

ON A QUEER CRAFT.

A Skater's Thrilling Experience in Northumberland Straits.

I had been spending the Christmas holidays with friends in Prince Edward Island, and was crossing to the mainland on my way to Ottawa when our stout steel steamer ran into a pack of ice just outside Pictou harbor, and seemed likely to be delayed there for hours. There was nothing to do but make the best of circumstances, so the passengers, all men, retired to the smoking room for warmth and talk.

"It's too bad to be stopped here. We might almost swim ashore," said a fat little man.

"You wouldn't find winter swimming pleasant," said a young doctor.

"Have you ever tried it?" asked the fat man.

"Had to once." The doctor's expression betokened recollection of a woful experience.

"Tell us all about it. Come, out with the story," and at the word story there was a general shifting of chairs to face the doctor.

"Well, all right. It will help to pass the time," said he, "so here it is."

In the winter of 1885 I was going to school at Pictou Academy, and a cold winter it was. The harbor froze so early that several barques were shut in. The ice held, and before long it was so thick that the island steamer had to cut her way up to the wharf. Splendid skating and clear, steady weather we boys had, I tell you.

Going to school was a hard trial these days. With eyes on our books, we thought of nothing but skating. Why should dull learning enchain boys who wished to send down the harbor to East River, and whizz along its crooked course? But you all know now we felt. After school we'd skate till late at night, illuminating the harbor with bonfires and torches.

One afternoon in January I skated up to New Glasgow to visit my sick friend, Bob Goodyear. He had been taken down with fever, and was dangerously ill. Bob was then boarding in New Glasgow, where he had few friends.

It took me about an hour to skate from Pictou to New Glasgow. I got there a little after nightfall, and found Bob so very ill that I decided to stay all night and help nurse him. The doctor came in soon, and gave me instructions for my night's watch.

About eleven o'clock my real task began, when the people of the house had gone to bed, and I was left to myself in the sick-room. I was somewhat tired after the day's exertion, the wind had made my eyelids heavy, and I soon caught myself nodding.

However, by frequent sips of strong coffee I managed to keep my eyes open for several hours and do my duty, but gradually I felt myself growing nervous. I tried to read, but couldn't, and to keep myself under control I was obliged to pace the floor.

The room was very warm, and in the small hours I went out into the hall. There the cool air refreshed me considerably, and the bright light occurred to me that I might as well skate back to Pictou that night. My watch would be over at three o'clock, when I should be relieved by Bob's regular nurse.

In half an hour she came, and then I fully decided to go. So I started before she had time to wheeze out half the list of dangers which, she assured me, I was exposing myself.

Outside a fine snow was falling, and the wind was northwest. I was on the ice and away in almost no time, it seemed. The cold night air was most exhilarating, and the very strong coffee I had last taken stimulated me. I seemed intoxicated with strength, and longed for more resistance than wind and ice would offer.

Digging my skates into the ice I dashed along against the brisk nor'wester with the speed of a race-horse. The distance to Pictou was not more than nine miles; but the storm and the increasing snow underfoot would lengthen the trip considerably. If I had paused to consider this, I should at least have reserved my strength, instead of hurrying on at the pace I was going.

There was no real danger, I thought, but I made far too little of the risks of skating in such darkness. The river channel often remains open in places, even during the coldest weather. When I found myself frequently running ashore after passing the first bend, the thought of this danger should have occurred to me.

Strange to say, it did not. But my progress was fast becoming unsatisfactory. The course of the river has many sharp turns, hard to follow. I often dashed up against one of the steep banks, and if it had not been for getting direction from the wind, I should have been completely bewildered.

Buffeted by storm and shore, and pretty tired, I was still not discouraged. The idea of turning back never entered my thoughts. I should soon be outside the river-banks, which I could tell were already diverging. It seemed long, however, before I got well away from them. Eventually, nevertheless, I appeared to have succeeded, and pulling myself together, I made a bee-line for Pictou. Quite a depth of snow covered the ice by this time. But I thought my task was as good as done, now that nothing remained but to cross the harbor.

A straight course for home took me right in the teeth of the wind and blinding snow. It was impossible to keep that direction for any considerable time; for the wind was stronger here than in the river, and colder as well.

To get along easier, I resorted to an occasional "tack." This was a risky device; but I had repeated it a good many times before it occurred to me that through this repeated altering of my course I must soon lose my bearings.

In fact, I had lost them already. How near I might be to the open water at the mouth of the harbor, I had no means of determining. My ice-way, which I had not thought to take account of, must have been considerable; so that, instead of being opposite Pictou, I had very probably allowed myself to be carried several points south. I congratulated myself on having discovered my error so soon. It was not too late to rectify my course so as to avoid the danger, and I had no doubt I could do that.

There was, though, one other ground for apprehension. Up the harbor for some distance a passage had been opened by the

winter boat from Prince Edward Island. This, however, I judged to be on the opposite side of the harbor from where I then was, and might be avoided by keeping well to the north.

It was apparent, therefore, that I must shift my course farther north. The wind guided me in this. Pleased to think that I had been careful to note its direction before setting out, I started off once more, and took a course a couple of points north of the wind.

I soon realized that a good hour's work was cut out for me. The snow was so deep as to make progress a matter of difficulty, while the wind came in gusts that took my breath. There was nothing else to do, though, but to set my teeth and struggle on.

Tired out from the exertion of the afternoon, and still more by that of the last hour and a half, I felt a great weariness stealing over me; and now and then I would stumble in the snow, which had drifted in heaps over the crevices of the ice.

I could not tell how far I had gone on in this condition, when suddenly I felt a sensation as of the ice giving way under my feet. It was not imagination, but reality. In the same instant I was struggling in the cold water of the harbor, clutching with my mitted hands a piece of floating ice which seemed to have been broken away at the moment when I went down.

Terror seized me. I knew that much swimming in that freezing water was impossible. Besides, where should I swim to?

Fortunately the block of ice to which I clung was pretty firm. To raise myself upon it was my immediate thought. My skates impeded me. Those were moments of anguish; but after a terrible struggle I succeeded in dragging myself out of the water upon the slab of ice.

my insecure raft, I sought its point of contact with the new ice. My hands were so thoroughly numb that I could do no more than guess the relative position of the two blocks. Satisfied, however, that I had really met a larger and therefore safer mass, I mustered my energies, and resolved to cross the chasm.

My little block would not allow of my leaping from it. I could not have done so, anyway, for I was too weak even to rise to my feet. I rather sprawled across to the point I sought; and then not without dipping my legs once more in the water.

More dead than alive I lay, for a moment helpless. I could feel, nevertheless, that the ice on which I rested was more stable than that which I had left. With great effort I gained my feet. The muscles of my body had begun to contract, and the blood seemed frozen in my veins.

In almost any circumstances a man dies hard, but when cold and exhaustion, like an anæsthetic, have deadened his senses and energies, the struggle for life becomes very feeble.

Consciously I endeavored to shake off my stupor. Violently beating my limbs and body, I succeeded in partially restoring circulation—a natural and easy thing to do, one would think; but I remember the effort of those moments as the most painful of my life.

Vitality gradually came back, and with it a despairing anxiety to know where I was. The stability of the ice under my tread assured me of temporary security, and I longed for daylight.

I tried to move, but it was with pain. My knees sank under me. Hardly realizing what I did, I groped and stumbled forward for perhaps fifty yards. Then suddenly it struck me that I must be again on solid ice. There could be no doubt of it. This mystery of my position was clear at once. I had broken through the ice, not near the



A CHANCE OF ESCAPE.

There was no longer any doubt in my mind as to where I was. I had allowed myself to be carried out of my way into the open sea near the mouth of the harbor! My situation was horrible to think of. The fragment of ice upon which I found temporary safety was being carried away from the main body; and I was moving out with the tide into Northumberland Strait—so I supposed.

To shout loudly for help I could not, because as I was with cold. It would be useless, anyway, for there was no possible chance of my being heard.

My situation was utterly desperate. I was so paralyzed with cold that I could hardly move a muscle. My legs were numb, and the upper part of my body chilled to that degree that I fancied myself burning hot. My senses, instead of being quickened to action, were overpowered. Still, I was conscious that I ought to move my limbs; and by a great effort I raised myself on my knees and began slapping my body and limbs, in order to excite some circulation.

Gradually I recovered the partial use of my legs, and I felt safe to stand erect on the floating ice. My skates, which were of no further use, I tore from my feet and carelessly allowed to tumble into the water.

How far I had floated I could not tell. The tide was flowing out rapidly, and no doubt I should soon be outside the harbor. Horrible fate that threatened! Even though I should not be carried to sea, I must soon succumb to cold and exhaustion. Already the power of my will was strained to keep hold on consciousness.

Suddenly it occurred to me that if I were near the entrance of the harbor the glare of the lighthouse should be visible. I could not be sure, however, that the light was kept burning in winter, as there seemed no need of it. I might, therefore, be near it now, without being aware of it. A cry of distress might be heard.

Foebly I called, "Help! Help!" Then, regaining my voice I shouted out into the storm my cry for assistance.

No answer. I might have passed the light already. No hope remained. A great weakness was coming over me, and I must soon wholly give up to it.

All at once I was aroused from lethargy by a slight concussion. Startled, but still drowsy, I could not immediately account for it. Then it dawned upon me that my ice-block had come into collision with some other floating fragment.

There was really nothing in this to inspire me with hope; yet, strangely, at that instant hope did dart through me. I was ready to clutch desperately at anything. The shock, at all events, was beneficial, in that it partly restored me to my senses. Another effort, and I was fully awake. There was some ground for hope, too. I must have come into contact with some large mass of ice; for I felt that my little float was no longer being borne along by the current.

My mind was soon made up to cross to this new ice. If, as I hoped, its surface should prove large enough to admit of my moving about, there was a chance to escape from immediate death, for such must be my fate if I remained in my present restricted position. There was not the same danger of being carried out to sea on the larger mass, either.

How long a time had elapsed since my plunge into the harbor, I had no correct idea. Possibly not more than a few minutes; though it then seemed to be much longer. When the sudden jar had roused me from that drowsiness that would soon have been fatal, I had ceased to move and was sitting on the ice!

Feeling my way cautiously to the edge of

mouth of the harbor, but at the edge of the narrow channel cut by the steamer, which ran like a gash right up the frozen harbor to Pictou town. I had floated down the passage for some little distance, and across it, till my course was stopped by a cake of ice projecting from the Pictou side.

All this appeared as plain as daylight to my brain, now quickened to action by the assurance of deliverance. But how was it possible for me, who knew the way so well, to miscalculate so strangely my true course for home? I certainly had made due allowance for the channel.

The solution of this problem was not revealed until I reached land, and found myself more than half a mile below where I had expected to be. Then all was perfectly clear. Since my setting out the wind had shifted from northwest to due northeast. Consequently my course, instead of taking me where I had wished, carried me far down the harbor. It was indeed fortunate that I had not found myself at the harbor's mouth, far below town.

All peril of water was now past. It only remained to drag myself home. I crawled painfully up the bank, and by a final effort reached my lodgings, completely prostrated.

My hair did not, as you may see, turn white; but my ears and face were of that complexion for a while; for face, hands and feet were badly frost-bitten. As I was young and vigorous the shock to my nerves from fright, cold and exhaustion lasted but a few days. But I didn't skate any more that winter. I have not, by any means, lost my fondness for the amusement. I have persuaded myself that I can get enough of it during the daytime; and I prefer making long journeys by rail or steamer, even at the risk of having to picnic a day or two in Gulf ice.

Before the young doctor had concluded his story our boat had freed herself from the ice, and was making her way through open water up the Narrows.

Soon we were tearing through ice a foot thick in Pictou harbor, at the rate of eight knots an hour, and the doctor shivered as he glanced over the stern into the seething water.

"I couldn't count much on my keeping company with you down there," he dryly remarked to the fat man. "It looks as cold as ever."—[David Solaon in Youths' Companion.]

Mallet—"Your wife seems to be of a very sunny disposition. She is always smiling." Husband—"It isn't that; it's good teeth."

Mr. C. C. Cleveland, M. P. for Richmond and Wolfe, has had the misfortune to lose two children, a son and a daughter. Scarlet fever, which is very prevalent in the east, carried the children off.

Senator Botsford of New Brunswick, the oldest man in the Upper House, is ill, and is not expected to live. Mr. Botsford was born in 1804, and is therefore ninety years of age. He entered politics in 1838, and has thus had fifty-six years of public life. In his advanced age he is almost forgotten, but he has occupied important positions, and has done some good things. When Lord Durham thought of Confederation he sent all the way to New Brunswick for Mr. Botsford, and that gentleman made a winter journey to Quebec to discuss the matter. When he arrived Lord Durham received him well, but told him he had been recalled. Mr. Botsford fought for the opening of the sessions of the New Brunswick Legislative Council to the public, and succeeded in abolishing the system of secrecy that had hitherto been observed.

BRITAIN RULES IN AFRICA.

From Lake Tanganyika Southward.

How "The Meteor Flag of England" Has Been Carried Northward by the Cape Colonists—All in Twelve Years—Cecil Rhodes, Premier of Cape Colony, is Looking Forward to a Great United British South African State.

An amiable Dutch lady, who lives in Capetown in the house her family have uninterruptedly occupied for more than 100 years, has among her household treasures an atlas containing maps of various countries as they appeared to observant Dutchmen 150 years ago. It is curious to note how, in a map of the Western Hemisphere, South America is dealt with in considerable detail. So is the eastern coast of North America. But when the draughtsman approaches the western coast, he does not get much further north than San Francisco. Here the pen is uplifted, and the rest is left to imagination. Naturally Africa, a country which at the time the atlas was published had been 100 years partly occupied by the Dutch, receives special attention. The interior is marked out with great minuteness, though it is true that in noting the location of particular tribes, the honest mapmaker admits that he is guided by what he has heard said. Amongst other things, the map proves that the knowledge of the existence of gold in South Africa is not a modern possession. In various districts, notably in Mashonaland, a patch of yellow colors the map, and underneath is written the magic words "HERE IS GOLD."

School maps of the era immediately preceding Dr. Livingstone's expedition did not deal with the interior of Africa with anything like the fullness that distinguishes this old Dutch map. Africa was then endeared to boys and girls by the fact that its interior was largely made up of blank spaces, presenting nothing to be committed to memory. The lot of the schoolboy of to-day is in this respect much harder. Africa has been surveyed from north to south, from east to west, and hides no mysteries from the map-maker. Worse still, it is a congeries of nationalities, the land being divided among Great Britain, Germany, France, Portugal, Turkey, Italy and Spain, with here and there a purely African state, a miserable slice left to the ancient possessors of the land.

Mr. Cecil Rhodes has been busy of late. PAINTING THE MAP RED.

Poring over it to-day, he looks longingly at some stretches of country covered with a tint which map-makers have agreed to assign to other nationalities. Only a year ago there was but a slip of South Africa south of the Orange river painted red, indicating the limits of Cape Colony. It is true that since 1885 Bechuanaland has been under British protection, a portion of it a Crown colony. But England's chief interest in that district has been an annual expenditure of a hundred thousand a year, for which there is absolutely no return. Since the Chartered Company came into existence a huge patch of Central South Africa has been painted red. To-day it is all red from Capetown up to Lake Nyassa and Lake Tanganyika. The red boldly pushes its way up, taking the pick of the land, pushing aside the green of Germany and the blue of Portugal. North of German East Africa the red shows again over the liberal space of British East Africa. Studying the latest map of Africa, the candid Briton is driven to the conclusion that there is nothing more towering than the rapacity with which England grabs land in foreign parts, unless it be the indignation with which she regards other nations to extend their boundaries.

Mr. Rhodes dreams of a day when there shall be direct telegraph and railway communication

BETWEEN CAPE TOWN AND CAIRO.

That is a big order; but he is the kind of man who is apt to realize his dreams, however extravagant they may appear to the prosaic mind. He has marched far since he set his steps in the direction of carrying the British flag northward. Twelve years ago, when Mr. Rhodes, first promulgated the idea of obtaining the unknown interior of Africa as a reversion to the Cape Colony, he stood alone in his crusade. To-day he has the country entirely and enthusiastically at his back. Nothing is more common in the general elections still going on than to hear a member of the Opposition criticize, as in duty bound, some portion of the Premier's domestic policy, winding up with the emphatic statement that he is entirely with him in his imperial policy.

It was during the governorship of Sir Hercules Robinson that Mr. Rhodes began his work. Sir Hercules was not averse to

A LITTLE REGULAR AND ORDERLY EXTENSION of our empire in South Africa, but the magnitude of Mr. Rhodes' ideas was apt to startle him.

"Where will you stop?" Sir Hercules asked him during one of the conversations that followed on the acquisition of Bechuanaland.

"I will stop only where the country has been claimed," said Mr. Rhodes.

Sir Hercules, taking up the map, found that this would take the British territory up to the southern border of Lake Tanganyika. He was, as Mr. Rhodes says, in telling the story, "a little upset!" "I think," he remarked, "you should be satisfied with the Zambesi as a boundary."

That was ten years ago, and to-day the map is painted red up to the southern borders of Lake Tanganyika, with the Zambesi river in the rear. Taking on this subject, Mr. Rhodes recalls the time, 200 years distant, when the Dutch settlers at the Cape built a block house on Table mountain, and regarded it as the limit of their geographical ideas. The block house still stands, but Cape Colony has spread lusty limbs in all directions, and there are some of its sons who look forward to the day when the colony shall be the centre of a great united South African state.

THE WAY IS CLEARED.

In that direction, as a glance at the map will show, the way is now pretty well cleared. The proposed state could never run east and west from coast to coast, since on the west Germany has Damaraland, and on

the east there is a long strip of blue showing Portuguese territory. But Damaraland is scarcely worth the trouble of holding—the more so as its only decent port, Walfish Bay, already belongs to the English. It would be nicely asymmetrical to have Portugal's portion thrown in, but that is impossible, and can be dispensed with. The real difficulty in the way is the existence of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, wedged in as they are in the centre of the British territory.

The future of the Transvaal is one of the most interesting problems in the politics of South Africa. Every month sees the proportion between the governing class and the governed widened. In process of time, according to the current rate of progression, the Boers must be

SHOULDERED OUT BY THE BRITISH.

In the meantime they are making the most of their opportunity, manipulating matters so that the burden of taxation shall fall upon the English settlers, who are practically prohibited from taking any part in the government of the country. Mr. Rhodes looks with apprehension on this state of things, believing that it inevitably tends towards the establishment in the Transvaal of an English republic as independent of Downing street or Westminster as of the Orange Free State. The one other alternative are the return of the Transvaal to its former allegiance to the Queen, a course which has no advocates, whether among the Boers or the English; or its incorporation with Cape Colony, which for various reasons is impracticable. The prospect of having as neighbor an independent English republic does not suit Mr. Rhodes' scheme of a united South Africa loyal to the British crown. The Cape Colony—that is to say Mr. Rhodes—is now prepared to take over Bechuanaland, an event which was very nearly accomplished during the existence of the late Government. Sir Hercules Robinson was then governor and had, with the approval of the Colonial Office, carried negotiation on the subject within measurable distance of conclusion, when an agitation was got up at home before which the government retreated, and Mr. W. H. Smith, with that air of surprised innocence that used to charm the House of Commons, protested that there was absolutely nothing in the reports current, or intimated action. So Bechuanaland remains with us to this day, and the British taxpayer has the pleasure of paying for the profits of his hundred thousand a year. —[H. W. L., in the London Daily News.]

Where Fruit Plants Come From.

- Spinach is a Persian plant.
- Filberts came from Greece.
- Quinces came from Corinth.
- The turnip came from Rome.
- The peach came from Persia.
- The nasturtium came from Peru.
- Horseradish is a native of England.
- Melons were found originally in Asia.
- Sage is a native of the south of Europe.
- Sweet marjoram is a native of Portugal.
- The bean is said to be a native of Egypt.
- Damsons originally came from Damascus.
- The pea is a native of the south of Europe.
- Coriander seed came originally from the East.
- The gooseberry is indigenous to Great Britain.
- Ginger is a native of the East and West Indies.
- Apricots are indigenous to the plains of Armenia.
- The cucumber was originally a tropical vegetable.
- The walnut is a native of Persia, Caucasus and China.
- Capers originally grew wild in Greece and Northern Africa.
- Garlic came from Sicily and the shores of the Mediterranean.
- The onion was almost an object of worship with the Egyptians 2,000 years before the Christian era. It first came from India.
- Asparagus was originally a wild sea-coast plant of Great Britain.
- The clove is a native of the Malacca Islands, as also is nutmeg.
- Cherries were known in Asia as far back as the seventeenth century.
- The tomato is a native of South America, and takes its name from a Portuguese word.
- Parsley is said to have come from Egypt, and mythology tells us it was used to adorn the head of Hercules.
- Apples were originally brought from the East by the Romans. The crab apple is indigenous to Great Britain.
- Cloves come to us from the Indies, and take their name from the Latin clavus, meaning a nail, to which they have resemblance.

A Chinese Railway.

China has at last one complete railway. It is the short line connecting Tientsin with Shan-hai-kwan, a town in the eastern part of the great Chinese wall, where the latter runs down to the Gulf of Lia-tung. There is a certain anachronism in the association of the "iron horse," so emblematic of our modern celerity of communication, with the Chinese wall, which stands as the personification of obstruction to free intercourse. However, this new Chinese railroad is itself an anomaly; it is not intended for traffic. It will carry neither merchandise nor passenger. Having been built simply for strategic purposes, it will be strictly confined to military uses. The sedan chair will continue to be the vehicle for overland journeys in China, and freight will still be carried slung to poles borne on the shoulders of muscular Chinese porters.

De Trop—"Isn't it rather late for you to go home alone?" Tottie—"You bet! Mamma would never forgive me if I came home alone."

"My friend," said the solemn man, "have you ever done aught to make the community in which you live the better for your living in it?" "I have done much, sir," replied the other humbly, "to purify the homes of my fellow beings." "Ah," continued the solemn man with a pleased air, "you distribute tracts?" "No, I clean carpets."

Information at the port of Capetown...
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