THE GREAT MIGRATION

his loaded rifle for the kamschatdale carries this weapon in such places as he expects the bear to pass. The are on the  
banks of the streams and lakes that abound in fish; and as the bears ramble along the edge of the water, or are even seen  
swimming or wading into it, the patient hunter is pretty sure od getting a shot. Should he fall to bring down bruin at the  
first fire. The game becomes uncertain and sometimes dangerous; since the animal often charges upon the hunter. Even  
though the latter may be concealed among the long reeds and bushes, the sagacious bear, guided by the smoke and blaze  
of the powder easily finds out his assailant. The hunter, however, never fires without taking a deliberate aim. He carries a  
forked stick, over which he rests his pieces, and never fires off hand. To miss would not only endanger his life and the loss  
of his game, but what is also of consequence to a kamchtdale, the loss of his powder and bullet costly articles in this  
remote corner of the earth. In case of missing, he has still his bear spear and a long blade knife to fall back upon; and  
with these he defends himself as well as he can though not unfrequently bruin proves the victor, and the hunter the  
victim. There are certain times when the Siberian bears become exceedingly dangerous to approach. The season of rut  
which occurs in the latter part of the summer is one of those; but there is another period of danger which however,  
does not happen every year. When the spring chances to be late on account of a prolonged winter and when the lakes  
and streams remain frozen over after the bears have come forth from their hiding places, them ware bruin is a caution  
which it is prudent to observe. The fierce animals, half famished for want of their usual diet of fish, roam over the  
country in all direction; and fearlessly approach the ostrogs, roaming around the balagans and jourts in search of  
something to eat. Woe to the kamschatdale that gets in their tray at such a time for the bear, instead of waiting to be  
attached, becomes himself the assailant; and as great numbers of these quadrupeds often troop about together, of course  
the encounter is all the more perilous. It was just in such a spring that our young hunters had arrived at petropaulouskt  
and stories of numerous bear conflicts, that had recently occurred in the neighborhood, were rife in the village; while  
the number of fresh skies every day brough in by the kurilski hunters, showed that bears could not be otherwise than  
plentiful in the country adjacent. Guided by one of these hunters, our party set forth upon a search. The snow still  
covered the ground; and of course, they travelled in sledges each having one to himself. Drawn by dogs, as the custom  
of the county. The dogs are harnessed and abreast, with the odd one in front. Each has his collar of bearskin, with a   
leather thong for a trace; and of them are sufficient to draw the little sledge with a man in it. The sledge, called saunka, is   
less than feet long; and being made of the lightest birch wood, is of very little weight. A curved stick, called the oschtol  
with an iron point, and little bells at the other end is used to direct the dogs; and urged on by this and by well known  
exclamations of their driver, they will go at a speed of many miles an hour. In this slight vehicle, hills, valley, lakes, and  
rivers are crossed, without such a thing as a road being thought of; and when the dogs are good, and have been well  
cared for an immense distance may be passed over in a day. In less than an hour after their departure from  
petropaulouski, our hunters had entered amid the wildest scenery where not the slightest sign of either cultivation or  
human habitation was to be seen, and where at any wildest scenery where not the slightest sign of either cultivation or  
human habitation was to be seen, and where at any moment they might expect to come in sight of their great game. Dog  
driving. The guide was conducting them to a stream that ran into the bay some or miles from the ostrog. On that stream,  
he said, they would be pretty certain to find a bear. If not several at a place he knew of the water was not frozen,  
and the bears might be there trying to catch fish. When questioned as to why this particular stream was not frozen like  
the others, he said that some distance up it there were warm springs a phenomenon of frequent occurrence in the   
peninsula of kamschatka that these springs supplied most of the water of the stream and that for several hundred yards  
below where they gushed forth, the river was kept open by their warmth during the severest winters. Not through its  
whole course, however. Father down, where the water became cool, it froze like in other streams; and that this was the  
case, was evident to our hunters, who had entered the mouth of the rivers from the icy surface of the bay, and were  
gliding in their sledges up its frozen channel. After having gone or miles up this icebound stream, which ran through a  
narrow valley with steep sloping sides, the guide warned our hunters that they were close to the place where the water  
would be found open. At this point a law ridge ran transversely across the valley through which the stream had, in  
process of time, cut a channel; but the ridge occasioned a dam or lake of some half dozen acres in superficial extent,  
which lay just above it. The dam itself was rarely frozen over; and it was by the water remaining in it, or flowing  
sluggishly through it and thus giving it time to cool that the stream immediately below got frozen over. The lake lay just

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