THE GREAT MIGRATION

the correctness of the information by seeing the cherry trees with their branches broken and some of the stems pulled   
down into a slanting position, evidently done by the bears to enable them to get conveniently at the fruit . From the  
trees that had been treated in this rough manner all the fruit had been stripped off as clean as if a party of cherry pickers  
had passed that way. The ravages exhibited a very recent sign. Most of them must have been done within a week; and one  
tree looked at freshly torn, as if it had been pulled about that very morning of. Of course, with such indications before their  
eyes, our hunters were advancing on the qui vive. Not knowing the instant that bruin might break out. Il will not be  
correct to say that they were proceeding with caution. Had they been sufficiently cautious, they would not have been  
there afoot. Of course they were on foot since no horses could be procured in these parts. To go affot in pursuit of  
such game as grizzly bears was the height of indiscretion; and the traders had told them so; but they made light on what  
they had been told, for reasons, first, because it was absolutely necessary they should kill a grizzly and strip him of his  
skin and secondly, because our young hunters, pouchskin as well, had but a very indefinite idea of the risk they were   
running. They had heard that the grizzly was one of the flercest of its kind; but because it was called a bear, and they had   
now hunted and killed so many other bears, they fancied this one might be as easily conquered as any of its congeners.  
They had heard that these animals often tail and run away at sight of man; but these stories are deceptive. The bears   
that do so are either juvenile grizzlies or ground individuals of the versus americanus which are often mistaken for the  
grizzly. With old Ephraim himself the case is quite different, as we have already said. On sight of a human enemy, instead  
of running away, the grizzly more frequently runs towards him, charging forward with open mouth, and often without   
having received the slightest provocation. Of this fact our hunters had proof almost upon the instant. They had entered a  
wide tract, sparsely covered with trees; but such small trees, and so thinly standing over the grown, that the hunters  
might have fancied them to have been planted; and that they are entering within the bounderies of some old orchard.  
The tract thus characterised was about or acres in superficial extent; and surrounded by the same king of coppice that  
covered most of the face of the country. Under the thin trees there was neither underwood, nor long grass; and they  
could see between their trunks in every direction, to the edge of the jungle that grew around. While walking quietly  
along, a singular noise reached their ears, that caused them suddenly to halt in their tracks. It caused them to turn also:  
for the noise appeared to come from behind them. It resembled the hurried breathing of a person badly afflicted with  
asthma; but so much louder, that if it had proceeded from a human lungs, they could only have been those of an asthmatic  
giant it was. In reality, a gigantic creature that produced the noise since it was neither more or less than a grizzly bear.  
Not one alone, but a brace of these monstrous animals a male and female, no doubt were seen at that moment by the  
edge of the thicket, out of which the hunters had just emerged. Both were standing on their hind limbs, and both  
uttering the strange snuffing noise that attracted attention to them. Other noises were now mingled with these  
sharp querulous grunts and, by the gestures which the bears were making, it was evident they not only saw the hunters  
in the open ground, but were reconnoitering them perhaps with an intention to make an attack upon them our hunters  
were quite taken aback. They had expected, at least, to have been allowed the initiative in any conflict that might occur;  
but they now say that, instead of been the assailant part, they were likely to be the assailed they had no time for  
deliberation; for the brace of bears come apparently having satisfied themselves with their threatening demonstration, dropped  
down on all fours, and came galloping onward almost as fast as horses could have done the hunters fired at once: and  
not with out effect: for one of the bears fell to their shot. It was the smaller one, and that which had been foremost.  
Acting without concert they had all aimed at the same animal choosing that was nearest; and this was unfortunate,  
for had some one of them sighted the other and bigger bear, they might have given him a wound that would have, at  
least, crippled him. As it was, he had neither been shot at nor touched; and the fall of his mate for it was the male who  
survived now so completely exasperated him, that he rushed on with the full determination to deal death among the  
enemies who had bereaved him. It was fortunate that he stopped a moment avec his fallen companion. He did so as if to  
convince himself that she was dead. It was only for an instant but a precious instant that was to all of the hunters. It  
gave them sufficient time to take to a tree each springing up to the one that was most convenient. Alexis and Ivan being  
young and nimble, easily accomplished this feat; but it caused pouchskin an effort and he came very near making it in vain.  
He had got his arms over a branch, and was drawing his great booted legs after him; but, before he could raise them to a

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