred yards of the brig, and thence to that mass of snow-packed sterility which we call the shore. His not rejoining the ship is a mystery quite in keeping with his character.’”

“Perhaps a bear ate him up,” said Edith.

Miss Harson admitted that this might be very possible; and Grim was generally denounced as a very silly dog for wandering away from warmth and safety to meet such a wretched end.

“Newfoundland dogs are ever so much nicer,” said Clara; “and that obstinate ‘Old Grim’ was just served right.”

“Newfoundlanders are nicer in many

ways," was the reply, "for, besides being voracious eaters, the Eskimo dogs still have so much of the wild-beast nature about them that they can scarcely be restrained from running away on the first opportunity. 'Two of our largest,' says the biographer of 'Old Grim,' 'left themselves behind at Fog Inlet, and we had to send a boat-party to-day to their rescue. It cost a pull of about eight miles through ice and water before they found the recreants, fat and saucy, beside the carcass of the dead narwhal. After more than an hour spent in attempts to catch them, one was tied and brought on board, but the other suicidal scamp had to be left to his fate.'"

"How many dogs do they have to travel with?" asked Malcolm.

"That depends, Malcolm, upon the number of the travelers and the quantity of baggage they carry, as a certain amount is partitioned to each dog. Dr. Kane and his party started with ten Newfoundland dogs, and on reaching Greenland they purchased thirty or forty Eskimo dogs from the natives. It was almost an impossibility to

get enough for these creatures to eat; and the following account of them is not very flattering:

“‘It may be noted among our little miseries,’ says the great explorer, ‘that we have more than fifty dogs on board, the majority of whom might rather be characterized as “ravening wolves.” To feed this family, upon whose strength our progress and success depend, is really a difficult matter. The absence of shore- or land-ice to the south in Baffin’s Bay has prevented our rifles from contributing any material aid to our commissariat. Our two bears lasted the cormorants but eight days, and to feed them upon the meagre allowance of two pounds of raw flesh every other day is an almost impossible necessity. Only yesterday they were ready to eat the caboose up, for I would not give them pemmican. Corn-meal or beans they disdain to touch, and salt junk would kill them.’”

CHAPTER XII.

THE POLAR BEAR ARRIVES.

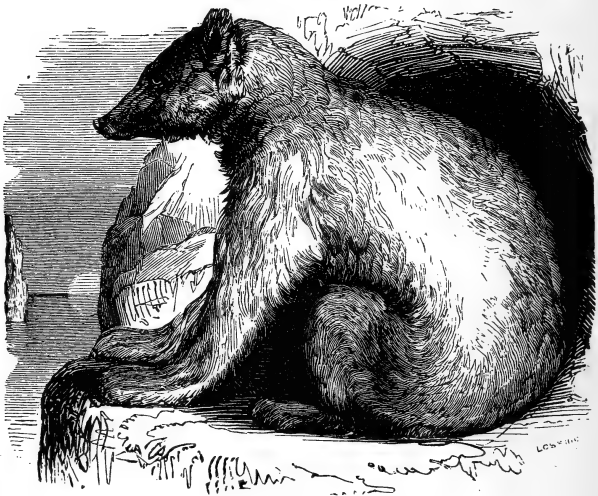
“**H**ERE is your long-wished-for polar bear, Malcolm: how do you like his portrait?”

He was certainly not a pretty creature to look at; nor did he appear at all amiable with his great wide head and grinning jaws showing such terrible teeth, while the powerful shoulders and thick, muscular fore legs made him still more formidable.

Clara declared that his eyes were like a pig's, and the little Kyles were not at all complimentary to this “despot of the Arctic regions.”

“Naturalists consider it a remarkable thing,” said Miss Harson, “that, in spite of the ice and snow and bitter cold, added to the darkness and semi-darkness of the nine months' winter, the inhabitable regions around the North Pole are the home of

several mammalia, of which the most formidable is our charming friend here. Many of the other animals are migratory, moving south, and back again with the sun ; but the



POLAR BEAR.

polar bear may be called a constant resident. This clumsy-looking animal is from eight to nine feet long, and sometimes even larger, and he manages to shuffle along on the snow and ice at a very rapid pace. These great paws, both on the fore and

hind legs, are covered with natural mittens of long thick hair which keep the bear from sinking in the snow. He is equally at home in the water, as he is an excellent swimmer; and his activity, whether on land or water, is something wonderful in a creature so clumsily made. His yellowish-white fur grows short and fine over the back, and longer on the lower parts of the body. The feet are represented as bushy, with an extra supply of fur on the soles to give the animal a firmer hold on the ice."

"I wish we could have seen the feet of those little bears that were bouncing about in the water at Central Park," said Clara, regretfully.

"But we saw their cunning little yellow heads, you know," replied Edith; "and they didn't look ugly at all, like this wicked *old* one."

"But that is just what they are growing into, Edie," replied her governess: "most young animals are 'cunning' and harmless, but as they gain in size and strength they act out their natures. It is very wonderful, too, to see how the Creator has provided

for these different natures with their special needs, and how his protecting care extends even to so savage and undesirable a creature as the one we are considering. We may ask, Why should such a life as this be prolonged or made comfortable in any way? but God, for wise purposes which we cannot fathom, has placed this ferocious animal where he is best fitted to live, and so ordered even the color of his fur as to make it a protection from his enemies and an aid to him in approaching the animals upon which he subsists. During the long Arctic winter his coarse thick hair is white, like the snow and icebergs among which he roams, while in the milder season it takes on a yellowish hue. The thickness of this fur protects the polar bear not only from the cold, but also against the tusks and talons of the animals on which it feeds."

"I should think that bear would have a very good time," said Malcolm.

"He does seem to enjoy life in his own way," said Miss Harson, "and not to be without his amusements, having been seen

to slide down a steep icy bank on his hind quarters, for no other apparent purpose but because he liked it. His shaggy fur was as good a protection from injury as if he had been wrapped up in comfortables."

A sliding polar bear! The Elmridge children thought that if they could but have seen *that* their happiness would be complete. It was worth a journey to Greenland.

"Does he skate too, Miss Harson?" asked Clara, laughingly.

"In his fashion, he does, for he is accomplished on the ice. Voyagers to the Arctic regions describe the polar bear as wandering over the fields of ice, mounting the hummocks and looking around for prey. With outstretched head, its little but keen eye directed to the various points of a wide horizon, the polar bear looks out for seals or scents with its quick nostrils the luscious smell of some half-putrid whale-flesh. It is said that a piece of fat thrown into the fire will draw a bear to a ship miles off."

"Does he swim there?" asked Edith.

"Yes, dear, if there is water enough; if

not, he shuffles along on the ice. Seals are his favorite food ; and his wonderful swimming powers are scarcely a match for these slippery animals, who are such accomplished swimmers themselves. So Master Bear, instead of chasing his prey in the water, prefers to surprise it when it is asleep on a piece of ice."

"Such a funny place to sleep on!" murmured Clara.

"Funny for Miss Clara Kyle, but not funny for a seal. When chasing a seal in this way, the bear approaches very stealthily, making long dives, and so manages that at his last dive he comes up directly under the unfortunate seal, who either tumbles into the water in a fright, and is instantly snapped up, or is chased on the ice, where the bear has the advantage in point of speed and is sure to catch him. But the great banquet of the bear is upon a dead whale ; on which, in company with sharks, sea-birds, etc., he feeds until the carcass is so stripped that the weight of the bones sinks it, and the sharks have it all to themselves."

"I didn't know," said Malcolm, "that the polar bear was so much like a vulture or a hyena. He seems to be about as disagreeable in every way as he looks."

"I don't want to see a live one," said Edith in great disgust: "he's too horrid."

"Not altogether horrid, dear," replied her governess, "for the mother bear is very devoted to her little ones. You must know that, in the first place, she makes a very queer kind of nest for them in the snow, which I am going to tell you about. In November, or about that time, Papa Bruin goes off seal-hunting, and Mamma Bruin betakes herself to a snow-bank at the foot of some cliff. Here she burrows in the snow until she is settled to her satisfaction, and then, curling herself up comfortably, she lets the snow-drifts that are sure to come pile themselves up on her until there is such a thick coverlid between her and the outer air that not a single whiff of the keen, biting blast reaches her."

"But what keeps her from smothering?" asked Malcolm.

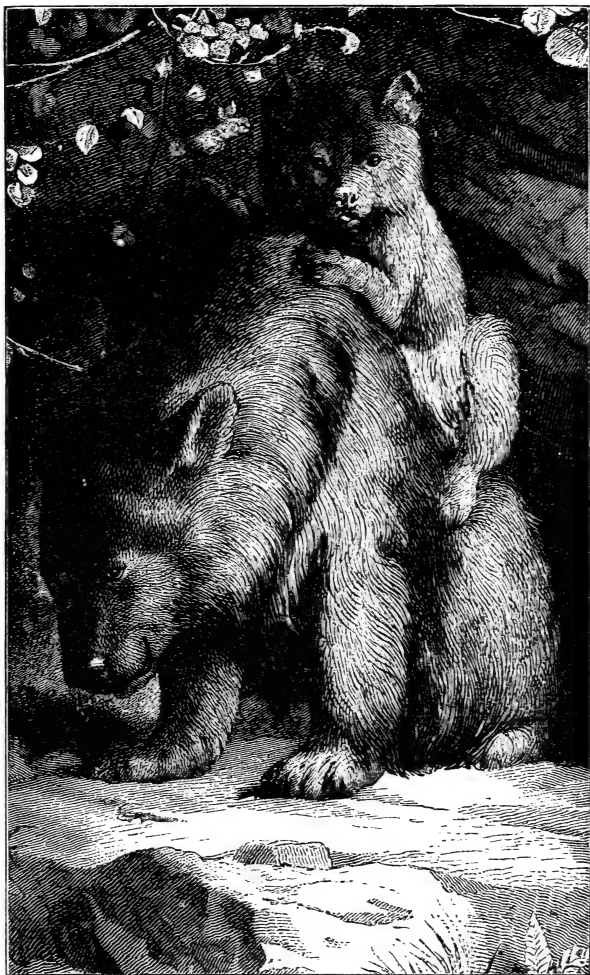
"Her own breath, which keeps a small

passage open in the roof of her den. The warmth of her body, too, enlarges the nest, so that she can move herself as she likes. It is an enormously fat bear that goes into this curious residence; for she has been eating all that she could possibly stuff down her capacious throat for some time before, that she might be able to go for several months without another meal. Some time in March—and she always knows just the right time—Mrs. Bear breaks down the walls of her house, and comes forth with two or three baby bears about as large as a Newfoundland dog. The little ones have been born under the snow, and now they are ready to accompany their mother on her tramps over the ice.”

“How cunning they must look!” said Clara. “I wish we could have seen those little ones at the Park running around.”

“Don’t you think,” asked her brother mischievously, “that some one else would have been running too?”

“Yes,” was the laughing reply, “I think that *three* people would. But Miss Harson, I dare say, would have walked.”



MRS. BEAR AND LITTLE BEAR.

“She might have outrun you all,” said that young lady, “for she is not fond of having even *little* bears ‘running around.’ But we seldom know what we shall do in danger until the danger comes. To return to Mrs. Bear and her little ones: it is said that when she is pursued she will seize her cubs and either carry or push them forward; and these comical little animals seem to understand what is going on, and lighten her labors by placing themselves across her path to be shoved on. They were seen once, when they had been shoved some yards in advance, to run on until the old bear overtook them, when they arranged themselves in turn for a second throw.”

This amused the children very much, and the little polar bears were certainly far more entertaining than their parents.

“The captain of a vessel in the Arctic regions,” continued Miss Harson, “once went in pursuit of three bears, as his Eskimo dogs were, as usual, in want of fresh meat, and he saw that they were a mother-bear and two young ones. He wished to secure the cubs alive, and was very careful

in shooting at the old one. But all three fell and were taken on board the ship; and the captain describes their affection as quite heartrending:

“‘When the cubs saw their mother was wounded, they commenced licking her wounds, regardless of their own sufferings. At length the mother began to eat the snow, a sure sign that she was mortally wounded. Even then her care for the cubs did not cease, as she kept continually turning her head from one to the other, and, though roaring with pain, she seemed to warn them to escape if possible. Their attachment was as great as hers; and I was thus obliged to destroy them all. It went much against my feelings, but the memory of my starving dogs reconciled me to the necessity.’”

“Poor things!” sighed Edith; “what a pity!”

“Three polar bears less in the world!” replied Malcolm.

“At another time,” continued their governess, “a polar bear with one cub was pursued by two men and five dogs. The

mother ran, but the little one being unable either to keep ahead of the dogs or to keep pace with her, she turned back and, putting her head under its haunches, threw it some distance ahead. The cub safe for the moment, she would wheel around and face the dogs, so as to give it a chance to run away; but it always stopped just as it alighted till she came up and threw it ahead again: it seemed to expect her aid, and would not go on without it. Sometimes the mother would run a few yards ahead, as if to coax the young one up to her, and when the dogs came up she would turn on them and drive them back; then, as they dodged her blows, she would rejoin the cub and push it on, sometimes putting her head under it, sometimes catching it in her mouth by the nape of the neck."

"Oh!" said Clara, forgetting her horror of polar bears, "I *hope* she got away."

"I almost feel that I hope so too," was the reply; "but the cub was soon unable to go any farther, and the men and the dogs were too much for the mother. She never went more than two yards ahead,

constantly looking at the cub. When the dogs came near her she would sit upon her haunches and take the little one between her hind legs, fighting the dogs with her paws and roaring so that she could have been heard a mile off. She would stretch her neck and snap at the nearest dog with her shining teeth, whirling her paws like the arms of a windmill. If she missed her aim, not daring to pursue one dog lest the others should harm the cub, she would give a great roar of baffled rage, and go on pawing and snapping and facing the ring, grinning at the dogs with her mouth stretched wide open."

"I suppose the poor little cub was dreadfully frightened," said Edith.

"And yet, when her mother was killed, she jumped upon the body and reared up, for the first time growling hoarsely. The dogs seemed quite afraid of the little creature, she fought so actively and made so much noise, and, while tearing mouthfuls of hair from the dead mother, they would spring aside the minute the cub turned toward them. The men drove the dogs

off for a time, but were obliged to shoot the cub at last, as she would not leave the body."

The children were so sorry for the poor little bear that they quite forgot her growing up into a savage big one.

"Polar bears," continued Miss Harson, "are very dangerous animals to hunt; but it is said that they can be hunted to better advantage in the water than on land. Here, however, one will sometimes throw a canoe into the air or crunch it in pieces with its terrible jaws. When attacked in the water, it tries to escape by swimming to the ice; and when this is in small loose pieces, it dives under the water and appears on the opposite side. It has been seen, when shot at a distance and able to escape, to retire to the shelter of a hummock and apply snow to the wound to stop the bleeding."

"Well," said Malcolm, "I'll remember that the next time I cut my finger in the tool-room. I've actually learned something from a polar bear!"

"By watching the habits of animals we may learn a great deal," was the reply;

“and even the most insignificant ones can teach us something. The Eskimos, who scarcely seem beyond intelligent animals themselves, have, according to a description that was written quite a number of years ago, a most ingenious plan for the destruction of this bear without engaging in personal combat with so dangerous an enemy. They take a stout piece of whalebone about two feet in length, bend it double and push the two ends into a piece of blubber. The whalebone thus prepared is placed in the open air, where the cold immediately freezes the blubber and holds the ends of the whalebone fast. The weapon is now complete. Armed with this singular instrument, the Eskimos sally out in search of a bear, and, on finding one, provoke it to chase them—a matter of no great difficulty, as ‘nennook’ generally labors under an infirmity of temper and needs but little irritation.

“So the bear sets off after the Eskimos, and the Eskimos run away from the bear as fast as they can until the animal is in right earnest. At last the bear gains on

them, and is permitted to come tolerably close, when the fugitives throw the prepared whalebone at it. The bear sniffs at it, and, finding it to be eatable, swallows it and resumes the chase. Before very long, however, the heat of its interior thaws the blubber, and the whalebone, being thus set free, springs open, and interferes so materially with the digestion of the unfortunate animal that it gives up the chase, and soon dies from the injuries inflicted."

"That seems very cruel," said Clara.

"It does indeed; but we must remember that the polar bear is a very useful animal to the Eskimo after he is killed, his flesh and fat furnishing them with food, while the skin is used for a variety of purposes. Sometimes it is made, without cutting it open, into a warm bed-sack—or, rather, the bed itself—by turning the furry side inward; and into this the Eskimo creeps and sleeps very comfortably."

No one seemed to think this bed a very attractive one, and presently Malcolm asked:

"Do the Eskimos always hunt polar

bears with a piece of whalebone? It seems such a funny thing to do."

"Oh no," replied his governess; "they often shoot them or spear them. Eskimos, as we have seen, inhabit many different regions, and their customs vary, even at short distances; besides, they were not acquainted with firearms until travelers from civilized countries introduced them. The polar bear is such a powerful and daring adversary that it is a formidable thing to attempt its destruction; and it has a habit of using its terrible teeth in battle which leaves lifelong scars on those hunters who are not killed by it. 'The hugging, pawing and boxing,' says one who has seen this bear in its native ice-fields, 'which characterize the black and grisly bears, are resorted to by it only under peculiar circumstances. While wandering over the icy fields it will rear itself upon its hind legs to enlarge its circle of vision; and I have often seen it in this attitude pawing the air as if practicing for an apprehended conflict.'"

The idea of such a great creature on its hind legs, practicing such queer gymnastics,

excited a burst of merriment in the little party, and 'nennook,' as the Eskimos call it, was amusing as well as dangerous.

"Dr. Kane," continued the young lady, "tells a funny little story of himself and a polar bear hunting the same seal. The famous explorer had taken off his shoes and was crawling on his stomach, in a half-frozen condition, along the ice after his sleeping prey. When he got within shooting distance the seal suddenly rolled on one side and lifted its head. Feeling that he had nothing to do with this movement, as the animal was gazing in an opposite direction, the hunter soon discovered a rival in a large bear, who was also lying on his stomach, waiting, with commendable patience and cold feet, for a chance of nearer approach.

"'What should I do?' he continues. 'The bear was doubtless worth more to me than the seal, but the seal was now within shot, and the bear a "bird in the bush."' Besides, my bullet once invested in the seal would leave me defenceless. I might be giving a dinner to the bear, and saving



RIVAL HUNTERS.

myself for his dessert. These meditations were soon brought to a close, for a second movement of the seal so aroused my hunter's instincts that I pulled the trigger. My cap alone exploded. Instantly, with a floundering splash, the seal descended into the deep, and the bear, with two or three rapid leaps, stood disconsolate by the place of his descent. For a single moment we stared each other in the face, and then, with that discretion which is the better part of valor, the bear ran off in one direction, and I followed his example in the other.'"

Malcolm, who had been waiting with eager interest to hear what the hunter did next, was so overcome by this unexpected ending that he rolled on the floor with laughter. His sisters laughed and Miss Harson laughed, and, having begun, no one seemed able to stop.

"It was no laughing matter," said the young lady presently, "to the person concerned, who, in the course of his explorations, had had numerous undesirable meetings with polar bears. Once, when about two miles away from the brig—luck-

ily, as he says, not more—he heard what he thought was the bellow of a walrus on the ice. Although at noonday, it was too dark to distinguish anything not close at hand; but a second roar said ‘Bear,’ as plainly as the words could be uttered. Roar upon roar followed; but the noise suddenly ceased, and, finding it very cold on the ice, the watcher concluded to crawl to the edge of it and peer under his hands into the dark shadow of the hummock ridges.

“‘I did so,’ he says. ‘One look: nothing. A second: no bear, after all. A third: what is that long rounded shade? Stained ice? Yes, stained ice. The stained ice gave a gross menagerie roar, and charged on the instant for my position. I had not even a knife, and did not wait to think what would have been appropriate if I had had one. I ran, throwing off first one mitten and then its fellow to avoid pursuit. I gained the brig, and the bear got my mittens. I got back one of them an hour afterward, but the other was carried off as a trophy in spite of all the rifles we could bring to the rescue.’”

"I wonder," said Clara, "that Dr. Kane didn't get eaten up?"

"He had some very narrow escapes," replied Miss Harson, "and they were generally very comical ones. Some of the party who had gone on an exploring-tour brought back accounts of a rather exciting visit from a bear in the dead of night, when all were asleep in their tent on the ice. One of them was awakened by something that seemed to be scratching the snow near his head, and presently he discovered a great creature of some kind walking around the outside of the tent. He shouted to his companions, but did not disturb the unknown visitor, who had arrived at a time when all the guns were out of reach on the sledge and there was not even a stick inside.

"While the startled men were considering the idea of rushing out for their arms, a large bear presented himself at the tent-opening to see how things looked inside. Matches and torches of newspaper were fired at him, in the vain hope that he would be driven away; but after musing for a little

while upon what he seemed to think rather strange antics, though harmless on the whole, he took up his station at the doorway and fell to work on a seal which had been shot the day before.

“Seeing him thus occupied, one of the party quietly cut a hole in the back of the tent with his knife, and crawled out to get a boat-hook which helped to support the ridge-pole. With this he dealt the intruder a blow on the nose that made him retreat beyond the sledge, and the moment was seized to snatch a rifle and send a well-directed ball through the bear’s body.

“It was an especial season for bears, who were not only dangerous, but mischievous and destructive, utterly ruining the ‘caché’ or storehouse, which had been built with great care, and leaving their marks on everything. These tigers of the ice had things entirely their own way, and no obstacle seemed to hinder them. ‘Not a morsel of pemmican remained except in the iron cases, which, being round, with conical ends, defied both claws and teeth. They had rolled and pawed them in every

direction, tossing them about like footballs, although over eighty pounds in weight. An alcohol case, strongly iron-bound, was dashed into small fragments, and a tin can of liquor mashed and twisted almost into a ball. The claws of the beast had perforated the metal and torn it up as with a cold chisel.

“‘They were too dainty for salt meats; ground coffee they had an evident relish for; old canvas was a favorite, for some reason or other; even our flag, which had been reared “to take possession” of the waste, was gnawed down to the very staff. They had made a regular frolic of it, rolling our bread-barrels over the ice-foot and into the broken outside ice; and, unable to masticate our heavy india-rubber cloth, they had tied it up in unimaginable hard knots.’”

“I don’t see how bears *could* tie knots,” said Edith when the merriment over these antics had somewhat subsided.

“I cannot explain it, dear,” replied her governess, laughing; “but I think we must acknowledge the polar bear to be the most ingenious of all the bear family.”

CHAPTER XIII.

A THRILLING STORY.

“**M**ORE stories about polar bears?” said Miss Harson, in apparent surprise. “Why, you have had ever so many stories now; I wonder how many it would take to satisfy you?”

“One good *long* story,” replied Malcolm, promptly: “those were only anecdotes.”

“But they were very nice,” said Edith, to whom this seemed like a reflection on their governess; “and the bears were very funny. But couldn’t you tell us something *dreadful*, Miss Harson—something to frighten us, you know?”

The young lady was very much amused by this request, to which she replied:

“You mean something *tragical*, Edie; and I think I can gratify you without really frightening you. It is quite a terrible story, but it turned out well, after all, and will,

I hope, satisfy you on the subject of bears. I read such an account some time ago, and I think I will call it

“UNWELCOME VISITORS.

“Some years ago a large exploring-party went out in the interests of the Hudson Bay Fur Company to examine a new tract where a fort could be built, and they met with some very strange and startling adventures.

“The region to which they went was not an utterly cheerless waste in summer, for there were fir trees in abundance, as well as pine and birch on the wooded heights, and of these trees their house or fort was built. This was made as warm and comfortable as possible, and a strong fence of pointed stakes set up around it. An inner court also was built, and a large wooden shed beyond the house, which was filled with fuel for the coming winter. An abundant store of provisions, and tame reindeer to give them milk, were provided for the long polar night; and this soon came upon them.

“In spite of all their care the party were half frozen, as the temperature indoors could not be raised above 20°. No one dared to open doors and windows, as the vapor in the rooms would have been immediately converted into snow; and in the passage the breathing of the inmates already produced that result. Every now and then dull reports were heard which startled those unaccustomed to such high latitudes. They were caused by the creaking of the trunks of trees, of which the walls were composed, under the influence of the intense cold. The spruce beer, made from a decoction of young fir-branchlets, froze, bursting the barrels in which it was kept; while all solid bodies resisted the introduction of heat as if they were petrified.

“This seemed bad enough; but presently came the announcement that the wood was giving out. The cold was so intense that those who were exposed to it lost their breath and fainted on the ice, struck down by the cold almost as if by lightning.”

“Oh—h!” gasped the audience, trying

in vain to think how it would feel to be as cold as this.

“The next thing that happened,” continued Miss Harson, “was *bears!*”

It was getting to be delightfully horrible, and Malcolm especially was in a state of agreeable expectation.

“There were half a dozen of them, where one would have been too many; and, possibly feeling the intense cold themselves, in addition to hunger, these most unwelcome visitors had managed to climb over the palisades, and, liking the look of the smoke from the chimneys, they were walking up to the house.”

Edith was getting very close indeed to her governess, as she used to do when a wee girl if anything terrible appeared to be coming, and even Clara was not much behind.

“It’s getting very interesting,” said Malcolm, who was leaning over the back of the young lady’s chair. “What did they do, Miss Harson?”

“They did a variety of things,” was the laughing reply, “if you mean the bears;

and it certainly was an uncommon performance for a procession of them to march boldly up to a dwelling full of people and make a call. They were seen from the windows without any feeling of fear, as it was supposed that they would soon get tired of prowling around the house and take themselves off.

“But the creatures had no idea of leaving, and they seemed possessed with a determination to get into the house, as every now and then one of them would push its great head against the window-pane and display the rows of terrible teeth as it uttered a threatening growl.”

The children now glanced at the windows, as if expecting to see polar bears on the outside; but Miss Harson reminded them that bears of any kind had never been seen within many miles of Elmridge.

“Perhaps I had better stop,” she continued, “if my story is too exciting.”

“Oh no! no!” was the chorus; “*please* go on.” And they all tried to look as brave as possible.

“It was a long and tiresome visit, last-

ing all that day and all night, and you may be sure that a strict watch was kept on the bears' movements. Early the next morning came the welcome news that they were gone; no one could see them anywhere. This comfort did not last long, however, as one of the party, who went up to the loft, where the provisions and valuable furs were stored, declared that the bears were walking around on the roof."

"Oh!" gasped Edith, "then they could get down the chimney!"

"No danger of that, dear, as they would not care to be burned. Two or three of the men rushed to the loft and had the pleasure of hearing the growls and heavy footsteps of the four-legged savages; and as their great claws caught in the laths of the roof beneath the ice, there was danger that they might tear away the woodwork. It was too cold, however, to remain in the loft, as all were giddy and faint from the exposure, and they rejoined the party down stairs, who were trying their best to keep warm with low fires and scarcely a stick of wood. The furs were brought down into

the sitting-room to keep them from the bears—who, strange to say, would have made a meal of them—and also to pile on the perishing human beings, who expected to freeze to death. For those wretched bears had broken some of the laths of the roof with their weight and their claws, and this let the fearful outside cold into every part of the building. The creatures were now working with might and main to get into the house.

“One brave man volunteered to go for wood; and although the shed was not more than fifty steps from the house, he fell fainting to the ground on breathing the stinging cold of the outer air, and had to be dragged back by a rope, one end of which was fastened around his waist, while the other was held by his companions within doors. In carrying him in something dreadful happened.

“Before the outer door was quite closed an enormous bear threw the whole weight of his body against it, and growled horribly. He was resolved to get in this time; and the huge head, with its open, ravenous

mouth, and one great fore paw, were already between the door and the wall, when a pistol was fired into the now conveniently open mouth, and the bear fell backward, probably killed. It did not take long to shut and fasten that door, and the prisoners returned to their freezing.

“Finally, the bears got into the loft, where they made such an uproar that night that no one could sleep. There were constant growling, stamping of feet and tearing of claws, but there seemed little danger of their breaking through the beams of the ceiling into the lower floor. They managed, however, to do a great deal of mischief in an unexpected way, and to add fresh suffering to the trials of the inmates. The pipes of the stove and kitchen furnace ran all along the loft, and, being made of lime-bricks but imperfectly cemented together, they could not resist great pressure for any length of time. Now, some of the bears scratched at the masonry, whilst others leant against the pipes for the sake of the warmth from the stove; so that the bricks began to give way, and

soon the stoves and furnace ceased to draw.

“This was discouraging enough, but there was worse to come. As the fires got lower and lower, the house was filled with a thick, disgusting smoke, the pipes were broken and the lamps went out. It was suffocation to remain indoors, and death by freezing to go out. To despatch the bears was a last resort; and, seizing hatchets and whatever else came handy, the men rushed to the loft and began the battle in total darkness. Shots were fired into the smoke, and howls were heard and scratches received in return. But the brave men would probably have had the worst of it if help had not come in a very startling form.

“A terrible rumbling sound suddenly drowned the tumult, the ground became violently agitated and the house rocked as if it were being torn up from its foundations. The beams of the walls separated, and through the openings the terrified bears were seen rushing away into the darkness, howling with rage and fright.”

“What *was* the matter, Miss Harson?”

“An *earthquake*; which doubtless saved the lives of the frightened people. Animals are particularly terrified by anything out of the ordinary course of nature, and the bears now felt it to be quite time to leave the house.”

“I wish they'd all been killed,” said Clara, quite fiercely.

“They were very thoroughly frightened,” replied her governess, “according to the story; but it was not enough of an earthquake to kill them. It was sufficient, though, to turn the house to one side and to burst the walls open, leaving the inmates in a wretched condition for a day or two. Repairs were made as quickly as possible, and fortunately there was a sudden change in the weather, and it became warm enough to snow.”

“‘Warm enough to snow’?” said Edith in a bewildered way: “why, Miss Harson, it's awful cold when it snows.”

“Scarcely ‘awful,’ dear, although it often seems very cold indeed to *us*. But with the experience these poor people had we should think it like spring in comparison.

It was supposed that the earthquake drove away the cold as well as the bears; and this was one of the few occasions on which such a visitor could be thought desirable.”

CHAPTER XIV.

A CHANGE OF SCENE.

“ I CALL that *mean*,” exclaimed Malcolm, gazing ruefully at the liquid pond; “just when we’ve got used to living at the North Pole to have it run away and leave us! And Sim and his mother and the white-headed baby all gone off too—it’s a perfect shame!”

“I don’t wonder you are indignant,” replied Miss Harson gravely; “people *ought* to be able to skate all the year round; and for a boy who cares nothing for tents or boating or anything of that kind, and who never eats fruit or vegetables, and who does not care for flowers or trees or smiling skies, the change is certainly very hard.”

“Now you are laughing at me, Miss Harson.”

“Yes, and I mean to laugh at you, you

absurd boy! *I* do not wish it to be always winter, if *you* do; and I doubt if Clara and Edith do, either."

The little girls, however, were looking rather mournful too; it was such fun on the pond, and the ice and snow were so pretty, and they liked to hear about the Eskimos and the polar bears.

"But you cannot be *always* hearing about them," said their governess, laughing; "and there are some other people to hear about, and at least two very peculiar animals. Suppose that we take a sudden jump this evening from the Arctic Circle to the Equator, and see what is to be found there?"

When evening came they were quite ready, and Malcolm said, rather unexpectedly,

"When any one speaks of Africa, I always think of 'From Greenland's icy mountains.'"

"That is a curious connection of ideas, I think; but you probably mean that it reminds you of the missionary hymn beginning—

‘From Greenland’s icy mountains,
From India’s coral strand,
Where Afric’s sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand,—
From many an ancient river,
From many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver
Their land from error’s chain.’”

“Yes,” said Malcolm, “that’s it, Miss Harson; I knew there was *something* about Africa in it.”

“Having found that out,” continued the young lady, “we will now see what there is in Africa. We shall be sure to find enough to make us reverence the noble men and women who have risked their lives, and often lost them, in carrying the gospel to the heathen inhabitants of what has been very properly called the ‘Dark Continent.’ We have just been freezing in the Arctic regions, and we shall not find any more enjoyment in roasting under the Equator. You all know how very hard it is to bear the heat in our large, comfortable house at Elmridge when the thermometer reaches one hundred, or even ninety, degrees: think, then, what it must be to live where

one hundred and thirty degrees is not considered extraordinary. Those who have been born and brought up in such a climate take it as a matter of course, as the Eskimos do their intense cold; but to go from a temperate region to such an extreme of heat is almost unbearable."

"Miss Harson," asked Clara, very seriously, "do you think that missionaries *ought* to go to such dreadful places where they can't live?"

"But they do live, dear; that is, a great many of them do. And in the very worst places white men are found who have gone there to get rich by trading with the natives. If people will risk their lives for the sake of making money, should those who profess to be Christ's faithful soldiers and servants not be willing to do as much to save souls from perishing? One of the African chiefs replied to a missionary who had been talking to him of the day of judgment: 'You startle me: these words make all my bones to shake; I have no more strength in me; but my forefathers were living at the same time yours were,

and how is it that they did not send them word about these terrible things sooner? They all passed away into darkness without knowing whither they were going.'”

“Did they mind the dark?” asked Edith, a little surprised.

“A very terrible kind of darkness is meant, dear,” replied her governess; “but why do you ask?”

“I thought it was always dark there,” said the little girl, “and that it was called the *Dark Continent*.”

“Dark because unknown, and the people who live there have dark skins; but they glory in the bright sunshine, and darkness is quite as terrible to them as it is to us. But their *understandings* are darkened, so that they see things quite differently; and the same chief, who loved the missionary and saw how anxious he was that the people should become Christians, said to him at another time, ‘Do you imagine these people will ever believe by your merely talking to them? I can make them do nothing except by thrashing them; and, if you like, I shall call my headmen, and with



RAIN DOCTOR.

our litupa (whips of rhinoceros hide) we will soon make them all believe together.' This was a novel way of converting people; but as the chief did not condescend to ask their opinion in other matters, he saw no reason for consulting them about their becoming Christians."

"Did *he* become a Christian?" asked Malcolm, "and did he really whip the people for being heathens?"

"He *did* become a Christian, and did as well as he could; but he was taught a better way than that for influencing his people. The greatest trouble the missionary had was with the 'rain-makers,' because the people believed in them so thoroughly, and in such a country as Africa rain is one of the greatest blessings. The ground is often parched for weeks, and even for months, without it and a great variety of things are used by the 'rain doctors' to make the rain come. Dr. Livingstone gives an account of a conversation that he held with one of these supposed wonderful men, who certainly knew how to talk very well; it went on like this:

“*Medical Doctor*: Hail, friend! How very many medicines you have about you, this morning! Why, you have every medicine in the country here.’

“*Rain Doctor*: Very true, friend; and I ought, for the whole country needs the rain I am making.’

“*M. D.*: So you really believe that you can command the clouds? I think that can be done by God alone.’

“*R. D.*: We both believe the very same thing. It is God that makes the rain, but I pray to him by means of these medicines; and, the rain coming, of course it is then mine. It was I who made it for the Bakwains for many years; ask them: they will tell you the same as I do.’

“*M. D.*: But we are distinctly told, in the parting words of our Saviour, that we can pray to God acceptably in his name alone, and not by means of medicines.’

“*R. D.*: Truly. But God told us differently. He made black men first, and did not love us as he did the white men. He made you beautiful and gave you clothing and guns and gunpowder and

horses and wagons, and many other things about which we know nothing. But toward us he had no heart. He gave us nothing except the assegai and cattle and rain-making, and he did not give us hearts like yours. We never love each other. Other tribes place medicines about our country to prevent the rain, so that we may be dispersed by hunger and go to them and augment their power. We must dissolve their charms by our medicines. God has given us one little thing which you know nothing of: he has given us the knowledge of certain medicines by which we can make rain. *We* do not despise those things which you possess, though we are ignorant of them. We don't understand your book, yet we don't despise it. *You* ought not to despise our little knowledge, though you are ignorant of it.'

“‘*M. D.*: I don't despise what I am ignorant of; I only think you are mistaken in saying that you have medicines which can influence the rain at all.’

“‘*R. D.*: That's just the way people talk when they talk on a subject of which they

have no knowledge. When we first opened our eyes we found our forefathers making rain, and we follow in their footsteps. *You* who send to Kuruman for corn and who irrigate your garden may do without rain: *we* cannot manage in that way. If we had no rain, the cattle would have no pasture, the cows give no milk, our children become lean and die, our wives run away to other tribes who do make rain and have corn, and the whole tribe become dispersed and lost; our fire would go out.'

“‘*M. D.*: I quite agree with you as to the value of the rain, but you cannot charm the clouds by medicines. You wait till you see the clouds come; then you use your medicines, and take the credit which belongs to God only.’

“‘*R. D.*: I use my medicines, and you employ yours; we are both doctors, and doctors are not deceivers. You give a patient medicine. Sometimes God is pleased to heal him by means of your medicine; sometimes not—he dies. When he is cured you take the credit of what God does. I do the same. Sometimes God

grants us rain, sometimes not. When he does, we take the credit of the charm. When a patient dies, you don't give up trust in your medicines; neither do I when rain fails. If you wish me to leave off my medicines, why continue your own?'

“‘*M. D.*: I give medicine to living creatures within my reach, and can see the effects, though no cure follows; you pretend to charm the clouds, which are so far above us that your medicines never reach them. The clouds usually lie in one direction, and your smoke goes in another. God alone can command the clouds. Only try and wait patiently: God will give us rain without your medicines.’

“So,” continued Miss Harson, “the talk would go on for some time. Dr. Livingstone says that he never could convince one of them in the matter of rain-making. ‘The general effect of argument is to produce the impression that you are not anxious for rain at all; and it is very undesirable to allow the idea to spread that you do not take a generous interest in their welfare.’”

The children were very much interested

in the conversation between the missionary and the rain-maker, but they wondered how the latter could help believing that the power of sending rain belongs to God alone.

“That is because you do not quite understand about these poor Africans,” replied their governess; “and it certainly *does* seem strange to *us*. But you must remember that they have always believed in this rain-making, and to be suddenly told that there is no truth in it is very unwelcome to them. If it pleased God to do as he did with Elijah and the priests of Baal when he sent down visible fire from heaven to show his power over the heathen, the missionary’s work would be easy; but his only weapon is the word of God revealed through his Son. There is so much suffering in that hot country for want of rain—which means nothing to eat as well as nothing to drink—that the rain-makers, who seldom begin their spells until they see clouds in the sky, are treated with great respect.”

“What do they do, Miss Harson,” asked Clara, “to make rain?”

“A great many silly things, dear, which do not seem worth repeating. Among other ingredients, they collect every root and plant to be found in the country and burn them; the ascending smoke is supposed to bring down the rain, which often follows in a day or two.”

“It’s a pity,” said Malcolm, “that we can’t give them some of ours, since they want it so much and we have more than we need.”

There had been four rainy days in succession, and the young people at Elmridge felt quite badly used.

“Yes,” replied his governess; “if it were always best for people to have just what they want, it *would* be a pity. But we have no reason to think that it is. The thing to be considered is how we bear the troubles and disappointments that are sent; and these poor Bakwains seem to bear them very well. The women parted with most of their ornaments to purchase corn from more fortunate tribes. The children scoured the country in search of the numerous bulbs and roots which can sustain life, and the men engaged in hunting.’ ”

“I should think the children would be afraid,” said Edith. “Suppose a great lion should spring on them?”

“Such a thing would not be very likely to happen, Edie, even in Africa; for these dangerous animals are not at all common, and they are seldom seen in the day-time. The missionary says that it is very hard to teach half-starved heathen, but that in a Christian country people with painfully empty stomachs would not behave any better. The tribes, too, are often at war with each other, which is a great hindrance; and after going a short distance the missionary may be brought to a sudden standstill by finding that he is on hostile ground. He perseveres, however, through heat and drought and discouragements of all sorts; and here is a very interesting account of a day among the South Africans:

“We rose early, because, however hot the day may have been, the evening, night and morning at Kolobeng were deliciously refreshing. After family worship and breakfast between six and seven, we went to keep school for all who would attend, men,

women and children being all invited. School over at eleven o'clock, while the missionary's wife was occupied in domestic matters the missionary himself had some manual labor as a smith, carpenter or gardener, according to whatever was needed for ourselves or for the people: if for the latter, they worked for us in the garden or at some other employment; skilled labor was thus exchanged for the unskilled. After dinner and an hour's rest, the wife attended her infant school, which the young, who were left by their parents entirely to their own caprice, liked amazingly, and for which they generally mustered a hundred strong; or she varied that with a sewing-school, having classes of girls to learn the art; this too was equally well relished.

“During the day every operation must be superintended, and both husband and wife must labor till the sun declines. After sunset the husband went into the town to converse with any one willing to do so—sometimes on general subjects, at other times on religion. On three nights of the

week, as soon as the milking of the cows was over and it had become dark, we had a public religious service, and one of instruction on secular subjects aided by pictures and specimens.

““These services were diversified by attending upon the sick and prescribing for them, giving food, and otherwise assisting the poor and wretched. We tried to gain their affections by attending to the wants of the body. The smallest acts of friendship—an obliging word, a civil look—are, as St. Xavier thought, no despicable part of the missionary armor. Nor ought the good opinion of the most abject to be disregarded when politeness may secure it. Their good word in the aggregate forms a reputation which may be well employed in procuring favor for the gospel. Show kind attention to the reckless opponents of Christianity on the bed of sickness and pain, and they never can become your personal enemies. Here, if anywhere, love begets love.’”

“What good people the missionary and his wife must have been!” said Clara;

“but didn't they have anything to eat in the dry season?”

“Not such things as *you* would like to eat,” was the reply. “Once they had to live on bran, and sometimes they ate locusts.”

Symptoms of strong disgust from Clara and Edith, which increased when Miss Harson added:

“The natives, in the kindness of their hearts, often gave the missionary's children a large kind of caterpillar, which they seemed to enjoy, and the natives themselves ate quantities of them.”

“Well,” said Malcolm, making up one of his worst faces, “I'm glad *I* haven't got to be a missionary and go to Africa.”

“Yet,” replied his governess with a loving gaze, “you may live to think that the greatest honor that could possibly befall you.”

CHAPTER XV.

SOMETHING ABOUT AFRICA.

THE idea of his ever becoming a missionary quite sobered Malcolm for a time, and he wondered if Miss Harson really meant it in earnest.

"I really do," was the smiling reply, "for stranger things than that have happened; and all who are baptized are bound to be missionaries, in a certain sense, whether they go to Africa or not. We are all called upon to be self-denying and to work for the good of others; and there is a great deal of such work to be done at home. I will tell you something about this in a story."

"But we haven't had any *animals* yet, Miss Harson," said Edith, wondering what this strange order of things meant.

"Do not be frightened, dear," replied

her governess; "I have no intention of telling the story *now*, and the animals have not been forgotten. But first let us see how these poor people manage about water. A small plant grows in that part of Africa having a tuberous root as large as a coconut, and the inside of this root is a mass of cellular tissue filled with fluid much like that in a young turnip. Owing to the depth beneath the soil at which it is found, it is generally deliciously cool and refreshing. Another kind, named 'mokuri,' is seen in other parts of the country where long-continued heat parches the soil. This plant is an herbaceous creeper, and deposits underground a number of tubers, some as large as a man's head, at spots in a circle a yard or more from the stem. The natives strike the ground with stones on the circumference of the circle till, by hearing a difference of sound, they know the water-bearing tuber to be beneath. They then dig down a foot or so and find it.

"The women often go a long distance from home to get water, and they carry the shells of ostrich-eggs, instead of pails, to

put it in. Each woman will tie twenty or thirty of these strange water-vessels to her back in a net or bag, every shell having a hole in it to pour in water, and when it is full the hole is stopped with a small bunch of grass or straw. When taken home these shells are carefully buried in the ground, and brought out as occasion requires."

"I don't want to go to Africa, then," said Clara, "for I should drink up all their water if they have so little."

"If you could get it," was the laughing reply, "I have no doubt that you would, as you require two or three glasses of it at a meal, with I don't know how many between meals; but these people are cunning enough to hide the water which they get with so much trouble. The Bushmen, who live in the desert, once told a party from a more civilized tribe who reached their village parched with thirst that they had no water and never drank any. They were watched night and day, but no water was ever produced; and finally the visitors declared that they were not men, and there was no use in staying any longer. They prob-

ably had water all the time hidden under the ground."

This seemed "dreadfully mean" to the children, who could not realize how precious a little store of water is in a country of heat and drought, and how difficult it is to be hospitable under such circumstances.

"Besides," added the young lady, "we do not know but that these visitors may have been rude in their demands. A missionary says: 'I have come into villages where, had we acted a domineering part and rummaged every hut, we should have found nothing; but by sitting down quietly and waiting with patience until the villagers were led to form a favorable opinion of us, a woman would bring out a shell full of the precious fluid from I know not where.'"

"Isn't Africa like a big desert, anyway?" asked Malcolm.

"No, indeed," replied his governess; "many parts of it are both fertile and beautiful; the trees are magnificent, and the pasturage, especially in South Africa, plentiful enough to support large herds of cattle. The Boers, or farmers of Dutch



A BUSHMAN FAMILY.

descent, are a wealthy class of people, and many of them live in quite a luxurious manner. Even the desert itself is not all desert, as it supports multitudes of both small and large animals, and the wild water-melon alone covers great tracts of it."

"I never heard of wild watermelons," said Clara: "do they taste like ours?"

"I do not suppose that they are quite the same, dear, and some of them are bitter and not eatable at all. But want of rain interferes very much with the supply, while an unusually wet season makes it so abundant that there is a feast for all. Then animals of every sort and name, including man, rejoice in the rich supply. The elephant, true lord of the forest, revels in this fruit, and so do the different species of rhinoceros, although naturally so diverse in their choice of pasturage. The various kinds of antelopes feed on them with equal avidity, and lions, hyenas, jackals and mice all seem to know and appreciate the common blessing. The natives select them by striking one melon after another with a hatchet, and applying the tongue to the gashes.

They thus readily distinguish between the bitter and the sweet."

"I'm glad *we* don't have any bitter water-melons," said Edith, "because it wouldn't be nice to have people make holes in 'em and taste 'em before they came here."

Miss Harson smiled at her earnestness as she replied:

"A great many things, dear, are not 'nice' which have to be borne by the devoted missionaries in a foreign country. But it really *is* nice that so much pleasant food, free to all, can be found in the desert. Many other fruits grow in Africa, but we can get very little idea of their taste from the descriptions of them."

"I suppose the houses are like the little huts in the pictures," said Clara: "some of them look quite pleasant among the trees."

"Yes, and the missionary was sometimes glad to exchange his tent for one of them. 'If we slept in the tent in some villages,' he says, 'the mice ran over our faces and disturbed our sleep, or hungry prowling dogs would eat our shoes and leave only the soles.'

When they were guilty of this and other misdemeanors, we got the loan of a hut. The best sort of Makolo hut consists of three circular walls with small holes for doors, each similar to that in a dog-house, and it is necessary to bend down the body to get in, even when on all fours. The roof is formed of reeds or straight sticks, in shape like a Chinaman's hat, bound firmly together with circular bands, which are lashed with the strong inner bark of the mimosa tree. When all prepared except the thatch, it is lifted on to the circular wall, the rim resting on a circle of poles, between each of which the third wall is built. The roof is thatched with fine grass and sewed with the same material as the lashings, and as it projects far beyond the walls and reaches within four feet of the ground, the shade is the best to be found in the country. These huts are very cool in the hottest day, but are close and deficient in ventilation by night. The bed is a mat of rushes sewed together with twine, and the hip-bone soon becomes sore on the hard flat surface.' "

“That’s much nicer than the Eskimo houses,” said Malcolm, “but I should like their fur bags better to sleep in.”

“Not in the climate of Africa,” replied his governess; “the close huts must be bad enough there, yet such a hard bed is certainly not inviting. The natives do not mind it, as they know nothing better, but it adds very much to the discomfort of missionary life. The style of living under the Equator is, of course, entirely different from that of the Arctic regions, and while our Eskimo friends make animated bundles of themselves to keep out the cold, their African brothers wear scarcely any clothing at all.”

“Their dresses are very short,” said Edith, looking at the pictures, “and they don’t come up high enough at the top.”

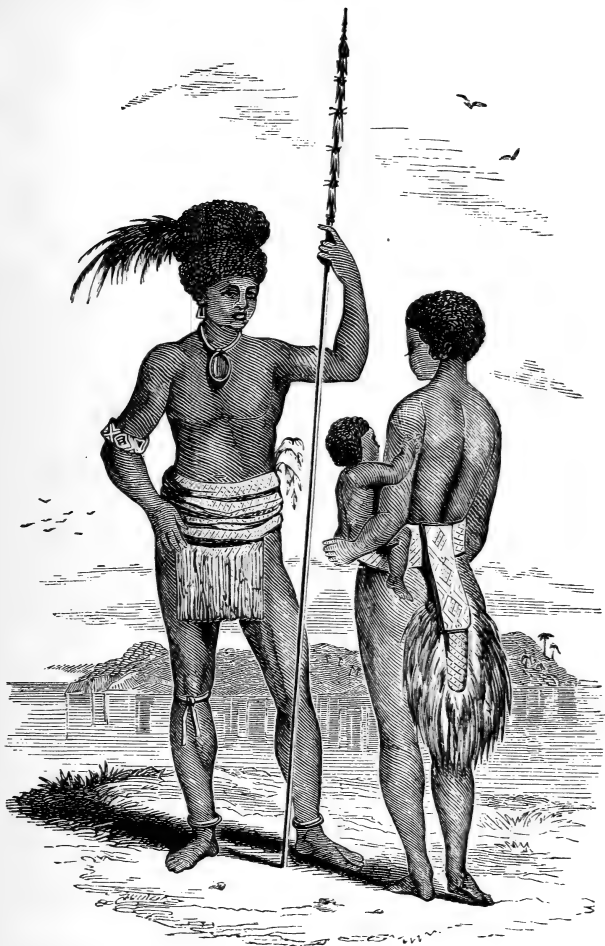
“Some of them,” added her sister, “have only got on the *middle* of a dress.”

Malcolm thought that the men were only “a bunch of bare arms and legs.”

“When they become Christians,” said Miss Harson, “they are willing to dress like civilized beings, but in a heathen state

they do not even know what a looking-glass means. When one appears for the first time in a place, their curiosity is unbounded, and frequent calls are made upon the owner of such a singular article. 'They came frequently,' says the missionary, 'and asked for the looking-glass, and the remarks they made—while I was engaged in reading, and apparently not attending to them—on first seeing themselves therein were amusingly ridiculous: "Is that me?" "What a big mouth I have!" "My ears are as big as pumpkin-leaves." "I have no chin at all." Or, "I would have been pretty, but am spoiled by these high cheek-bones." "See how my head shoots up in the middle," laughing vociferously all the time at their own jokes. They readily perceive any defect in each other, and give nicknames accordingly. One man came alone to have a quiet gaze at his own features once when he thought I was asleep: after twisting his mouth about in various directions, he remarked to himself, "People say I am ugly, and how very ugly I am, indeed!"' "

"What very funny people!" exclaimed



AFRICANS

Edith. Malcolm and Clara were equally amused by this account.

“They have many peculiar ideas,” said their governess, “and among them is a great contempt for shedding tears on any occasion whatever. We can realize, therefore, the power of God’s word among these people when we read such a testimony as this: ‘Baba, a mighty hunter who was ultimately killed by a rhinoceros, sat listening to the gospel in the church at Kuruman, and the gracious words of Christ, made to touch his heart evidently by the Holy Spirit, melted him into tears; I have seen him and others sink down to the ground weeping. When Baba was lying mangled by the furious beast which tore him off his horse, he shed no tear, but quietly prayed as long as he was conscious.’”

CHAPTER XVI.

A CURIOUS WATER-LILY.

THERE were numerous pictures of African scenery in the books which Miss Harson had selected from the library, and the children were very much surprised to find such attractive-looking places in the Dark Continent. The river-banks were often charming, and the great shade-trees seemed thick enough to keep out the hottest sun.

“The Luambye River,” said the young lady, “is described as a magnificent one, often more than a mile broad, and adorned with many islands of from three to five miles in length. Both islands and banks are covered with forest, and most of the trees on the brink of the water send down roots from their branches, like the banyan. The islands at a little distance seem great rounded masses of sylvan vegetation re-

clining on the bosom of the glorious stream. The beauty of the scenery of some of the islands is greatly increased by the date palm, with its gracefully-curved fronds and refreshing light-green color, near the bottom of the picture, and the lofty palmyra towering far above and casting its feathery foliage against a cloudless sky. Many rapids and cataracts make it still more picturesque, but also very dangerous, as the canoes then have to be taken out of the water and carried by land to a safer place. In this and other African rivers a curious kind of water-lily is found, of an enormous size and looking very much like this."

When the children saw the "water-lily" in the book they burst into peals of merriment. Such an absurd, ungainly-looking animal, or, rather, several of them, lying flat on the water just like lily-pads, and some of them well under it, showing only dark shadows, while a baby of gigantic size, with a very silly expression, was perched on its mother's body and sailing along with the greatest complacency!

"They are handsome creatures," said

Malcolm, presently; "their heads are nearly as long as their bodies."

"Not quite so bad as that," was the reply, "for the larger species are fourteen feet long, while the head is but three feet. This ugly head looks, as you see, like a long box. The legs are very short in proportion—a peculiarity of all water-animals—and they have four toes, all of which touch the ground in walking. Some of them, you see, are collected in a group on the bank, for they are land-animals as well, although apparently more at home in the water; and during the heat of the day the hippopotamus is to be found in the middle of the stream quite under water, only rising from time to time to breathe. Various splashes and snorts proclaim its presence even when it is invisible, and it can remain under water longer than any other animal. Yet it has sometimes been found asleep in the forests several miles away from the water."

"It's such an immense creature to be in the water at all," said Clara, "that I wonder it doesn't sink. It's ever so much larger

than a polar bear, and I shouldn't think it could swim a bit."

"It is a very accomplished swimmer, and quite the lord of the African rivers: its only home is in these rivers, as it is not found in any other country. Yet, strange as it seems, it lives almost entirely on grass and weeds."

"And doesn't it eat the fishes?" asked Edith.

"No, dear," replied her governess; "I believe that the hippopotamus has never been known to take any animal food. It has immense eye-teeth, which are curved in such a way that the upper ones fit inside the lower, the surfaces that touch each other being gradually worn flat. These tusks—the lower ones especially—are sometimes very large, and have been known to weigh as much as seventeen pounds. The ivory is quite valuable, and is often used in manufacturing artificial teeth. The tusks are said to leave their trace in the rank herbage by the river-banks, the ground in many places looking as if gone over with a harrow; they are also employed for tearing up

NEITHER PRETTY NOR GOOD.



aquatic weeds, on which the animals largely depend for food."

"It seems so queer, Miss Harson," said Malcolm, "that all the biggest animals only eat grass and such things. There's the elephant, you know, and the cow and the ox and all the rest of them."

"It is a good provision for the safety of other animals," was the reply, "as, if these huge creatures happened to be carnivorous, they would soon clear the smaller ones from the face of the earth. The hippopotamus, it seems, does not eat in the day-time, but large herds collect in still, deep water, and the deep furrows they make in ascending the banks to graze during the night are everywhere apparent. They are guided back to the water by the scent; but a long-continued pouring rain makes it impossible for them to perceive by that means in which direction the river lies, and they are found bewildered on the land. The hunters take advantage of their helplessness on these occasions to kill them."

"They don't *look* like water-animals,"

said Clara ; "I should think they belonged on land."

"The polar bear does not look like a water-animal," replied her governess, "yet he is better off than the hippopotamus, as he can also get along very well on land, or rather on ice. 'It is impossible to judge of the number in a herd,' says a traveler, 'for they are almost always hidden beneath the water ; but, as they require to come up every few minutes to breathe, when there is a constant succession of heads thrown up, then the herd is supposed to be large. They love a still reach of the stream, as in the more rapid parts of the channel they are floated down so quickly that much exertion is required in swimming up again to regain the distance lost. Such constant exertion disturbs them in their nap. They prefer to remain by day in a drowsy, yawning state, and, though their eyes are open, they take little notice of things at a distance. The males utter a loud succession of snorting grunts which may be heard a mile off. The canoe in which I was sitting, in passing over a wounded one elicited a

distinct grunting, though the animal lay entirely under water.

“The young, when very little, take their stand on the neck of the mother, and the small head, rising above the large, comes first to the surface. The mother, knowing the more urgent need of her calf, comes more frequently to the surface when it is in her care. But in the rivers of Londa, where they are much in danger of being shot, even the hippopotamus gains wit by experience; for while those in the Zambesi put up their heads openly to blow, the former keep their noses among water-plants, and breathe so quietly that one would not dream of their existence in the river except by footprints on the banks.”

“Aren't they dangerous in the water,” asked Malcolm, “when they get among the canoes?”

“Sometimes, when they wish to get to the surface and a canoe is in the way. One hippopotamus struck a boat with her head and nearly overturned it, one half being lifted quite out of the water. One man was tilted out into the river, but for-



SPEARING HIPPOPOTAMUS.

tunately the boat was very near the shore, and all managed to scramble upon dry land. The animal gazed after the canoe, as if trying to find out how much mischief she had done, and it was supposed that she was avenging the death of her little one, whom the men had speared the day before. 'This is so unusual an occurrence,' says the writer, 'when the precaution is taken to coast along the shore, that my men exclaimed, "Is the beast mad?" There were eight of us in the canoe at the time, and the shake it received shows the immense power of this animal in the water.'"

"I should think it *would* have been mad," exclaimed Clara, pitying the poor mother, "after seeing its child killed. And I suppose that if the hippopotamus didn't like grass better, it would have eaten the men."

"Quite likely, Clara, if it had caught them; yet it is not at all probable that the little one was killed out of cruelty, but for use. The meat, which is said to taste like pork, is considered good food by the natives; and, besides this, they boil down the

fat taken from the layers between the ribs. It is never thicker than oil in such a warm climate, but it has a peculiarity of keeping fresh for many years. White men do not find it so agreeable as the natives do, as they say it has a flavor of train oil, but some travelers consider hippopotamus bacon quite a delicacy. The fashion is to cut it in narrow strips and roast it, when, says one who has tried it, it is 'hard and tough as so much rope.' The meat is very fibrous, being a mere tissue of sinews."

"I don't believe it's nice," said Edith, with as much earnestness as though she expected an invitation to feast on hippopotamus.

"No," replied her governess with a smile, "I have no idea that it is, and where it is eaten good meat is very scarce. But the hippopotamus, when dead, is a very useful animal. Its skin, which is two inches thick, makes excellent handles for knives and workmen's tools, besides being good for a variety of purposes; while its flesh and fat and tusks are all valuable."

"Miss Harson," asked Clara, in a puzzled

tone, "what color are hippopotamuses? In the pictures some look white and others quite dark."

"Their color, as generally described, is very peculiar, having a reddish tinge when they first come out of the water. One traveler describes them as of 'a dark, fleshy red, almost like raw meat, marked irregularly with large black spots. In the sunshine their damp bodies assume quite a bluish-gray hue.' Another one says that 'the males appear of a dark color, the females of a yellowish-brown.'"

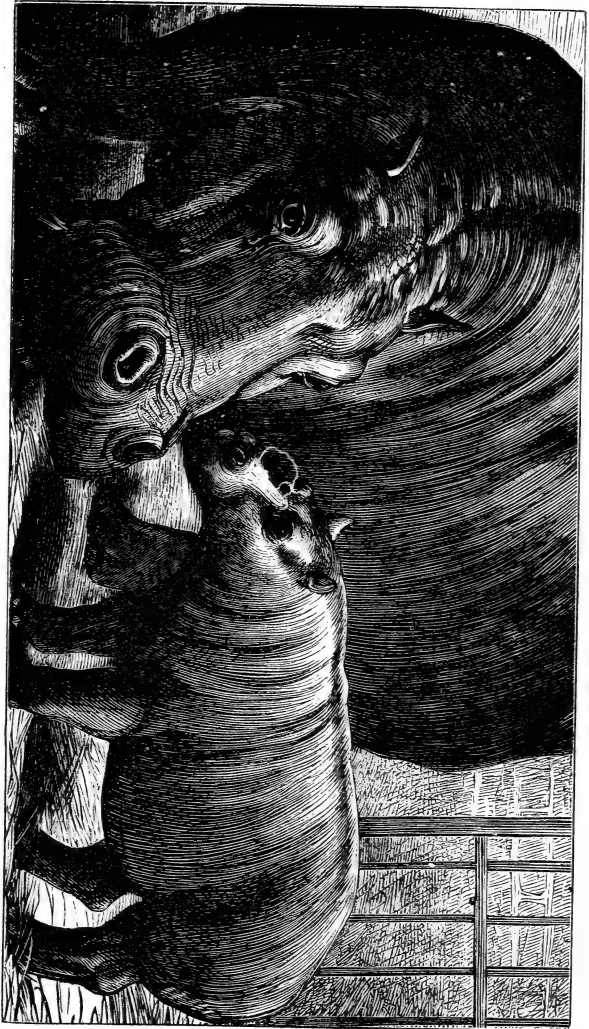
"The little ones must be comical objects," said Malcolm.

"They are," replied the young lady, laughing at the recollection; "I saw one some years ago on exhibition, and it was a most absurd-looking animal. This 'baby' was said to be about two years old, and it was just the color of a pig, with the pink skin showing through. Its head was like a box, and it had a stupid, *wooden-y* kind of look that was very funny."

"Was it in a cage?" asked Edith.

"Oh no, dear: it could not have lived in

A HIPPOPOTAMUS BABY.



a cage. There was a large tank of water for it to splash about in, and when it was not doing this it stood at the head of the steps leading down to it or walked around among the visitors. They were not at all afraid of it, as it was very peaceably inclined, and never did any more mischief than to upset a baby or two when the little things got in its way. It was quite playful, and very fond of company."

"Oh, Miss Harson! what became of it?" The three children would have liked nothing better than to go in pursuit of that young hippopotamus.

"I think it died," was the reply; "and it would be very difficult to keep such an animal alive in a state of captivity. Think of the vast expanse of water to which it is accustomed and where it spends most of its time lolling about in a listless, dreamy manner. The hippopotamus is formed, in some respects, for just such a life, and the flexible nostrils can be tightly closed by muscular exertion when the animal is under water, thus preventing any from getting in. This is sometimes the only part seen above

water. When the animal 'blows' there is a waterspout about three feet high."

"They can't be very easy to kill, with that thick skin," said Malcolm: "how do the natives manage it, Miss Harson?"

"They use harpoons and spears; and sometimes a native will go fearlessly into the water after a hippopotamus, armed only with a large knife. Hunters shoot it; but 'when, out of a herd of these animals in a river, one has been wounded, the rest are far more wary in coming to the surface; and should the wound have been fatal, the carcass does not rise for an hour, but drifts down the stream.'"

"It is nice that they don't want to kill people," said Clara, "as they are so big and strong; it doesn't matter so much about their being ugly."

"I am afraid, dear," replied her governess, "that I shall have to upset your pleasant idea of the hippopotamus. It does not *eat* people, but a naturalist says he is disposed to think the hippopotamus the most dangerous to an unarmed man of all the large mammalia of South Africa. One

reason of this is that the huge animal cannot endure the sight of anything to which it is not accustomed or which takes it by surprise. Let it come upon a horse, an ox, a porcupine, a log of wood, or even a fluttering garment suddenly crossing its path, and it will fly upon any of them with relentless fury; but let such object be withdrawn betimes from view, and the brute in an instant will forget all about it and go on its way entirely undisturbed. Although in some cases it may happen that an unprotected man may elude the attack of a lion, a buffalo or a leopard, except when they have been provoked, he cannot indulge the hope of escaping the violence of a hippopotamus that has once got him within reach of its power."

"Then it is ugly outside and inside too," said Edith in great disgust, "and I thought before that it was just homely and nice."

"Not pretty, but good," added her brother; "but now there's nothing nice about it—eh, Edie? It *doesn't* look much like a pet."

"Clara," said Miss Harson presently, "I

wish you to find the fifteenth verse of the fortieth chapter of Job, and read from that verse to the end."

Clara read very reverently the following verses :

"Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee ; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo, now, his strength *is* in his loins, and his force *is* in the navel of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar : the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones *are as* strong pieces of brass ; his bones *are* like bars of iron. He *is* the chief of the ways of God : he that made him can make his sword to approach *unto him*. Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play. He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed and fens. The shady trees cover him *with* their shadow ; the willows of the brook compass him about. Behold, he drinketh up a river, *and* hasteth not : he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. He taketh it with his eyes : *his* nose pierceth through snares."*

* See also Revised Version.

“This,” said Miss Harson, “is the only mention made in the Bible of the hippopotamus, which answers in so many ways to the description of ‘behemoth.’ Its eating grass like an ox applies exactly, as the hippopotamus feeds like ordinary cattle, and, like them, it will get into a grain-field whenever it has a chance, and do a great deal of damage. In order to supply its huge, massive body with nourishment it consumes vast quantities of food, as indeed may be inferred from the structure of its mouth and jaws. The mouth is enormously broad and shovel-shaped, so as to take in a large quantity of food at once, and the gape is so wide that when the animal opens its jaws to their full extent it seems to split its head into two nearly equal portions. This great mobility of jaw is assisted by the peculiar form of the gape, which takes a sudden turn upward and reaches almost to the eyes. This description is illustrated in various pictures in books of travel in Africa, which show the animal with open mouth.”

“What a dreadful mouth it must be!”

said Malcolm; "I don't see how people dare to hunt such an animal."

"Man's power over the beasts of the field has continued to this day," replied the



HIPPOPOTAMUS.

young lady, "although he sometimes falls a victim to their ferocity. Unless the hippopotamus is hunted or trapped, food becomes scarce in his neighborhood, for, besides eating so enormously, he spoils as much as he eats by the trampling of his heavy feet.

Owing to the width of the animal, the feet are placed very far apart, and the consequence is that the hippopotamus makes a double path, the feet of each side trampling down the herbage and causing the track to look like double ruts, with an elevated ridge between them."

"And no one can say, 'Go and drive the hippopotamus out,' I suppose," said Clara, "as they tell people here to drive the cows out."

"We can be quite sure that no one would be found to do it," was the laughing reply; "although one of the old fables about behemoth was that he devoured daily the herbage of a thousand hills, and that to prevent the destruction of all growing things the herbage was miraculously renewed every night.

"The sacred writer says that 'he lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reeds and fens;' and he is particularly fond of the little islands in the river Nile which are full of reeds and papyrus, and also of beautiful white lotus-flowers, among which the ugly hippopotamus looks very much

out of place. Being perfectly at home in the water, he does not in the least mind the annual rising of the river, when whole villages are swept away and the country left desolate: all he cares for is to find enough to eat, and floods do not make him at all uneasy."

"Miss Harson," asked Edith, in a very much puzzled tone, "what does it mean about 'his nose pierceth through snares'?"

"I do not wonder that you ask, dear, for it sounds strangely enough; but it only means that the animal *detects* snares, and is not easily taken in anything like a trap.* 'Now this faculty of detecting snares,' says a naturalist, 'is one of the chief characteristics of the hippopotamus when it lives near places inhabited by mankind, who are always doing their best to destroy it. In the first place, its body gives them an almost unlimited supply of flesh, the fat is very highly valued for many purposes, the teeth are sold to the ivory-dealers and the hide is cut up into whips or "khour-bashes."

* But see Revised Version.

“Not content with hunting the hippopotamus, the natives contrive various traps, either pitfalls or drop-traps. The former are simply pits dug in the path of the animal, covered with sticks and reeds, and having at the bottom a sharp stake, on which the victim is impaled, and so effectually prevented from escaping or damaging the pit by its struggles.

“The drop-trap is a log of wood weighted with stones, and having at one end an iron spike, which is sometimes poisoned. The path which the animal takes is watched, a conveniently overhanging branch is selected, and from that branch the cruel spear is suspended by a catch or trigger exactly over the centre of the path. One end of the trigger supports the spear, and to the other is attached a rope, which is brought across the path in such a way that when touched it releases the spear, which is driven deeply into the animal's back. If well hung, the spear-blade divides the spine, and the wounded animal falls on the spot; but even if it should miss a vital part, the poison soon does its fatal work.

““In consequence of the continual persecution to which it is subjected the hippopotamus becomes exceedingly wary, and, huge, clumsy and blundering as it looks, is clever enough to detect either a pitfall or a drop-trap that has not been contrived with especial care. An old and experienced hippopotamus becomes so wary that he will be suspicious even of a bent twig, and, rather than venture across it, will leave the path, force for himself a roundabout passage, and return to the path beyond the object that alarmed him.’”

“He must be hard to catch,” said Malcolm.

“Yes,” replied his governess; “the hippopotamus has more intellect than he is generally credited with; but he is quite disposed to let his enemies alone if they do not begin the attack.”

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RIGHT KIND OF HELP.

“**N**OW,” said Miss Harson, “as Africa always makes Malcolm think of Bishop Heber’s beautiful missionary hymn, I will finish our hippopotamus talk with a story of some missionary work that was done at home.”

This was a delightful prospect to the little audience, but, to be quite sure that they were getting what they wanted most, the question was asked: “Your own story, Miss Harson?”

“Yes, this is all my own.”

Miss Harson then proceeded with her story, which she called

A MISSIONARY BOAT.

The Mitchells had been comfortably settled in their country-house for a month or so, and, as they were all boys except papa

and mamma, this country home was a great thing for them. It was so unexpected, too, and actually came to them—as so few pleasant things do come—because of the hard times.

It happened in this way: Mr. Waite, who owned the place, was an old friend, and, as it had not been rented for two years, he told Mr. Mitchell that his boys might as well have the comfort of it, and he was welcome to occupy it all summer, rent free. The family sometimes had a week or two of country-life with some cousins in New Hampshire, but the remainder of the year was spent in the city, where Mr. Mitchell had to work very steadily as bookkeeper in a bank, and could allow them few luxuries. But the boys were brought up as Christian gentlemen, and were early taught to make the best of things. They were so happy and affectionate with each other that they never thought of envying their richer companions, while father and mother were both loved and revered. A place in the country all their own seemed at first almost too good to be true, and for a week or two

they were constantly exploring and discovering fresh delights.

A pond, a grove of chestnut trees, a hut for camping out, were all rejoiced over in turn, but the pond, that was almost a lake and was beautifully shaded with willows and alders and drooping vines, was their great delight. Such a place for bathing on warm days, such a place for swimming, and, if they only had a boat, such a place for rowing! But there was no boat, and how to get one became the subject of much discussion in the family.

Papa and mamma had taken it in hand; they felt that rowing, under proper circumstances, would be good exercise for the boys and would add much to their enjoyment. So banks were produced and their contents counted—generally two or three times over, in the hope of making more of them; wonderful offers of work at exorbitant wages were made to Mr. Mitchell by his three sons—Teddy being too small to be of any use—and they almost appeared to think that they could help mamma with her sewing at the same rates, while she

laughed heartily at the ridiculous propositions that were made.

“Now, boys,” said Mrs. Mitchell in her pleasant way, “we are going to have a boat if we can get one by proper means; but we must take care not to let it become one of the ‘inordinate affections’ from which we pray to be delivered, nor must we let the want of it lessen our gratitude for the many blessings we already enjoy. We certainly did not expect to have a country-house; but no sooner do we get that than we immediately cry out for a boat.”

“All right, little mother,” replied “Major,” with such a “bear’s hug” as only a fourteen-year-old boy can give, “we won’t forget what you say. But you see if we don’t have the boat!”

Mamma laughed, and the boys went off as usual under the loving direction of their elder, taking their way to the pond, as though a contemplation of its pebbly bottom might in some way lead to the appearance of a boat upon its surface.

“If Uncle Jack comes,” suggested Harry,

"and mamma expects him, you know, next month—he will certainly give us the boat."

"I shouldn't like that," replied Major; "I think it would be a great deal nicer and more manly to get it ourselves. And I, for one, should never tell Uncle Jack that we *wanted* a boat."

"Oh, but he'd find it out," cried Phil; "he always *does* find out just what people want. You know he guessed about my kite."

"Not a very difficult thing," thought his elder brothers as they remembered that this had been almost Phil's first word in the morning and the last at night. But they kindly refrained from telling him so, for, as Phil himself would have said, he was "only a little boy then." It was more than a year ago.

"We'll get the boat ourselves," continued Major, "and won't we have grand times *then*? What shall we name it, boys?"

Everything that a boat could be named was suggested, and the brothers sat regularly down and had such an animated discussion over it that it seemed rather funny

to think there really was no boat in existence yet.

It happened that a boat was also wanted just then in another part of the world and for quite a different purpose, and the next Sunday afternoon Mrs. Mitchell, who was seated on the shady piazza with a religious paper in her hand, said:

“Boys, here is something for *you*. Bishop P—— of Africa has written a letter to the children, asking them to help him get a boat in which he can travel up and down the coast. He says it is really a *must-have*, for it is a rare thing for a boat to come to Cape Mount, and it would save both time and money. For want of it the missionaries are sometimes delayed a month from their work; and the bishop says he has been asked as much as a hundred dollars for a boat to convey him from Monrovia to Cape Mount. There are places to which he must go for just one day’s work, and which he cannot reach without losing from two to four or five weeks. A little ocean-yacht that will carry ten tons, and that ought not to cost over a thousand dollars,

will do. How about *our* boat in the face of this greater need?"

At first the boys groaned, this seemed such a complete extinguisher on their little craft, which they had already named the "Firefly," and which was just as hard to give up as if they had really owned it. But then how could the bishop's work get on unless all who knew of it helped him to get a boat?

Major spoke first:

"He shall have it, mother," looking up with a bright smile, as if ashamed of his momentary hesitation. "Ten dollars will be *something* toward it." And he walked rather hastily to the end of the piazza.

His father's voice at his shoulder whispered:

"Remember, my son, the words of David: 'Neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing.'"

"Yes, papa," was the reply, "and we are going to work just as hard for the bishop's boat as we would for our own."

"Indeed we will," chimed in Harry and

Phil, after the first rush of disappointment. And as Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell watched the bright young faces they could not help thinking that a few more such earnest workers would soon accomplish what the good bishop desired.

The boys were laying out tasks for the coming week by which they expected to earn money for the missionary boat, when mamma asked them if they would not like to have a little talk about Africa, where Bishop P—— was working and where many good men had laid down their lives in the service of their Lord. Mrs. Mitchell knew how to make these “talks” very attractive, and the little group sat there into the twilight hearing about the missionaries who had worked for God in that benighted country.

Up rose three young heroes with the morning sun, and fell very vigorously to putting the home-lawn in order. Mamma encouraged them with smiles from the window of her sewing-room, and had a liberal supply of gingerbread in readiness for their eleven-o'clock luncheon.

In the afternoon they went, as usual, to bathe in their beloved pond, and Harry exclaimed with a sigh,

“I don’t see the Firefly here any longer.”

“The Firefly,” said Major, grandly, “has been promoted. She has spread her sails for the African coast, and now floats majestically on the ocean waves.”

The young orator forgot that the Firefly never had any sails, as it was a rowboat; but this is not to be wondered at, as he also forgot that it never had an existence. He deeply lamented his imaginary boat, but he tried to think of the hard-working bishop and the comfort he would take in the yacht, which Major already saw sailing up and down the coast of Africa, doing its good work.

The days went on, full of work and happiness; the boys were allowed to help a neighboring farmer with his hay-harvest, and their earnings had now reached quite a respectable sum. The bishop’s boat was a frequent subject of conversation, and they wondered when they might venture to send their contribution; but not while work

lasted certainly, and the lads toiled away like a colony of beavers.

"I am afraid," said Mr. Mitchell one evening to his wife, "that the boys are going to have a disappointment, after all. I see in the *Spirit of Missions* that the bishop's yacht is already provided for, a generous Southern congregation having offered to give the whole sum if necessary."

"We ought to be glad, of course," was the smiling reply, "and yet I should have liked a share in the bishop's boat; the boys too, after all their work."

"I wonder what they will do about it?" continued Mr. Mitchell.

"We shall see," replied his wife.

The younger boys received the news with subdued delight: their beloved Firefly, they thought, would now be restored to them.

But Major counted out the savings, which had now rolled up to the sum of twenty-five dollars, and said very gravely,

"This money is not ours, but Bishop P——'s. We earned it for *him*, and I

think it would be dishonest to take it back again."

"Bravo, Major!" exclaimed his father; while the mother's eyes were moist.

Harry and Phil felt quite ashamed of their first thought and very proud of their brother, and the little pile was made over at once to papa, to be changed into suitable shape for transportation to Africa.

Then "Uncle Jack" came.

He was Mrs. Mitchell's younger brother, always full of life and spirits and ready to enter into all his nephews' pleasures. No wonder, therefore, that he was such a favorite with them.

"Why haven't these boys a boat?" asked this same Uncle Jack quite suddenly one day. "It's just what they need on that nice large pond, and it would do more for them in the way of muscles and tan than anything else you could give them."

He was rather surprised at the effect of his words, for the three boys looked as guilty as though they had been doing something wrong, while Phil could scarcely help smiling to think how clever Uncle Jack was

at guessing, after all. Mrs. Mitchell began to talk of something else, and when the boys were out of hearing she told her brother the story of the boat.

"The dear little fellows!" exclaimed Uncle Jack with suspicious-looking eyes. "That really shames me beyond endurance. I shall send a contribution to Africa instantly, as the bishop probably needs plenty of things besides a yacht; and the boys shall have their boat too."

The young Mitchells had not lifted their eyes to anything grander than a second-hand rowboat, but they had, one fine day, a great surprise in the appearance of a lovely *new* one that had mysteriously found its way to the pond, and looked as though it had always belonged there. It was painted olive-green with red trimmings, and on the bow, in bright red letters, was the magic name "Firefly."

"That is the loveliest story yet," was the commendation that greeted Miss Harson. But what pleased her still better was to see that her little charges were as eager to do

missionary work of this kind as the Mitchells had been; and if there had only been a boat wanted somewhere, they would have worked just as hard for it. But nothing seemed quite so interesting to work for as a boat.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A PLEASANT DISCOVERY.

MEANWHILE, what had become of Sim Jute? No one seemed to know, for, as Malcolm said, Sim and his mother and the white-headed baby had all gone off together when the ice melted on the pond and a coffee-house for skaters was no longer needed. They went off so early one March morning that no one even knew they were going until they had gone, and their friends at Elmridge felt quite hurt that they had not been told of their intention.

Mr. Kyle came home one day with the exciting intelligence that he had seen Sim among a group of newsboys selling papers, but on catching sight of Mr. Kyle he was off like a flash, leaving no clue to his whereabouts. It seemed very sad, just as

he had begun to care for better things, that he should avoid his most faithful friends in this way; but Miss Harson said that she would not give Sim up yet, and that she still hoped to find him.

"I am afraid," said Clara, "that he has got bad again, and that he won't want us to find him. I wish he hadn't run away."

"I suppose he thought that there was nothing for him to do here now," replied her governess, "and perhaps he had good reasons for going as he did. We will at least try not to judge him until we know the truth."

It was some time before any such opportunity occurred, but it came at last.

Miss Harson had gone to the city to spend the day in making some necessary purchases, and there, in a down-town street, gazing into a picture-window, she saw the very boy who had occupied so many of her thoughts. She knew the back of Sim's head—which was all she could see—in a moment, and before he had time to recognize the young lady her hand was on his shoulder and he was completely caught.

No transgressor could look more startled at the appearance of a policeman than did Sim at sight of Miss Harson. Yet he was evidently pleased too, but it was difficult to say which feeling was uppermost.

"I didn't want you to find me yet," he said, very frankly, "and that is why I run away from Mr. Kyle the day he seen me."

Sim had not given much attention to grammar yet, but the young lady noticed with pleasure that he looked neat and clean and was comfortably dressed. His face too had a more straightforward, manly look than it used to wear, and it was not easy to believe that he had returned to evil ways.

"Miss Harson," said Sim, after a moment of hesitation, "will you come and see my mother? It's near by here, and, though we ain't got much of a place, it ain't very bad."

The young lady went gladly, and when they reached the spot she was most agreeably surprised. The neatest of little temperance coffee-houses was flourishing under Mrs. Jute's supervision, and that worthy

woman herself almost had her arms round her visitor in her delight at seeing her; she got her into a chair in the neat little room at the back and had a cup of coffee in her hands, all in a moment.

Miss Harson laughed at these summary measures as she said:

“Really, Mrs. Jute, I ought not to stay, even to drink this nice coffee; but if you will promise to be more communicative than Sim has been, and tell me why you made that sudden flitting, I shall be glad to listen.”

Mrs. Jute made a pretence of frowning at Sim—not succeeding very well, however, as he was evidently the apple of her eye—and, turning to the young lady, she replied:

“It’s just this way, Miss Harson: that boy’s too close-mouthed to live. There wasn’t nothing more to do at Long Pond, and Sim was bent on comin’ to New York and tryin’ his luck at papers or ’most anythin’. But he didn’t want any of you fine folks that had been so good to him to know until we’d got to be respectable-like.”

Miss Harson glanced kindly at the very

sheepish-looking boy who stood behind his mother during this recital, to which she replied:

“I cannot see, though, why this flitting should have been such a very private one that no one knew anything about it.”

“There was a lot of fellers,” said Sim, with downcast eyes, “that would have pitched in and come too if they’d knowed we was comin’; so I said to mammy that we’d jest get off quiet-like by ourselves. But Mary Jane hollered—”

“And the blessed child is hollerin’ this very minit!” exclaimed Mrs. Jute, as she bustled into a sort of closet and brought forth the white-headed baby, with a very open mouth and a very red face.

“And I thought,” said Sim, continuing his narrative, “that somebody’d hear it, sure, and come to see what was the matter. But they didn’t, and we got off safe. We had some money, you know, from the coffee-selling at Long Pond, and I got two rooms for mother and me and Mary Jane, and went to sellin’ papers. This was pretty good, but not good enough; I wanted to do

something, Miss Harson, that you'd think tip-top, so I talked mother into havin' another coffee-stand. When the temperance people heard of it, they put us here; and they say it does a lot of good keepin' workin' men away from the liquor saloons."

"I can easily believe that," replied the young lady, who had listened with great interest to the boy's account; "and you are certainly privileged, Sim, in being able to make a comfortable living and to do good to your fellow-creatures at the same time. Have you ever thought of being grateful for this?"

Sim said, half inaudibly, that "he was tryin'," and Miss Harson knew that from him this meant a great deal.

"And—there's somethin' else," he added, as if afraid of being heard: "there's *money in the bank!* And, Miss Harson, *I'm goin' to night-school*, come winter."

Sim stood watching the effect of this astounding communication, which surprised his visitor quite as much as he could have desired. Indeed, Miss Harson could scarcely believe that this was the same lawless boy

who, with companions like himself, had infested Long Pond so unpleasantly not many months ago.

The change in Mrs. Jute was scarcely less wonderful, as she was now a neat, industrious, cheerful woman. The little coffee-house was very popular in the neighborhood, and every one had a good word for it except the saloon-keepers.

When Miss Harson returned to Elmridge and opened her wonderful budget of news, great was the exclaiming over Sim Jute and the delight at the improved condition of the family. Edith declared that it had been brought about by her twisted ankle, because they got acquainted with Sim when he carried her to the house. Clara was sure that Miss Harson was the cause, "because she talked so kindly to Sim that he couldn't *help* wanting to be good;" but Miss Harson herself thought differently.

"We were all permitted to act as instruments; but remember," said she, reverently, "that 'God giveth the increase.' Mrs. Jute and Sim are most encouraging examples of what he can do in this respect."

CHAPTER XIX.

A DANGEROUS NEIGHBOR.

“**H**ERE’S a hippopotamus with a horn on his lip,” said Edith at their next sitting. She was examining one of the books on Miss Harson’s table, and seemed to have made quite a discovery.

“‘The rhinoceros,’” read Malcolm; “another pretty creature. Well, he *does* look a good deal like a hippopotamus with a horn; an African gentleman, too.”

“Some members of the family reside in India,” replied his governess. “But to be quite exact, he is not really a water-animal, only approaching it in his fondness for bathing. This, and his not belonging to any class in particular, have caused me to place him among the amphibious quadrupeds.”

“Why, I remember him,” said Clara, presently: “don’t you know, Edie, that he was at the Central Park that day, looking so wretched, with his horn off?”

Yes, they all remembered it now; but Miss Harson told them that the poor creature there, who died soon afterward, was quite a different object from a rhinoceros in good condition freely roaming his native wilds.

“There are supposed to be several varieties of this animal,” continued the young lady, “although naturalists do not quite agree on this point, some thinking that the varieties are all the same animal at different ages and under different circumstances. There are said to be four different species in Africa alone, and the natives distinguish them as the *boreli*, or black rhinoceros; the *keitloa*, or two-horned black; the *moohoo*, or common white; and the *kakoba*, or long-horned white rhinoceros. The black are smaller, but more fierce, than the white ones, and much more dangerous to the hunter. The largest of the African species is the long-horned white one, which is sometimes over eighteen feet long, while around its broad back and low-hanging stomach it would measure nearly as much.

“The Asiatic rhinoceros is considerably

smaller, and its skin hangs in folds. Two of these three varieties have one horn, while the other has two. These two horns, however, do not grow side by side, like those of other horned animals, but the second one rises behind the first, at some distance, and is much smaller."

"What a queer-looking creature!" said Clara as they were all looking at a specimen of the two-horned variety.

"This is what a celebrated hunter in Africa says of the largest species," continued Miss Harson: "It is about as large around as it is long, while the body sets so low on its legs that a tall man on tiptoe could see across its back. Attached to its blunt nose—not to the bone, but merely set in the skin, with a network of muscles to hold it—is a horn more or less curved, hard as steel, sharp and more than a yard long, and immediately behind this is a little horn, equally sharp and nearly straight."

"Such a big white animal must look very funny," said Malcolm: "something like a house walking around."

"The so-called 'white' ones are not

really white," was the reply ; "only light-colored, like the famous white elephant. The usual color of the rhinoceros is a dark slate, and a *very* dark one is called black. Even blue ones have been mentioned, but this probably means that the slate color has something the tinge of a Maltese cat. It is described as a huge, ungainly beast, with a disproportionately large head and a very thick skin. This skin, in some of the species, is curiously marked off into shields which are almost impenetrable ; and one hide will furnish seven shields, which are worth about two dollars apiece in a rough state. One variety is ornamented with a sort of folded collar, which hangs down quite low at each side. Taken altogether, they are not a handsome family, nor can they generally be called amiable."

"The white ones are good, aren't they?" asked Edith.

"They have that character ; they are said to 'feed almost entirely on grasses, and to be of a timid, unsuspecting disposition. This renders them an easy prey, and they were slaughtered without mercy on the in-

roduction of firearms. But even a white rhinoceros is not always safe: one, even after it was mortally wounded, attacked a hunter's horse and thrust its horn through to the saddle, tossing both horse and rider. I once saw a white rhinoceros,' continues the writer, 'give a buffalo which was gazing intently at myself a poke in the chest, but it did not wound it, and it seemed only a hint for it to get out of the way.'"

This seemed so very comical that the children wished they could have seen it—at a safe distance.

"Can a rhinoceros run very fast, Miss Harson?" asked Clara.

"Not usually as fast as a good horse, but it is said when disturbed to go off at a swift trot, easily getting ahead of a man on foot."

"I should think," said Malcolm, "that it would be the man who would want to get ahead of the rhinoceros."

"That depends," was the reply, "upon whether the man is frightened or whether he wishes to kill the animal. Hunters prefer having their prey in front of them. The

sight of the rhinoceros is very poor, but, as if to make up for this, his hearing and scent are very acute. Like elephants and buffaloes, as well as our friend the hippopotamus, he sleeps during the heat of the day, and feeds at night or in the cool hours of early morning and evening. His power of scent will warn him of the approach of a stranger while yet five or six hundred yards distant, and he will generally charge down upon an object that he smells, but does not see, pushing with three loud whiffs resembling the sound produced by a jet of steam escaping from a safety-valve. His cry has been compared, like that of the hippopotamus, to the harsh, shrill sound of a penny trumpet."

"And does he only eat *grass*?" asked Edith, who thought it a very insufficient meal for so huge a creature.

"Yes, dear," replied her governess; "the big animal is perfectly satisfied with grass and leaves, especially if there are some dainty young shoots among them. The black rhinoceros while feeding rubs its front horn on the ground, which quite

flattens the surface ; another species guides her calf in front of her with her horn ; while with others the young one follows behind its mother."

"They seem to do a great deal with their horns," said Malcolm.

"They do a great deal too much sometimes, even tearing them off, which causes a great deal of bleeding and is evidently painful. But in time a new horn grows out. An old rhinoceros in a zoological garden worked so continually at the bars of its cage as to make its horn grow straight out in front, instead of upward, and this made her a queerer-looking object than ever."

"Well," said pretty Clara, who was a little given to admiring herself, "I should think it was queer-looking enough before. I'm glad *I'm* not an ugly rhinoceros."

"Take care, Clara," was the laughing reply. "You never heard, I suppose, what happened to a little Hottentot who ridiculed a rhinoceros for being ugly? At least the poem *says* it happened to him. Shall I read it to you?"

Three voices were very anxious to hear

it; and Miss Harson proceeded to read the rhymes, which she said she had found in a volume of *Harper's Young People*:

“A FABLE FOR SMART LITTLE BOYS.

“There was a little Hottentot
Who wandered in a shady spot
Beside a sluggish river's brink,
Where savage beasts came down to drink,
When suddenly he ran across
A monstrous, grim rhinoceros.
The little blackamoor was pert,
And not afraid of being hurt,
So, without any hesitation,
He entered into conversation,
And, just to make his smartness clear,
Began to ridicule and jeer:

““My gracious! what an ugly beast!
Your skin is all begrimed and creased;
And what a nose for shape and size,
With a great horn between the eyes!”

“Whereat that big rhinoceros
Just gave his nose a little toss,
His funny little critic eyed
With grim good-humor, and replied:

““My nose, young darkey? take a look
At yours, reflected in the brook:
Now tell me what you think of *that*?”

““Mine? Why, 'twas beautifully flat
When I was born; my mother's care
To give me a distinguished air
Has broadened it to what you see,
And made my playmates envy me.”

“‘Yes, made you quite a beau! But hark’ee,
You most impertinent young darkey,
And let me tell you I was made
With this huge form, and thus arrayed
With a great horn upon my nose,
To serve as warning to all those
Who poke in other folks’s platters
And make free with their neighbor’s matters.
I’ve half a mind—’twould serve you right—
To toss you fairly out of sight.
I’m coming for you now. Here goes!
Say, now, how do you like my nose?’

“‘Oh don’t! you dear, good, lovely beast!
I didn’t mean it in the least;
You are the sweetest beast I know,
And every one will tell you so.’

“‘You little impudence! begone!
Quick, or my nose shall help you on!’

“That frightened little Hottentot
Departed on a lively trot.”

This poem was highly appreciated by the audience, to whom the idea of a little Hottentot making free with a big rhinoceros was extremely funny.

“You see now, Clara,” observed her brother, mischievously, “that when you meet a rhinoceros it won’t do to tell him how ugly he is, but you must be sure to say, loud enough for him to hear, that he is

a very handsome animal and a 'dear, good, lovely beast.' This may save your life, you know."

"That is not at all the moral of the fable, Master Malcolm," replied his governess, "for it teaches us the lesson that ridiculing others for what they cannot help—like personal ugliness or deformity—is a hateful propensity; to point out another person's defects while we have others quite as bad is supremely silly; while to jeer at those who are powerful enough to crush us in return is a dangerous indulgence.

"The horn of the rhinoceros, which seems to have been the particular point of the little Hottentot's attack, is very highly valued because of the superstitions attached to it; but for ivory it does not compare with the tusks of the elephant. Rhinoceros-horn shavings are supposed to cure some diseases, and many people firmly believe that a cup made of the horn will burst if poison is poured into it. A German writer says of it:

"The horn will not endure the touch of poison: I have often been a witness of

this. Many people of fashion at the Cape have cups turned out of rhinoceros-horn; some have them set in silver and some in gold. If wine is poured into one of these cups it immediately rises and bubbles up as though it were boiling, and if there is poison in it the cup immediately splits. If poison is put by itself into one of these cups, the cup instantly flies to pieces. The chips made in turning one of these cups are carefully saved and returned to the owner of the cup, being esteemed of great benefit in convulsions, faintings and many other complaints.' ”

“Is that really true?” asked Clara. “Do *you* believe it, Miss Harson?”

“No, Clara, I do not believe in these wonderful powers of curing; and as for the wine and the poison, *we* are not very likely to try the experiment with either. But there is something much more interesting than this which is told of the rhinoceros by travelers and hunters, and which we have every reason to believe. He has a little friend and constant attendant, called by the natives ‘kala,’ and its object is to

rid the rhinoceros of insects and to warn it of danger. This strange guardian is a bird of a grayish color and about the size of a thrush. As many as half a dozen of these birds will devote themselves to one of these huge animals. Very disagreeable insects called 'ticks,' which burrow under the skin and are not easily dislodged, torment the huge animal, and as these birds have sharp, curved beaks, they pierce the thick skin and dig out the intruders."

"But doesn't that hurt the rhinoceros dreadfully?" asked Edith.

"Yes, dear, it often puts him to pain, but he seems to understand that the pain is for his good, and stands patiently while his faithful little attendants probe into his flesh in quest of the ticks. These birds also warn the rhinoceros of any danger which his eyes are not keen enough to see. The large animal has an acute ear, and generally hears the first cry of its associate; but when it is sleeping soundly, the 'kala' often has to flap its wings across its eyes, which it never ceases doing until the ungainly sleeper is fairly awake. The bird is fre-

quently heard in the morning uttering its well-known cry as it searches for its bulky companion, to whom it seems to be attached after the manner of a faithful dog."

"How funny that does seem!" said Clara. "I shouldn't think a rhinoceros could ever be caught, with these birds around to warn him."

"Hunters object to the arrangement very much," replied Miss Harson, "and one of them says: 'Many a time have these ever-watchful birds disappointed me in my stalk and tempted me to invoke an anathema upon their devoted heads. They are the best friends the rhinoceros has.'"

"I don't admire their taste," said Malcolm, "in picking out a rhinoceros for a friend, but it's very nice of the birds."

"And they must be so sorry," said Edith, "when they find that he's dead. They don't eat him then, do they, Miss Harson?"

"No, dear; they do not belong to the vulture family.—To answer *your* question, Clara," continued the young lady, "whether other animals are not afraid of the rhinoceros: it is said that the kingly lion will run

away from the chance of an encounter with him, and that the huge elephant often gets the worst of it in a battle. In one case, however, the impetuous rage of the rhinoceros proved his downfall; for, having driven his terrible horn up to the hilt in the carcass of an elephant, he was unable to extract it, and the latter, falling, crushed the life out of his assailant. A traveler once saw a fight between a gigantic elephant and a black rhinoceros, that was ended by the flight of the former. The panther, too—and the Indian panther is a large and powerful animal—will sometimes try a battle with its huge neighbor, and especially if it has a family of small kittens reposing near where the rhinoceros is passing. But the sharp horn easily pierces the soft, spotted skin, and the ferocious mother is crushed beneath the ponderous feet of her enemy.”

“And I don’t suppose the rhinoceros wanted her ugly little kittens at all,” said Malcolm. “What a goose the panther is to attack a great creature like that! She might know that she’d get the worst of it.”

“The love of most animals for their young,” replied his governess, “is so strong that they can think of nothing else when the little ones appear to be in danger. The panther’s nature, too, is so fierce that were she only the size of an ordinary cat, and the rhinoceros twice his usual size, she would probably make the attack in defence of her kittens. But with no kittens at hand she is said to glide away in the most unobtrusive manner at sight of her clumsy foe.”

“Don’t the hunters often get killed?” asked Clara, “when they attack a rhinoceros?”

“No; such an occurrence is very rare. The natives sometimes meet with bad accidents, but the accounts of travelers concerning their encounters with these animals are often very amusing. Sometimes the great creatures even run away from the hunters.”

“Well,” said Malcolm in disgust, “if *I* were such a big creature, I wouldn’t run away so easily.”

“Of course you think so,” replied Miss

Harson, "because you know the animal's power against a man, while it does not. So large and powerful an animal as the horse, for instance, will be completely terrified by a small piece of white paper fluttering in his path, partly because it is a strange object, and partly because the peculiar formation of his eye magnifies it to about six times its real size."

"Does everything look six times larger to a horse than it really is?" asked Clara in amazement.—"Only think, Edie, if a mouse looked six times larger than it is to us, how we should run and scream!"

"Six times more, I suppose, than you do now," said tormenting Malcolm.

"I thought," said his governess, reprovingly, "that you had entered into a compact not to tease?"

"So I did, Miss Harson, and I mean to keep it—when I can. But I couldn't resist that chance."

"And *we* entered into a compact," said Clara, amiably, "not to run and scream, but somehow we always forget it."

"Recollect, then," said the young lady,

smiling, "that for the future you are not to run and scream at anything short of a rhinoceros."

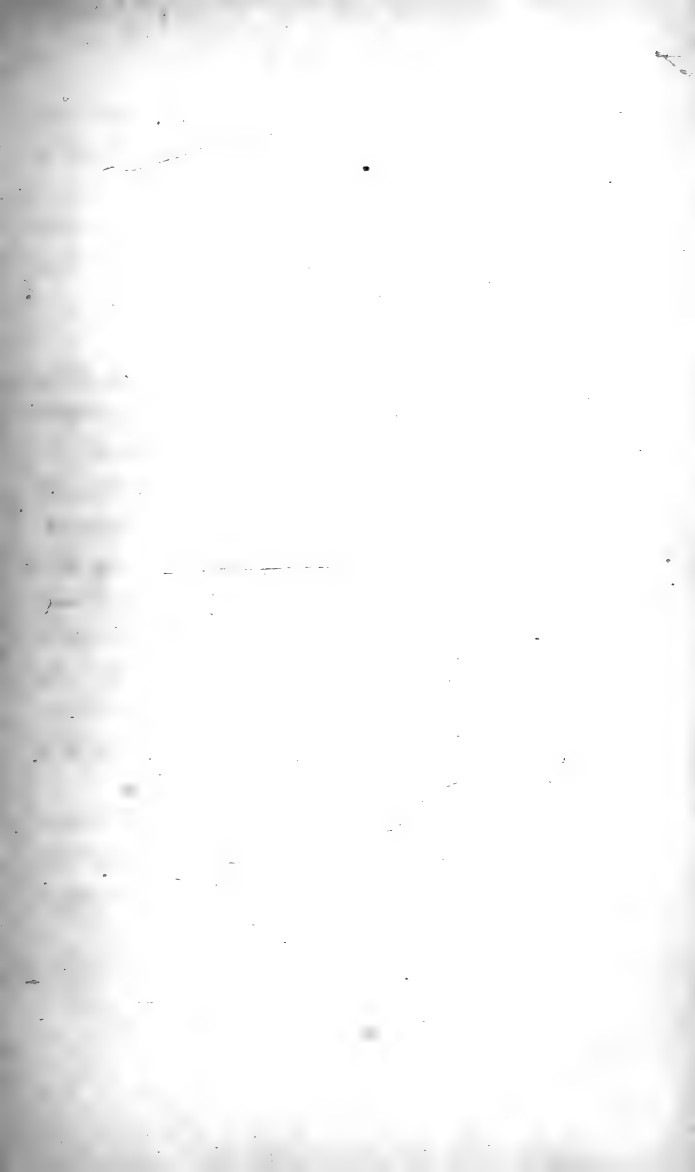
Edith was laughing herself now, and "snuggling up," as she called it, to her governess.

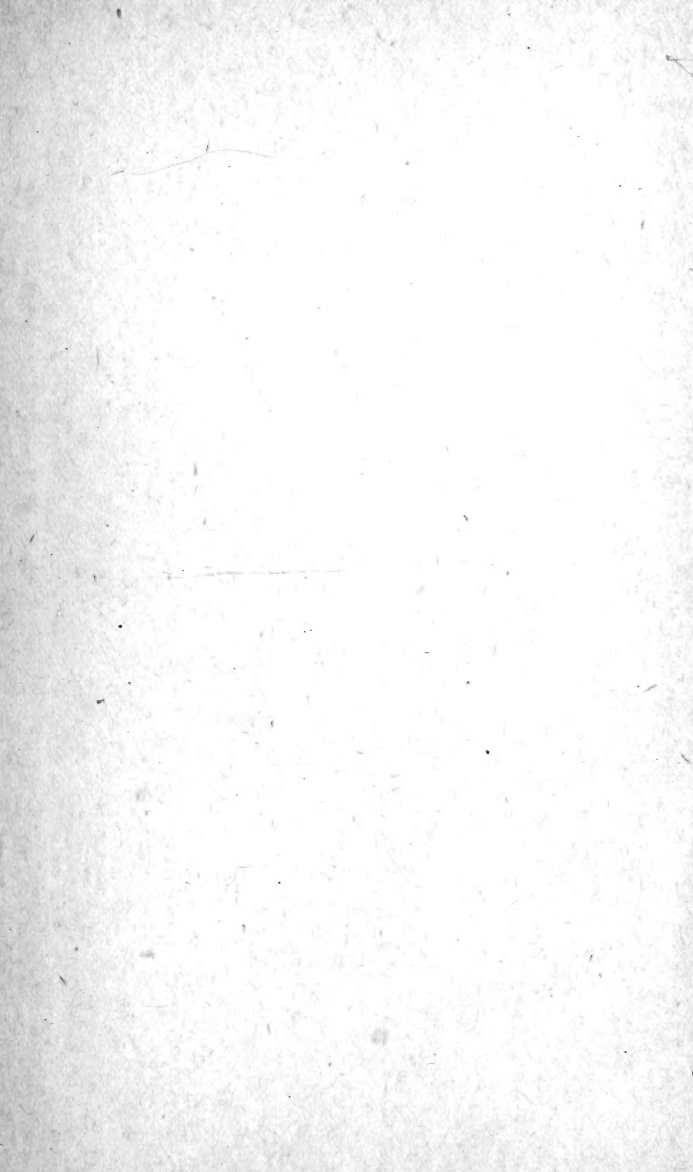
"Is that all, Miss Harson?" in a tone of regret as there came an ominous pause.

"I think it is 'all.' I do not know of any story to fit a rhinoceros except an anecdote in which the reader was requested to 'imagine the great rhinoceros at the Zoological Garden taking it into its head, with that little eye, target hide, bulky bones and other items about it, to fondle its keeper!' The story adds, rather unnecessarily, that the keeper was nearly crushed to death."

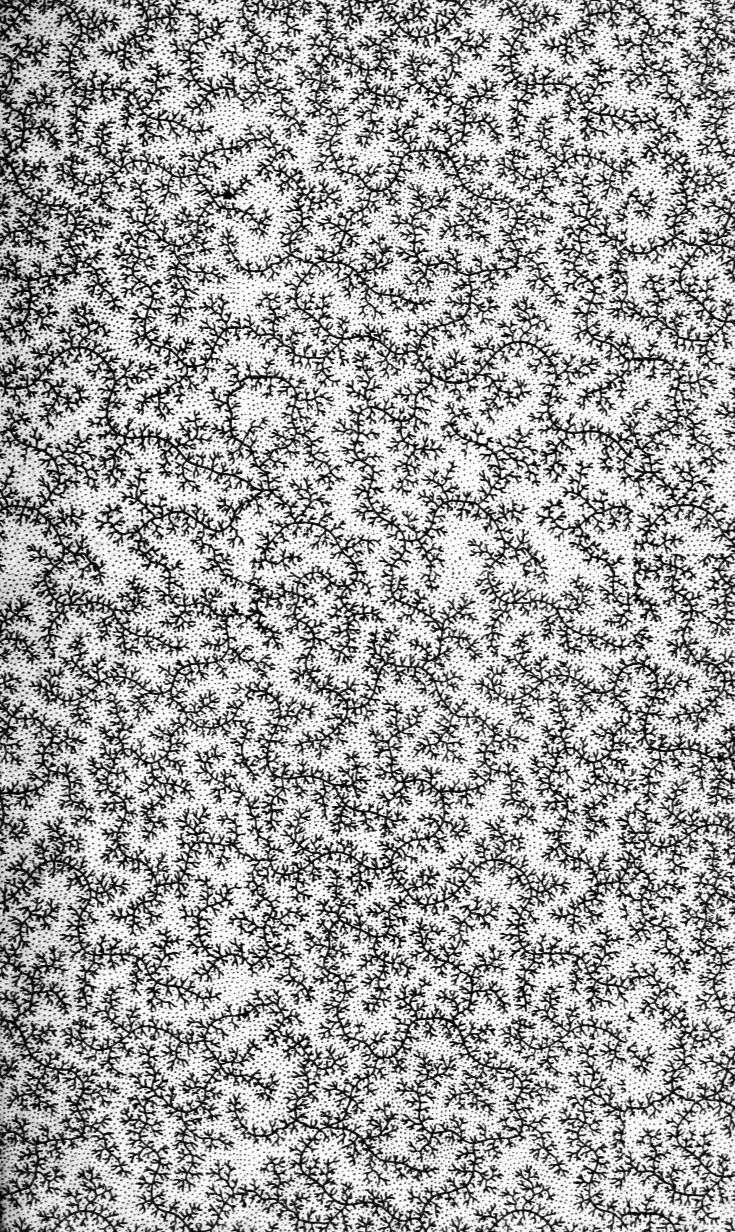
This seemed to the children rather worse than being petted by a lion, and, on the whole, they did not think the rhinoceros a particularly attractive animal.

THE END.









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