THE GREAT MIGRATION

shore through water that was as calm as a pond when, at a great distance ahead of them, the indian observed a slight  
rippling upon the surface, and pointed it out. It was not caused by the wind; for there was not a breath stirring at the   
time; and it was not like the whitish curl which a breeze casts upon the surface of water. It resembled more a series of  
little wavelets, such as proceed from a stone plunged into a deep pool or from a disturbance of the water caused by the  
movements of some animal. The indian said that it was a bear; though there was no bear, nor any living things in sight as  
the canoe moved nearer, our hunters perceived that there was an indentation on the shore a little creek or bay out of   
which the ripples were proceeding. The guide knew that there was such a bay; and beleived that the bear would be found  
somewhere within it, swimming about in the water. The hunters did not stay to inquire the reason why bruin should be  
thus bathing himself there was no time; for just at that instant the indian beached his canoe; and desired them all to   
disembark and follow such further instructions as he might give them. Without hesitation they accepted his invitation;  
resolved to act acccording to his counsel. The Indian, after making his boat fast, took the route inland, followed by the  
other after going some or hundred yards, he turned to the left, and conducted the party around the shore of the bay  
which trended in a semicircular or horse shoe shape. He did not take all of them around; but only one, whom he  
stationed on the opposite side. This was pouchskin. Ivan he had already placed on the nearer side, and alexis at the bottom  
so that they were thus set at the angles of a triangle, nearly equilateral. On assigning to each of them his station, the  
indian further instructed them to creep forward among the bushes which still separated them from the water and to do   
so without making any noise, till they should hear a whoop from himself. This would be the signal for them to show  
themselves around the edge of the bay in the water of which the indian hunter was confident a bear was bathing himself.  
He himself returned to his canoe. Agreeably to his instructions, the hunters crawled forward each on his own line of  
approach, and all observing the greatest caution and silence. As soon as their eyes rested upon the water, they perceived  
the correctness of the indian’s conjecture. A bear there was, sure enough they saw only his head; but this was sufficient  
for bruin’s identification; since no similar cranium could have been encountered in such a place. As the indian had  
apprised them, the bear was swimming about in the bay; but for what purpose it was at first difficult to make out to  
their astonishment, he swam with his mouth wide open so that they could see the interior of his great encarmined palate,  
while his long tongue flapped out at intervals, and appeared to sweep the surface of the water. As intervals too, he was   
seen to close his mouth the huge jaws coming together with a clap clap, the noise of which could be heard echoing far  
over the lake he did not go long in one course; but ever and anon kept turning himself and quartering the bay in every  
direction. It was a long time before the spectators could find any explanation of these odd manœuvres on the part of  
the bear. They might have fancied he was merely takind a cool bath to refresh himself; for the day was exceedingly hot,  
and the air was filled with mosquitoes as our hunters had already learnt to their great discomfort. It might have been to  
get rid of these tormentors that bruin had submerged his body in the water; and so pouchsckin concluded, and also ivan  
though both were puzzled by the odd behaviour of the bear, in swimming open mouthed, and at intervals snapping his  
jaws as he did. Alexis, however, was better reasoner; and soon discovered the why and the wherefore of these   
mysterious demonstrations. Alexis saw that the surface of the water was thickly coated with something; and, on  
scrutinising it more closely, he made out this something to be a swarm of insects. There appeared to be more than one   
species of them indeed there were both about the size of ordinary gadflies; but altogether different from each other in  
colour and habits. One was a sort of water beetle that swam near the surface; while the other was a winged insect that  
occasionally rose into the air, but more generally crawled along the water making short runs from place to place, then   
stopping a moment and then darting on again. The whole surface of the bay and even out for some distance into the   
lake fairly swarmed with these creatures; and it was in pursuit of them that bruin was whisking his tongue so rapidly  
about and bringing his jaws together in such sonorous concussion. The animal was simply indulging in a favourite meal   
which in summer is furnished him not only on the shores of the great slave lake, but most of the smaller lakes  
throughout the barren grounds. Alexis had scarce finished making the observation, when a loud whoop was heard from  
the direction of the lake; and almost at the same instant the canoe of the indian was seen shooting through the water,  
right for the entrance of the bay obedient to the signal, the hunters rushed out from their cover, and ran forward upon   
the beech holding his gun in readiness to fire. The bear, seeing himself thus suddenly and unexpectedly surrounded

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