

The Autobiography of
Gurdon Saltonstall Hubbard



Introduction by Caroline M. McIlvaine

THE CITADEL PRESS

NEW YORK

81-106

#44

The Autobiography of

you do with only one boot?" Beaubien insisted that he was to have a pair, but on referring the matter to the parties, they decided the bet was for one only. "Now," said Mr. Stewart, "we will flip up a dollar to see whether it shall be a pair or none. Here is a dollar. Now, sir; heads I win, tails you lose. Three flips?" "Yes." It was heads. "Oh, heads I win." Next time it turns tails. "Oh, tails you lose." "Yes, yes," says Beaubien. Throws again, and this time heads. "Heads I win, Mr. Beaubien." "How the d—!; I lose the head, I lose the tail; by gar, you make me lose all the time"; and, amid a roar of laughter, Mr. Stewart made his exit.

This Beaubien had some education, could read and write, and was very proud of his accomplishments. Coming into the office one morning, about daylight, he said to the bookkeeper, "Mr. Bookkeeper, I write very fine, and I make pretty figures." "Is that so? Well, help me a little; put down on that paper, one; now put down two; there, that's all; now add them together." After some reflection he announced the result as three. "Now," said the bookkeeper, "put down two; now one; add them together." After pondering over it for a time Beaubien looked up with a radiant countenance and exclaimed, "By gar he all make three," and went off profoundly impressed with his own learning and proficiency in mathematics.

80

Durdon Saltontail Inubard

FISHING IN MUSKEGON LAKE.—A MONTH OF SOLITUDE.—LOST IN A SNOW STORM.—DEATH OF DUFRAIN.

I supposed I should be again detailed to the Illinois river "brigade" with my old leader, Mr. Deschamps, and was much surprised and grieved, when the time arrived to select goods and make ready for our departure, to receive one evening a summons from Mr. Crooks to meet him at his private office, when I was informed that I was not to go to my old post, but, in company with a Frenchman named Jacques Dufrain, take charge of an outfit on the Muskegon River. Dufrain could neither read nor write, but had a large experience among the Indians on the Peninsula of Michigan, and I was to be governed by his advice in trading.

I was told that the invoices would be directed to me, and that I was to be the commander of the expedition, and Dufrain simply my adviser, and then I was not to allow his advice to govern me when it differed materially with my own views. Mr. Crooks also told me that though I was young and inexperienced, he was confident that with Dufrain's honesty and acquaintance with the Indians, I would have no difficulty in conducting the venture; the outfit would be small, and we were to go in Mr. Deschamps' "brigade" to the mouth of the Muskegon or not, as we chose. Our headquarters were to be some sixty miles up the river.

81

The Autobiography of

This was, indeed, a bitter disappointment to me, as I had counted very much on seeing Mr. Kinzie's family, for whom I had formed a great attachment, and had hoped for Mr. Deschamps' permission to spend two or three weeks with them and the officers of Fort Dearborn, and then go alone and join my companions at Beureau trading house. And besides, I had left some of my clothing at Mr. Kinzie's to be repaired and put in order by my return. But as there was no other alternative, I received my goods with a good grace, and about the middle of October, 1819, started with the Illinois "brigade" on my second trip to the Indian country.

We camped the first night at Point Wagashvic and there remained wind-bound for the space of a week, and soon thereafter reached the Little Traverse. Here Mr. Deschamps advised me to stop and purchase my canoe and some Indian corn. About ten miles distant, at the foot of the bay, was an Indian village, and thither I sent my associate to make the necessary purchases; and after an absence of two days he returned with a canoe loaded with Indians, and about eight bushels of corn and some beans for our winter's stores. It was a small supply, but all we could get, and having paid for it we got ready to leave on the following morning.

When morning came we found the wind blowing strong from the northeast, afterwards

82

Burdon Saltontall Hubbard

changing to northwest and west, and for ten days blowing a gale so that November had come before we had started. We left before the heavy sea had subsided, and with great labor (there being but three men to row the boat) reached Grand Traverse, where we were again detained five or six days by adverse winds; another start, more heavy sea, and Calp River was reached, where we were again wind-bound for several days.

Thus, with a heavily laden canoe and adverse winds, often in great peril, sometimes shipping water and narrowly escaping wreck, suffering from cold, and worn with toil, we entered the Muskegon River about the tenth of December and found the lake frozen. The weather was very cold, and the coast Indians had all left for their hunting grounds in the interior.

Dufrain said it would be impossible to reach our destination, and recommended the repairing of an old abandoned trading house at a point of the lake about one and one half miles distant and there make our winter quarters. This we decided to do, though it would be very inconvenient, being from thirty to fifty miles distant from the Indian hunting grounds, where we should be compelled to go to trade. By breaking ice ahead of our boat we reached the place, and went industriously to work to repair the house and make it tenable.

We had not seen an Indian for fifteen or twenty days, and as it was necessary to reach

83

The Autobiography of

them, and let them know where we had located, we decided to send an expedition in search of them at once. Accordingly we made up an assortment of goods into three packages of about sixty pounds each, which, with a blanket apiece, were to be carried by Jacques and the two *voyageurs* who constituted our force; and on a bright December morning they bade me good-bye and started on their journey.

As Jacques was perfectly familiar with the country, I did not look forward to a long absence, and was content to remain alone. My stock of provisions consisted of the corn and a small quantity of flour, which we had brought from Mackinaw, and as I had my gun to depend on I thought I should have no difficulty in procuring all the meat I desired.

Dufrain had told me that I should find no game, but this I did not believe. I confined my hunting trips to a mile or so of the house, never daring to go out of sight of it, and for a week found rabbits and squirrels in sufficient numbers to supply me with food. Then came a heavy fall of snow and for several days I could find nothing to shoot, and as the work of walking in two feet of snow was very laborious and I expected Dufrain to return very soon, I concluded to remain indoors, keep up a good fire, and content myself with corn. I had, I think, three books, which helped me to while away the time.

We had found in the lake a drowned deer

Burdon Saltonstall Hubbard

which we had skinned, and this skin dried furnished me with a mat upon which to lie in front of the fire. The fireplace was broad, some three or four feet, and very deep, and so took in large logs that made a warm, cheerful fire. The timber under the hill, around the house, had all been cut off by its former occupants, and procuring wood was a serious problem. Through the deep snow from the top of the hill I was obliged to carry it, and for days I labored all the morning in getting my day's supply of fuel. The snow being so deep I could not haul or roll it down the hill, I set about devising some way to overcome the difficulty, and the idea of using the deer skin in some way for a sled presented itself to my mind. As it was not long enough to take on the four-foot logs I cut them three feet only, and having soaked the skin to make it pliable, I laid a log on it, and tied up the sides of the skin around it with a grape vine, and found I had a pretty fair sled. My down-hill path soon became hard and smooth, and extended to the door of the house, and my load would frequently slide down to the bottom with me astride of it.

In a Book of Travels in the Northwest, which I had read, the author described the manner in which some tribes of Indians caught large fish during the winter. A hole was cut in the ice, over which a small shelter was built sufficiently large for one person to sit in, and

The Autobiography of

made as dark as possible. The occupant then stationed himself with a spear in his left hand and a small wooden fish attached to a string in his right; the imitation fish being jerked up and down in the water attracted the larger ones, and they were easily speared.

I thought that what an Indian could do in that line, I could, and set about making my preparations. I whittled out a stick into the shape of a fish, shaping it as artistically as I could, and colored it by searing with a hot iron. In an excavation made for the purpose I poured melted lead to sink it, and after having placed in the head beads for eyes I had quite a natural looking fish, about four inches in length. Placing my spear head on a handle, I marched with them to the middle of Muskegon Lake, cut a hole in the ice, and erected a shelter by sticking poles in the ice and stretching a blanket over them. Everything being in readiness, I crawled into the hut, and lying flat on the ice dropped my "little pet"—as I called my little fish—and anxiously awaited the result. I was soon gratified by the appearance of a large fish that made a dart at my decoy. I hurled my spear at him, and—missed. And thus every few minutes for more than two hours I repeated the operation with the same results, when, mortified and angry, I returned, cold and hungry, to my solitary home and made a dinner of corn.

Brooding over my ill luck and awkward-

Burbon Saltontail Hubbard

ness and almost discouraged, I concluded that "practice would make perfect," and that I would try again on the following day, which I did, and after an hour or so of unrewarded effort I succeeded in catching a large lake trout, with which I returned to my house and soon had boiling in my camp kettle; and never before or since did fish taste so good. After that I had no trouble in taking all the fish I wanted. Every night a wolf came and devoured the remnants of the fish I had thrown out. I could see him through the cracks of my house, and could easily have shot him, but he was my only companion, and I laid awake at night awaiting his coming.

Thus I lived for thirty long, dreary, winter days, solitary and alone, never once during that time seeing a human being, and devoured with anxiety as to the fate of Dufrain and his men, whom I feared had met with some serious mishap, if, indeed, they had not been murdered. My anxiety for the last two weeks had been most intense, and at times I was almost crazy. I could not leave my goods, and knew not what I should do.

I looked upon the expedition as worse than a failure, and my first management of a trading house as a disastrous one. I thought that, should I live to return to Mackinaw, I should be an object of ridicule among the traders, and have incurred the lasting displeasure of my employers, and this was to be the end of all

The Autobiography of

my bright anticipations for the future. Oh, that I had been permitted to again accompany Mr. Deschamps and join my old companions at Beebeau's trading house.

My joy can be better imagined than described when, one morning, I discovered a party of men at the head of the lake coming toward me. I supposed them to be Indians, but was soon rejoiced to recognize among them Dufrain and his two companions. Having disposed of all their goods, and been successful in their trading, they had secured a large number of furs, and with the assistance of Indians, whom they had hired and equipped in snow-shoes, they had carried them on their backs. At the sight of the rich treasures they unloaded all my gloomy anticipations fled, and joy and satisfaction reigned in their stead.

The expedition had been one of great success; the goods had all been disposed of, and in their place they brought the finest and richest of furs—marten, beaver, bear, lynx, fox, otter, and mink making up their collection.

Dufrain had a long account to give of trials, disappointments, and perseverance. He was ten days in finding the first band of Indians, and these had already been visited by an opposition trader, who cleared the camp of all the valuable furs and told the Indians that no trader would come to Muskegon. The Indians regretted his late arrival, as he was a great favorite with them.

88

Burdon Saltontall Hubbard

Though in their progress thus far they had suffered greatly from want of provisions, and had progressed but slowly and with great fatigue owing to the depth of the snow, they determined to push on to other camps and dispose of their goods before the other trader should reach them. Having provided himself and party with provisions and snow-shoes, Dufrain despatched an Indian to me to tell me of his movements, and that he should be gone twenty days longer, and started on his way. We afterwards learned that after a half-day's travel the Indian injured his foot and was compelled to return to the camp, and thus I was left in ignorance of Dufrain's movements.

All was joy that night in our little household, the men as glad to return as I was to welcome them. I feasted them bountifully on corn soup and fish and listened to the recital of the incidents of their trip.

Another trip was decided on to go to the camp of some Indians he had heard of, but not seen, and who were in need of clothing, and had an abundance of furs. As time was very precious, the following day was devoted to selecting and packing goods and making preparations for departure. I decided to go with this expedition, though Dufrain remonstrated, and told me I could not stand the hardships of the journey; that having never traveled on snow-shoes I would have the *mal du raquette*, or become sick, and thus detain

89

The Autobiography of

them; but to my mind anything could be easier endured than another month of such solitude as I had just passed through, and *mal de raquette* or sickness were nothing to be compared with what I had endured.

On the following morning we departed, leaving one man in charge of the house. Though my pack was only half as heavy as the others, the day was one of untold misery to me, never having walked in snow-shoes before. The day was clear and cold, the country rough and hilly and covered with underbrush, and every few minutes I tripped and fell, and usually landed at full length and buried my face in the snow, from which I could not arise without assistance from the others. By noon I was completely exhausted, and my load was carried by one of the others; and though we had made an early start, when we camped at night we had traveled only about six miles.

Then came the preparations for the night's rest. The snow was about two feet deep, and shelter we had none. A place was selected by the side of a large fallen tree, the snow was scraped from the ground, and a place cleared of about six feet by ten, dry and green wood cut and piled up to the windward of the log, and a fire struck with flint and steel. Hemlock boughs were cut for bedding, and these covered with a blanket, to keep them down and in place; then the packs were placed at one end to protect our heads from the wind,

90

Durdon Saltonsfall Hubbard

and our beds were complete. During our march we had killed two porcupines, and these were dressed and toasted on sticks, and with our pounded parched corn made a very delicious supper. And as we had eaten nothing since early morning good appetites gave additional zest to the repast.

After supper, a smoke, and then to bed, all lying together on the hemlock beds, covered with the two remaining blankets, with our feet to the fire, which we replenished through the night. I slept but little, being kept awake by the aching of my legs, the muscles of which were badly swollen.

Before day all were up, and breakfast was made from the remnants of the previous night's supper, and by the time it was light we were ready to resume our journey. I was so stiff and lame that I could scarcely walk, and Dufrain advised me to return, he offering to go part way with me, and there meet the other man, whom I should send from the house. I at first thought I would do so, but the recollection of the lonely month of anxiety I had passed there soon determined me to go on with the party, and all Dufrain's arguments failed to change my purpose. Every step caused me suffering, but as I warmed up the pain by degrees left me. I had caught the knack of throwing out the heels of my snow-shoes by a slight turn of the foot, and my falls were less frequent, and when

91

The Autobiography of

we camped at night we estimated that we had made during the day about three leagues or nine miles.

During the day we had cut from a hollow tree two rabbits, and these with corn furnished our supper. Our camp was made as on the previous night. In the morning we consumed the remainder of our stock of corn, as we expected to reach an Indian camp by night, and made our usual early start.

Snow soon commenced falling, and continued hard all day, and as the weather had moderated the snow stuck to our shoes, making them heavy and the walking very tiresome; we failed to find the Indians, and camped for the night with nothing to eat. The muscles of my toes were very sore, and on removing my moccasins and neips, I found my feet much swollen, and at the tops where the strap that held my snow-shoes was fastened, they were red and bruised, sure signs of "*mal du raquette*." The morning found me in a sad condition, the swelling much increased, and the tops of my feet so sore that I could not bear my snow-shoes without great pain; still, on we went, I hobbling along as best I could. The snow still fell, and about noon we reached the Indian camp, and were provided with dinner by a squaw, and did ample justice to the bear meat and corn soup which she provided.

In the evening the Indians returned from hunting and trapping, bringing a good supply

Burton Saltonstall Hubbard

of furs, and the following forenoon was employed by them in selling their furs, and setting with Dufrain for the goods he had sold to them on a previous trip. We remained in this camp five days, and I was very kindly treated. The old squaw poulticed my feet with herbs, and for two days I practiced every hour or so on my snow-shoes, so that when we left these hospitable people I felt well and strong, and had no trouble in keeping up with the others, nor was I tired at night. We camped in the usual manner, having made fifteen miles that day.

Just at dark of the next day, as we were preparing our camp, we heard the bark of a dog, and knew the Indians were near; taking up our march, we soon reached their camp, where we remained for two days. A grand feast was prepared by the Indians, partly in honor of our visit, at which all the meat and broth set before us must be eaten, and the bones saved and buried with appropriate ceremonies, as an offering to the Great Spirit, that he might favor them in the hunt. The offering was a fat bear, over which a great pow-wow was first had by all the inmates of the lodges, after which it was carefully skinned, cut into small pieces, and put into the kettle in the presence of all.

During the cooking, speeches were made by some of the older Indians invoking the aid of the Great Spirit, and when cooked the meat

The Autobiography of

was carefully removed from the kettles and distributed in wooden bowls to each individual present in such quantities as their age and capacity for eating would seem to warrant, and all received their just proportion. Then the oil was skimmed off, and it and the broth divided in a like manner; a harangue was delivered by the head of the lodge, asking the Good Spirit to favor them in the chase and keep them well and free from harm; and then the eating commenced.

I thought they had given me a larger portion than my age and capacity demanded, but Dufrain told me that I must eat all the meat and drink all the oil and broth, and leave the bones in my bowl; that a failure to do so would be considered an insult to the Indians and an offense to the Great Spirit. "But," I said, "they have given me more than the others, and it is impossible for me to swallow it all." Dufrain replied: "They have given you the best portion as a compliment; you must receive it, and eat and drink every bit and every drop, otherwise we shall have trouble." "Well, you must help me, then," I said. "No," he replied; "I can't help you; each person must eat all that is given him, and will not be allowed to part with any portion of it; I am sorry for you, as well as for myself, and wish it had been a cub, instead of a fat bear, but I shall eat mine if it kills me."

It was between eight and nine o'clock at

94

Burdon Saltonstall Hubbard

night, and the fire, which furnished the only light in the lodge, was low, and my location was in the back part of the lodge, where my movements could not be easily detected. I wore a French capote or hood, which suggested itself to my mind as being my only chance for disposing of a portion of the contents of my bowl, and I determined to attempt it. I felt that extreme caution was necessary, and no little dexterity required to slip the meat into the hood unobserved; but I took the first opportunity, and succeeded in safely depositing a piece without detection even by Dufrain, who sat next to me. I proceeded eating slowly, so that no notice might be taken of the diminished quantity in my bowl, and soon succeeded in depositing another piece, and then a third, and ended by eating the last piece. There still remained the oil and broth, and I feared that my now overburdened stomach could not stand this addition to its load. The grease had soaked through the cloth of my capote, and I could feel it trickling down my back, and I told Dufrain, in Indian, that I must go out, and asked him not to let my bowl be tipped over while I was gone. The Indians laughed, and I hastily made my exit, threw the pieces of meat to the dogs, and then, thrusting my fingers down my throat, endeavored to produce an eruption which should provide room for what I still had to swallow; failing in this attempt, however, I returned to my place in

95

The Autobiography of

the lodge, and by persistent effort finally succeeded in swallowing the remainder.

The ceremony of gathering the bones was then gone through with by the head of the lodge picking them up very carefully and depositing them in a bowl, then another harangue, and we were left to chat and barter as suited us best.

From these Indians we learned of two camps situated in opposite directions, and from them engaged a guide to go with one of our men to one camp, and from there to another, we had before known of, and to return home, where we were to meet him. Dufrain, being well acquainted with the country, felt confident that he could go directly to the other camp in one day's travel, and I decided to go with him. When we lay down it was snowing hard, which continued through the night. We arose as usual before dawn of day, and partook of a nice dish of corn soup, which had been prepared for us by the good squaw in whose lodge we had slept, and as soon as possible started. The snow continued falling, and being soft struck to our snow-shoes and made the traveling very hard and fatiguing, and by ten o'clock I discovered that my companion was in doubt as to our whereabouts, and at noon we halted near a large fallen tree to strike fire for a smoke. When I asked him if we should reach the camps that night, his reply was that we should have reached the river by that time,

96

Burbon Saltonstall Hubbard

which would have been more than half way. He said he did not know where we were, the woods looked strange, but perhaps that was because there was so much snow on the trees. It had then stopped snowing, though with no appearance of clearing off.

Soon after we started the storm again commenced harder than ever, and I clearly saw that we were not going in the right direction, and ventured to tell Dufrain so. He was very passionate, and replied sharply that if I knew the way better than he I had better take the lead; thus rebuked, I followed on in silence. About four o'clock we found two tracks of snow-shoes. "Ah," said Dufrain, "you see we are right; these tracks are of to-day; there is new snow on them; had they been of yesterday they would have been covered over so we could not see them; they were made by hunters from the camps this morning, but we can't go further than the river to-night. We will take the back tracks and they will lead us to the camps."

It so happened that during the earlier part of the day I had noticed a peculiar leaning tree, which was now in sight, and I told him we were lost, and would soon reach the log where we had stopped at noon. He could not believe that I was right, and on we went, but before dark he was convinced by our reaching the same log, and there we camped for the night. We both slept soundly, and arose

97

The Autobiography of

refreshed. The snow still falling, we hesitated for some time, undecided whether to take our back track to the camp we had left, or to strike for the river in the direction we thought it to be. Knowing that if the snow continued, of which there was every prospect, our tracks would soon be obliterated, and Dufrain feeling confident that we could find the river and then know where we were, we decided to proceed. We traveled all day, and camped at night without having reached it. Again, another day's weary tramp with the same result, and Dufrain was willing to admit that he had no idea where we were. We still held our course, and again laid down to sleep, very tired and hungry.

The following day Dufrain became very weak, and was much frightened; still snowy, clouded, and dark; snow fully three feet deep. When we started the next morning, the clouds were breaking away, and by nine o'clock, the sun burst forth for the first time since we left the Indian camp. We then saw we were traveling a westerly course, and changed to the north. Dufrain was very weak, and our progress was necessarily very slow. Near a creek we found a thorn-apple tree, and removing the snow from the ground, found a few apples, which we devoured with a relish, and soon after struck the Muskegon River. Following up the river, we discovered on the opposite bank the poles of an Indian lodge, bark canoes, and a scaffold upon which was

Burdon Saltontall Hubbard

deposited matting for covering lodges. It was very cold, the river full of floating ice, and not fordable. Dufrain recognized the spot, and said that a half mile above were rapids, where the river could be forded. Having reached the rapids we crossed with great difficulty, the water in places being up to our waists, and the ice floating against us. When we reached the scaffold, our clothes were frozen stiff. We took down some of the mats, cleared the snow, and made a comfortable lodge, sufficiently large to shelter us.

Dufrain carried the flint, steel, and tinder in a bag, and after we had gathered wood for a fire, he discovered that he had lost it. We were indeed in a serious predicament, covered with ice, and shivering with cold; we supposed that we should certainly freeze to death. Dufrain abandoned all hope, and began to cross himself and say his prayers. I opened the bales of goods, and took from them what blankets and cloth they contained, cut more hemlock boughs, and took down more matting, and then we lay down close to each other, and covered up with the blankets and cloth. Soon the ice on our clothing began to thaw from the warmth of our bodies, and we fell asleep, never waking until sunrise.

We did not feel hungry, but were very weak, and neither felt inclined to move. We were dry and warm, and felt more like lying where we were and awaiting death than of making

The Autobiography of

any further effort to save our lives. We knew the Indians could not be far away, and supposed we might soon find a snow-shoe path which would lead us to their lodges, but were not capable of making the effort to save ourselves. My own reflections of the responsibility resting upon me, and thoughts of my widowed mother, brother and sisters, finally nerved me to make an effort. I told Dufrain that we must get up and go to the camps, and that I would go and reconnoitre, find the path and return for him; to my great disappointment, however, I could find no snow-shoe tracks; but after a careful search I discovered some small saplings broken off just above the snow, and could, by the feeling as I stepped, discover that there was a path under the newly fallen snow. I followed it for a short distance, when I saw a blaze on a tree, and knew that I was going in the right direction to find the camps. I returned for my companion, whom I found sleeping, and seeming not to have moved during my absence. With great difficulty I aroused him and put on his snow-shoes, and then, having placed both packs upon the scaffold, started on the march. I had much trouble in keeping the path, which I followed by the broken twigs and an occasional blaze on a tree, and our progress was very slow. About noon we struck a fresh snow-shoe track, and this gave me renewed energy, for I knew it had been made by a hunter from the Indian

100

Burdon Saltonstall Hubbard

camps, and that by following the back track I should reach the lodges. Dufrain was not in the least moved by this good fortune; in fact, was stupid and inclined to stop, frequently crossed himself, while his lips moved as if in prayer, and it required much effort and persuasion on my part to get him to move slowly forward, he frequently protesting that he could not move another step.

Intent on my progress, and for a time forgetting my comrade, I advanced as rapidly as possible, and on looking around for Dufrain, I found he was not in sight; I deliberated a moment whether to return for him or continue on my way. My own strength was fast failing, and I feared that delay would be certain death. I resolved, however, to make a last effort, and turned back; I found him lying asleep in the snow. I tried to arouse him, but he would open his eyes but for a moment, and say, "I can't; leave me." Finding my attempts useless, I dug away the snow, wrapped him in his blanket, with mine over him, and left him.

I started forward conscious that I myself might soon be in the same condition, though determined not to give up while there was a hope. I felt no hunger, but was very weak; the perspiration ran from every pore, and at times everything seemed to waiver before me, with momentary darkness. I seemed almost to faint; still I moved on, reeling like a drunken man. Coming to new tracks, and hearing the

101

The Autobiography of

barking of a dog, told me I was nearing a lodge, and gave me new strength to advance. Soon I was gladdened by the glimpse of a lodge, and a few minutes more was seated on a bearskin within. It was a solitary hut on the bank of a creek, and in it was a middle-aged Indian, with his arm bandaged, and his squaw with three or four young children. I sat and awaited the usual custom of the Indians to set before a stranger something to eat, but seeing no move in that direction, I told the squaw that I was hungry and had not eaten for four days and nights. She exclaimed: "Nin guid buck-a-ta-minna baain" (we too are hungry; my husband broke his arm). She opened a sack and took out a small portion of pounded corn, which she stirred into a kettle of water and placed over the fire to boil, and soon as it was ready gave me a very small quantity, about half a pint, and replaced the kettle over the fire.

I supposed I was hungry, though I did not feel so, and supping a little from the wooden dish found it difficult to swallow. This frightened me and I lay down and slept.

I was awakened by the squaw, who gave me more soup from the kettle, which I ate with a relish and asked for more. "No," she said, "lie down and sleep, and I will awake you and give you more after awhile." This I did, and was awakened after dark refreshed but very sore and lame; took what soup was

102

Durdon Saltongrall Hubbard

given me, and still wanting more; she refused me, saying, "after a little"; and that she knew best how to relieve me.

I noticed that the children frequently went out of doors, and that there was a look of anxiety on the countenances of both the Indian and squaw, which I thought was on my account; but asking, he replied that his oldest son went out early in the morning to try to kill something for them to eat, and they were fearful some accident had befallen him.

Up to this time I had not spoken of Durfrain, because I saw there was no one to go for him, and had there been, he could not have been reached before dark. The moon would rise about midnight, and then I had determined to ask the squaw to go with me for him, though I had no idea of finding him alive. They were well acquainted with him, and on my telling them of his situation the squaw parched what corn she had left, pounded it and got it ready, and we made preparations to go after him.

The squaw and her husband both thought that their son had gone to the river to see if the canoe and scaffold were safe, and that it was his track that I had followed to the camp. While we were discussing this idea, the dogs barked; the children ran out, and soon returned with the news that their brother had returned; and he soon entered, bearing a cub, whereat there was great rejoicing. It being the first

103

The Autobiography of

of the larger animals he had ever killed, it must be offered to the Great Spirit as a thank offering, and the boy must fast for two days. The father sat up and beat a drum; the boy blackened his face, the bear was skinned, and preparations made for a feast, though fortunately the feast was not to be similar to the one I had attended shortly before, when all was to be eaten.

After hearing who I was, and that Jaco (Dufrain's Indian name) had been left behind, the boy volunteered to go with me in search of him; and when the moon rose, though I was scarcely able to move, we started. The Indian and his wife protested against my going, insisting that the boy and his mother could go without me, and I should gladly have consented to remain had I not known that if my comrade was found alive no one but me could get him to make an attempt to move.

The boy in his hunting had made a long detour, and on my describing the place where I had left Dufrain, he was able to reach it by a much shorter route than by following his tracks as I had done. In about an hour we reached Dufrain and found him apparently lifeless, but still warm. By much effort we aroused him so that he could speak, but he persisted in remaining where he was, said he was stiff and could not walk, and closed his eyes and again dropped to sleep. It required our utmost effort to raise him to his feet,

104

Burdon Salmonstall Hubbard

and by short stages to finally reach the camp just as the sun rose.

We made him as comfortable as possible, and by feeding him a little every few minutes revived him. His feet and legs were badly swollen, so much so that I was obliged to rip his leggings to get them off; his feet were in a most terrible condition; the strings of his snow-shoes had so bruised his toes that blood had oozed out and completely saturated the neips; and, to add to his misery, the poor fellow was ruptured, and it was several days before I could replace the protruding parts. He gained slowly, and it was a week before he could sit up; and despairing of his restoration so as to be able to bear the journey home, with the assistance of the boy and his mother I constructed a *train-de-chese* on which to remove him.

During my ten days' stay I had daily caught in traps from one to a dozen partridges; and these, added to what the boy had killed, furnished us a sufficiency of food, though at times our rations were limited.

I finally got my sled fully rigged, though my friend was still unable to sit up more than an hour at a time. We had already spent more than ten days, and I felt that I could remain no longer, and a decision must be made, either to leave him and return for him, or draw him on the sled to our home. The old Indian said we might accomplish his re-

105

The Autobiography of

movial; but he thought it extremely doubtful, the country being very hilly and covered with underbrush. I left it to Dufrain to decide, and as he chose to go, I started, with the young Indian to assist me. We had a terrible journey over hills and through thick undergrowth, and after three days of most severe toil reached our trading house, our invalid having borne the journey remarkably well.

The other party had only returned two days before, and all were anxious about us, and were about organizing an expedition to go in search of us. I was almost worn out from the hardships I had endured and from dragging my comrade.

Dufrain never left our cabin until we carried him to a canoe in the spring to start for Mackinaw. There was a light wind the day we started and the motion of the canoe caused vomiting, and before we could reach a harbor at White River he died, and we buried him in the bluff. He was very fond of card-playing during his life, and some Indians having camped on the bluffs where we buried him reported that at night they heard his voice calling out the name of the cards as he played them, "corno" (diamond), "cune" (heart), etc.; and though the river was a great resort for the Indians in the spring, where they used the peculiar white clay for washing their blankets, for years after they avoided it, believing it to be haunted.

106

Durbon Saltontall Hubbard

KALAMAZOO RIVER.—COSA.—AN ACCIDENT.—A VISIT.—WOLF STORIES.—CROOKED CREEK.

We were among the very first of the traders to reach Mackinaw, and after making my returns to Mr. Stewart I was detailed for a time to the retail store. On Mr. Matthews' return from Montreal I was assigned to duty under him in the assorting and packing house, where the business was conducted in the same manner as previously described, and lasted until the last of July or first of August.

My third winter was spent on the Kalamazoo River, in Michigan, my trading house being on the north bank of the river, and opposite the present city of Kalamazoo, and for the first time I had full control of an "outfit."

My crew consisted of three Canadians, who were accustomed to trading at that post, and an Indian named Cosa, well and favorably known among the Indians for bravery and intelligence. He had years before abandoned hunting, preferring to engage for the winter with some one of the regular traders as an ordinary man or *voyageur*. He received one hundred dollars for his winter's service, which was considered a high price for so short a time, and was as much as two Canadians received for a whole year. But as he was perfectly familiar with the country, and well acquainted

107