THE GREAT MIGRATION

the squatter, but hugged only the tough old treen in whose bark he buried deep his pointed claws. An inspiration flashed  
through the squatter’s mind, as he saw the bear slowly and with some difficulty dragging out his nails; and seizing bruin’s  
shanks just above the paws, he braced himself against the tree, resolved to try and hold the claws into their woody  
sockets until his neighbour could respond to his halloos for help. The other squatter heard his cries; but instead of  
hastening to the rescue, he came slowly along, carelessly shouldering his axe, perceiving his neighbour’s difficulty, a new  
solution of the ox, question had entered his mind; and to the redoubled appeals for assistances, he calmly replied on one   
condition, neighbour what is it anxiously inquired the other, if let you loose from the bar, you’ll gi me up your odd  
steer. There was no help for it, and with a heavy sigh, the prisoner consented. Stop cried he, ere the axe could fall; this  
old brute has half plagued the life out me, and i’d like nothing better’s the satisfaction killin him myself. Jest you ketch  
hold here, and let me give his death blow. The second squatter, rejoicing beyond measure at having accomplished his  
long desired purpose unsuspiciously agreed, dropped the axe, cautiously grasped the sinewy shanks, and bent his strength  
to the momentary struggle. To his utter dismay, he beheld his neighbour quietly shoulder the axe, and walk away from  
the ground hold on he shouted; ain’t ye goin to kill the bar wal, not jest now, i fancy, i thought you might like to hang  
on a while the tables thus turned, the deluded squatter had no resource but to make terms with his grimly gleeful  
neighbour, who at last consented to put an end to the wild beast’s life, if he might not only be released from the bargain  
he had just made, but in addition, be himself the recipient of the odd ox. Sorely chagrined, the second squatter  
consented. But he was a little comforted at the idea of a slight revanche that had just entered, his head. Watching his  
chance, as the other approached to deal the fatal blow, with a desperate effort he tore out the bear’s claws from the bark  
setting the infuriated animal free and then fled at full speed to his cabin, leaving the original combatants to fight it out  
between themselves. The particulars of the contest even tradition has not preserved the sequel to the narrative only  
telling that half an hour later the first squatter, scratched and bloody, hobbled slowly up to the cabin, remarking  
satirically as he threw down the broken axe ; thar, neighbour, i’m afraid i’ve spiled yer axe, but i’m sure i’ve spiled the bar  
Prehaps you’d let one your leetle boys drive that ere ox over to my house after enjoying the hospitality of their planter  
friend for a few days longer, our travellers once more resumed their journey ; and proceeded up the great mississipi.  
towards the cold countries of the north. The polar bear. A few weeks after leaving the louisiana planter, our hunters  
were receiving hospitality from a very different kind of host, a fur trader. Their headquarters was fort churchill, on the  
western shore of hudson’s bay, and once the chief entrepot of the famous company who have so long directed the  
destinies of that extensive region sometimes styled prince rupert’s land, but more generally known as the hudson’s bay  
territory. To fort churchill they had travelled almost due north first up the mississipi, then across land to take superior  
and direct over the lake to one of the company’s posts on its northern shore. Thence by a chain of takes rivers, and  
portages to york factory, and on northward to fort churchill. Of course, at fort churchill they had arrived within the   
range of the great while or polar bear (ursus maritimus), who was to be the next object of their chasse. In the   
neighbourhood of york factory, and even further to the south, they might have found bears of this spectes; for the ursus  
maritimus extends his wanderings all around the shores of hudson’s bay though not to those of james bay further south.  
The latitude of degrees is his southern limit upon the continent of america ; but this only refers to the shores of labrador  
and those of hudson’s day. On the western coast behring’s straits appears to form his boundary southward; and even  
within these, for some distance along both the asiatic and the american shores,he is one of the rarest of wanderers. His   
favourite range is among the vast conglomeration of islands and peninsulas that extend around hudson’s and baffin’s bays  
including the icebound coasts of greenland and labrador while going westward to behring’s straits, although the great   
quadruped is occasionally met with, he is much more rare. Somewhat in a similar manner, are the white bears distributed  
in the eastern hemisphere. While found in great plenty in the frozen ocean, in its central and eastern parts, towards the  
west, on the northern coasts of russia and lapland, they are never seen except when by chance they have strayed thither,  
or been drifted upon masses of floating ice. It is unnecessary to remark that this species of bear lives almost exclusively  
near the sea, and by the sea. He may be almost said to dwell upon it; since out of the months in the year, of them at least  
are passed by him upon the fields of ice. During the short summer of the arctic regions, he makes a trip inland rarely  
extending it above miles, and never over a hundred guided in his excursions by the courses of rivers that fall into the sea.

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