

WAINO: THE NORTHERN POLAR CONTINENT.

FORSMAN'S NARRATIVE.

ADRIET ON THE ARCTIC SEA.

My name is Karl Forsman, I was born at Gluckstadt on the Elbe, upon the 10th of January, 1814. My father, Otto Forsman, and my mother, Margaret Weigell Forsman, still remain at Gluckstadt, I do not doubt, if God spares them to their children; and if what I now write shall ever reach them, as I can but little hope, let them know that I have thus set down my history, that they may with certainty identify their lost son Karl; and let them surely believe, if I see them no more, that my love to them has survived long separation and distance, and great peril and suffering; and let them convey the same to my true wife Gertrude, and by her to forgive my single and most regretted wrong to her.

I served with my father as fisherman on the Elbe and along the sea coast, until three years after I had reached manhood. But I longed for a more adventurous and exciting life, and in 1838 I went to Amsterdam and shipped for a sailor. I made voyages to Liverpool in England, to New York in America, and to several East Indian and Mediterranean ports, occasionally returning to Gluckstadt for a few weeks at a time. It was during one of these visits, in the winter of 1842, that I was happily joined in wedlock to Gertrude Spiluyt, who had been my favorite playmate since I recollect anything. The twelve years we lived together as man and wife were very happy, though I was absent from home most of the time and Providence gave us no offspring. In the spring of 1854 I was induced by the hope of large gains to ship as second mate for a whaling voyage to the northern seas. My wife and parents remonstrated till they saw that I could not be moved from my purpose, and then dismissed me with blessing and tears. They felt it to be the final parting, and I have now reason to think their forbidding will prove true. My ship was the Von Raumer, Captain Schulz—a staunch craft and worthy commander.

The voyage was unlike any other former experience to me, and when we reached the waters where the whale abounds, below Spitzbergen, the chase of these sea monsters became very exciting, especially as I had a personal interest in the number taken. We had excellent luck, and were likely to get our full cargo of oil in less than the usual time, when I was accidentally separated from my messmates and ship and sent alone upon a strange voyage, from which I fear there will be no return. We had gone in the small boat to Edges Island, on a bright Sunday morning, as was our custom, to hunt the eggs of the elder duck, which were abundant among the rocks. Having filled my pouch with eggs, I returned first to the boat, and while awaiting the arrival of my comrades, laid myself down in the boat and fell asleep. When I awoke I found that I was adrift upon the ocean, alone. The rope had evidently slipped from under the large stone put upon it to hold it, and the boat had already drifted so far that in the dim light I could but just see the islands in the distance, and could discover no vessel. A great horror then came over me. I cannot tell the agony of that moment! As soon as I could in some measure control myself, I tried to make out the direction the boat was taking. As near as I could judge it was a little east of north, and a high wind conspired with the current to make my course rapid. This suggested the only thought in which I could find comfort, that if I must perish of cold, the sooner I could reach the region of perpetual ice the briefer my sufferings would be.

I had no sail in the boat, and but one oar. I was utterly at the mercy of winds and waves, and I lay down in the bottom of the boat in a stupor, which was less like sleep than the lethargy of despair. I did not invoke the saints, for I had been taught that the great God does not entrust the government of his universe to finite beings; and I did not pray for miraculous deliverance at His hand, for my mother, a devotee follower of Luther, had told me that the age of miracles closed long ago, and that now inflexible law controls all things; and if it were not so, I could not feel that I was of sufficient consequence to be made the subject of miraculous interposition. No doubt I might have found reasons enough for praying, in spite of the inflexibility of natural law, if I had been in the mood, as I was not. My only thoughts were of home and the friends whose exhortations I had uttered as I lay down to make known to them my terrible fate, for I did not think escape from death possible.

When I next aroused myself the boat was moving more slowly; there was no wind, and I was astonished to find the air milder than at Spitzbergen. I began to hope that I might really be drifting southward. But I soon saw the sun was moving in a lower circuit, and was convinced that my hopes were delusive. I cannot tell how long I drifted in this way. After I had exhausted my small stock of duck's eggs, I had neither food nor drink, but the sense of hunger was soon lost in that of thirst. I should think it might have been about the sixth day after I left Edges Island that I lay down, utterly exhausted and disheartened, whispered a brief prayer, and resigned myself to die.

ASHORE AT THE POLE.

How long I remained insensible I cannot tell. Only know that I was aroused by a sudden shock, and had reason enough left to infer that the boat had struck a rock. I tried to lift my head but was not strong enough. Soon after there were sounds of voices, as of children near me, and I thought it only a dream. But I opened my eyes, and beheld a group of strange creatures around the boat, children in size and features, but evidently men in age, who were gazing earnestly at me, with curiosity and some alarm. Weakness and thirst were too strong in me to give way to other emotions, and I tried to make signs to these people that I needed water. They were long in comprehending me, or so it seemed to my impatience; but at length one brought me a small vessel of water, and I drank it eagerly and beckoned for more. In a few minutes I felt greatly refreshed and endeavored to rise, but I had overestimated my strength and dropped back from weakness. The strange little men were evidently consulting as to what

they should do with me, which I made out by their gestures and movements, though their language was wholly unintelligible. They soon rigged a rough litter of sticks, upon which they gently placed me, and eight of them lifted it and bore me away from the shore. I had not strength to notice the appearance of the place where I had landed, but I was so anxious for the safety of my boat that I succeeded in impressing the idea upon my unknown hosts, and had the satisfaction to see several of them at work upon it, attempting to draw it into a narrow cove between the rocks. My bearers took me along very carefully, while I slept most of the time, and was only conscious that we went a long way up a steep hill and then descended more gradually into a deep valley, musical with running streams and singing birds. When we halted at last I was lifted upon a soft couch of moss, and various articles of simple drink and food were administered to me in small installments. None of them were familiar to my taste, but all grateful and restorative. I was still too weak to notice much, and my dreamy thoughts were troubled with questions whether the creatures into whose hands I had fallen were cannibals, whether they would eat me before putting me on the spit, and whether I might not hope to get strong enough to kill a score or two of the puny things and so escape.

(To be continued.)

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