THE GREAT MIGRATION

If he’s there he can’t escape us. without our having a shot at him: and you say that these american bears are much easier   
killed than ours. The south americans were so, certainly. I hope northern brothers may die as easy. Not all rejoined  
alexis. We may expect some tough struggles when we come to the great grizzly, and to him of the polar regions: but the   
black bears are, as you conjecture, not so difficult to deal with. If wounded, however, they will show fight: and, though  
their teeth and claws are less dangerous than the others, they can give a man a most uncomfortable hug. I have heard.  
But let us go, as you say. If not yonder, he must have taken to the woods. In that case there is no way of following him  
up, except by dogs; and for these we must go back to the house. As they continued talking, they advanced towards the  
narrow isthmus that connected the little peninsula with the mainland. What a pity, remarked ivan, that that great log is   
there but for it we might have seen his track in the mud crossing over. Ivan referred to a prostate trunk that traversed  
the isthmus longitudinally extending from the mainland to the higher ground of the peninsula, to which it formed a kind  
of bridge or causeway. Certainly, ha it not been there, either the bears tracks would have been seen in the mud or not;  
and if not, then no bear could have passed to the peninisula, and their exploration would have been unnecessary.  
But although tey saw no tracks, they had started to examine the wood pile: and they continued on, climbing up to the   
log, and walking along its stop. All at once, alexis was seen to pause and bend his body forward and downward. What is it   
eyes upon the back of which were visible, not the tracks of a bear, but dabs of mud, that must have been recently  
deposited there, either by the feet of a bear, or some other animal. By the great peter said ivan, speaking cautiously,  
notwithstanding his innocent adjuration; that must be his tracks it’s the same sort of mud as that in which we’ve just been  
tracing him black as ink nearly. It has come off his great paws not a doubt of it, brother i think it is likely, assented alexis,  
at the same time that both looked to the locks of their guns, and saw that the caps were on the nipples. A little further   
along the log, the bar kwas smoothere, and there the trac kwas still more conspicuous. The print was better dennned, and  
answered well for the footmark of a bear. Ther was the naked paw, and the balls of the toes, all complete. They no  
longer doubted that it was the track of the bear. It was just a question whether the animal had gone over the log and  
returned again. But this was set at rest, or nearly so, by a closer scrutiny. There was no sign of a return track. True he  
might have washed his paws in the interval, or cleaned them on the dead wood; but that was scare probable, and our  
hunters did not think so. They felt perfectly sure that the bear was before them: and, acting upon this belief they cocked  
their guns, and continued their approach towards the wood pile. A darkey on bear back. Both the young hunters   
succeeded in passing over the log, and had set foot on the peninsula; while the negro, who was following a little behind.  
was still upon the prostrate trunk, just at that moment a noise was heard very similar to that made by a pig when   
suddenly started from its bed of straw a sort of half snort, half grunt : and along with the noise a huge black body was  
seen springing up from under the loose pile of dead trees causing several of them to shake and rattle under its weight.  
Our hunters saw at a glance that it was the bear : and levelled their guns upon it with the intension of firing. The animal   
had reared itself on its hind legs as if to reconnoitre the ground and while in this attitude both the hunters had sighted it,  
and were on the eve of pulling their triggers. Before they could do so, however, the bear dropped back on all fours. So   
sudden was the movement that the aim of both was quite disconcerted, and they both lowered their guns to get a fresh  
the delay, however, proved fatal to their intention. Before either had got a satisfactory sight upon the body of the bear,  
the latter sprang forward with a fierce growl, and rushed right between the two, so near that it was impossible for either  
of them to fire otherwise than at random. Ivan did fire, but to no purpose; for his bullet went quite wide of the bear.  
striking the log behind it, and causing the bark to splinter out in all directions. The bear made no attempt to charge  
towards them, but rushed straight on evidently with no other design than to make his escape to the woods. Alexis   
wheeled round to fire after him; as he was raising his gun, his eyes fell upon the negro, who was coming on aver the  
log, and who had just got about halfway across it. The bear had by this time leaped up on the other end, and in a hurried   
gallop that had been quickened by the report of ivan’s piece was going right in the opposite direction. The negro, who  
saw the huge shaggy quadruped coming straight towards him, at once set up a loud hulla balloo, and, with his eyes almost  
starting from their sockets, was endeavouring to retreat backwards, and get out of the way. His efforts proved fruitless;

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