# JAMES DE MILLE

James De Mille was born in Saint John, New Brunswick August 23 1833. The son of the merchant and shipowner, he attended Horton Academy in Wolfville and spent one year at Acadia University. He then travelled with his brother Elisha Budd to Europe, spending half a year in England, France and Italy. Soon after his return to North America, he attended Brown University, from which he obtained a Master of Arts degree.

He married Anne Pryor, daughter of the president of Acadia University, John Pryor, and was there appointed professor of classics. He served there until 1865 when he accepted a new appointment at Dalhousie as professor of English and rhetoric.

His most popular work was *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*, which was serialised posthumously in the magazine *Harper's Weekly,* and published in book form by Harper and Brothers of New York City in 1888.

He continued to write and teach at Dalhousie until his early death 28 January 1880 at age 46.

“ THE DOCTOR WAS EVIDENTLY DISCOURSING UPON A FAVORITE TOPIC.”

# A STRANGE MANUSCRIPT FOUND IN A COPPER CYLINDER

BY

JAMES DE MILLE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
GILBERT GAUL

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A STRANGE MANUSCRIPT

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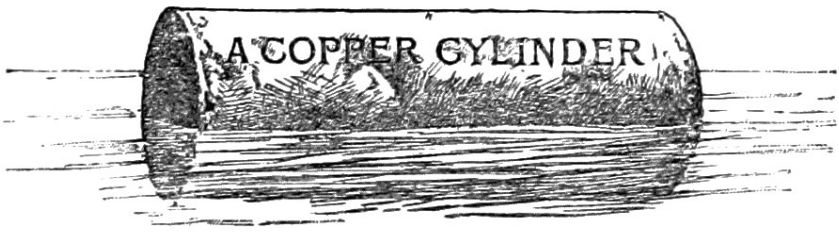


# CONTENTS

# A STRANGE MANUSCRIPT FOUND IN A COPPER CYLINDER

## CHAPTER I

### *"The Finding Of The Copper Cylinder"*

It occurred as far back as February 15, 1850. It happened on that day that the yacht *Falcon* lay becalmed upon the ocean between the Canaries and the Madeira Islands. This yacht *Falcon* was the property of Lord Featherstone, who, being weary of life in England, had taken a few congenial friends for a winter's cruise in these southern latitudes. They had visited the Azores, the Canaries, and the Madeira Islands, and were now on their way to the Mediterranean.

The wind had failed, a deep calm had succeeded, and everywhere, as far as the eye could reach, the water was smooth and glassy. The yacht rose and fell at the impulse of the long ocean undulations, and the creaking of the spars sounded out a lazy accompaniment to the motion of the vessel. All around was a watery horizon, except in the one place only, toward the south, where far in the distance the Peak of Teneriffe rose into the air.

The profound calm, the warm atmosphere, the slow pitching of the yacht, and the dull creaking of the spars all combined to lull into a state of indolent repose the people on board. Forward were the crew; some asleep, others smoking, others playing cards. At the stern were Oxenden, the intimate friend of Featherstone, and Dr. Congreve, who had come in the double capacity of friend and medical attendant. These two, like the crew, were in a state of dull and languid repose. Suspended between the two masts, in an Indian hammock, lay Featherstone, with a cigar in his mouth and a novel in his hand, which he was pretending to read. The fourth member of the party, Melick, was seated near the mainmast, folding some papers in a peculiar way. His occupation at length attracted the roving eyes of Featherstone, who poked forth his head from his hammock, and said in a sleepy voice:

"I say, Melick, you're the most energetic fellah I ever saw. By Jove! you're the only one aboard that's busy. What are you doing?"

"Paper boats," said Melick, in a business-like tone.

"Paper boats! By Jove!" said Featherstone. "What for?"

"I'm going to have a regatta," said Melick. "Anything to kill time, you know."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Featherstone again, raising himself higher in his hammock, "that's not a bad idea. A wegatta! By Jove! glowious! glowious! I say, Oxenden, did you hear that?"

"What do you mean by a regatta?" asked Oxenden, lazily.

"Oh, I mean a race with these paper boats. We can bet on them, you know."

At this Featherstone sat upright, with his legs dangling out of the hammock.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed again. "Betting! So we can. Do you know, Melick, old chap, I think that's a wegular piece of inspiration. A wegatta! and we can bet on the best boat."

"But there isn't any wind," said Oxenden.

"Well, you know, that's the fun of it," said Melick, who went solemnly on as he spoke, folding his paper boats; "that's the fun of it. For you see if there was a wind we should be going on ourselves, and the regatta couldn't come off; but, as it is, the water is just right. You pick out your boat, and lay your bet on her to race to some given point."

"A given point? But how can we find any?"

"Oh, easily enough; something or anything—a bubble'll do, or we can pitch out a bit of wood."

Upon this Featherstone descended from his perch, and came near to examine the proceedings, while the other two, eager to take advantage of the new excitement, soon joined him. By this time Melick had finished his paper boats. There were four of them, and they were made of different colors, namely, red, green, yellow, and white.

"I'll put these in the water," said Melick, "and then we can lay our bets on them as we choose. But first let us see if there is anything that can be taken as a point of arrival. If there isn't anything, I can pitch out a bit of wood, in any direction which may seem best."

Saying this, he went to the side, followed by the others, and all looked out carefully over the water.

"There's a black speck out there," said Oxenden.

"So there is," said Featherstone. "That'll do. I wonder what it is?"

"Oh, a bit of timber," said Melick. "Probably the spar of some ship."

"It don't look like a spar," said the doctor; "it's only a round spot, like the float of some net."

"Oh, it's a spar," said Melick. "It's one end of it, the rest is under water."

The spot thus chosen was a dark, circular object, about a hundred yards away, and certainly did look very much like the extremity of some spar, the rest of which was under water. Whatever it was, however, it served well enough for their present purpose, and no one took any further interest in it, except as the point toward which the paper boats should run in their eventful race.

Melick now let himself down over the side, and placed the paper boats on the water as carefully as possible. After this the four stood watching the little fleet in silence. The water was perfectly still, and there was no perceptible

wind, but there were draughts of air caused by the rise and fall of the yacht, and these affected the tiny boats. Gradually they drew apart, the green one drifting astern, the yellow one remaining under the vessel, while the red and the white were carried out in the direction where they were expected to go, with about a foot of space between them.

"Two to one on the red!" cried Featherstone, betting on the one which had gained the lead.

"Done," said Melick, promptly taking his offer.

Oxenden made the same bet, which was taken by Melick and the doctor.

Other bets were now made as to the direction which they would take, as to the distance by which the red would beat the white, as to the time which would be occupied by the race, and as to fifty other things which need not be mentioned. All took part in this; the excitement rose high and the betting went on merrily. At length it was noticed that the white was overhauling the red. The excitement grew intense; the betting changed its form, but was still kept up, until at last the two paper boats seemed blended together in one dim spot which gradually faded out of sight.

It was now necessary to determine the state of the race, so Featherstone ordered out the boat. The four were soon embarked, and the men rowed out toward the point which had been chosen as the end of the race. On coming near they found the paper boats stuck together, saturated with water, and floating limp on the surface. An animated discussion arose about this. Some of the bets were off, but others remained an open question, and each side insisted upon a different view of the case. In the midst of this, Featherstone's attention was drawn to the dark spot already mentioned as the goal of the race.

"That's a queer-looking thing," said he, suddenly. "Pull up, lads, a little; let's see what it is. It doesn't look to me like a spar."

The others, always on the lookout for some new object of interest, were attracted by these words, and looked closely at the thing in question. The men pulled. The boat drew nearer.

"It's some sort of floating vessel," said Oxenden.

"It's not a spar," said Melick, who was at the bow.

And as he said this he reached out and grasped at it. He failed to get it, and did no more than touch it. It moved easily and sank, but soon came up again. A second time he grasped at it, and with both hands. This time he caught it, and then lifted it out of the water into the boat. These proceedings had been watched with the deepest interest; and now, as this curious floating thing made its appearance among them, they all crowded around it in eager excitement.

"It looks like a can of preserved meat," said the doctor.

"It certainly is a can," said Melick, "for it's made of metal; but as to preserved meat, I have my doubts."

The article in question was made of metal and was cylindrical in shape. It was soldered tight and evidently contained something. It was about eighteen inches long and eight wide. The nature of the metal was not easily perceptible, for it was coated with slime, and covered over about half its surface with barnacles and sea-weed. It was not heavy, and would have floated higher out of the water had it not been for these encumbrances.

"It's some kind of preserved meat," said the doctor. "Perhaps something good—game, I dare say—yes, Yorkshire game-pie. They pot all sorts of things now."

"If it's game," said Oxenden, "it'll be rather high by this time. Man alive! look at those weeds and shells. It must have been floating for ages."

"It's my belief," said Featherstone, "that it's part of the provisions laid in by Noah for his long voyage in the ark. So come, let's open it, and see what sort of diet the antediluvians had."

"It may be liquor," said Oxenden.

Melick shook his head.

"No," said he; "there's something inside, but whatever it is, it isn't liquor. It's odd, too. The thing is of foreign make, evidently. I never saw anything like it before. It may be Chinese."

"By Jove!" cried Featherstone, "this is getting exciting. Let's go back to the yacht and open it."

The men rowed back to the yacht.

"It's meat of some sort," continued the doctor. "I'm certain of that. It has come in good time. We can have it for dinner."

"You may have my share, then," said Oxenden. "I hereby give and bequeath to you all my right, title, and interest in and to anything in the shape of meat that may be inside."

"Meat cans," said Melick, "are never so large as that."

"Oh, I don't know about that," said the doctor, "they make up pretty large packages of pemmican for the arctic expeditions."

"But they never pack up pemmican in copper cylinders," said Melick, who had been using his knife to scrape off the crust from the vessel.

"Copper!" exclaimed Oxenden. "Is it copper?"

"Look for yourselves," said Melick, quietly.

They all looked, and could see, where the knife had cut into the vessel, that it was as he said. It was copper.

"It's foreign work," said Melick. "In England we make tin cans for everything. It may be something that's drifted out from Mogadore or some port in Morocco."

"In that case," said Oxenden, "it may contain the mangled remains of one of the wives of some Moorish pasha."

By this time they had reached the yacht and hurried aboard. All were eager to satisfy their curiosity. Search was made for a cold-chisel, but to no purpose.

Then Featherstone produced a knife which was used to open sardine boxes, but after a faithful trial this proved useless. At length Melick, who had gone off in search of something more effective, made his appearance armed with an axe. With this he attacked the copper cylinder, and by means of a few dexterous blows succeeded in cutting it open. Then he looked in.

"What do you see?" asked Featherstone.

"Something," said Melick, "but I can't quite make it out."

"If you can't make it out, then shake it out," said Oxenden.

Upon this Melick took the cylinder, turned it upside down, shook it smartly, and then lifted it and pounded it against the deck. This served to loosen the contents, which seemed tightly packed, but came gradually down until at length they could be seen and drawn forth. Melick drew them forth, and the contents of the mysterious copper cylinder resolved themselves into two packages.

The sight of these packages only served to intensify their curiosity. If it had been some species of food it would at once have revealed itself, but these packages suggested something more important. What could they be? Were there treasures inside—jewels, or golden ornaments from some Moorish seraglio, or strange coin from far Cathay?

One of the packages was very much larger than the other. It was enclosed in wrappers made of some coarse kind of felt, bound tight with strong cords. The other was much smaller, and, was folded in the same material without being bound. This Melick seized and began to open.

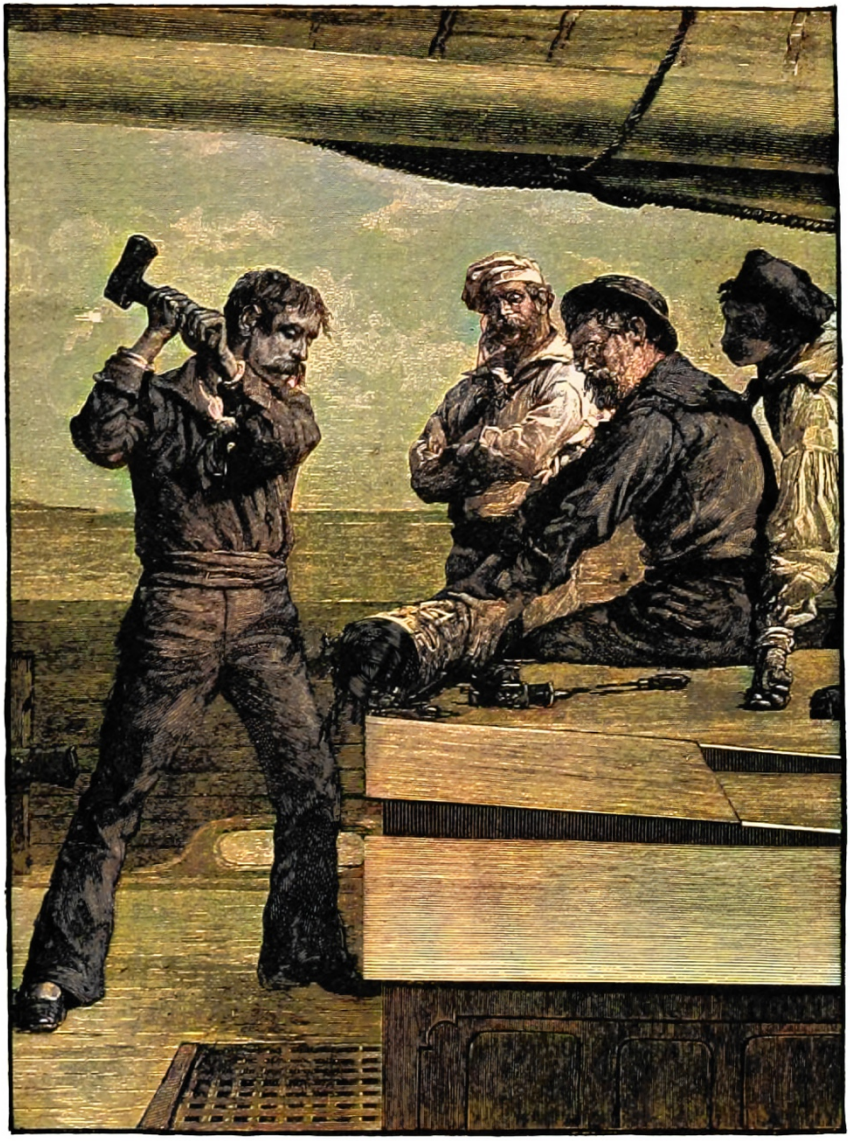
"Wait a minute," said Featherstone. "Let's make a bet on it. Five guineas that it's some sort of jewels!"

"Done," said Oxenden.

Melick opened the package, and it was seen that Featherstone had lost. There were no jewels, but one or two sheets of something that looked like paper. It was not paper, however, but some vegetable product which was used for the same purpose. The surface was smooth, but the color was dingy, and the lines of the vegetable fibres were plainly discernible. These sheets were covered with writing.

"Halloa!" cried Melick. "Why, this is English!"

At this the others crowded around to look on, and Featherstone in his excitement forgot that he had lost his bet. There were three sheets, all covered with writing—one in English, another in French, and a third in German. It was the same message, written in these three different languages. But at that moment they scarcely noticed this. All that they saw was the message itself, with its mysterious meaning.



"WITH THIS HE ATTACKED THE COPPER CYLINDER, AND BY MEANS OF A FEW DEXTEROUS BLOWS SUCCEEDED IN CUTTING IT OPEN."

It was as follows:

"To the finder of this:

"SIR,—I am an Englishman, and have been carried by a series of incredible events to a land from which escape is as impossible as from the grave. I have written this and committed it to the sea, in the hope that the ocean currents may bear it within the reach of civilized man. Oh, unknown friend! whoever you are. I entreat you to let this message be made known in some way to my father, Henry More, Keswick, Cumberland, England, so that he may learn the fate of his son. The MS. accompanying this contains an account of my adventures, which I should like to have forwarded to him. Do this for the sake of that mercy which you may one day wish to have shown to yourself.

"ADAM MORE."

"By Jove!" cried Featherstone, as he read the above, "this is really getting to be something tremendous."

"This other package must be the manuscript," said Oxenden, "and it'll tell all about it."

"Such a manuscript'll be better than meat," said the doctor, sententiously.

Melick said nothing, but, opening his knife, he cut the cords and unfolded the wrapper. He saw a great collection of leaves, just like those of the letter, of some vegetable substance, smooth as paper, and covered with writing.

"It looks like Egyptian papyrus," said the doctor. "That was the common paper of antiquity."

"Never mind the Egyptian papyrus," said Featherstone, in feverish curiosity. "Let's have the contents of the manuscript. You, Melick, read; you're the most energetic of the lot, and when you're tired the rest of us will take turns."

"Read? Why, it'll take a month to read all this," said Melick.

"All the better," said Featherstone; "this calm will probably last a month, and we shall have nothing to interest us."

Melick made no further objection. He was as excited as the rest, and so he began the reading of the manuscript.

# CHAPTER II

## *"Adrift In The Antarctic Ocean"*

My name is Adam More. I am the son of Henry More, apothecary, Keswick, Cumberland. I was mate of the ship *Trevelyan* (Bennet, master), which was chartered by the British Government to convey convicts to Van Dieman's Land. This was in 1843. We made our voyage without any casualty, landed our convicts in Hobart Town, and then set forth on our return home. It was the 17th of December when we left. From the first adverse winds prevailed, and in order to make any progress we were obliged to keep well to the south. At length, on the 6th of January, we sighted Desolation Island. We found it, indeed, a desolate spot. In its vicinity we saw a multitude of smaller islands, perhaps a thousand in number, which made navigation difficult, and forced us to hurry away as fast as possible. But the aspect of this dreary spot was of itself enough to repel us. There were no trees, and the multitude of islands seemed like moss-covered rocks; while the temperature, though in the middle of the antarctic summer, was from 38° to 58° Fahr.

In order to get rid of these dangerous islands we stood south and west, and at length found ourselves in south latitude 65°, longitude 60° east. We were fortunate enough not to find any ice, although we were within fifteen hundred miles of the South Pole, and far within that impenetrable icy barrier which, in 1773, had arrested the progress of Captain Cook. Here the wind failed us, and we lay becalmed and drifting. The sea was open all around us, except to the southeast, where there was a low line along the horizon terminating in a lofty promontory; but though it looked like land we took it for ice. All around us whales and grampuses were gambolling and spouting in vast numbers. The weather was remarkably fine and clear.

For two or three days the calm continued, and we drifted along helplessly, until at length we found ourselves within a few miles of the promontory above mentioned. It looked like land, and seemed to be a rocky island rising from the depths of the sea. It was, however, all covered with ice and snow, and from this there extended eastward as far as the eye could reach an interminable line of ice, but toward the southwest the sea seemed open to navigation. The promontory was very singular in shape, rising up to a peak which was at least a thousand feet in height, and forming a striking object, easily discovered and readily identified by any future explorer. We named it, after our ship, Trevelyan Peak, and then felt anxious to lose sight of it forever. But the calm continued, and at length we drifted in close enough to see immense flocks of seals dotting the ice at the foot of the peak.

Upon this I proposed to Agnew, the second mate, that we should go ashore, shoot some seals, and bring them back. This was partly for the

excitement of the hunt, and partly for the honor of landing in a place never before trodden by the foot of man. Captain Bennet made some objections, but he was old and cautious, and we were young and venturesome, so we laughed away his scruples and set forth. We did not take any of the crew, owing to the captain's objections. He said that if we chose to throw away our own lives he could not help it, but that he would positively refuse to allow a single man to go with us. We thought this refusal an excess of caution amounting to positive cowardice, but were unable to change his mind. The distance was not great, the adventure was attractive, and so the captain's gig was lowered, and in this Agnew and I rowed ashore. We took with us a double-barrelled rifle apiece, and also a pistol. Agnew took a glass.

We rowed for about three miles, and reached the edge of the ice, which extended far out from the promontory. Here we landed, and secured the boat by means of a small grappling-iron, which we thrust into the ice. We then walked toward the promontory for about a mile, and here we found a multitude of seals. These animals were so fearless that they made not the slightest movement as we came up, but stared at us in an indifferent way. We killed two or three, and then debated whether to go to the promontory or not. Agnew was eager to go, so as to touch the actual rock; but I was satisfied with what we had done, and was now desirous of returning. In the midst of this I felt a flake of snow on my cheek. I started and looked up. To my great surprise I saw that the sky had changed since I had last noticed it. When we left the ship it was clear and blue, but now it was overspread with dark, leaden-colored clouds, and the snow-flakes that had fallen were ominous of evil. A snow-storm here, in the vicinity of the ice, was too serious a thing to be disregarded. But one course now remained, and that was an immediate return to the ship.

Each of us seized a seal and dragged it after us to the boat. We reached it and flung them in. Just at that moment a gun sounded over the water. It was from the ship—the signal of alarm—the summons from the captain for our return. We saw now that she had been drifting since we left her, and had moved southwest several miles. The row back promised to be far harder than the pull ashore, and, what was worse, the wind was coming up, the sea was rising, and the snow was thickening. Neither of us said a word. We saw that our situation was very serious, and that we had been very foolhardy; but the words were useless now. The only thing to be done was to pull for the ship with all our strength, and that was what we did.

So we pushed off, and rowed as we had never rowed before. Our progress was difficult. The sea grew steadily rougher; the wind increased; the snow thickened; and, worst of all, the day was drawing to a close. We had miscalculated both as to distance and time. Even if it had continued calm we should have had to row back in the dark; but now the sun was setting, and with the darkness we had to encounter the gathering storm and the blinding

snow. We rowed in silence. At every stroke our situation grew more serious. The wind was from the south, and therefore favored us to some extent, and also made less of a sea than would have been produced by a wind from any other quarter; but then this south wind brought dangers of its own, which we were soon to feel—new dangers and worse ones. For this south wind drove the ship farther from us, and at the same time broke up the vast fields of ice and impelled the fractured masses northward. But this was a danger which we did not know just then. At that time we were rowing for the ship, and amid the darkness and the blinding snow and the dashing waves we heard from time to time the report of signal-guns fired from the ship to guide us back. These were our only guide, for the darkness and the snow had drawn the ship from our sight, and we had to be guided by our hearing only.

We were rowing for our lives, and we knew it; but every moment our situation grew more desperate. Each new report of the gun seemed to sound farther away. We seemed always to be rowing in the wrong direction. At each report we had to shift the boat's course somewhat, and pull toward the last point from which the gun seemed to sound. With all this the wind was increasing rapidly to a gale, the sea was rising and breaking over the boat, the snow was blinding us with its ever-thickening sleet. The darkness deepened and at length had grown so intense that nothing whatever could be seen—neither sea nor sky, not even the boat itself—yet we dared not stop; we had to row. Our lives depended on our efforts. We had to row, guided by the sound of the ship's gun, which the ever-varying wind incessantly changed, till our minds grew all confused, and we rowed blindly and mechanically.

So we labored for hours at the oars, and the storm continually increased, and the sea continually rose, while the snow fell thicker and the darkness grew intenser. The reports of the gun now grew fainter; what was worse, they were heard at longer intervals, and this showed us that Captain Bennet was losing heart; that he was giving us up; that he despaired of finding us, and was now firing only an occasional gun out of a mournful sense of duty. This thought reduced us to despair. It seemed as if all our efforts had only served to take us farther away from the ship, and deprived us of all motive for rowing any harder than was barely necessary to keep the boat steady. After a time Agnew dropped his oar and began to bail out the boat—a work which was needed; for, in spite of our care, she had shipped many seas, and was one third full of water. He worked away at this while I managed the boat, and then we took turns at bailing. In this way we passed the dreary night.

Morning came at last. The wind was not so violent, but the snow was so thick that we could only see for a little distance around us. The ship was nowhere visible, nor were there any signs of her. The last gun had been fired during the night. All that we could see was the outline of a gaunt iceberg—an ominous spectacle. Not knowing what else to do we rowed on as before, keeping in what seemed our best course, though this was mere conjecture,

and we knew all the time that we might be going wrong. There was no compass in the boat, nor could we tell the sun's position through the thick snow. We rowed with the wind, thinking that it was blowing toward the north, and would carry us in that direction. We still hoped to come within sound of the ship's gun, and kept straining our ears incessantly to hear the wished-for report. But no such sound ever came again, and we heard nothing except the plash of the waves and the crash of breaking ice. Thus all that day we rowed along, resting at intervals when exhausted, and then resuming our labors, until at length night came; and again to the snow and ice and waves was added the horror of great darkness. We passed that night in deep misery. We had eaten nothing since we left the ship, but though exhausted by long fasting and severe labor, the despair of our hearts took away all desire for food. We were worn out with hard work, yet the cold was too great to allow us to take rest, and we were compelled to row so as to keep ourselves from perishing. But fatigue and drowsiness overcame us, and we often sank into sleep even while rowing; and then after a brief slumber we would awake with benumbed limbs to wrestle again with the oars. In this way we passed that night.

Another morning came, and we found to our great joy that the snow had ceased. We looked eagerly around to see if there were any signs of the ship. Nothing could be seen of her. Far away on one side rose a peak, which looked like the place where we had landed. Judging from the wind, which we still supposed to be southerly, the peak lay toward the northeast; in which case we had been carried steadily, in spite of all our efforts, toward the south. About a mile on one side of us the ice began, and extended far away; while on the other side, at the distance of some ten miles, there was another line of ice. We seemed to have been carried in a southwesterly direction along a broad strait that ran into the vast ice-fields. This discovery showed how utterly useless our labors had been; for in spite of all, even with the wind in our favor, we had been drawn steadily in an opposite direction. It was evident that there was some current here, stronger than all our strength, which had brought us to this place.

We now determined to land on the ice, and try to cook a portion of our seals. On approaching it we noticed that there was a current which tended to draw us past the ice in what I supposed to be a southwesterly direction. This confirmed my worst fears. But now the labor of landing and building a fire on the ice served to interest us for a time and divert our thoughts. We brushed away the snow, and then broke up a box which was in the boat, and also the stern seats. This we used very sparingly, reserving the rest for another occasion. Then we cut portions from one of the seals, and laid them in thin strips on the flames. The cooking was but slight, for the meat was merely singed; but we were ravenous, and the contact of the fire was enough to give it an attractive flavor. With this food we were greatly refreshed; and as for

drink, we had all around us an endless extent of ice and snow. Then, taking our precious fragments of cooked meat, we returned to the boat and put off. We could scarcely tell what to do next, and while debating on this point we fell asleep. We slept far into the night, then awoke benumbed with cold; then took to the oars till we were weary; then fell asleep again, to be again awakened by the cold and again to pull at the oars. So the night passed, and another day came.

The snow still held off, but the sky was overcast with dark, leaden-colored clouds, and looked threatening. Ice was all around us as before; and the open water had diminished now from ten miles to five miles of width. The ice on one side was low, but on the opposite side it arose to the height of one hundred feet. We saw here, as we watched the shore, that the current which had already borne us thus far was now stronger than ever, and was carrying us along at a rate which made all efforts of ours against it utterly useless. And now a debate arose between us as to the direction of this current. Agnew suddenly declared his belief that it was running north, while I was firm in the conviction that it ran south.

"There's no use rowing any more," said Agnew. "If it runs south we can't resist it. It's too strong. But I always like to look on the bright side, and so I believe it runs north. In that case there is no use rowing, for it will carry us along fast enough."

Then I proposed that we should go ashore on the ice. To this Agnew objected, but afterward consented, at my earnest request. So we tried to get ashore, but this time found it impossible; for the ice consisted of a vast sheet of floating lumps, which looked like the ruin of bergs that had been broken up in some storm. After this I had nothing to say, nor was there anything left for us but to drift wherever the current might carry us.

So we drifted for some days, Agnew all the time maintaining that we were going north, while I was sure that we were going south. The sky remained as cloudy as ever, the wind varied incessantly, and there was nothing by which we could conjecture the points of the compass. We lived on our seal, and for drink we chewed ice and snow. One thing was certain—the climate was no colder. Agnew laid great stress on this.

"You see," said he, "we must be going north. If we were going south we should be frozen stiff by this time."

"Yes; but if we were going north," said I, "we ought to find it growing warmer."

"No," said he, "not with all this ice around us. It's the ice that keeps the temperature in this cold state."

Argument could do no good, and so we each remained true to our belief—his leading him to hope, and mine dragging me down to despair. At length we finished the last fragment of the seal that we had cooked, and, finding ourselves near some firm ice, we went ashore and cooked all that was

left, using the remainder of our wood for fuel, and all that we dared to remove from the boat. Re-embarking with this, we drifted on as before.

Several more days passed. At last one night I was roused by Agnew. He pointed far away to the distant horizon, where I saw a deep red glow as of fire. We were both filled with wonder at the sight, and were utterly unable to account for it. We knew that it could not be caused by the sun or the moon, for it was midnight, and the cause lay on the earth and not in the skies. It was a deep, lurid glow, extending along the horizon, and seemed to be caused by some vast conflagration.

# CHAPTER III

## *"A World Of Fire And Desolation"*

At the sight of that deep-red glow various feelings arose within us: in me there was new dejection; in Agnew there was stronger hope. I could not think but that it was our ship that was on fire, and was burning before our eyes. Agnew thought that it was some burning forest, and that it showed our approach to some habitable and inhabited land. For hour after hour we watched, and all the time the current drew us nearer, and the glow grew brighter and more intense. At last we were too weak to watch any longer, and we fell asleep.

On waking our first thoughts were about the fire, and we looked eagerly around. It was day, but the sky was as gloomy as ever, and the fire was there before our eyes, bright and terrible. We could now see it plainly, and discern the cause also. The fire came from two points, at some distance apart—two peaks rising above the horizon, from which there burst forth flames and smoke with incessant explosions. All was now manifest. It was no burning ship, no blazing forest, no land inhabited by man: those blazing peaks were two volcanoes in a state of active eruption, and at that sight I knew the worst.

"I know where we are now," I said, despairingly.

"Where?" asked Agnew.

"That," said I, "is the antarctic continent."

"The antarctic fiddlestick," said he, contemptuously. "It is far more likely to be some volcanic island in the South Sea. There's a tremendous volcano in the Sandwich Islands, and these are something like it."

"I believe," said I, "that these are the very volcanoes that Sir James Ross discovered last year."

"Do you happen to know where he found them?" Agnew asked.

"I do not," I answered.

"Well, I do," said he, "and they're thousands of miles away from this. They are south latitude 77°, east longitude 167°; while we, as I guess, are about south latitude 40°, east longitude 60°."

"At any rate," said I, "we're drifting straight toward them."

"So I see," said Agnew, dryly. "At any rate, the current will take us somewhere. We shall find ourselves carried past these volcanic islands, or through them, and then west to the Cape of Good Hope. Besides, even here we may find land with animals and vegetation; who knows?"

"What! amid all this ice?" I cried. "Are you mad?"

"Mad?" said he; "I should certainly go mad if I hadn't hope."

"Hope!" I repeated; "I have long since given up hope."

"Oh, well," said he, "enjoy your despair, and don't try to deprive me of my consolation. My hope sustains me, and helps me to cheer you up. It would never do, old fellow, for both of us to knock under."

I said nothing more, nor did Agnew. We drifted on, and all our thoughts were taken up with the two volcanoes, toward which we were every moment drawing nearer. As we approached they grew larger and larger, towering up to a tremendous height. I had seen Vesuvius and Stromboli and Ætna and Cotopaxi; but these appeared far larger than any of them, not excepting the last. They rose, like the Peak of Teneriffe, abruptly from the sea, with no intervening hills to dwarf or diminish their proportions. They were ten or twelve miles apart, and the channel of water in which we were drifting flowed between them.

Here the ice and snow ended. We thus came at last to land; but it was a land that seemed more terrible than even the bleak expanse of ice and snow that lay behind, for nothing could be seen except a vast and drear accumulation of lava-blocks of every imaginable shape, without a trace of vegetation—uninhabited, uninhabitable, and unpassable to man. But just where the ice ended and the rocks began there was a long, low reef, which projected for more than a quarter of a mile into the water, affording the only possible landing-place within sight. Here we decided to land, so as to rest and consider what was best to be done.

Here we landed, and walked up to where rugged lava-blocks prevented any further progress. But at this spot our attention was suddenly arrested by a sight of horror. It was a human figure lying prostrate, face downward.

At this sight there came over us a terrible sensation. Even Agnew's buoyant soul shrank back, and we stared at each other with quivering lips. It was some time before we could recover ourselves; then we went to the figure, and stooped down to examine it.

The clothes were those of a European and a sailor; the frame was emaciated and dried up, till it looked like a skeleton; the face was blackened and all withered, and the bony hands were clinched tight. It was evidently some sailor who had suffered shipwreck in these frightful solitudes, and had drifted here to starve to death in this appalling wilderness. It was a sight which seemed ominous of our own fate, and Agnew's boasted hope, which had so long upheld him, now sank down into a despair as deep as my own. What room was there now for hope, or how could we expect any other fate than this?

At length I began to search the pockets of the deceased.

"What are you doing?" asked Agnew, in a hoarse voice.

"I'm trying to find out who he is," I said. "Perhaps there may be papers."

As I said this I felt something in the breast-pocket of his jacket, and drew it forth. It was a leather pocket-book, mouldy and rotten like the clothing. On opening it, it fell to pieces. There was nothing in it but a piece of paper,

also mouldy and rotten. This I unfolded with great care, and saw writing there, which, though faded, was still legible. It was a letter, and there were still signs of long and frequent perusals, and marks, too, which looked as though made by tears—tears, perhaps of the writer, perhaps of the reader: who can tell? I have preserved this letter ever since, and I now fasten it here upon this sheet of my manuscript.

THE LETTER.

"Bristol April 20. 1820.

"my darling tom

"i writ you these few lines in hast i don like youar gon a walen an in the south sea dont go darlin tom or mebbe ill never se you agin for ave bad drems of you darlin tom an im afraid so don go my darlin tom but come back an take anoth ship for America baby i as wel as ever but mises is pa an as got a new tooth an i think yo otnt go a walen o darlin tom * * * sea as the wages was i in New York an better go thar an id like to go ther for good for they gives good wages in America. O come back my Darlin tom and take me to America an the baby an weel all live an love an di together

"Your loving wife
Polley Reed."

I began to read this, but there came a lump in my throat, and I had to stop. Agnew leaned on my shoulder, and we both read it in silence. He rubbed the back of his hand over his eyes and drew a long breath. Then he walked away for a little distance, and I put the letter carefully away in my own pocket-book. After a little while Agnew came back.

"More," said he, "do you remember any of the burial-service?"

I understood his meaning at once.

"Yes," I said, "some of it—a good deal of it, I think."

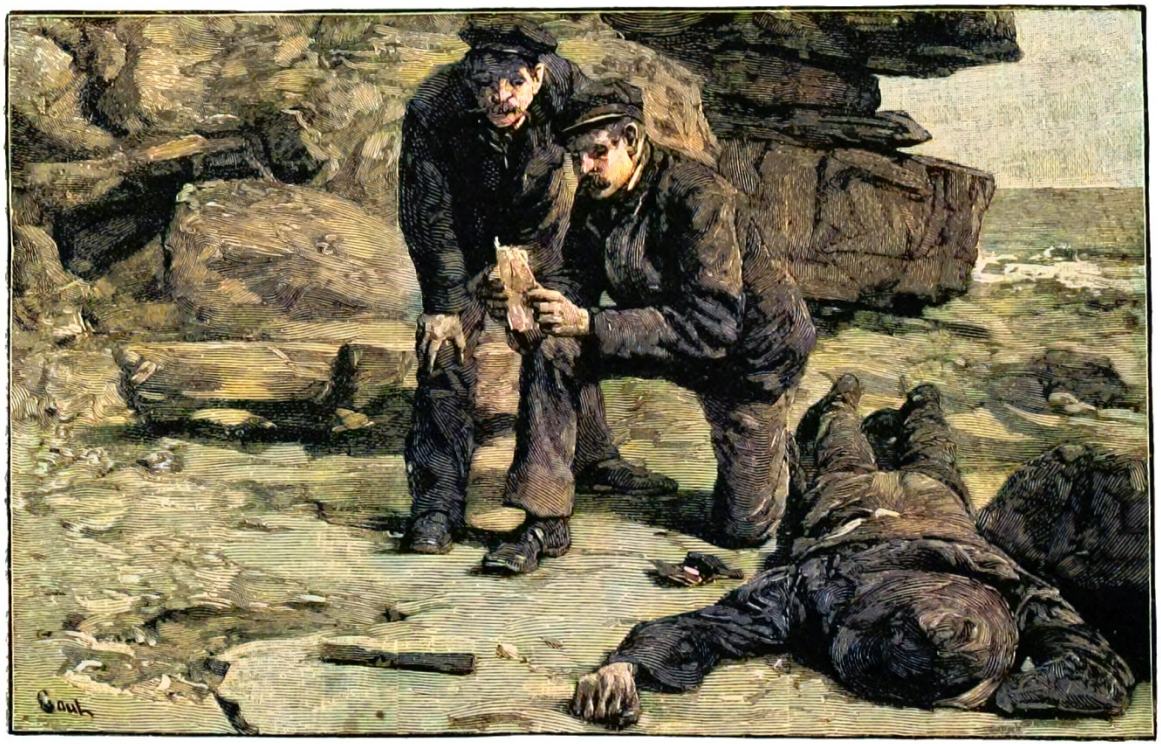
"That's good," said he. "Let's put the poor fellow under ground."

"It would be hard to do that," I said; "we'll have to bury him in the snow."

At this Agnew went off for a little distance and clambered over the rocks. He was not gone long. When he returned he said, "I've found some crumbled pumice-stone; we can scoop a grave for him there."

We then raised the body and carried it to the place which Agnew had found. So emaciated was the poor dead sailor that his remains were no heavier than a small boy. On reaching the spot, we found the crumbled pumice-stone. We placed the body in a crevice among the lava rocks, and then I said what I could remember of the burial-service. After this we carried in our hands the crumbled pumice-stone until we had covered the body, and thus gave the poor fellow a Christian burial.

We then returned to the shore.



“ I BEGAN TO READ THIS, BUT THERE CAME A LUMP IN MY THROAT,
AND I HAD TO STOP.”

"More, old fellow," said Agnew, "I feel the better for this; the service has done me good."

"And me too," said I. "It has reminded me of what I had forgotten. This world is only a part of life. We may lose it and yet live on. There is another world; and if we can only keep that in our minds we sha'n't be so ready to sink into despair—that is, I sha'n't. Despair is my weakness; you are more hopeful."

"Yes," said Agnew, solemnly; "but my hope thus far has referred only to the safety of my skin. After this I shall try to think of my soul, and cultivate, not the hope of escape, but the hope full of immortality. Yes, More, after all we shall live, if not in England, then, let us hope, in heaven."

There was a long silence after this—that kind of silence which one may preserve who is at the point of death.

"I wonder how he got here?" said Agnew, at last. "The letter mentions a whaler. No doubt the ship has been driven too far south; it has foundered; he has escaped in a boat, either alone or with others; he has been carried along this channel, and has landed here, afraid to go any farther."

"But his boat, what has become of that?"

"His boat! That must have gone long ago. The letter was written in 1820. At any rate, let's look around."

We did so. After some search we found fragments of a rotted rope attached to a piece of rock.

"That," said Agnew, "must have been fastened to the boat; and as for the boat herself, she has long ago been swept away from this."

"What shall we do now?" I said, after a long silence.

"There's only one thing," said Agnew. "We must go on."

"Go on?" I asked, in wonder.

"Certainly," said he, confidently. "Will you stay here? No. Will you go back? You can't. We must, therefore, go on. That is our only hope."

"Hope!" I cried. "Do you still talk of hope?"

"Hope?" said Agnew; "of course. Why not? There are no limits to hope, are there? One can hope anything anywhere. It is better to die while struggling like a man, full of hope and energy than to perish in inaction and despair. It is better to die in the storm and furious waters than to waste away in this awful place. So come along. Let's drift as before. Let's see where this channel will take us. It will certainly take us somewhere. Such a stream as this must have some outlet."

"This stream," said I, "will take us to death, and death only. The current grows swifter every hour. I've heard some old yarn of a vast opening at each of the poles, or one of them, into which the waters of the ocean pour. They fall into one, and some say they go through and come out at the other."

Agnew laughed.

"That," said he, "is a madman's dream. In the first place, I don't believe that we are approaching the south, but the north. The warmth of the climate here shows that. Yes, we are drawing north. We shall soon emerge into warm waters and bright skies. So come along, and let us lose no more time."

I made no further objection. There was nothing else to be done, and at the very worst we could not be in greater danger while drifting on than in remaining behind. Soon, therefore, we were again in the boat, and the current swept us on as before.

The channel now was about four miles wide. On either side arose the lofty volcanoes vomiting forth flames and smoke with furious explosions; vast stones were hurled up into the air from the craters; streams of molten lava rolled down, and at intervals there fell great showers of ashes. The shores on either side were precipitous and rugged beyond all description, looking like fiery lava streams which had been arrested by the flood, and cooled into gloomy, overhanging cliffs. The lava rock was of a deep, dull slate-color, which at a distance looked black; and the blackness which thus succeeded to the whiteness of the snow behind us seemed like the funeral pall of nature. Through scenes like these we drifted on, and the volcanoes on either side of the channel towered on high with their fiery floods of lava, their incessant explosions, their fierce outbursts of flames, and overhead there rolled a dense black canopy of smoke—altogether forming a terrific approach to that unknown and awful pathway upon which we were going. So we passed this dread portal, and then there lay before us—what? Was it a land of life or a land of death? Who could say?

It was evening when we passed through. Night came on, and the darkness was illuminated by the fiery glow of the volcanic flames. Worn out with fatigue, we fell asleep. So the night passed, and the current bore us on until, at length, the morning came. We awoke, and now, for the first time in many days, we saw the face of the sun. The clouds had at last broken, the sky was clear, and behind us the sun was shining. That sight told us all. It showed us where we were going.

I pointed to the sun.

"Look there," said I. "There is the sun in the northern sky—behind us. We have been drifting steadily toward the south."

At this Agnew was silent, and sat looking back for a long time. There we could still see the glow of the volcanic fires, though they were now many miles away; while the sun, but lately risen, was lying on a course closer to the horizon than we had ever seen it before.

"We are going south," said I—"to the South Pole. This swift current can have but one ending—there may be an opening at the South Pole, or a whirlpool like the Maelstrom."

Agnew looked around with a smile.

"All these notions," said he, "are dreams, or theories, or guesses. There is no evidence to prove them. Why trouble yourself about a guess? You and I can guess, and with better reason; for we have now, it seems, come farther south than any human being who has ever lived. Do not imagine that the surface of the earth is different at the poles from what it is anywhere else. If we get to the South Pole we shall see there what we have always seen—the open view of land or water, and the boundary of the horizon. As for this current, it seems to me like the Gulf Stream, and it evidently does an important work in the movement of the ocean waters. It pours on through vast fields of ice on its way to other oceans, where it will probably become united with new currents. Theories about openings at the poles, or whirlpools, must be given up. Since the Maelstrom has been found to be a fiction, no one need believe in any other whirlpool. For my own part, I now believe that this current will bear us on, due south, over the pole, and then still onward, until at last we shall find ourselves in the South Pacific Ocean. So cheer up—don't be downhearted; there's still hope. We have left the ice and snow behind, and already the air is warmer. Cheer up; we may find our luck turn at any moment."

To this I had no reply to make. Agnew's confidence seemed to me to be assumed, and certainly did not alleviate my own deep gloom, nor was the scene around calculated to rouse me in the slightest degree out of my despair. The channel had now lessened to a width of not more than two miles; the shores on either side were precipitous cliffs, broken by occasional declivities, but all of solid rock, so dark as to be almost black, and evidently of volcanic origin. At times there arose rugged eminences, scarred and riven, indescribably dismal and appalling. There was not only an utter absence of life here in these abhorrent regions, but an actual impossibility of life which was enough to make the stoutest heart quail. The rocks looked like iron. It seemed a land of iron penetrated by this ocean stream which had made for itself a channel, and now bore us onward to a destination which was beyond all conjecture.

Through such scenes we drifted all that day. Night came, and in the skies overhead there arose a brilliant display of the aurora australis, while toward the north the volcanic fires glowed with intense lustre. That night we slept. On awakening we noticed a change in the scene. The shores, though still black and forbidding, were no longer precipitous, but sloped down gradually to the water; the climate was sensibly milder, and far away before us there arose a line of giant mountains, whose summits were covered with ice and snow that gleamed white and purple in the rays of the sun.

Suddenly Agnew gave a cry, and pointed to the opposite shore.

"Look!" he cried—"do you see? They are men!"

I looked, and there I saw plainly some moving figures that were, beyond a doubt, human beings.

# CHAPTER IV

## *"The Sight Of Human Beings"*

The sight of human beings, thus unexpectedly found, filled us with strange feelings—feelings which I cannot explain. The country was still iron-bound and dark and forbidding, and the stream ran on in a strong current, deep, black as ink, and resistless as fate; the sky behind was lighted up by the volcanic glare which still shone from afar; and in front the view was bounded by the icy heights of a mountain chain. Here was, indeed, a strange country for a human habitation; and strange, indeed, were the human beings whom we saw.

"Shall we land?" said Agnew.

"Oh no," said I. "Don't be hasty. The elements are sometimes kinder than men, and I feel safer here, even in this river of death, than ashore with such creatures as those."

Agnew made no reply. We watched the figures on the shore. We saw them coming down, staring and gesticulating. We drew on nearer to them till we were able to see them better. A nearer view did not improve them. They were human beings, certainly, but of such an appalling aspect that they could only be likened to animated mummies. They were small, thin, shrivelled, black, with long matted hair and hideous faces. They all had long spears, and wore about the waist short skirts that seemed to be made of the skin of some sea-fowl.

We could not imagine how these creatures lived, or where. There were no signs of vegetation of any kind—not a tree or a shrub. There were no animals; but there were great flocks of birds, some of which seemed different from anything that we had ever seen before. The long spears which the natives carried might possibly be used for catching these, or for fishing purposes. This thought made them seem less formidable, since they would thus be instruments of food rather than weapons of war. Meanwhile we drifted on as before, and the natives watched us, running along the shore abreast of us, so as to keep up with the boat. There seemed over a hundred of them. We could see no signs of any habitations—no huts, however humble; but we concluded that their abodes were farther inland. As for the natives themselves, the longer we looked at them the more abhorrent they grew. Even the wretched aborigines of Van Dieman's Land, who have been classed lowest in the scale of humanity, were pleasing and congenial when compared with these, and the land looked worse than Tierra del Fuego. It looked like a land of iron, and its inhabitants like fiends.

Agnew again proposed to land, but I refused.

"No," I said; "I'd rather starve for a week, and live on hope. Let us drift on. If we go on we may have hope if we choose, but if we land here we shall lose even that. Can we hope for anything from such things as these? Even if they prove friendly, can we live among them? To stay here is worse than death; our only hope is to go on."

Agnew made no reply, and we drifted on for two hours, still followed by the natives. They made no hostile demonstrations. They merely watched us, apparently from motives of curiosity. All this time we were drawing steadily nearer to the line of lofty mountains, which with their icy crests rose before us like an inaccessible and impassable barrier, apparently closing up all farther progress; nor was there any indication of any pass or any opening, however narrow, through which the great stream might run. Nothing was there but one unbroken wall of iron cliffs and icy summits. At last we saw that the sloping shores grew steeper, until, about a mile or two before us, they changed to towering cliffs that rose up on each side for about a thousand feet above the water; here the stream ran, and became lost to view as completely as though swallowed up by the earth.

"We can go no farther," said Agnew. "See—this stream seems to make a plunge there into the mountains. There must be some deep canyon there with cataracts. To go on is certain death. We must stop here, if only to deliberate. Say, shall we risk it among these natives? After all, there is not, perhaps, any danger among them. They are little creatures and seem harmless. They are certainly not very good-looking; but then, you know, appearances often deceive, and the devil's not so black as he's painted. What do you say?"

"I suppose we can do nothing else," said I.

In fact, I could see that we had reached a crisis in our fate. To go on seemed certain death. To stop was our only alternative; and as we were armed we should not be altogether at the mercy of these creatures. Having made this decision we acted upon it at once, for in such a current there was no time for delay; and so, seizing the oars, we soon brought the boat ashore.

As we approached, the crowd of natives stood awaiting us, and looked more repulsive than ever. We could see the emaciation of their bony frames; their toes and fingers were like birds' claws; their eyes were small and dull and weak, and sunken in cavernous hollows, from which they looked at us like corpses—a horrible sight. They stood quietly, however, and without any hostile demonstration, holding their spears carelessly resting upon the ground.

"I don't like the looks of them," said I. "I think I had better fire a gun."

"Why?" cried Agnew. "For Heaven's sake, man, don't hurt any of them!"

"Oh no," said I; "I only mean to inspire a little wholesome respect."

Saying this I fired in the air. The report rang out with long echoes, and as the smoke swept away it showed us all the natives on the ground. They had seated themselves with their hands crossed on their laps, and there they sat

looking at us as before, but with no manifestation of fear or even surprise. I had expected to see them run, but there was nothing of the kind. This puzzled us. Still, there was no time now for any further hesitation. The current was sweeping us toward the chasm between the cliffs, and we had to land without delay. This we did, and as I had another barrel still loaded and a pistol, I felt that with these arms and those of Agnew we should be able to defend ourselves. It was in this state of mind that we landed, and secured the boat by means of the grappling-iron.

The natives now all crowded around us, making many strange gestures, which we did not understand. Some of them bowed low, others prostrated themselves; on the whole these seemed like marks of respect, and it occurred to me that they regarded us as superior beings of some sort. It was evident that there was nothing like hostility in their minds. At the same time, the closer survey which I now made of them filled me with renewed horror; their meagre frames, small, watery, lack-lustre eyes, hollow, cavernous sockets, sunken cheeks, protruding teeth, claw-like fingers, and withered skins, all made them look more than ever like animated mummies, and I shrank from them involuntarily, as one shrinks from contact with a corpse.

Agnew, however, was very different, and it was evident that he felt no repugnance whatever. He bowed and smiled at them, and shook hands with half a dozen of them in succession. The hand-shaking was a new thing to them, but they accepted it in a proper spirit, and renewed their bows and prostrations. After this they all offered us their lances. This certainly seemed like an act of peace and good-will. I shook my head and declined to touch them; but Agnew accepted one of them, and offered his rifle in return. The one to whom he offered it refused to take it. He seemed immensely gratified because Agnew had taken his lance, and the others seemed disappointed at his refusal to take theirs. But I felt my heart quake as I saw him offer his rifle, and still more when he offered it to one or two others, and only regained my composure as I perceived that his offer was refused by all.

They now made motions to us to follow, and we all set forth together.

"My dear More," said Agnew, cheerily, "they're not a bad lot. They mean well. They can't help their looks. You're too suspicious and reserved. Let's make friends with them, and get them to help us. Do as I do."

I tried to, but found it impossible, for my repugnance was immovable. It was like the horror which one feels toward rats, cockroaches, earwigs, or serpents. It was something that defied reason. These creatures seemed like human vermin.

We marched inland for about half a mile, crossed a ridge, and came to a valley, or rather a kind of hollow, at the other side of which we found a cave with a smouldering fire in front. The fire was made of coal, which must exist here somewhere. It was highly bituminous, and burned with a great blaze.

" THE NATIVES NOW ALL CROWDED AROUND US, MAKING MANY STRANGE GESTURES."

The day was now drawing to a close; far away I could see the lurid glow of the volcanoes, which grew brighter as the day declined: above, the skies twinkled with innumerable stars, and the air was filled with the moan of rushing waters.

We entered the cave. As we did so the natives heaped coal upon the fire, and the flames arose, lighting up the interior. We found here a number of women and children, who looked at us without either fear or curiosity. The children looked like little dwarfs; the women were hags, hideous beyond description. One old woman in particular, who seemed to be in authority, was actually terrible in her awful and repulsive ugliness. A nightmare dream never furnished forth a more frightful object. This nightmare hag prostrated herself before each of us with such an air of self-immolation that she looked as though she wished us to kill her at once. The rough cave, the red light of the fire, all made the scene more awful; and a wild thought came to me that we had actually reached, while yet living, the infernal world, and that this was the abode of devils. Yet their actions, it must be confessed, were far from devilish. Everyone seemed eager to serve us. Some spread out couches formed of the skins of birds for us to sit on; others attended to the fire; others offered us gifts of large and beautiful feathers, together with numerous trinkets of rare and curious workmanship. This kind attention on their part was a great puzzle to me, and I could not help suspecting that beneath all this there must be some sinister design. Resolving to be prepared for the worst, I quietly reloaded the empty barrel of my rifle and watched with the utmost vigilance. As for Agnew, he took it all in the most unsuspicious manner. He made signs to them, shook hands with them, accepted their gifts, and even tried to do the agreeable to the formidable hags and the child-fiends around him. He soon attracted the chief attention, and while all looked admiringly upon him, I was left to languish in comparative neglect.

At length a savory odor came through the cave, and a repast was spread before us. It consisted of some large fowl that looked like a goose, but was twice as large as the largest turkey that I had ever seen. The taste was like that of a wild-goose, but rather fishy. Still to us it seemed delicious, for our prolonged diet of raw seal had made us ready to welcome any other food whatever; and this fowl, whatever it was, would not have been unwelcome to any hungry man. It was evident that these people lived on the flesh of birds of various sorts. All around us we saw the skins of birds dried with the feathers on, and used for clothing, for mats, and for ornaments.

The repast being finished, we both felt greatly strengthened and refreshed. Agnew continued to cultivate his new acquaintances, and seeing me holding back, he said,

"More, old fellow, these good people give me to understand that there is another place better than this, and want me to go with them. Will you go?"

At this a great fear seized me.

"Don't go!" I cried—"don't go! We are close by the boat here, and if anything happens we can easily get to it."

Agnew laughed in my face.

"Why, you don't mean to tell me," said he, "that you are still suspicious, and after that dinner? Why, man, if they wanted to harm us, would they feast us in this style? Nonsense, man! Drop your suspicions and come along."

I shook my head obstinately.

"Well," said he, "if I thought there was anything in your suspicions I would stay by you; but I'm confident they mean nothing but kindness, so I'm going off to see the place."

"You'll be back again?" said I.

"Oh yes," said he, "of course I'll come back, and sleep here."

With these words he left, and nearly all the people accompanied him. I was left behind with the women and children and about a dozen men. These men busied themselves with some work over bird-skins; the women were occupied with some other work over feathers. No one took any notice of me. There did not seem to be any restraint upon me, nor was I watched in any way. Once the nightmare hag came and offered me a small roasted fowl, about the size of a woodcock. I declined it, but at the same time this delicate attention certainly surprised me.

I was now beginning to struggle with some success against my feelings of abhorrence, when suddenly I caught sight of something which chased away every other thought, and made my blood turn cold in my veins. It was something outside. At the mouth of the cave—by the fire which was still blazing bright, and lighting up the scene—I saw four men who had just come to the cave: they were carrying something which I at first supposed to be a sick or wounded companion. On reaching the fire they put it down, and I saw, with a thrill of dismay, that their burden was neither sick nor wounded, but dead, for the corpse lay rigid as they had placed it. Then I saw the nightmare hag approach it with a knife. An awful thought came to me—the crowning horror! The thought soon proved to be but too well founded. The nightmare hag began to cut, and in an instant had detached the arm of the corpse, which she thrust among the coals in the very place where lately she had cooked the fowl. Then she went back for more.

For a moment my brain reeled, and I gasped for breath. Then I rose and staggered out, I know not how. No one tried to stop me, nor did anyone follow me; and, for my part, I was ready to blow out the brains of the first who dared to approach me. In this way I reached the open air, and passed by the hag and the four men as they were busy at their awful work. But at this point I was observed and followed. A number of men and women came after me, jabbering their uncouth language and gesticulating. I warned them off, angrily. They persisted, and though none of them were armed, yet I saw that

they were unwilling to have me leave the cave, and I supposed that they would try to prevent me by force.

The absence of Agnew made my position a difficult one. Had it not been for this I would have burst through them and fled to the boat; but as long as he was away I felt bound to wait; and though I longed to fly, I could not for his sake. The boat seemed to be a haven of rest. I longed to be in her once more, and drift away, even if it should be to my death. Nature was here less terrible than man; and it seemed better to drown in the waters, to perish amid rocks and whirlpools, than to linger here amid such horrors as these. These people were not like human beings. The vilest and lowest savages that I had ever seen were not so odious as these. A herd of monkeys would be far more congenial, a flock of wolves less abhorrent. They had the caricature of the human form; they were the lowest of humanity; their speech was a mockery of language; their faces devilish, their kindness a cunning pretence; and most hideous of all was the nightmare hag that prepared the cannibal repast.

I could not begin hostilities, for I had to wait for Agnew; so I stood and looked, and then walked away for a little distance. They followed me closely, with eager words and gesticulations, though as yet no one touched me or threatened me. Their tone seemed rather one of persuasion. After a few paces I stood still, with all of them around me. The horrible repast showed plainly all that was in store for us. They received us kindly and fed us well only to devote us to the most abhorrent of deaths. Agnew, in his mad confidence, was only insuring his own doom. He was putting himself completely in the power of devils, who were incapable of pity and strangers to humanity. To make friends with such fiends was impossible, and I felt sure that our only plan was to rule by terror—to seize, to slay, to conquer. But still I had to wait for him, and did not dare to resort to violence while he was absent; so I waited, while the savages gathered round me, contenting themselves with guarding me, and neither touching me nor threatening me. And all this time the hag went on, intent on her preparation of the horrible repast.

While standing there looking, listening, waiting for Agnew, I noticed many things. Far away the volcanoes blazed, and the northern sky was red with a lurid light. There, too, higher up, the moon was shining overhead, the sky was gleaming with stars; and all over the heavens there shone the lustre of the aurora australis, brighter than any I had ever seen—surpassing the moon and illuminating all. It lighted up the haggard faces of the devils around me, and it again seemed to me as though I had died and gone to the land of woe—an iron land, a land of despair, with lurid fires all aglow and faces of fear.

Suddenly, there burst upon my ears the report of a gun, which sounded like a thunder-peal, and echoed in long reverberations. At once I understood it. My fears had proved true. These savages had enticed Agnew away to destroy him. In an instant I burst through the crowd around me, and ran

wildly in the direction of that sound, calling his name, as I ran, at the top of my voice.

I heard a loud cry; then another report. I hurried on, shouting his name in a kind of frenzy. The strange courage of these savages had already impressed me deeply. They did not fear our guns. They were all attacking him, and he was alone, fighting for his life.

Then there was another report; it was his pistol. I still ran on, and still shouted to him.

At last I received an answer. He had perhaps heard me, and was answering, or, at any rate, he was warning me.

"More," he cried, "fly, fly, fly to the boat! Save yourself!"

"Where are you?" I cried, as I still rushed on.

"Fly, More, fly! Save yourself! You can't save me. I'm lost. Fly for your life!"

Judging from his cries, he did not seem far away. I hurried on. I could see nothing of him. All the time the savages followed me. None were armed; but it seemed to me that they were preparing to fling themselves upon me and overpower me with their numbers. They would capture me alive, I thought, bind me, and carry me back, reserving me for a future time!

I turned and waved them back. They took no notice of my gesture. Then I ran on once more. They followed. They could not run so fast as I did, and so I gained on them rapidly, still shouting to Agnew. But there was no response. I ran backward and forward, crossing and recrossing, doubling and turning, pursued all the time by the savages. At last, in rage and despair, I fired upon them, and one of them fell. But, to my dismay, the others did not seem to care one whit; they did not stop for one moment, but pursued as before.

My situation was now plain in all its truth. They had enticed Agnew away; they had attacked him. He had fought, and had been overpowered. He had tried to give me warning. His last words had been for me to fly—to fly: yes, for he well knew that it was better far for me to go to death through the raging torrent than to meet the fate which had fallen upon himself. For him there was now no more hope. That he was lost was plain. If he were still alive he would call to me; but his voice had been silenced for some time. All was over, and that noble heart that had withstood so bravely and cheerily the rigors of the storm, and the horrors of our desperate voyage, had been stilled in death by the vilest of miscreants.

I paused for a moment. Even though Agnew was dead, I could not bear to leave him, but felt as though I ought to share his fate. The savages came nearer. At their approach I hesitated no longer. That fate was too terrible: I must fly.

But before I fled I turned in fury to wreak vengeance upon them for their crimes. Full of rage and despair, I discharged my remaining rifle-barrel into

the midst of the crowd. Then I fled toward the boat. On the way I had a frightful thought that she might have been sent adrift; but, on approaching the place, I found her there just as I had left her. The savages, with their usual fearlessness, still pursued. For a moment I stood on the shore, with the grapple in my hand and the boat close by, and as they came near I discharged my pistol into the midst of them. Then I sprang into the boat; the swift current bore me away, and in a few minutes the crowd of pursuing demons disappeared from view.