The World of Ice
Vol.I

By
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The World of Ice

Chapter One.

Some of the dramatis personae IntroducedRetrospective GlancesCauses of Future EffectsOur Hero’s Early Life at SeaA PirateA Terrible Fight and its ConsequencesBuzzby’s Helm Lashed AmidshipsA Whaling Cruise Begun.

Nobody ever caught John Buzzby asleep by any chance whatever. No weasel was ever half so sensitive on that point as he was. Wherever he happened to be (and in the course of his adventurous life he had been to nearly all parts of the known world) he was the first awake in the morning and the last asleep at night; he always answered promptly to the first call, and was never known by any man living to have been seen with his eyes shut, except when he winked, and that operation he performed less frequently than other men.

John Buzzby was an old salta regular true-blue jack tar of the old school, who had been born and bred at sea; had visited foreign parts innumerable; had weathered more storms than he could count, and had witnessed more strange sights than he could remember. He was tough, and sturdy, and grizzled, and broad, and square, and massivea first-rate specimen of a John Bull, and, according to himself, “always kept his weather-eye open.” This remark of his was apt to create confusion in the minds of his hearers, for John meant the expression to be understood figuratively, while, in point of fact, he almost always kept one of his literal eyes open and the other partially closed, but as he reversed the order of arrangement frequently, he might have been said to

keep his lee-eye as much open as the weather one. This peculiarity gave to his countenance an expression of earnest thoughtfulness mingled with humour. Buzzby was fond of being thought old, and he looked much older than he really was. Men guessed his age at fifty-five, but they were ten years out in their reckoning, for John had numbered only forty-five summers, and was as tough and muscular as ever he had beenalthough not quite so elastic.

John Buzzby stood on the pier of the seaport town of Grayton watching the active operations of the crew of a whaling ship which was on the point of starting for the icebound seas of the frozen regions, and making sundry remarks to a stout, fair-haired boy of fifteen, who stood by his side gazing at the ship with an expression of deep sadness.

“She’s a trim-built craft and a good sea-boat, I’ll be bound, Master Fred,” observed the sailor, “but she’s too small by half, accordin’ to my notions, and I have seen a few whalers in my day. Them bow-timbers, too, are scarce thick enough for goin’ bump agin the ice o’ Davis Straits. Howsome’iver, I’ve seen worse craft drivin’ a good trade in the Polar Seas.”

“She’s a first-rate craft in all respects, and you have too high an opinion of your own judgment,” replied the youth indignantly. “Do you suppose that my father, who is an older man than yourself, and as good a sailor, would buy a ship, and fit her out, and go off to the whale-fishery in her if he did not think her a good one?”

“Ah! Master Fred, you’re a chip of the old blockneck or nothingcarry on all sail till you tear the masts out of her! Reef the t’gallant sails of your temper, boy, and don’t run foul of an old man who has been all but a wet-nurse to yetaught ye to walk, and swim, and pull an oar, and build ships, and has hauled ye out o’ the sea when ye fell infrom the time ye could barely stump along on two legs, lookin’ like as if ye was more nor half seas over.”

“Well, Buzzby,” replied the boy, laughing, “if you’ve been all that to me, I think you have been a wet-nurse too! But why do you run down my father’s ship? Do you think I’m going to stand that? No, not even from you, old boy.”

“Hallo! youngster,” shouted a voice from the deck of the vessel in question, “run up and tell your father we’re all ready, and if he don’t make haste he’ll lose the tide, so he will, and that’ll make us have to start on a Friday, it will, an’ that’ll not do for me no how, it won’t; so make sail and look sharp about it, dowon’t you?”

“What a tongue he’s got,” remarked Buzzby. “Before I’d go to sea with a first mate who jawed like that I’d be a landsman. Don’t ever you git to talk too much, Master Fred, wotever ye do. My maxim isand it has served me through

life, uncommon,‘Keep your weather-eye open and your tongue housed ’xcept when you’ve got occasion to use it.’ If that fellow’d use his eyes more and his tongue less he’d see your father comin’ down the road there, right before the wind; with his old sister in tow.”

“How I wish he would have let me go with him!” muttered Fred to himself sorrowfully.

“No chance now, I’m a-feared,” remarked his companion. “The gov’nor’s as stiff as a nor’wester. Nothin’ in the world can turn him once he’s made up his mind but a regular sou’easter. Now, if you had been my son, and yonder tight craft my ship, I would have said, come, at once. But your father knows best, lad, and you’re a wise son to obey orders cheerfully, without question. That’s another o’ my maxims: ‘Obey orders an’ ax no questions.’”

Frederick Ellice, senior, who now approached, whispering words of consolation into the ear of his weeping sister, might, perhaps, have just numbered fifty years. He was a fine, big, bold, hearty Englishman, with a bald head, grizzled locks, a loud but not harsh voice, a rather quick temper, and a kind, earnest, enthusiastic heart. Like Buzzby, he had spent nearly all his life at sea, and had become so thoroughly accustomed to walking on an unstable foundation that he felt quite uncomfortable on solid ground, and never remained more than a few months at a time on shore. He was a man of good education and gentlemanly manners, and had worked his way up in the merchant service step by step until he obtained the command of a West India trader.

A few years previous to the period in which our tale opens, an event occurred which altered the course of Captain Ellice’s life, and for a long period plunged him into the deepest affliction. This was the loss of his wife at sea, under peculiarly distressing circumstances.

At the age of thirty Captain Ellice had married a pretty blue-eyed girl, who resolutely refused to become a sailor’s bride unless she should be permitted to accompany her husband to sea. This was without much difficulty agreed to, and forthwith Alice Bremner became Mrs Ellice, and went to sea. It was during her third voyage to the West Indies that our hero, Fred, was born, and it was during this and succeeding voyages that Buzzby became “all but a wet-nurse” to him.

Mrs Ellice was a loving, gentle, seriously-minded woman. She devoted herself, heart and soul, to the training of her boy, and spent many a pleasant hour in that little unsteady cabin, in endeavouring to instil into his infant mind the blessed truths of Christianity, and in making the name of Jesus familiar to

his ear. As Fred grew older his mother encouraged him to hold occasional intercourse with the sailors, for her husband's example taught her the value of a bold, manly spirit, and she knew that it was impossible for her to instil that into him, but she was careful to guard him from the evil that he might chance to learn from the men, by committing him to the tender care of Buzzby. To do the men justice, however, this was almost unnecessary, for they felt that a mother's watchful eye was on the child, and no unguarded word fell from their lips while he was romping about the forecastle.

When it was time for Fred to go to school, Mrs Ellice gave up her roving life and settled in her native town of Grayton, where she resided with her widowed sister, Amelia Bright, and her niece Isobel. Here Fred received the rudiments of an excellent education at a private academy. At the age of twelve, however, Master Fred became restive, and, during one of his father's periodical visits home, begged to be taken to sea. Captain Ellice agreed; Mrs Ellice insisted on accompanying them, and in a few weeks they were once again on their old home, the ocean, and Fred was enjoying his native air in company with his friend Buzzby, who stuck to the old ship like one of her own stout timbers.

But this was destined to be a disastrous voyage. One evening, after crossing the line, they descried a suspicious-looking schooner to windward, bearing down upon them under a cloud of canvas.

"What do you think of her, Buzzby?" enquired Captain Ellice, handing his glass to the seaman.

Buzzby gazed in silence and with compressed lips for some time; then he returned the glass, at the same time muttering the word: "Pirate."

"I thought so," said the captain in a deep, unsteady voice. "There is but one course for us, Buzzby," he continued, glancing towards his wife, who, all unconscious of their danger, sat near the taffrail employed with her needle; "these fellows show no mercy, because they expect none either from God or man. We must fight to the last. Go, prepare the men and get out the arms. I'll tell my wife."

Buzzby went forward, but the captain's heart failed him, and he took two or three rapid, hesitating turns on the quarter-deck ere he could make up his mind to speak.

"Alice," he said at length abruptly, "yonder vessel is a pirate."

Mrs Ellice looked up in surprise, and her face grew pale as her eye met the troubled gaze of her husband.

“Are you quite sure, Frederick?”

“Yes, quite. Would God that I were left alone tobutnay, do not be alarmed; perhaps I am wrong; it may be aa clipper-built trading vessel. If not, Alice, we must make some show of fighting, and try to frighten them. Meanwhile you must go below.”

The captain spoke encouragingly as he led his wife to the cabin, but his candid countenance spoke too truthfully, and she felt that his look of anxious concern bade her fear the worst.

Pressing her fervently to his heart, Captain Ellice sprang on deck.

By this time the news had spread through the ship, and the crew, consisting of upwards of thirty men, were conversing earnestly in knots of four or five while they sharpened and buckled on cutlasses, or loaded pistols and carbines.

“Send the men aft, Mr Thompson,” said the captain, as he paced the deck to and fro, casting his eyes occasionally on the schooner, which was rapidly nearing the vessel. “Take another pull at these main-topsail-halyards, and send the steward down below for my sword and pistols. Let the men look sharp; we’ve no time to lose, and hot work is before us.”

“I will go for your sword, Father,” cried Fred, who had just come on deck.

“Boy, boy, you must go below; you can be of no use here.”

“But, Father, you know that I’m not afraid.”

“I know that, boy; I know it well; but you’re too young to fight; you’re not strong enough; besides, you must comfort and cheer your mother, she may want you.”

“I am old enough and strong enough to load and fire a pistol, Father; and I heard one of the men say we would need all the hands on board, and more if we had them; besides, it was my mother who told me what was going on, and sent me on deck to help you to fight.”

A momentary gleam of pride lit up the countenance of the captain as he said hastily: “You may stay, then,” and turned towards the men, who now stood assembled on the quarterdeck.

Addressing the crew in his own blunt, vigorous style, he said: “Lads, yon rascally schooner is a pirate, as you all know well enough. I need not ask you if you are ready to fightI see by your looks you are. But that’s not enoughyou must make up your minds to fight well. You know that pirates give no quarter.

I see the decks are swarming with men. If you don't go at them like bull-dogs you'll walk the plank before sunset, every man of you. Now, go forward, and double-shot your muskets and pistols, and stick as many of the latter into your belts as they will hold. Mr Thompson, let the gunner double-shot the four big guns, and load the little carronade with musket balls to the muzzle. If they do try to board us they'll get a warm reception."

"There goes a shot, sir," said Buzzby, pointing towards the piratical schooner, from the side of which a white cloud burst and a round shot ricochetted over the sea, passing close ahead of the ship.

"Ay, that's a request for us to lay-to," said the captain bitterly, "but we won't. Keep her away a point."

"Ay, ay, sir," sung out the man at the wheel. A second and third shot were fired, but passed unheeded, and the captain, fully expecting that the next would be fired into them, ordered the men below.

"We can't afford to lose a man, Mr Thompson; send them all down."

"Please, sir, may I remain?" said Buzzby, touching his hat.

"Obey orders," answered the captain sternly. The sailor went below with a sulky fling.

For nearly an hour the two vessels cut through the water before a steady breeze, during which time the fast-sailing schooner gradually overhauled the heavy West-Indiaman, until she approached within speaking distance. Still Captain Ellice paid no attention to her, but stood with compressed lips beside the man at the wheel, gazing alternately at the sails of his vessel and at the windward horizon, where he fancied he saw indications that led him to hope the breeze would fail ere long.

As the schooner drew nearer, a man leaped on the hammock-nettings, and, putting a trumpet to his mouth, sang out lustily: "Ship ahoy, where are you from and what's your cargo?"

Captain Ellice made no reply, but ordered four of his men on deck to point one of the stern-chasers.

Again the voice came harshly across the waves, as if in passion: "Heave to, or I'll sink you." At the same moment the black flag was run up to the peak, and a shot passed between the main and fore-mast.

"Stand by to point this gun," said the captain in a subdued voice.

“Ay, ay, sir!”

“Fetch a red-hot iron; luff, luff a littlea little moresteady, so.” At the last word there was a puff and a roar, and an iron messenger flew towards the schooner. The gun had been fired more as a reply of defiance to the pirate than with the hope of doing him any damage, but the shot had been well aimedit cut the schooner’s main-sail-yard in two and brought it rattling down on deck. Instantly the pirate yawed and delivered a broadside, but in the confusion on deck the guns were badly aimed, and none took effect. The time lost in this manoeuvre, added to the crippled condition of the schooner, enabled the West-Indiaman to gain considerably on her antagonist, but the pirate kept up a well-directed fire with his bow-chasers, and many of the shots struck the hull and cut the rigging seriously. As the sun descended towards the horizon the wind fell gradually, and ceased at length altogether, so that both vessels lay rolling on the swell with their sails flapping idly against the masts.

“They’re a gittin’ out the boats, sir,” remarked John Buzzby, who, unable to restrain himself any longer, had crept upon deck at the risk of another reprimand; “and, if my eyes be’nt deceiving me, there’s a sail on the horizon to wind’ardleastways, the direction which wos wind’ard afore it fell calm.”

“She’s bringing a breeze along with her,” remarked the captain, “but I fear the boats will come up before it reaches us. There are three in the water and manned already. There they come. Now, then, call up all hands.”

In a few seconds the crew of the West-Indiaman were at their stations ready for action, and Captain Ellice, with Fred at his elbow, stood beside one of the stern-chasers. Meanwhile, the boats of the piratefive in numberpulled away in different directions, evidently with the intention of attacking the ship at different points. They were full of men armed to the teeth. While they rowed towards the ship the schooner resumed its fire, and one ball cut away the spanker boom and slightly wounded two of the men with splinters. The guns of the ship were now brought to bear on the boats, but without effect, although the shot plunged into the water all round them. As they drew nearer a brisk fire of musketry was opened on them, and the occasional falling of an oar and confusion on board showed that the shots told. The pirates replied vigorously, but without effect, as the men of the ship were sheltered by the bulwarks.

“Pass the word to load and reserve fire,” said the captain, “and hand me a musket, Fred. Load again as fast as I fire.” So saying, the captain took aim and fired at the steersman of the largest boat, which pulled towards the stern. “Another, Fred”

At this moment a withering volley was poured upon the boat, and a savage

yell of agony followed, while the rowerswho remained unhurtpaused for an instant as if paralysed. Next instant they recovered, and another stroke would have brought them almost alongside, when Captain Ellice pointed the little carronade and fired. There was a terrific crash, the gun recoiled violently to the other side of the deck, and the pirate boat sank, leaving the sea covered with dead and wounded men. A number, however, who seemed to bear charmed lives, seized their cutlasses with their teeth and swam boldly for the ship. This incident, unfortunately, attracted too much of the attention of the crew, and, ere they could prevent it, another boat reached the bow of the ship, the crew of which sprang up the side like cats, formed on the forecastle, and poured a volley upon the men.

“Follow me, lads,” shouted the captain, as he sprang forward like a tiger. The first man he reached fell by a ball from his pistol; in another moment the opposing parties met in a hand-to-hand conflict. Meanwhile Fred, having been deeply impressed with the effect of the shot from the little carronade, succeeded in raising and reloading it. He had scarcely accomplished this when one of the boats reached the larboard quarter, and two of the men sprang up the side. Fred observed them, and felled the first with a handspike before he reached the deck, but the pirate who instantly followed would have killed him had he not been observed by the second mate, who had prevented several of the men from joining in the mêlée on the forecastle in order to meet such an emergency as this. Rushing to the rescue with his party, he drove the pirates back into the boat, which was immediately pulled towards the bow, where the other two boats were now grappling and discharging their crews on the forecastle. Although the men of the West-Indiaman fought with desperate courage, they could not stand before the increasing numbers of pirates who now crowded the forepart of the ship in a dense mass. Gradually they were beaten back, and at length were brought to bay on the quarter-deck.

“Help, Father!” cried Fred, pushing through the struggling crowd, “here’s the carronade ready loaded.”

“Ha! boy, well done!” cried the captain, seizing the gun, and, with the help of Buzzby, who never left his side, dragging it forward. “Clear the way, lads!”

In a moment the little cannon was pointed to the centre of the mass of men and fired. One awful shriek of agony rose above the din of the fight, as a wide gap was cut through the crowd; but this only seemed to render the survivors more furious. With a savage yell they charged the quarter-deck, but were hurled back again and again by the captain, and a few chosen men who stood around him. At length one of the pirates, who had been all along conspicuous for his strength and daring, stepped deliberately up, and, pointing a pistol at the captain’s breast, fired. Captain Ellice fell, and at the same moment a ball laid

the pirate low; another charge was made; Fred rushed forward to protect his father, but was thrown down and trodden under foot in the rush, and in two minutes more the ship was in possession of the pirates.

Being filled with rage at the opposition they had met with, these villains proceeded, as they said, to make short work of the crew, while several of them sprang into the cabin, where they discovered Mrs Ellice almost dead with terror. Dragging her violently on deck, they were about to cast her into the sea, when Buzzby, who stood with his hands bound, suddenly burst his bonds and sprang towards her. A blow from the butt of a pistol, however, stretched him insensible on the deck.

“Where is my husband?my boy?” screamed Mrs Ellice wildly.

“They’ve gone before you, or they’ll soon follow,” said a savage fiercely, as he raised her in his powerful arms and hurled her overboard. A loud shriek was followed by a heavy plunge. At the same moment two of the men raised the captain, intending to throw him overboard also, when a loud boom arrested their attention, and a cannon-shot ploughed up the sea close in front of their bows.

While the fight was raging, no one had observed the fact that the breeze had freshened, and a large man-of-war, with American colours at her peak, was now within gunshot of the ship. No sooner did the pirates make this discovery than they rushed to their boats, with the intention of pulling to their schooner, but those who had been left in charge, seeing the approach of the man-of-war, and feeling that there was no chance of escape for their comrades, or, as is more than probable, being utterly indifferent about them, crowded all sail and slipped away, and it was now hull-down on the horizon to leeward. The men in the boats rowed after her with the energy of despair, but the Americans gave chase, and we need scarcely add that, in a very short time, all were captured.

When the man-of-war rejoined the West-Indiaman, the night had set in and a stiff breeze had arisen, so that the long and laborious search that was made for the body of poor Mrs Ellice proved utterly fruitless. Captain Ellice, whose wound was very severe, was struck down as if by a thunderbolt, and for a long time his life was despaired of. During his illness Fred nursed him with the utmost tenderness, and, in seeking to comfort his father, found some relief to his own stricken heart.

Months passed away. Captain Ellice was conveyed to the residence of his sister in Grayton, and, under her care, and the nursing of his little niece, Isobel, he recovered his wonted health and strength. To the eyes of men Captain Ellice and his son were themselves again, but those who judge of

men’s hearts by their outward appearance and expressions, in nine cases out of ten judge very wide of the mark indeed. Both had undergone a great change. The brilliancy and glitter of this world had been completely and rudely dispelled, and both had been led to enquire whether there was not something better to live for than mere present advantage and happiness; something that would stand by them in those hours of sickness and sorrow which must inevitably, sooner or later, come upon all men.

But Captain Ellice could not be induced to resume the command of his old ship or voyage again to the West Indies. He determined to change the scene of his future labours and sail to the frozen seas, where the aspect of every objecteven the ocean itselfwould be very unlikely to recall the circumstances of his loss.

Some time after his recovery, Captain Ellice purchased a brig and fitted her out as a whaler, determined to try his fortune in the northern seas. Fred pleaded hard to be taken out, but his father felt that he had more need to go to school than to sea; so he refused, and Fred, after sighing very deeply once or twice, gave in with a good grace. Buzzby, too, who stuck to his old commander like a leech, was equally anxious to go, but Buzzby, in a sudden and unaccountable fit of tenderness, had, just two months before, married a wife, who might be appropriately described as “fat, fair, and forty,” and Buzzby’s wife absolutely forbade him to go. Alas! Buzzby was no longer his own master. At the age of forty-five he becameas he himself expressed itan abject slave, and he would as soon have tried to steer in a slipper bath right in the teeth of an equinoctial hurricane as have opposed the will of his wife. He used to sigh gruffly when spoken to on this subject, and compare himself to a Dutch galliot that made more lee-way than head-way, even with a wind on the quarter. “Once,” he would remark, “I was clipper-built and could sail right in the wind’s eye, but ever since I tuck this craft in tow I’ve gone to leeward like a tub. In fact, I find there’s only one way of going ahead with my Poll, and that is right before the wind! I used to yaw about a good deal at first, but she tuck that out o’ me in a day or two. If I put the helm only so much as one stroke to starboard, she guv’ a tug at the tow-rope that brought the wind dead aft again; so I’ve gi’n it up, and lashed the tiller right amidships.”

So Buzzby did not accompany his old commander; he did not even so much as suggest the possibility of it, but he shook his head with great solemnity as he stood with Fred, and Mrs Bright, and Isobel, at the end of the pier, gazing at the brig, with one eye very much screwed up, and a wistful expression in the other, while the graceful craft spread out her canvas and bent over to the breeze.

Chapter Two.

Departure of the Pole Star for the Frozen SeasSage reflections of Mrs Bright, and sagacious remarks of BuzzbyAnxieties, fears, surmises, and resolutionsIsobelA search proposedDeparture of the Dolphin for the Far North.

Digressions are bad at the best, and we feel some regret that we should have been compelled to begin our book with one; but they are necessary evils, sometimes, so we must ask our reader's forgiveness, and beg him, or her, to remember that we are still at the commencement of our story, standing at the end of the pier, and watching the departure of the Pole Star whale-ship, which is now a scarcely distinguishable speck on the horizon.

As it disappeared Buzzby gave a grunt, Fred and Isobel uttered a sigh in unison, and Mrs Bright resumed the fit of weeping which for some time she had unconsciously suspended.

"I fear we shall never see him again," sobbed Mrs Bright, as she took Isobel by the hand and sauntered slowly home, accompanied by Fred and Buzzby, the latter of whom seemed to regard himself in the light of a shaggy Newfoundland or mastiff, who had been left to protect the family. "We are always hearing of whale-ships being lost, and, somehow or other, we never hear of the crews being saved, as one reads of when ships are wrecked in the usual way on the sea-shore."

Isobel squeezed her mother's hand, and looked up in her face with an expression that said plainly: "Don't cry so, Mamma, I'm sure he will come back," but she could not find words to express herself, so she glanced towards the mastiff for help.

Buzzby felt that it devolved upon him to afford consolation under the circumstances, but Mrs Bright's mind was of that peculiar stamp which repels advances in the way of consolation unconsciously, and Buzzby was puzzled. He screwed up first the right eye and then the left, and smote his thigh repeatedly; and assuredly, if contorting his visage could have comforted Mrs Bright, she would have returned home a happy woman, for he made faces at her violently for full five minutes; but it did her no good, perhaps because she didn't see him, her eyes being suffused with tears.

"Ah! yes," resumed Mrs Bright, with another burst, "I know they will never come back, and your silence shows that you think so too; and to think of their taking two years' provisions with them in case of accidents!doesn't that prove that there are going to be accidents? and didn't I hear one of the sailors say that she was a crack ship, a number one? I don't know what he meant by a number one; but if she's a cracked ship I know she will never come back; and

although I told my dear brother of it, and advised him not to go, he only laughed at me, which was very unkind, I'm sure"

Here Mrs Bright's feelings overcame her again.

"Why, Aunt," said Fred, scarce able to restrain a laugh, despite the sadness that lay at his heart, "when the sailor said it was a crack ship, he meant that it was a good one, a first-rate one."

"Then why did he not say what he meant? But you are talking nonsense, boy; do you think that I will believe a man means to say a thing is good when he calls it cracked? and I'm sure nobody would say a cracked tea-pot was as good as a whole one; but tell me, Buzzby, do you think they ever will come back?"

"Why, ma'am, in coorse I do," replied Buzzby vehemently; "for why? if they don't, they're the first that ever went out o' this port in my day as didn't. They've a good ship and lots o' grub, and it's like to be a good season; and Captain Ellice has, for the most part, good luck; and they've started with a fair wind, and kep' clear of a Friday, and what more could ye wish? I only wish as I was aboard along with them, that's all."

Buzzby delivered himself of this oration with the left eye shut and screwed up, and the right one open. Having concluded, he shut and screwed up the right eye, and opened the lefthe reversed the engine, so to speak, as if he wished to back out from the scene of his triumph and leave the course clear for others to speak. But his words were thrown away on Mrs Bright, who was emphatically a weak-minded woman, and never exercised her reason at all, except in a spasmodic, galvanic sort of way, when she sought to defend or to advocate some unreasonable conclusion of some sort, at which her own weak mind had arrived somehow. So she shook her head, and sobbed good-bye to Buzzby, as she ascended the sloping avenue that led to her pretty cottage on the green hill that overlooked the harbour and the sea beyond.

As for John Buzzby, having been absent from home full half an hour beyond his usual dinner-hour, he felt that, for a man who had lashed his helm amidships, he was yawing alarmingly out of his course, so he spread all the canvas he could carry, and steered, right before the wind, towards the village, where, in a little, whitewashed, low-roofed, one-doored and two-little-windowed cottage, his spouse (and dinner) awaited him.

To make a long story short, three years passed away, but the Pole Star did not return, and no news of her could be got from the various whale-ships that visited the port of Grayton. Towards the end of the second year Buzzby began to shake his head despondingly; and as the third drew to a close, the expression of gloom never left his honest, weather-beaten face. Mrs Bright

too, whose anxiety at first was only half genuine, now became seriously alarmed, and the fate of the missing brig began to be the talk of the neighbourhood. Meanwhile Fred Ellice and Isobel grew and improved in mind and body, but anxiety as to his father's fate rendered the former quite unable to pursue his studies, and he determined at last to procure a passage in a whale-ship, and go out in search of the brig.

It happened that the principal merchant and ship-owner in the town, Mr Singleton by name, was an intimate friend and old school-fellow of Captain Ellice, so Fred went boldly to him and proposed that a vessel should be fitted out immediately, and sent off to search for his father's brig. Mr Singleton smiled at the request, and pointed out the utter impossibility of his agreeing to it; but he revived Fred's sinking hopes by saying that he was about to send out a whaler to the northern seas at any rate, and that he would give orders to the captain to devote a portion of his time to the search, and, moreover, agreed to let Fred go as a passenger in company with his own son Tom.

Now Tom Singleton had been Fred's bosom friend and companion during his first year at school, but during the last two years he had been sent to the Edinburgh University to prosecute his medical studies, and the two friends had only met at rare intervals. It was with unbounded delight, therefore, that he found his old companion, now a youth of twenty, was to go out as surgeon of the ship, and he could scarce contain himself as he ran down to Buzzby's cottage to tell him the good news, and ask him to join.

Of course Buzzby was ready to go, and, what was of far greater importance in the matter, his wife threw no obstacle in the way. On the contrary, she undid the lashings of the helm with her own hand, and told her wondering partner, with a good-humoured (but firm) smile, to steer where he chose, and she would content herself with the society of the two young Buzzbys (both miniature facsimiles of their father), till he came back.

Once again a whale-ship prepared to sail from the port of Grayton, and once again Mrs Bright and Isobel stood on the pier to see her depart. Isobel was about thirteen now, and as pretty a girl, according to Buzzby, as you could meet with in any part of Britain. Her eyes were blue, and her hair nut-brown, and her charms of face and figure were enhanced immeasurably by an air of modesty and earnestness that went straight home to your heart, and caused you to adore her at once. Buzzby doated on her as if she were his only child, and felt a secret pride in being in some undefinable way her protector. Buzzby philosophised about her, too, after a strange fashion. "You see," he would say to Fred, "it's not that her figure-head is cut altogether after a parfect pattern; by no means, for I've seen pictur's and statues that wos better; but she carries her head a little down, d'ye see, Master Fred, and there's where it is; that's the

way I gauges the worth o' young women, jist accordin' as they carry their chins up or down. If their brows come well for'ard, and they seems to be lookin' at the ground they walk on, I knows their brains is firm stuff, and in good workin' order; but when I sees them carryin' their noses high out o' the water, as if they wos afeard o' catchin' sight o' their own feet, and their chins elewated so that a little boy standin' in front o' them couldn't see their faces nohow, I make pretty sure that t'other end is filled with a sort o' mush that's fit only to think o' dress and dancing."

On the present occasion Isobel's eyes were red and swollen, and by no means improved by weeping. Mrs Bright, too, although three years had done little to alter her character, seemed to be less demonstrative and much more sincere than usual in her grief at parting from Fred.

In a few minutes all was ready. Young Singleton and Buzzby having hastily but earnestly bade Mrs Bright and her daughter farewell, leaped on board. Fred lingered for a moment.

"Once more, dear Aunt," said he, "farewell! With God's blessing we shall come back soon. Write to me, darling Isobel, won't you? to Uppernavik, on the coast of Greenland. If none of our ships are bound in that direction write by way of Denmark. Old Mr Singleton will tell you how to address your letter, and see that it be a long one."

"Now, then, youngster, jump aboard," shouted the captain; "look sharp!"

"Ay, ay," returned Fred, and in another moment he was on the quarter-deck, by the side of his friend Tom.

The ship, loosed from her moorings, spread her canvas, and plunged forward on her adventurous voyage.

But this time she does not grow smaller as she advances before the freshening breeze, for you and I, reader, have embarked in her, and the land now fades in the distance, until it sinks from view on the distant horizon, while nothing meets our gaze but the vault of the bright blue sky above and the plain of the dark blue sea below.

Chapter Three.

The voyageThe Dolphin and her CrewIce AheadPolar ScenesMasthead ObservationsThe First WhaleGreat Excitement.

And now we have fairly got into blue waterthe sailor's delight, the landsman's dread

“The sea! the sea! the open sea;

The blue, the fresh, the ever free.”

“It’s my opinion,” remarked Buzzby to Singleton one day, as they stood at the weather gangway, watching the foam that spread from the vessel’s bow as she breasted the waves of the Atlantic gallantly,“It’s my opinion that our skipper is made o’ the right stuff. He’s entered quite into the spirit of the thing, and I hear’d him say to the first mate yesterday he’d made up his mind to run right up into Baffin’s Bay and make enquiries for Captain Ellice first, before goin’ to his usual whalin’-ground. Now that’s wot I call doin’ the right thing; for, ye see, he runs no small risk o’ gettin’ beset in the ice and losing the fishin’ season altogether by so doin’.”

“He’s a fine fellow,” said Singleton; “I like him better every day, and I feel convinced he will do his utmost to discover the whereabouts of our missing friend; but I fear much that our chances are small, for although we know the spot which Captain Ellice intended to visit, we cannot tell to what part of the frozen ocean ice and currents may have carried him.”

“True,” replied Buzzby, giving to his left eye and cheek just that peculiar amount of screw which indicated intense sagacity and penetration; “but I’ve a notion that, if they are to be found, Captain Guy is the man to find ’em.”

“I hope it may turn out as you say. Have you ever been in these seas before, Buzzby?”

“No, sirnever; but I’ve got a half-brother wot has bin in the Greenland whale-fishery, and I’ve bin in the south-sea line myself.”

“What line was that, Buzzby?” enquired David Summers, a sturdy boy of about fifteen, who acted as assistant steward, and was, in fact, a nautical maid-of-all-work. “Was it a log-line, or a bow-line, or a cod-line, or a bit of the equator?eh!”

The old salt deigned no reply to this passing sally, but continued his converse with Singleton.

“I could give ye many a long yarn about the South Seas,” said Buzzby, gazing abstractedly down into the deep. “One time, when I was about fifty mile to the sou’west o’ Cape Horn, I”

“Dinner’s ready, sir,” said a thin, tall, active man, stepping smartly up to Singleton, and touching his cap.

“We must talk over that some other time, Buzzby. The captain loves punctuality.” So saying, the young surgeon sprang down the companion ladder, leaving the old salt to smoke his pipe in solitude.

And here we may pause a few seconds to describe our ship and her crew.

The Dolphin was a tight, new, barque-rigged vessel of about three hundred tons burden, built expressly for the northern whale-fishery, and carried a crew of forty-five men. Ships that have to battle with the ice require to be much more powerfully built than those that sail in unencumbered seas. The Dolphin united strength with capacity and buoyancy. The under part of her hull and sides were strengthened with double timbers, and fortified externally with plates of iron; while, internally, stanchions and cross-beams were so arranged as to cause pressure on any part to be supported by the whole structure; and on her bows, where shocks from the ice might be expected to be most frequent and severe, extra planking, of immense strength and thickness, was secured. In other respects the vessel was fitted up much in the same manner as ordinary merchantmen. The only other peculiarity about her worthy of notice was the crow’s-nest, a sort of barrel-shaped structure fastened to the fore-masthead, in which, when at the whaling-ground, a man is stationed to look out for whales. The chief men in the ship were Captain Guy, a vigorous, practical American; Mr Bolton, the first mate, an earnest, stout, burly, off-hand Englishman; and Mr Saunders, the second mate, a sedate, broad-shouldered, raw-boned Scot, whose opinion of himself was unbounded, whose power of argument was extraordinary, not to say exasperating, and who stood six feet three in his stockings. Mivins, the steward, was, as we have already remarked, a tall, thin, active young man, of a brisk, lively disposition, and was somewhat of a butt among the men, but being in a position of power and trust he was respected. The young surgeon, Tom Singleton, whom we have yet scarcely introduced to the reader, was a tall, slim, but firmly-knit, youth, with a kind, gentle disposition. He was always open, straightforward, and polite. He never indulged in broad humour, though he enjoyed it much, seldom ventured on a witticism, was rather shy in the company of his companions, and spoke little; but for a quiet, pleasant tête-à-tête there was not a man in the ship equal to Tom Singleton. His countenance was Spanish-looking and handsome, his hair black, short, and curling, and his budding moustache was soft and dark as the eyebrow of an Andalusian belle.

It would be unpardonable, in this catalogue, to omit the cook, David Mizzle. He was round, and fat, and oily, as one of his own “duff” puddings. To look at him you could not help suspecting that he purloined and ate at least half of the salt pork he cooked, and his sly, dimpling laugh, in which every feature participated, from the point of his broad chin to the top of his bald head, rather

tended to favour this supposition. Mizzle was prematurely baldbeing quite a young man,and when questioned on the subject he usually attributed it to the fact of his having been so long employed about the cooking-coppers that the excessive heat to which he was exposed had stewed all the hair off his head! The crew was made up of stout, active men in the prime of life, nearly all of whom had been more or less accustomed to the whale-fishing, and some of the harpooners were giants in muscular development and breadth of shoulder, if not in height.

Chief among these harpooners was Amos Parr, a short, thick-set, powerful man of about thirty-five, who had been at sea since he was a little boy, and had served in the fisheries of both the northern and southern seas. No one knew what country had the honour of producing himindeed, he was ignorant of that point himself; for, although he had vivid recollections of his childhood having been spent among green hills, and trees, and streamlets, he was sent to sea with a strange captain before he was old enough to care about the name of his native land. Afterwards he ran away from his ship, and so lost all chance of ever discovering who he was; but, as he sometimes remarked, he didn't much care who he was, so long as he was himself; so it didn't matter. From a slight peculiarity in his accent, and other qualities, it was surmised that he must be an Irishmana supposition which he rather encouraged, being partial to the sons, and particularly partial to the daughters, of the Emerald Isle, one of which last he had married just six months before setting out on this whaling expedition.

Such was the Dolphin and her crew, and merrily they bowled along over the broad Atlantic with favouring winds, and without meeting with anything worthy of note until they neared the coast of Greenland.

One fine morning, just as the party in the cabin had finished breakfast, and were dallying with the last few morsels of the repast, as men who have more leisure than they desire are wont to do, there was a sudden shock felt, and a slight tremor passed through the ship as if something had struck her.

"Ha!" exclaimed Captain Guy, finishing his cup of chocolate, "there goes the first bump."

"Ice ahead, sir!" said the first mate, looking down the skylight.

"Is there much?" asked the captain, rising and taking down a small telescope from the hook on which it usually hung.

"Not much, sironly a stream; but there is an ice blink right ahead all along the horizon."

“How’s her head, Mr Bolton?”

“Nor’-west and by north, sir.”

Before this brief conversation came to a close, Fred Ellice and Tom Singleton sprang up the companion, and stood on the deck gazing ahead with feelings of the deepest interest. Both youths were well read in the history of polar seas and regions; they were well acquainted, by name at least, with floes, and bergs, and hummocks of ice, but neither of them had seen such in reality. These objects were associated in their young minds with all that was romantic and wild, hyperborean and polar, brilliant and sparkling, and light and whiteemphatically white. To behold ice actually floating on the salt sea was an incident of note in their existence; and certainly the impressions of their first day in the ice remained sharp, vivid and prominent, long after scenes of a much more striking nature had faded from the tablets of their memories.

At first the prospect that met their ardent gaze was not calculated to excite excessive admiration. There were only a few masses of low ice floating about in various directions. The wind was steady, but light, and seemed as if it would speedily fall altogether. Gradually the blink on the horizon (as the light haze always distinguishable above ice, or snow-covered land, is called) resolved itself into a long white line of ice, which seemed to grow larger as the ship neared it, and in about two hours more they were fairly in the midst of the pack, which was fortunately loose enough to admit of the vessel being navigated through the channels of open water. Soon after, the sun broke out in cloudless splendour, and the wind fell entirely, leaving the ocean in a dead calm.

“Let’s go to the fore-top, Tom,” said Fred, seizing his friend by the arm, and hastening to the shrouds.

In a few seconds they were seated alone on the little platform at the top of the fore-mast, just where it is connected with the fore-top-mast, and from this elevated position they gazed in silent delight upon the fairy-like scene.

Those who have never stood at the mast-head of a ship at sea in a dead calm cannot comprehend the feeling of intense solitude that fills the mind in such a position. There is nothing analogous to it on land. To stand on the summit of a tower and look down on the busy multitude below is not the same, for there the sounds are quite different in tone, and signs of life are visible all over the distant country, while cries from afar reach the ear, as well as those from below. But from the mast-head you hear only the few subdued sounds under your feetall beyond is silence; you behold only the small oval-shaped platform that is your worldbeyond lies the calm, desolate ocean. On deck you cannot

realise this feeling, for there sails and yards tower above you, and masts, and boats, and cordage intercept your view; but from above you take in the intense minuteness of your home at a single glanceyou stand aside, as it were, and, in some measure, comprehend the insignificance of the thing to which you have committed your life.

The scene witnessed by our friends at the mast-head of the Dolphin on this occasion was surpassingly beautiful. Far as the eye could stretch, the sea was covered with islands and fields of ice of every conceivable shape. Some rose in little peaks and pinnacles, some floated in the form of arches and domes, some were broken and rugged like the ruins of old border strongholds, while others were flat and level like fields of white marble; and so calm was it that the ocean in which they floated seemed like a groundwork of polished steel, in which the sun shone with dazzling brilliancy. The tops of the icy islets were pure white, and the sides of the higher ones of a delicate blue colour, which gave to the scene a transparent lightness that rendered it pre-eminently fairy-like.

“It far surpasses anything I ever conceived,” ejaculated Singleton after a long silence. “No wonder that authors speak of scenes being indescribable. Does it not seem like a dream, Fred?”

“Tom,” said Fred earnestly, “I’ve been trying to fancy myself in another world, and I have almost succeeded. When I look long and intensely at the ice, I get almost to believe that these are streets, and palaces, and cathedrals. I never felt so strong a desire to have wings that I might fly from one island to another, and go floating in and out and round about those blue caves and sparkling pinnacles.”

“It’s a curious fancy, Fred, but not unnatural.”

“Tom,” said Fred, after another long silence, “has not the thought occurred to you that God made it all?”

“Some such thought did cross my mind, Fred, for a moment, but it soon passed away. Is it not very strange that the idea of the Creator is so seldom and so slightly connected with his works in our minds?”

Again there was a long silence. Both youths had a desire to continue the conversation, and yet each felt an unaccountable reluctance to renew it. Neither of them distinctly understood that the natural heart is enmity against God, and that, until he is converted by the Holy Spirit, man neither loves to think of his Maker nor to speak of him.

While they sat thus musing, a breeze dimmed the surface of the sea, and the

Dolphin, which had hitherto lain motionless in one of the numerous canals, began slowly to advance between the islands of ice. The breeze freshened, and rendered it impossible to avoid an occasional collision with the floating masses; but the good ship was well armed for the fight, and, although she quivered under the blows, and once or twice recoiled, she pushed her way through the pack gallantly. In the course of an hour or two they were once more in comparatively clear water.

Suddenly there came a cry from the crow's-nest: "There she blows!"

Instantly every man in the ship sprang to his feet as if he had received an electric shock.

"Where away?" shouted the captain.

"On the lee-bow, sir," replied the look-out.

From a state of comparative quiet and repose the ship was now thrown into a condition of the utmost animation and, apparently, unmeaning confusion. The sight of a whale acted on the spirits of the men like wild-fire.

"There she blows!" sang out the man at the mast-head again.

"Are we keeping right for her!" asked the captain.

"Keep her away a bit; steady!" replied the look-out.

"Steady it is!" answered the man at the wheel.

"Call all hands and get the boats out, Mr Bolton," said the captain.

"All hands ahoy!" shouted the mate in a tempestuous voice, while the men rushed to their respective stations. "Boat-steerers, get your boats ready."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"There go flukes!" cried the look-out as the whale dived and tossed its flukes, that is its tail, in the air, not more than a mile on the lee-bow; "she's heading right for the ship."

"Down with the helm!" roared the captain. "Mr Bolton, brace up the mizzen top-sail! Hoist and swing the boats! Lower away!"

In another moment three boats struck the water, and their respective crews tumbled tumultuously into them. Fred and Singleton sprang into the stern-sheets of the captain's boat, just as it pushed off, and in less than five minutes the three boats were bounding over the sea in the direction of the whale like

race-horses. Every man did his best, and the tough oars bent like hoops as each boat's crew strove to outstrip the others.

Chapter Four.

The Chase and the BattleThe Chances and Dangers of Whaling WarBuzzby dives for his Life and saves itSo does the Whale and loses itAn Anxious Night which terminates happily, though with a Heavy Loss.

The chase was not a long one, for, while the boats were rowing swiftly towards the whale, the whale was, all unconsciously, swimming towards the boats.

"Give way now, lads, give way," said the captain in a suppressed voice; "bend your backs, boys, and don't let the mate beat us."

The three boats flew over the sea, as the men strained their muscles to the utmost, and for some time they kept almost in line, being pretty equally matched; but gradually the captain shot ahead, and it became evident that his harpooner, Amos Parr, was to have the honour of harpooning the first whale. Amos pulled the bow oar, and behind him was the tub with the line coiled away and the harpoon bent on to it. Being an experienced whaleman, he evinced no sign of excitement, save in the brilliancy of his dark eye and a very slight flush on his bronzed face. They had now neared the whale, and ceased rowing for a moment lest they should miss it when down.

"There she goes!" cried Fred in a tone of intense excitement, as he caught sight of the whale not more than fifty yards ahead of the boat.

"Now, boys," said the captain in a hoarse whisper, "spring hard, lay back hard, I saystand up!"

At the last word Amos Parr sprang to his feet and seized the harpoon; the boat ran right on to the whale's back, and in an instant Parr sent two irons to the hitches into the fish.

"Stern all!" The men backed their oars with all their might, in order to avoid the flukes of the wounded monster of the deep, as it plunged down headlong into the sea, taking the line out perpendicularly like lightning. This was a moment of great danger. The friction of the line as it passed the loggerhead was so great that Parr had to keep constantly pouring water on it to prevent its catching fire. A hitch in the line at that time, as it flew out of the tub, or any accidental entanglement, would have dragged the boat and crew right down. Many such fatal accidents occur to whalers, and many a poor fellow has had a

foot or an arm torn off, or been dragged overboard and drowned, in consequence of getting entangled. One of the men stood ready with a small hatchet to cut the line in a moment, if necessary, for whales sometimes run out all that is in a boat at the first plunge, and should none of the other boats be at hand to lend a second line to attach to the one nearly expended, there is nothing for it but to cut. On the present occasion, however, none of these accidents befel the men of the captain's boat. The line ran all clear, and long before it was exhausted the whale ceased to descend, and the slack was hauled rapidly in.

Meanwhile the other boats pulled up to the scene of action, and prepared to strike the instant the fish should rise to the surface. It appeared suddenly, not twenty yards from the mate's boat, where Buzzby, who was harpooner, stood in the bow ready to give it the iron.

"Spring, lads, spring!" shouted the mate, as the whale spouted into the air a thick stream of water. The boat dashed up, and Buzzby planted his harpoon vigorously. Instantly the broad flukes of the tail were tossed into the air, and, for a single second, spread like a canopy over Buzzby's head. There was no escape. The quick eye of the whaleman saw at a glance that the effort to back out was hopeless. He bent his head, and the next moment was deep down in the waves. Just as he disappeared the flukes descended on the spot which he had left and cut the bow of the boat completely away, sending the stern high into the air with a violence that tossed men, and oars, and shattered planks, and cordage, flying over the monster's back into the seething caldron of foam around him. It was apparently a scene of the most complete and instantaneous destruction, yet, strange to say, not a man was lost. A few seconds after, the white foam of the sea was dotted with black heads, as the men rose one by one to the surface, and struck out for floating oars and pieces of the wrecked boat.

"They're lost!" cried Fred Ellice in a voice of horror.

"Not a bit of it, youngster; they're safe enough, I'll warrant," replied the captain, as his own boat flew past the spot, towed by the whale. "Pay out, Amos Parr; give him line, or he'll tear the bows out of us."

"Ay, ay, sir!" sang out Amos, as he sat coolly pouring water on the loggerhead, round which a coil of the rope was whizzing like lightning; "all right! The mate's men are all safe, sir; I counted them as we shot past, and I seed Buzzby come up last of all, blowin' like a grampus; and small wonder, considerin' the dive he took."

"Take another turn of the coil, Amos, and hold on," said the captain.

The harpooneer obeyed, and away they went after the whale like a rocket, with

a tremendous strain on the line and a bank of white foam gurgling up to the edge of the gunwale that every moment threatened to fill the boat and sink her. Such a catastrophe is not of unfrequent occurrence, when whalemen, thus towed by a whale, are tempted to hold on too long; and many instances have happened of boats and their crews being in this way dragged under water and lost. Fortunately the whale dashed horizontally through the water, so that the boat was able to hold on and follow, and in a short time the creature paused and rose for air. Again the men bent to their oars, and the rope was hauled in until they came quite close to the fish. This time a harpoon was thrown and a deep lance-thrust given which penetrated to the vital parts of its huge carcass, as was evidenced by the blood which it spouted, and the convulsive lashing of its tremendous tail.

While the captain's crew were thus engaged, Saunders, the second mate, observing from the ship the accident to the first mate's boat, sent off a party of men to the rescue, thus setting free the third boat, which was steered by a strapping fellow named Peter Grim, to follow up the chase. Peter Grim was the ship's carpenter, and he took after his name. He was, as the sailors expressed it, a "grim customer", being burnt by the sun to a deep rich brown colour, besides being covered nearly up to the eyes with a thick coal-black beard and moustache, which completely concealed every part of his visage except his prominent nose and dark, fiery-looking eyes. He was an immense man, the largest in the ship, probably, if we except the Scotch second mate Saunders, to whom he was about equal in all respectsexcept argument. Like most big men, he was peaceable and good-humoured.

"Look alive now, lads," said Grim, as the men pulled towards the whale; "we'll get a chance yet, we shall, if you give way like tigers. Split your sides, boysdothat's it. Ah! there she goes right down. Pull away now, and be ready when she rises."

As he spoke the whale suddenly sounded, that is, went perpendicularly down, as it had done when first struck, and continued to descend until most of the line in the captain's boat was run out.

"Hoist an oar," cried Amos Parr, as he saw the coil diminishing. Grim observed the signal of distress, and encouraged his men to use their utmost exertions. "Another oar!another!" shouted Parr, as the whale continued its headlong descent. "Stand by to cut the line," said Captain Guy with compressed lips. "No! hold on, hold on!"

At this moment, having drawn down more than a thousand fathoms of rope, the whale slackened its speed, and Parr, taking another coil round the loggerhead, held on until the boat was almost dragged under water. Then the

line became loose, and the slack was hauled in rapidly. Meanwhile Grim's boat had reached the spot and the men now lay on their oars at some distance ahead, ready to pull the instant the whale should show itself. Up it came, not twenty yards ahead. One short, energetic pull, and the second boat sent a harpoon deep into it, while Grim sprang to the bow and thrust a lance with deadly force deep into the carcass. The monster sent up a stream of mingled blood, oil, and water, and whirled its huge tail so violently that the sound could be heard a mile off. Before it dived again, the captain's boat came up, and succeeded in making fast another harpoon, while several additional lance-thrusts were given with effect, and it seemed as if the battle were about to terminate, when suddenly the whale struck the sea with a clap like thunder, and darted away once more like a rocket to windward, tearing the two boats after it as if they had been egg-shells.

Meanwhile a change had come over the scene. The sun had set, red and lowering, behind a bank of dark clouds, and there was every appearance of stormy weather; but as yet it was nearly calm, and the ship was unable to beat up against the light breeze in the wake of the two boats, which were soon far away on the horizon. Then a furious gust arose and passed away; a dark cloud covered the sky as night fell, and soon boats and whale were utterly lost to view.

"Waes me," cried the big Scotch mate, as he ran up and down the quarter-deck wringing his hands, "what is to be done noo?"

Saunders spoke a mongrel kind of languagea mixture of Scotch and English,in which, although the Scotch words were sparsely scattered, the Scotch accent was very strong.

"How's her head?"

"Nor'-nor'-west, sir."

"Keep her there, then. Maybe, if the wind holds stiddy, we may overhaul them before it's quite dark."

Although Saunders was really in a state of the utmost consternation at this unexpected termination to the whale-hunt, and expressed the agitation of his feelings pretty freely, he was too thorough a seaman to neglect anything that was necessary to be done under the circumstances. He took the exact bearings of the point at which the boats had disappeared, and during the night, which turned out gusty and threatening, kept making short tacks, while lanterns were hung at the mast-heads, and a huge torch, or rather a small bonfire, of tarred materials was slung at the end of a spar and thrust out over the stern of the ship. But for many hours there was no sign of the boats, and the crew of the

Dolphin began to entertain the most gloomy forebodings regarding them.

At length, towards morning, a small speck of light was noticed on the weather-beam. It flickered for a moment, and then disappeared.

“Did ye see yon?” said Saunders to Mivins in an agitated whisper, laying his huge hand on the shoulder of that worthy. “Down your helm,” (to the steersman).

“Ay, ay, sir!”

“Stiddy!”

“Steady it is, sir!”

Mivins’ face, which for some hours had worn an expression of deep anxiety, relaxed into a bland smile, and he smote his thigh powerfully as he exclaimed: “That’s them, sir, and no mistake! What’s your opinion, Mr Saunders!”

The second mate peered earnestly in the direction in which the light had been seen, and Mivins, turning in the same direction, screwed up his visage into a knot of earnest attention so complicated and intense that it seemed as if no human power could evermore unravel it.

“There it goes again!” cried Saunders, as the light flashed distinctly over the sea.

“Down helm; back fore-top-sails!” he shouted, springing forward; “lower away the boat there!”

In a few seconds the ship was hove to, and a boat, with a lantern fixed to an oar, was plunging over the swell in the direction of the light. Sooner than was expected they came up with it, and a hurrah in the distance told that all was right.

“Here we are, thank God,” cried Captain Guy, “safe and sound! We don’t require assistance, Mr Saunders; pull for the ship.”

A short pull sufficed to bring the three boats alongside, and in a few seconds more the crew were congratulating their comrades with that mingled feeling of deep heartiness and a disposition to jest which is characteristic of men who are used to danger, and think lightly of it after it is over.

“We’ve lost our fish, however,” remarked Captain Guy, as he passed the crew on his way to the cabin; “but we must hope for better luck next time.”

“Well, well,” said one of the men, wringing the water out of his wet clothes as

he walked forward, “we got a good laugh at Peter Grim, if we got nothin’ else by our trip.”

“How was that, Jack?”

“Why, ye see, jist before the whale gave in, it sent up a spout o’ blood and oil as thick as the main-mast, and, as luck would have it, down it came slap on the head of Grim, drenchin’ him from head to foot, and makin’ him as red as a lobster.”

“’Ow did you lose the fish, sir?” enquired Mivins, as our hero sprang up the side, followed by Singleton.

“Lost him as men lose money in railway speculations nowadays. We sank him, and that was the last of it. After he had towed us I don’t know how far-out of sight of the ship at any rate,he suddenly stopped, and we pulled up and gave him some tremendous digs with the lances, until he spouted jets of blood, and we made sure of him, when, all at once, down he went head foremost like a cannon-ball, and took all the line out of both boats, so we had to cut, and he never came up again. At least if he did it became so dark that we never saw him. Then we pulled to where we thought the ship was, and, after rowing nearly all night, caught sight of your lights; and here we are, dead-tired, wet to the skin, and minus about two miles of whale-line and three harpoons.”

Chapter Five.

Miscellaneous ReflectionsThe Coast of GreenlandUppernavikNews of the Pole StarMidnight DayScientific Facts and Fairy-like ScenesTom Singleton’s opinion of Poor Old WomenIn Danger of a SqueezeEscape.

In pursuance of his original intention, Captain Guy now proceeded through Davis’ Straits into Baffin’s Bay, at the head of which he intended to search for the vessel of his friend Captain Ellice, and afterwards prosecute the whale-fishery. Off the coast of Greenland many whalers were seen actively engaged in warfare with the giants of the Polar Seas, and to several of these Captain Guy spoke, in the faint hope of gleaning some information as to the fate or the Pole Star, but without success. It was now apparent to the crew of the Dolphin that they were engaged as much on a searching as a whaling expedition; and the fact that the commander of the lost vessel was the father of “young Mr Fred”, as they styled our hero, induced them to take a deep interest in the success of their undertaking.

This interest was further increased by the graphic account that honest John Buzzby gave of the death of poor Mrs Ellice, and the enthusiastic way in

which he spoke of his old captain. Fred, too, had, by his frank, affable manner and somewhat reckless disposition rendered himself a general favourite with the men, and had particularly recommended himself to Mivins the steward (who was possessed of an intensely romantic spirit), by stating once or twice very emphatically that he (Fred) meant to land on the coast of Baffin's Bay, should the captain fail to find his father, and continue the search on foot and alone. There was no doubt whatever that poor Fred was in earnest, and had made up his mind to die in the search rather than not find him. He little knew the terrible nature of the country in which for a time his lot was to be cast, and the hopelessness of such an undertaking as he meditated. With boyish inconsiderateness he thought not of how his object was to be accomplished; he cared not what impossibilities lay in the way, but with manly determination he made up his mind to quit the ship and search for his father through the length and breadth of the land. Let not the reader smile at what he may perhaps style a childish piece of enthusiasm. Many a youth, at his age, has dreamed of attempting as great if not greater impossibilities. All honour, we say, to the boy who dreams impossibilities, and greater honour to him who, like Fred, resolves to attempt them! James Watt stared at an iron tea kettle till his eyes were dim, and meditated the monstrous impossibility of making that kettle work like a horse; and men might (perhaps did) smile at James Watt then; but do men smile at James Watt nownow that thousands of iron kettles are dashing like dreadful comets over the length and breadth of the land, not to mention the sea, with long tails of men, and women, and children behind them?

"That's 'ow it is, sir," Mivins used to say, when spoken to by Fred on the subject, "I've never bin in cold countries myself, sir, but I've bin in 'ot, and I knows that with a stout pair o' legs, and a will to work, a man can work 'is way hanywhere. Of course there's not much of a pop'lation in them parts, I've heer'd; but there's Heskimos, and where one man can live so can another, and what one man can do so can anotherthat's bin my hexperience, and I'm not ashamed to hown it, I'm not, though I do say it as shouldn't, and I honour you, sir, for your filleral detarmination to find your father, sir, and"

"Steward!" shouted the captain down the cabin skylight.

"Yes, sir!"

"Bring me the chart."

"Yes, sir!" and Mivins disappeared like a Jack-in-the-box from the cabin just as Tom Singleton entered it.

"Here we are, Fred," he said, seizing a telescope that hung over the cabin door, "within sight of the Danish settlement of Uppernavik; come on deck and see

it.”

Fred needed no second bidding. It was here that the captain had hinted there would, probably, be some information obtained regarding the Pole Star, and it was with feelings of no common interest the two friends examined the low-roofed houses of this out-of-the-way settlement.

In an hour afterwards the captain and first mate with our young friends landed amid the clamorous greetings of the entire population, and proceeded to the residence of the governor, who received them with great kindness and hospitality; but the only information they could obtain was that, a year ago, Captain Ellice had been driven there in his brig by stress of weather, and, after refitting and taking in a supply of provisions, had set sail for England.

Here the Dolphin laid in a supply of dried fish, and procured several dogs, besides an Esquimaux interpreter and hunter, named Meetuck.

Leaving this little settlement, they stood out once more to sea, and threaded their way among the ice, with which they were now well acquainted in all its forms, from the mighty berg, or mountain of ice, to the wide field. They passed in succession one or two Esquimaux settlements, the last of which, Votlik, is the most northerly point of colonisation. Beyond this all was terra incognita. Here enquiry was again made through the medium of the Esquimaux interpreter who had been taken on board at Uppernavik, and they learned that the brig in question had been last seen beset in the pack, and driving to the northward. Whether or not she had ever returned they could not tell.

A consultation was now held, and it was resolved to proceed north as far as the ice would permit towards Smith’s Sound, and examine the coast carefully in that direction.

For several weeks past there had been gradually coming over the aspect of nature a change to which we have not yet referred, and which filled Fred Ellice and his friend, the young surgeon, with surprise and admiration; this was the long-continued daylight, which now lasted the whole night round, and increased in intensity every day as they advanced north. They had, indeed, often heard and read of it before, but their minds had utterly failed to form a correct conception of the exquisite calmness and beauty of the midnight-day of the north.

Everyone knows that in consequence of the axis of the earth not being perpendicular to the plane of its orbit round the sun, the poles are alternately directed more or less towards that great luminary during one part of the year, and away from it during another part. So that, far north, the days during the

one season grow longer and longer until at last there is one long day of many weeks' duration, in which the sun does not set at all; and during the other season there is one long night, in which the sun is never seen. It was approaching the height of the summer season when the Dolphin entered the Arctic regions, and, although the sun descended below the horizon for a short time each night, there was scarcely any diminution of the light at all, and, as far as one's sensations were concerned, there was but one long continuous day, which grew brighter and brighter at midnight, as they advanced.

"How thoroughly splendid this is," remarked Tom Singleton to Fred one night, as they sat in their favourite out-look, the main-top, gazing down on the glassy sea, which was covered with snowy icebergs and floes, and bathed in the rays of the sun, "and how wonderful to think that the sun will only set for an hour or so, and then get up as splendid as ever!"

The evening was still as death. Not a sound broke upon the ear save the gentle cries of a few sea-birds that dipped ever and anon into the sea, as if to kiss it gently while asleep, and then circled slowly into the bright sky again. The sails of the ship, too, flapped very gently, and a spar creaked plaintively as the vessel rose and fell on the gentle undulations that seemed to be the breathing of the ocean; but such sounds did not disturb the universal stillness of the hour; neither did the gambols of yonder group of seals and walrus that were at play round some fantastic blocks of ice; nor did the soft murmur of the swell that broke in surf at the foot of yonder iceberg, whose blue sides were seamed with a thousand water-courses, and whose jagged pinnacles rose up like needles of steel into the clear atmosphere.

There were many bergs in sight, of various shapes and sizes, at some distance from the ship, which caused much anxiety to the captain, although they were only a source of admiration to our young friends in the main-top.

"Tom," said Fred, breaking a long silence, "it may seem a strange idea to you, but, do you know, I cannot help fancying that heaven must be something like this."

"I'm not sure that that's such a strange idea, Fred, for it has two of the characteristics of heaven in itpeace and rest."

"True; that didn't strike me. Do you know, I wish that it were always calm like this, and that we had no wind at all."

Tom smiled. "Your voyage would be a long one if that were to happen. I dare say the Esquimaux would join with you in the wish, however, for their kayaks and oomiaks are better adapted for a calm than a stormy sea."

“Tom,” said Fred, breaking another long silence, “you’re very tiresome and stupid tonight; why don’t you talk to me?”

“Because this delightful dreamy evening inclines me to think and be silent.”

“Ah, Tom! that’s your chief fault. You are always inclined to think too much and to talk too little. Now I, on the contrary, am always”

“Inclined to talk too much and think too little; eh, Fred?”

“Bah! don’t try to be funny, man; you haven’t it in you. Did you ever see such a miserable set of creatures as the old Esquimaux women are at Uppernavik?”

“Why, what put them into your head?” enquired Tom, laughing.

“Yonder iceberg; look at it! There’s the nose and chin exactly of the extraordinary hag you gave your silk pocket-handkerchief to at parting. Now, I never saw such a miserable old woman as that before; did you?”

Tom Singleton’s whole demeanour changed, and his dark eyes brightened as the strongly marked brows frowned over them, while he replied: “Yes, Fred, I have seen old women more miserable than that. I have seen women so old that their tottering limbs could scarcely support them, going about in the bitterest November winds, with clothing too scant to cover their wrinkled bodies, and so ragged and filthy that you would have shrunk from touching itI have seen such groping about among heaps of filth that the very dogs looked at and turned away as if in disgust.”

Fred was inclined to laugh at his friend’s sudden change of manner, but there was something in the young surgeon’s characterperhaps its deep earnestnessthat rendered it impossible, at least for his friends, to be jocular when he was disposed to be serious. Fred became grave as he spoke.

“Where have you seen such poor wretches, Tom?” he asked with a look of interest.

“In the cities, the civilised cities of our own Christian land. If you have ever walked about the streets of some of these cities before the rest of the world was astir, at grey dawn, you must have seen them shivering along and scratching among the refuse cast out by the tenants of the neighbouring houses. Oh, Fred, Fred, in my professional career, short though it has been, I have seen much of these poor old women, and many others, whom the world never sees on the streets at all, experiencing a slow, lingering death by starvation, and fatigue, and cold. It is the foulest blot on our country that there is no sufficient provision for the aged poor.”

“I have seen those old women too,” replied Fred, “but I never thought very seriously about them before.”

“That’s itthat’s just it; people don’t think, otherwise this dreadful state of things would not continue. Just listen now, for a moment, to what I have to say. But don’t imagine that I’m standing up for the poor in general. I don’t feelperhaps I’m wrong,” continued Tom thoughtfully,“perhaps I’m wrongI hope notbut it’s a fact I don’t feel much for the young and the sturdy poor, and I make it a rule never to give a farthing to young beggars, not even to little children, for I know full well that they are sent out to beg by idle, good-for-nothing parents. I stand up only for the aged poor, because, be they good or wicked, they cannot help themselves. If a man fell down in the street, struck with some dire disease that shrunk his muscles, unstrung his nerves, made his heart tremble, and his skin shrivel up, would you look upon him and then pass him by without thinking?”

“No!” cried Fred in an emphatic tone; “I would not! I would stop and help him.”

“Then, let me ask you,” resumed Tom earnestly, “is there any difference between the weakness of muscle and the faintness of heart which is produced by disease and that which is produced by old age, except that the latter is incurable? Have not these women feelings like other women? Think you that there are not amongst them those who have ‘known better times?’ They think of sons and daughters dead and gone, perhaps, just as other old women in better circumstances do; but they must not indulge such depressing thoughts, they must reserve all the energy, the stamina, they have, to drag round the citybarefoot, it may be, and in the coldto beg for food, and scratch up what they can find among the cinder-heaps. They groan over past comforts and past times, perhaps, and think of the days when their limbs were strong and their cheeks were smoothfor they were not always ‘hags’,and remember that once they had friends who loved them and cared for them, although they are old, unknown, and desolate now.”

Tom paused and pressed his hand upon his flushed forehead.

“You may think it strange,” he continued, “that I speak to you in this way about poor old women, but I feel deeply for their forlorn condition. The young can help themselves, more or less, and they have strength to stand their sorrows, with hope, blessed hope, to keep them up; but poor old men and old women cannot help themselves and cannot stand their sorrows, and, as far as this life is concerned, they have no hope; except to die soon and easy, and, if possible, in summer-time, when the wind is not so very cold and bitter.”

“But how can this be put right, Tom?” asked Fred in a tone of deep commiseration. “Our being sorry for it, and anxious about it (and you’ve made me sorry, I assure you) can do very little good, you know.”

“I don’t know, Fred,” replied Tom, sinking into his usual quiet tone. “If every city and town in Great Britain would start a society whose first resolution should be that they would not leave one poor old man or woman unprovided for, that would do it. Or if the Government would take it in hand honestly, that would do it.”

“Call all hands, Mr Bolton,” cried the captain in a sharp voice. “Get out the ice-poles, and lower away the boats.”

“Hallo! what’s wrong!” said Fred, starting up.

“Getting too near the bergs, I suspect,” remarked Tom. “I say, Fred, before we go on deck, will you promise to do what I ask you?”

“Wellyes, I will.”

“Will you promise, then, all through your life, especially if you ever come to be rich or influential, to think of and for old men and women who are poor?”

“I will,” answered Fred, “but I don’t know that I’ll ever be rich, or influential, or able to help them much.”

“Of course you don’t. But when a thought about them strikes you, will you always think it out, and, if possible, act it out, as God shall enable you?”

“Yes, Tom, I promise to do that as well as I can.”

“That’s right, thank you, my boy!” said the young surgeon, as they descended the shrouds and leaped on deck.

Here they found the captain walking up and down rapidly, with an anxious expression of face. After taking a turn or two he stopped short, and gazed out astern.

“Set the stun’sails, Mr Bolton. The breeze will be up in a little, I think. Let the men pull with a will.”

The order was given, and soon the ship was under a cloud of canvas, advancing slowly as the boats towed her between two large icebergs, which had been gradually drawing near to each other the whole afternoon.

“Is there any danger, Buzzby?” enquired Fred, as the sturdy sailor stood looking at the larger berg, with an ice-pole in his hands.

“Danger! ay, that there is, lad! more nor’s agreeable, d’ye see. Here we are without a breath o’ wind to get us on, right between two bergs as could crack us like a walnut. We can’t get to starboard of ’em for the current, nor to larboard of ’em for the pack, as ye see, so we must go between them, neck or nothing.”

The danger was indeed imminent. The two bergs were within a hundred yards of each other, and the smaller of the two, being more easily moved by the current, probably, was setting down on the larger at a rate that bade fair to decide the fate of the Dolphin in a few minutes. The men rowed lustily, but their utmost exertions could move the ship but slowly. Aid was coming, however, direct from the hand of Him who is a refuge in the time of danger. A breeze was creeping over the calm sea right astern, and it was to meet this that the studding sails had been set a-low and aloft, so that the wide-spreading canvas, projecting far to the right and left, had, to an inexperienced eye, the appearance of being out of all proportion to the little hull by which it was supported.

With breathless anxiety those on board stood watching the two bergs and the approaching breeze.

At last it came. A few cat’s-paws ruffled the surface of the sea, distending the sails for a moment, then leaving them flat and loose as before. This, however, was sufficient; another such puff and the ship was almost out of danger, but before it came, the projecting summit of the smaller berg was overhanging the deck. At this critical moment the wind began to blow steadily, and soon the Dolphin was in the open water beyond. Five minutes after she had passed, the moving mountains struck with a noise louder than thunder; the summits and large portions of the sides fell, with a succession of crashes like the roaring of artillery, just above the spot where the ship had lain not quarter of an hour before, and the vessel, for some time after, rocked violently to and fro in the surges that the plunge of the falling masses raised.

Chapter Six.

The GaleAnchored to a Berg which proves to be a Treacherous oneDangers of the “Pack”Beset in the IceMivins shows an Enquiring MindWalrusGale freshensChains and CablesHolding on for LifeAn Unexpected DiscoveryA “Nip” and its Terrible ConsequencesYoked to an Iceberg.

The narrow escape related in the last chapter was but the prelude to a night of troubles. Fortunately, as we have before mentioned, night did not now add darkness to their difficulties. Soon after passing the bergs, a stiff breeze sprang

up off shore, between which and the Dolphin there was a thick belt of loose ice, or sludge, while outside, the pack was in motion, and presented a terrible scene of crashing and grinding masses under the influence of the breeze, which soon freshened to a gale.

“Keep her away two points,” said Captain Guy to the man at the wheel; “we’ll make fast to yonder berg, Mr Bolton; if this gale carries us into the pack, we shall be swept far out of our course, if, indeed, we escape being nipped and sent to the bottom.”

Being nipped is one of the numberless dangers to which Arctic navigators are exposed. Should a vessel get between two moving fields or floes of ice, there is a chance, especially in stormy weather, of the ice being forced together and squeezing in the sides of the ship; this is called nipping.

“Ah!” remarked Buzzby, as he stood with folded arms by the capstan, “many and many a good ship has been sent to the bottom by that same. I’ve see’d a brig, with my own two eyes, squeezed together a’most flat by two big floes of ice, and after doin’ it they jist separated agin an’ let her go plump down to the bottom. Before she was nipped, the crew saved themselves by jumpin’ on to the ice, and they wos picked up by our ship that wos in company.”

“There’s no dependin’ on the ice, by no means,” remarked Amos Parr, “for I’ve see’d the self-same sort of thing that ye mention happen to a small schooner in Davis Straits, only, instead o’ crushin’ it flat, the ice lifted it right high and dry out o’ the water, and then let it down again, without more ado, as sound as iver.”

“Get out the warps and ice-anchors, there,” cried the captain.

In a moment the men were in the boats, and busy heaving and planting ice-anchors, but it was not until several hours had been spent in this tedious process that they succeeded in making fast to the berg. They had barely accomplished this when the berg gave indications of breaking up, so they cast off again in great haste, and, not long afterwards, a mass of ice, many tons in weight, fell from the edge of the berg close to where they had been moored.

The captain now beat up for the land in the hope of finding anchoring-ground. At first the ice presented an impenetrable barrier, but at length a lead of open water was found, through which they passed to within a few hundred yards of the shore, which, at this spot, showed a front of high precipitous cliffs.

“Stand by to let go the anchor,” shouted the captain.

“Ay, ay, sir!”

“Down your helm! Let go!”

Down went the anchor to the music of the rattling chain-cable, a sound which had not been heard since the good ship left the shores of Old England.

“If we were only a few yards farther in, sir,” remarked the first mate, “we should be better. I’m afraid of the stream of ice coming round yonder point.”

“So am I,” replied the captain; “but we can scarcely manage it, I fear, on account of the shore ice. Get out a boat, Mr Saunders, and try to fix an anchor. We may warp in a few yards.”

The anchor was fixed, and the men strained at the capstan with a will, but, notwithstanding their utmost efforts, they could not penetrate the shore ice. Meanwhile the wind increased, and snow began to fall in large flakes. The tide, too, as it receded, brought a stream of ice round the point ahead of them, which bore right down on their bows. At first the concussions were slight, and the bow of the ship turned the floes aside, but heavier masses soon came down, and at last one fixed itself on the cable, and caused the anchor to drag with a harsh, grating sound.

Fred Ellice, who stood beside the second mate, near the companion hatch, looked enquiringly at him.

“Ah! that’s bad,” said Saunders, shaking his head slowly, “I dinna like that sound. If we’re carried out into the pack there, dear knows where we’ll turn up in the long run.”

“Perhaps we’ll turn bottom up, sir,” suggested the fat cook, as he passed, at the moment with a tray of meat. Mizzle could not resist a jokeno matter how unsuitable the time or dreadful the consequences.

“Hold your tongue, sir,” exclaimed Saunders indignantly. “Attend to your business, and speak only when you’re spoken to.”

With some difficulty the mass of ice that had got foul of the cable was disengaged, but in a few moments another and a larger mass fixed upon it, and threatened to carry it away. In this extremity the captain ordered the anchor to be hove up, but this was not easily accomplished, and when at last it was hove up to the bow, both flukes were found to have been broken off, and the shank was polished bright with rubbing on the rocks.

Ice now came rolling down in great quantities and with irresistible force, and at last the ship was whirled into the much-dreaded pack, where she became firmly embedded, and drifted along with it before the gale into the unknown

regions of the north all that night. To add to their distress and danger a thick fog overspread the sea, so that they could not tell whither the ice was carrying them, and to warp out of it was impossible. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to drive before the gale and take advantage of the first opening in the ice that should afford them a chance of escape.

Towards evening of the following day the gale abated, and the sun shone out bright and clear, but the pack remained close as ever, drifting steadily towards the north.

“We’re far beyond the most northerly sea that has ever yet been reached,” remarked Captain Guy to Fred and Singleton, as he leaned on the weather bulwarks, and gazed wistfully over the fields of ice in which they were embedded.

“I beg your pardon for differing, Captain Guy, but I think that Captain Parry was farther north than this when he attempted to reach the pole,” remarked Saunders, with the air of a man who was prepared to defend his position to the last.

“Very possibly, Mr Saunders, but I think we are at least farther north in this direction than anyone has yet been; at least I make it out so by the chart.”

“I’m no sure o’ that,” rejoined the second mate positively; “charts are not always to be depended on, and I’ve heard that whalers have been up hereabouts before now.”

“Perhaps you are right, Mr Saunders,” replied the captain, smiling; “nevertheless I shall take observations and name the various headlands until I find that others have been here before me. Mivins, hand me the glass; it seems to me there’s a water-sky to the northward.”

“What is a water-sky, Captain?” enquired Fred.

“It is a peculiar, dark appearance of the sky on the horizon, which indicates open waterjust the reverse of that bright appearance which you have often seen in the distance, and which we call the ice-blink.”

“We’ll have open water soon,” remarked the second mate authoritatively.

“Mr Saunders,” said Mivins, who, having just finished clearing away and washing up the débris and dishes of one meal, was enjoying in complete idleness the ten minutes of leisure that intervened between that and preparations for the next,“Mr Saunders, sir, can you hinform me, sir, ’ow it is that the sea don’t freeze at ’ome the same as it does hout ’ere?”

The countenance of the second mate brightened, for he prided himself not a little on his vast and varied stores of knowledge, and nothing pleased him so much as to be questioned, particularly on knotty subjects.

“Hem! yes, Mivins, I can tell ’ee that. Ye must know that before fresh water can freeze on the surface the whole volume of it must be cooled down to 40 degrees, and salt water must be cooled down to 45 degrees. Noo, frost requires to be very long continued and very sharp indeed before it can cool the deep sea from the top to the bottom, and until it is so cooled it canna freeze.”

“Oh!” remarked Mivins, who only half understood the meaning of the explanation, “’ow very hodd. But can you tell me, Mr Saunders, ’ow it is that them ’ere hicebergs is made? Them’s wot I don’t comprehend no ’ow.”

“Ay,” replied Saunders, “there has been many a wiser head than yours puzzled for a long time aboot icebergs. But if ye’ll use yer eyes you’ll see how they are formed. Do you see the high cliffs yonder away to the nor’-east? Well, there are great masses o’ ice that have been formed against them by the melting and freezing of the snows of many years. When these become too heavy to stick to the cliffs, they tumble into the sea and float away as icebergs. But the biggest bergs come from the foot of glaciers. We know what glaciers are, Mivins!”

“No, sir, I don’t.”

The second mate sighed. “They are immense accumulations of ice, Mivins, that have been formed by the freezings and meltings of the snows of hundreds of years. They cover the mountains of Norway and Switzerland, and many other places in this world, for miles and miles in extent, and sometimes they flow down and fill up whole valleys. I once saw one in Norway that filled up a valley eight miles long, two miles broad, and seven or eight hundred feet deep, and that was only a wee bit of it, for I was told by men who had travelled over it that it covered the mountains of the interior, and made them a level field of ice, with a surface like rough, hard snow, for more than twenty miles in extent.”

“You don’t say so, sir!” said Mivins in surprise. “And don’t they never melt?”

“No, never. What they lose in summer they more than gain in winter. Moreover, they are always in motion, but they move so slow that you may look at them ever so closely and so long, you’ll not be able to observe the motionjust like the hour hand of a watch,but we know it by observing the changes from year to year. There are immense glaciers here in the Arctic regions, and the lumps which they are constantly shedding off into the sea are the icebergs that one sees and hears so much about.”

Mivins seemed deeply impressed with this explanation, and would probably have continued the conversation much longer had he not been interrupted by the voice of his mischievous satellite, Davie Summers, who touched his forelock and said: “Please, Mr Mivins, shall I lay the table-cloth, or would it be better to slump dinner with tea this afternoon?”

Mivins started. “Ha! caught me napping! Down below, you young dog!”

The boy dived instantly, followed first by a dish-clout, rolled tightly up and well aimed, and afterwards by his active-limbed superior. Both reached the region of smells, cruets, and crockery at the same moment, and each set energetically to work at their never-ending duties.

Soon after this the ice suddenly loosened, and the crew succeeded, after a few hours’ hard labour, in warping the Dolphin once more out of the pack; but scarcely had this been accomplished when another storm, which had been gradually gathering, burst upon them, and compelled them once more to seek the shelter of the land.

Numerous walrus rolled about in the bays here, and they approached much nearer to the vessel than they had yet done, affording those on board a good view of their huge, uncouth visages, as they shook their shaggy fronts and ploughed up the waves with their tusks. These enormous creatures are the elephants of the Arctic Ocean. Their aspect is particularly grim and fierce, and, being nearly equal to elephants in bulk, they are not less terrible than they appear. In form they somewhat resemble seals, having barrel-shaped bodies, with round, or rather square, blunt heads and shaggy bristling moustache, and two long ivory tusks which curve downwards instead of upwards, serving the purpose frequently of hooks, by means of which and their fore-flippers they can pull themselves up on the rocks and icebergs. Indeed they are sometimes found at a considerable height up the sides of steep cliffs, basking in the sun.

Fred was anxious to procure the skull of one of these monstrous animals, but the threatening appearance of the weather rendered any attempt to secure one at that time impossible. A dark sinister scowl overhung the blink under the cloud-bank to the southward, and the dovkies which had enlivened their progress hitherto forsook the channel, as if they distrusted the weather. Captain Guy made every possible preparation to meet the coming storm, by warping down under the shelter of a ledge of rock, to which he made fast with two good hawsers, while everything was made snug on board.

“We are going to catch it, I fear,” said Fred, glancing at the black clouds that hurried across the sky to the northward, while he walked the deck with his friend, Tom Singleton.

“I suspect so,” replied Tom, “and it does not raise my spirits to see Saunders shaking his huge visage so portentously. Do you know, I have a great belief in that fellow. He seems to know everything and to have gone through every sort of experience, and I notice that most of his prognostications come to pass.”

“So they do, Tom,” said Fred, “but I wish he would put a better face on things till they do come to pass. His looks are enough to frighten one.”

“I think we shall require another line out, Mr Saunders,” remarked the captain, as the gale freshened, and the two hawsers were drawn straight and rigid like bars of iron: “send ashore and make a whale-line fast immediately.”

The second mate obeyed with a grunt that seemed to insinuate that he would have had one out long ago. In a few minutes it was fast, and not a moment too soon, for immediately after it blew a perfect hurricane. Heavier and heavier it came, and the ice began to drift more wildly than ever. The captain had just given orders to make fast another line, when the sharp, twanging snap of a cord was heard. The six-inch hawser had parted, and they were swinging by the two others, with the gale roaring like a lion through the spars and rigging. Half a minute more and “twang, twang!” came another report, and the whale-line was gone. Only one rope now held them to the land, and prevented them being swept into the turmoil of ice, and wind, and water, from which the rocky ledge protected them. The hawser was a good onea new ten-inch rope. It sung like the deep tones of an organ, loud above the rattle of the rigging and the shrouds, but that was its death-song. It gave way with the noise of a cannon, and in the smoke that followed its recoil, they were dragged out by the wild ice and driven hither and hither at its mercy.

With some difficulty the ship was warped into a place of comparative security in the rushing drift, but it was soon thrown loose again, and severely squeezed by the rolling masses. Then an attempt was made to set the sails and beat up for the land, but the rudder was almost unmanageable owing to the ice, and nothing could be made of it, so they were compelled to go right before the wind under close-reefed top-sails, in order to keep some command of the ship. All hands were on deck watching in silence the ice ahead of them, which presented a most formidable aspect.

Away to the north the strait could be seen growing narrower, with heavy ice-tables grinding up and clogging it from cliff to cliff on either side. About seven in the evening they were close upon the piling masses, to enter into which seemed certain destruction.

“Stand by to let go the anchor,” cried the captain, in the desperate hope of being able to wind the ship.

“What’s that ahead of us?” exclaimed the first mate suddenly.

“Ship on the starboard bow, right inshore!” roared the look-out.

The attention of the crew was for a moment called from their own critical situation towards the strange vessel which now came into view, having been previously concealed from them by a large grounded berg.

“Can you make her out, Mr Bolton?”

“Yes, sir, I think she’s a large brig, but she seems much chafed, and there’s no name left on the stern, if ever there was one.”

As he spoke, the driving snow and fog cleared up partially, and the brig was seen not three hundred yards from them, drifting slowly into the loose ice. There was evidently no one on board, and although one or two of the sails were loose, they hung in shreds from the yards. Scarcely had this been noted when the Dolphin struck against a large mass of ice, and quivered under the violence of the shock.

“Let go!” shouted the captain.

Down went the heaviest anchor they had, and for two minutes the chain flew out at the hawse-hole.

“Hold on!”

The chain was checked, but the strain was awful. A mass of ice, hundreds of tons weight, was tearing down towards the bow. There was no hope of resisting it. Time was not even afforded to attach a buoy or log to the cable, so it was let slip, and thus the Dolphin’s best bower was lost for ever.

But there was no time to think of or regret this, for the ship was now driving down with the gale, scraping against a lee of ice which was seldom less than thirty feet thick. Almost at the same moment the strange vessel was whirled close to them, not more than fifty yards distant, between two driving masses of thick ice.

“What if it should be my father’s brig?” whispered Fred Ellice, as he grasped Singleton’s arm, and turned to him a face of ashy paleness.

“No fear of that, lad,” said Buzzby, who stood near the larboard gangway and had overheard the remark. “I’d know your father’s brig among a thousand”

As he spoke, the two masses of ice closed, and the brig was nipped between them. For a few seconds she seemed to tremble like a living creature, and

every timber creaked. Then she was turned slowly on one side, until the crew of the Dolphin could see down into her hold, where the beams were giving way and cracking up as matches might be crushed in the grasp of a strong hand. Then the larboard bow was observed to yield as if it were made of soft clay, the starboard bow was pressed out, and the ice was forced into the forecastle. Scarcely three minutes had passed since the nip commenced; in one minute more the brig went down, and the ice was rolling wildly, as if in triumph, over the spot where she had disappeared.

The fate of this vessel, which might so soon be their own, threw a momentary gloom over the crew of the Dolphin, but their position left them no time for thought. One upturned mass rose above the gunwale, smashed in the bulwarks, and deposited half a ton of ice on deck. Scarcely had this danger passed when a new enemy appeared in sight ahead. Directly in their way, just beyond the line of floe-ice against which they were alternately thumping and grinding, lay a group of bergs. There was no possibility of avoiding them, and the only question was whether they were to be dashed to pieces on their hard blue sides or, perchance, in some providential nook to find a refuge from the storm.

“There’s an open lead between them and the floe-ice,” exclaimed Bolton in a hopeful tone of voice, seizing an ice-pole and leaping on the gunwale.

“Look alive, men, with your poles,” cried the captain, “and shove with a will.”

The “Ay, ay, sir!” of the men was uttered with a heartiness that showed how powerfully this gleam of hope acted on their spirits; but a new damp was cast over them when, on gaining the open passage, they discovered that the bergs were not at rest, but were bearing down on the floe-ice with slow but awful momentum, and threatened to crush the ship between the two. Just then a low berg came driving up from the southward, dashing the spray over its sides, and with its fore-head ploughing up the smaller ice as if in scorn. A happy thought flashed across the captain’s mind. “Down the quarter boat,” he cried.

In an instant it struck the water, and four men were on the thwarts.

“Cast an ice-anchor on that berg.”

Peter Grim obeyed the order, and, with a swing that Hercules would have envied, planted it securely. In another moment the ship was following in the wake of this novel tug! It was a moment of great danger, for the bergs encroached on their narrow canal as they advanced, obliging them to brace the yards to clear the impending ice-walls, and they shaved the large berg so closely that the port-quarter boat would have been crushed if it had not been taken from the davits. Five minutes of such travelling brought them abreast of a grounded berg, to which they resolved to make fast; the order was given to

cast off the rope; away went their white tug on his race to the far north, and the ship swung round in safety under the lee of the berg, where the crew acknowledged with gratitude their merciful deliverance from imminent danger.

Chapter Seven.

New characters introducedAn Old Game under Novel CircumstancesRemarkable Appearances in the SkyO'Riley meets with a Mishap.

Dumps was a remarkably grave and sly character, and Poker was a wagan incorrigible wagin every sense of the term. Moreover, although they had an occasional fight, Dumps and Poker were excellent friends, and great favourites with the crew.

We have not yet introduced these individuals to our reader; but as they will act a conspicuous part in the history of the Dolphin's adventurous career in the Arctic regions, we think it right now to present them.

While at Uppernavik, Captain Guy had purchased a team of six good, tough Esquimaux dogs, being desirous of taking them to England, and there presenting them to several of his friends who were anxious to possess specimens of those animals. Two of these dogs stood out conspicuous from their fellows, not only in regard to personal appearance, but also in reference to peculiarities of character. One was pure white, with a lively expression of countenance, a large shaggy body, two erect, sharp-pointed ears, and a short projection that once had been a tail. Owing to some cause unknown, however, his tail had been cut or bitten off, and nothing save the stump remained. But this stump did as much duty as if it had been fifty tails in one. It was never at rest for a moment, and its owner evidently believed that wagging it was the true and only way to touch the heart of man; therefore the dog wagged it, so to speak, doggedly. In consequence of this animal's thieving propensities, which led him to be constantly poking into every hole and corner of the ship in search of something to steal, he was named Poker. Poker had three jet-black spots in his white visageone was the point of his nose, the other two were his eyes.

Poker's bosom friend, Dumps, was so named because he had the sulkiest expression of countenance that ever fell to the lot of a dog. Hopelessly incurable melancholy seemed to have taken possession of his mind, for he never by any chance smiledand dogs do smile, you know, just as evidently as human beings do, although not exactly with their mouths. Dumps never romped either, being old, but he sat and allowed his friend Poker to romp

round him with a sort of sulky satisfaction, as if he experienced the greatest enjoyment his nature was capable of in witnessing the antics of his youthful companionfor Poker was young. The prevailing colour of Dumps's shaggy hide was a dirty brown, with black spots, two of which had fixed themselves rather awkwardly round his eyes, like a pair of spectacles. Dumps, also, was a thief, and, indeed, so were all his brethren. Dumps and Poker were both of them larger and stronger, and in every way better, than their comrades; and they afterwards were the sturdy, steady, unflinching leaders of the team during many a toilsome journey over the frozen sea.

One magnificent afternoon, a few days after the escape of the Dolphin just related, Dumps and Poker lay side by side in the lee-scuppers, calmly sleeping off the effects of a surfeit produced by the eating of a large piece of pork, for which the cook had searched in vain for three-quarters of an hour, and of which he at last found the bare bone sticking in the hole of the larboard pump.

"Bad luck to them dogs!" exclaimed David Mizzle, stroking his chin as he surveyed the bone. "If I could only find out, now, which of ye it was, I'd have ye slaughtered right off, and cooked for the mess, I would."

"It was Dumps as did it, I'll bet you a month's pay," said Peter Grim, as he sat on the end of the windlass refilling his pipe, which he had just smoked out.

"Not a bit of it," remarked Amos Parr, who was squatted on the deck busily engaged in constructing a rope mat, while several of the men sat round him engaged in mending sails, or stitching canvas slippers, etcetera. "Not a bit of it, Grim; Dumps is too honest by half to do sich a thing. 'Twas Poker as did it, I can see by the roll of his eye below the skin. The blackguard's only shammin' sleep."

On hearing his name mentioned, Poker gently opened his right eye, but did not move. Dumps, on the contrary, lay as if he heard not the base aspersion on his character.

"What'll ye bet it was Dumps as did it?" cried Davie Summers, who passed at the moment with a dish of some sort of edible towards the galley or cooking-house on deck.

"I'll bet you over the 'ead, I will, if you don't mind your business," said Mivins.

"You'd better not," retorted Davie with a grin. "It's as much as your situation's worth to lay a finger on me."

"That's it, youngster, give it 'im," cried several of the men, while the boy

confronted his superior, taking good care, however, to keep the fore-mast between them.

“What do you mean, you young rascal?” cried Mivins with a frown.

“Mean!” said Davie, “why, I mean that if you touch me I’ll resign office; and if I do that, you’ll have to go out, for everyone knows you can’t get on without me.”

“I say, Mivins,” cried Tom Green, the carpenter’s mate, “if you were asked to say: ‘Hold on hard to this handspike here, my hearties,’ how would ye go about it?”

“He’d ’it you a pretty ’ard crack hover the ’ead with it, ’e would,” remarked one of the men, throwing a ball of yarn at Davie, who stood listening to the conversation with a broad grin.

In stepping back to avoid the blow the lad trod on Dumps’s paw, and instantly there came from the throat of that excellent dog a roar of anguish that caused Poker to leap, as the cook expressed it, nearly out of his own skin. Dogs are by nature extremely sympathetic and remarkably inquisitive; and no sooner was Dumps’s yell heard than it was vigorously responded to by every dog in the ship, as the whole pack rushed each from his respective sleeping-place, and looked round in amazement.

“Hallo! what’s wrong there for’ard?” enquired Saunders, who had been pacing the quarter-deck with slow giant strides, arguing mentally with himself in default of a better adversary.

“Only trod on Dumps’s paw, sir,” said Mivins as he hurried aft; “the men are sky-larking.”

“Sky-larking, are you?” said Saunders, going forward; “weel, lads, you’ve had a lot o’ hard work of late, ye may go and take a run on the ice.”

Instantly the men, like boys set free from school, sprang up, tumbled over the side, and were scampering over the ice like madmen.

“Pitch over the ball!the football!” they cried. In a second the ball was tossed over the ship’s side, and a vigorous game was begun.

For two days past the Dolphin had been sailing with difficulty through large fields of ice, sometimes driving against narrow necks and tongues that interrupted her passage from one lead, or canal, to another; at other times boring with difficulty through compact masses of sludge, or, occasionally, when unable to advance farther, making fast to a large berg or field. They were

compelled to proceed north, however, in consequence of the pack having become fixed towards the south, and thus rendering retreat impossible in that direction until the ice should be again set in motion. Captain Guy, however, saw, by the steady advance of the larger bergs, that the current of the ocean in that place flowed southward, and trusted that in a short time the ice which had been forced into the strait by the gales, would be released, and open up a passage. Meanwhile he pushed along the coast, examining every bay and inlet in the hope of discovering some trace of the Pole Star or her crew.

On the day about which we are writing, the ship was beset by large fields, the snow-white surfaces of which extended north and south to the horizon, while on the east the cliffs rose in dark, frowning precipices from the midst of the glaciers that encumber them all the year round.

It was a lovely Arctic day. The sun shone with unclouded splendour, and the bright air, which trembled with that liquidity of appearance that one occasionally sees in very hot weather under peculiar circumstances, was vocal with the wild music of thousands of gulls, and auks, and other sea-birds, which clustered on the neighbouring cliffs, and flew overhead in clouds. All round, the pure surfaces of the ice-fields were broken by the shadows which the hummocks and bergs cast over them, and by the pools of clear water which shone like crystals in their hollows, while the beautiful beryl blue of the larger bergs gave a delicate colouring to the dazzling scene. Words cannot describe the intense glitter that characterised everything. Every point seemed a diamond; every edge sent forth a gleam of light, and many of the masses reflected the rich prismatic colours of the rainbow. It seemed as if the sun himself had been multiplied in order to add to the excessive brilliancy, for he was surrounded by parhelia, or sun-dogs as the men called them. This peculiarity in the sun’s appearance was very striking. The great orb of day was about ten degrees above the horizon, and a horizontal line of white passed completely through it extending to a considerable distance on either hand, while around it were two distinct halos, or circles of light. On the inner halo were situated the mock-suns, which were four in numberone above and one below the sun, and one on each side of him.

Not a breath of wind stirred the little flag that drooped from the mizzen-peak, and the clamorous ceaseless cries of sea-birds, added to the merry shouts and laughter of the men, as they followed the restless football, rendered the whole a scene of life, as it was emphatically one of beauty.

“Ain’t it glorious?” panted Davie Summers vehemently, as he stopped exhausted in a headlong race beside one of his comrades, while the ball was kicked hopelessly beyond his reach by a comparatively fresh member of the party.

“Ah! then, it bates the owld country intirely, it does,” replied O’Riley, wiping the perspiration from his forehead.

It is needless to say that O’Riley was an Irishman. We have not mentioned him until now, because up to this time he had not done anything to distinguish himself beyond his messmates; but on this particular day O’Riley’s star was in the ascendant, and Fortune seemed to have singled him out as an object of her special attention. He was a short man, and a broad man, and a particularly rugged manso to speak. He was all angles and corners. His hair stuck about his head in violently rigid and entangled tufts, rendering it a matter of wonder how anything in the shape of a hat could stick on. His brow was a countless mass of ever-varying wrinkles, which gave to his sly visage an aspect of humorous anxiety that was highly divertingand all the more diverting when you came to know that the man had not a spark of anxiety in his composition, though he often said he had. His dress, like that of most Jack-tars, was naturally rugged, and he contrived to make it more so than usual.

“An’ it’s hot, too, it is,” he continued, applying his kerchief again to his pate. “If it warn’t for the ice we stand on, we’d be melted down, I do belave, like bits o’ whale blubber.”

“Wot a jolly game football is, ain’t it?” said Davie, seating himself on a hummock, and still panting hard.

“Ay, boy, that’s jist what it is. The only objiction I have agin it is that it makes ye a’most kick the left leg clane off yer body.”

“Why don’t you kick with your right leg, then, stupid, like other people?” enquired Summers.

“Why don’t I, is it? Troth, then, I don’t know for sartin. Me father lost his left leg at the great battle o’ the Nile, and I’ve sometimes thought that had somethin’ to do wid it; but then me mother was lame o’ the right leg intirely, and wint about wid a crutch, so I can’t make out how it was, d’ye see?”

“Look out, Pat,” exclaimed Summers, starting up, “here comes the ball.”

As he spoke, the football came skimming over the ice towards the spot on which they stood, with about thirty of the men running at full speed and shouting like maniacs after it.

“That’s your sort, my hearties! another like that and it’s home! Pitch into it, Mivins. You’re the boy for me. Now, then, Grim, trip him up! Hallo, Buzzby, you bluff-bowed Dutchman, luff! luff! or I’ll stave in your ribs! Mind your

eye, Mizzle, there's Green, he'll be into your larboard quarter in no time. Hurrah! Mivins, up in the air with it. Kick, boy, kick like a spanker boom in a hurricane!"

Such were a few of the expressions that showered like hail round the men as they rushed hither and thither after the ball. And here we may remark that the crew of the Dolphin played football in a somewhat different style from the way in which that noble game is played by boys in England. Sides, indeed, were chosen, and boundaries were marked out, but very little if any attention was paid to such secondary matters! To kick the ball, and keep on kicking it in front of his companions, was the ambition of each man; and so long as he could get a kick at it that caused it to fly from the ground like a cannon-shot, little regard was had by anyone to the direction in which it was propelled. But, of course, in this effort to get a kick, the men soon became scattered over the field, and ever and anon the ball would fall between two men, who rushed at it simultaneously from opposite directions. The inevitable result was a collision, by which both men were suddenly and violently arrested in their career. But generally the shock resulted in one of the men being sent staggering backwards, and the other getting the kick. When the two were pretty equally matched, both were usually, as they expressed it, "brought up all standing", in which case a short scuffle ensued, as each endeavoured to trip up the heels of his adversary. To prevent undue violence in such struggles, a rule was laid down that hands were not to be used on any account. They might use their feet, legs, shoulders, and elbows, but not their hands.

In such rough play the men were more equally matched than might have been expected, for the want of weight among the smaller men was often more than counterbalanced by their activity; and frequently a sturdy little fellow launched himself so vigorously against a heavy tar as to send him rolling head over heels on the ice. This was not always the case, however, and few ventured to come into collision with Peter Grim, whose activity was on a par with his immense size. Buzzby contented himself with galloping on the outskirts of the fight, and putting in a kick when fortune sent the ball in his way. In this species of warfare he was supported by the fat cook, whose oily carcass could neither stand the shocks nor keep up with the pace of his messmates. Mizzle was a particularly energetic man in his way, however, and frequently kicked with such good-will that he missed the ball altogether, and the tremendous swing of his leg lifted him from the ice, and laid him sprawling on his back.

"Look out ahead!" shouted Green, the carpenter's mate; "there's a sail bearing down on your larboard bow."

Mivins, who had the ball before him at the moment, saw his own satellite,

Davie, coming down towards him with vicious intentions. He quietly pushed the ball before him for a few yards, then kicked it far over the boy's head, and followed it up like an antelope. Mivins depended for success on his almost superhuman activity. His tall, slight frame could not stand the shocks of his comrades, but no one could equal or come near to him in speed, and he was quite an adept at dodging a charge, and allowing his opponent to rush far past the ball by the force of his own momentum. Such a charge did Peter Grim make at him at this moment.

"Starboard hard!" yelled Davie Summers, as he observed his master's danger.

"Starboard it is!" replied Mivins, and, leaping aside to avoid the shock, he allowed Grim to pass. Grim knew his man, however, and had held himself in hand, so that in a moment he pulled up and was following close on his heels.

"It's an ill wind that blows no good," cried one of the crew, towards whose foot the ball rolled, as he quietly kicked it into the centre of the mass of men. Grim and Mivins turned back, and for a time looked on at the general make that ensued. It seemed as though the ball must inevitably be crushed among them as they struggled and kicked hither and thither for five minutes, in their vain efforts to get a kick; and during those few exciting moments many tremendous kicks, aimed at the ball, took effect upon shins, and many shouts of glee terminated in yells of anguish.

"It can't last much longer!" screamed the cook, his face streaming with perspiration, and beaming with glee, as he danced round the outside of the circle. "There it goes!"

As he spoke, the ball flew out of the circle, like a shell from a mortar. Unfortunately it went directly over Mizzle's head. Before he could wink he went down before them, and the rushing mass of men passed over him like a mountain torrent over a blade of grass.

Meanwhile Mivins ran ahead of the others, and gave the ball a kick that nearly burst it and down it came exactly between O'Riley and Grim, who chanced to be far ahead of the others. Grim dashed at it. "Och! ye big villain," muttered the Irishman to himself, as he put down his head and rushed against the carpenter like a battering-ram.

Big though he was, Grim staggered back from the impetuous shock, and O'Riley, following up his advantage, kicked the ball in a side direction, away from everyone except Buzzby, who happened to have been steering rather wildly over the field of ice. Buzzby, on being brought thus unexpectedly within reach of the ball, braced up his energies for a kick, but seeing O'Riley coming down towards him like a runaway locomotive, he pulled up, saying

quietly to himself: “Ye may take it all yer own way, lad; I’m too old a bird to go for to make my carcass a buffer for a mad-cap like you to run agin.”

Jack Mivins, however, was troubled by no such qualms. He happened to be about the same distance from the ball as O’Riley, and ran like a deer to reach it first. A pool of water lay in his path, however, and the necessity of going round it enabled the Irishman to gain on him a little, so that it became evident that both would come up at the same moment and a collision be inevitable.

“Hold yer wind, Paddy,” shouted the men, who paused for a moment to watch the result of the race. “Mind your timbers, Mivins! Back your top-sails, O’Riley; mind how he yaws!”

Then there was a momentary silence of breathless expectation. The two men seemed about to meet with a shock that would annihilate both, when Mivins bounded to one side like an india-rubber ball. O’Riley shot past him like a rocket, and the next instant went head-foremost into the pool of water.

This unexpected termination to the affair converted the intended huzzah of the men into a yell of mingled laughter and consternation as they hastened in a body to the spot; but before they reached it O’Riley’s head and shoulders reappeared, and when they came up, he was standing on the margin of the pool blowing like a walrus.

“Oh, then, but it is cowld!” he exclaimed, wringing the water from his garments. “Och, where’s the ball? give me a kick or I’ll freeze, so I will.”

As he spoke, the drenched Irishman seized the ball from Mivins’ hands and gave it a kick that sent it high into the air. He was too wet and heavy to follow it up, however, so he ambled off towards the ship as vigorously as his clothes would allow him, followed by the whole crew.

Chapter Eight.

Fred and the doctor go on an excursion, in which, among other strange things, they meet with red snow and a white bear, and Fred makes his first essay as a sportsman.

But where were Fred Ellice and Tom Singleton all this time? the reader will probably ask.

Long before the game at football was suggested, they had obtained leave of absence from the captain, and, loaded with game-bags, a botanical box, and geological hammer, and a musket, were off along the coast on a semi-scientific cruise. Young Singleton carried the botanical box and hammer, being an

enthusiastic geologist and botanist, while Fred carried the game-bag and musket.

“You see, Tom,” he said, as they stumbled along over the loose ice towards the ice-belt that lined the cliffs,“you see, I’m a great dab at ornithology, especially when I’ve got a gun on my shoulder. When I haven’t a gun, strange to say, I don’t feel half so enthusiastic about birds!”

“That’s a very peculiar style of regarding the science. Don’t you think it would be worth while communicating your views on the subject to one of the scientific bodies when we get home again? They might elect you a member, Fred.”

“Well, perhaps I shall,” replied Fred gravely; “but I say, to be serious, I’m really going to screw up my energies as much as possible, and make coloured drawings of all the birds I can get hold of in the Arctic regions. At least I would like to try.”

Fred finished his remark with a sigh, for just then the object for which he had gone out to those regions occurred to him, and although the natural buoyancy and hopefulness of his feelings enabled him generally to throw off anxiety in regard to his father’s fate, and join in the laugh, and jest, and game as heartily as anyone on board, there were times when his heart failed him, and he almost despaired of ever seeing his father again; and these feelings of despondency had been more frequent since the day on which he witnessed the sudden and utter destruction of the strange brig.

“Don’t let your spirits down, Fred,” said Tom, whose hopeful and earnest disposition often reanimated his friend’s drooping spirits. “It will only unfit you for doing any good service; besides, I think we have no cause yet to despair. We know that your father came up this inlet, or strait, or whatever it is, and that he had a good stock of provisions with him, according to the account we got at Uppernavik, and it is not more than a year since he was there. Many and many a whaler and discovery ship has wintered more than a year in these regions. And then, consider the immense amount of animal life all around us. They might have laid up provisions for many months long before winter set in.”

“I know all that,” replied Fred, with a shake of his head; “but think of yon brig that we saw go down in about ten minutes.”

“Well, so I do think of it. No doubt the brig was lost very suddenly, but there was ample time, had there been anyone on board, to have leaped upon the ice, and they might have got to land by jumping from one piece to another. Such things have happened before, frequently. To say truth, at every point of land

we turn, I feel a sort of expectation, amounting almost to certainty, that we shall find your father and his party travelling southward on their way to the Danish settlements."

"Perhaps you are right. God grant that it may be so!"

As he spoke they reached the fixed ice which ran along the foot of the precipices for some distance, like a road of hard white marble. Many large rocks lay scattered over it, some of them several tons in weight, and one or two balanced in a very remarkable way on the edge of the cliffs.

"There's a curious-looking gull I should like to shoot," exclaimed Fred, pointing to a bird that hovered over his head, and throwing forward the muzzle of his gun.

"Fire away, then," said his friend, stepping back a pace.

Fred, being unaccustomed to the use of firearms, took a wavering aim and fired.

"What a bother! I've missed it!"

"Try again," remarked Tom with a quiet smile, as the whole cliff vomited forth an innumerable host of birds, whose cries were perfectly deafening.

"It's my opinion," said Fred with a comical grin, "that if I shut my eyes and point upwards I can't help hitting something; but I particularly want yon fellow, because he's beautifully marked. Ah! I see him sitting on a rock yonder, so here goes once more."

Fred now proceeded towards the coveted bird in the fashion that is known by the name of stalkingthat is, creeping as close up to your game as possible, so as to get a good shot; and it said much for his patience and his future success the careful manner in which, on this occasion, he wound himself in and out among the rocks and blocks of ice on the shore in the hope of obtaining that sea-gull. At last he succeeded in getting to within about fifteen yards of it, and then, resting his musket on a lump of ice, and taking an aim so long and steadily that his companion began to fancy he must have gone to sleep, he fired, and blew the gull to atoms! There was scarcely so much as a shred of it to be found.

Fred bore his disappointment and discomfiture manfully. He formed a resolution then and there to become a good shot, and although he did not succeed exactly in becoming so that day, he nevertheless managed to put several fine specimens of gulls and an auk into his bag. The last bird amused

him much, being a creature with a dumpy little body and a beak of preposterously large size and comical aspect. There were also a great number of eider ducks flying about but they failed to procure a specimen.

Singleton was equally successful in his scientific researches. He found several beautifully green mosses, one species of which was studded with pale-yellow flowers, and, in one place, where a stream trickled down the steep sides of the cliffs, he discovered a flower-growth which was rich in variety of colouring. Amid several kinds of tufted grasses were seen growing a small purple flower and the white star of the chickweed. The sight of all this richness of vegetation growing in a little spot close beside the snow, and amid such cold Arctic scenery, would have delighted a much less enthusiastic spirit than that of our young surgeon. He went quite into raptures with it and stuffed his botanical box with mosses and rocks until it could hold no more, and became a burden that cost him a few sighs before he got back to the ship.

The rocks were found to consist chiefly of red sandstone. There was also a good deal of greenstone and gneiss, and some of the spires of these that shot up to a considerable height were particularly striking and picturesque objects.

But the great sight of the day’s excursion was that which unexpectedly greeted their eyes on rounding a cape towards which they had been walking for several hours. On passing this point they stopped with an exclamation of amazement. Before them lay a scene such as the Arctic regions alone can produce.

In front lay a vast reach of the strait, which at this place opened up abruptly and stretched away northward laden with floes, and fields, and hummocks, and bergs of every shade and size, to the horizon, where the appearance of the sky indicated open water. Ponds of various sizes, and sheets of water whose dimensions entitled them to be styled lakes, spangled the white surface of the floes, and around these were sporting innumerable flocks of wild fowl, many of which, being pure white, glanced like snow-flakes in the sunshine. Far off to the west the ice came down with heavy uniformity to the water’s edge. On the right there was an array of cliffs whose frowning grandeur filled them with awe. They varied from twelve to fifteen hundred feet in height, and some of the precipices descended sheer down seven or eight hundred feet into the sea, over which they cast a dark shadow.

Just at the feet of our young discoverers, for such we may truly call them, a deep bay or valley trended away to the right, a large portion of which was filled with the spur of a glacier, whose surface was covered with pink snow! One can imagine with what feelings the two youths gazed on this beautiful sight. It seemed as if that valley, instead of forming a portion of the sterile

region beyond the Arctic Circle, were one of the sunniest regions of the south, for a warm glow rested on the bosom of the snow, as if the sun were shedding upon it his rosiest hues. A little farther to the north the red snow ceased, or only occurred here and there in patches, and beyond it there appeared another gorge in the cliffs within which rose a tall column of rock, so straight and cylindrical that it seemed to be a production of art. The whole of the back country was one great rolling distance of glacier, and, wherever a crevice or gorge in the riven cliffs afforded an opportunity, this ocean of land-ice sent down spurs into the sea, the extremities of which were constantly shedding off huge bergs into the water.

“What a scene!” exclaimed Tom Singleton, when he found words to express his admiration. “I did not think that our world contained so grand a sight. It surpasses my wildest dreams of fairy-land.”

“Fairy-land!” ejaculated Fred, with a slight look of contempt; “do you know, since I came to this part of the world I’ve come to the conclusion that fairy tales are all stuff, and very inferior stuff too! Why, this reality is a thousand million times grander than anything that was ever invented. But what surprises me most is the red snow. What can be the cause of it?”

“I don’t know,” replied Singleton; “it has long been a matter of dispute among learned men; but we must examine it for ourselves, so come along.”

The remarkable colour of the snow referred to, although a matter of dispute at the period of the Dolphin’s visit to the Arctic Seas, is generally admitted now to be the result of a curious and extremely minute vegetable growth, which spreads not only over its surface, but penetrates into it sometimes to a depth of several feet. The earlier navigators who discovered it, and first told the astonished world that the substance which they had been accustomed to associate with the idea of the purest and most radiant whiteness had been seen by them lying red upon the ground, attributed the phenomenon to innumerable multitudes of minute creatures belonging to the order Radiata, but the discovery of red snow among the central Alps of Europe, and in the Pyrenees, and on the mountains of Norway, where marine animalcules could not exist, effectually overturned this idea. The colouring matter has now been ascertained to result from plants belonging to the order called Algae, which have a remarkable degree of vitality, and possess the power, to an amazing extent, of growing and spreading with rapidity even over such an ungenial soil as the Arctic snow.

While Singleton was examining the red snow, and vainly endeavouring to ascertain the nature of the minute specks of matter by which it was coloured, Fred continued to gaze with a look of increasing earnestness towards the tall

column, around which a bank of fog was spreading, and partially concealing it from view. At length he attracted the attention of his companion towards it.

“I say, I’m half inclined to believe that yon is no work of nature, but a monument set up to attract the attention of ships. Don’t you think so?”

Singleton regarded the object in question for some time. “I don’t think so, Fred; it is larger than you suppose, for the fog-bank deceives us; but let us go and seeit cannot be far off.”

As they drew near to the tall rock, Fred’s hopes began to fade, and soon were utterly quenched by the fog clearing away and showing that the column was indeed of nature’s own constructing. It was a single, solitary shaft of green limestone, which stood on the brink of a deep ravine, and was marked by the slaty limestone that once encased it. The length of the column was apparently about five hundred feet, and the pedestal of sandstone on which it stood was itself upwards of two hundred feet high.

This magnificent column seemed the flag-staff of a gigantic crystal fortress, which was suddenly revealing by the clearing away of the fog-bank to the north. It was the face of the great glacier of the interior, which here presented an unbroken perpendicular fronta sweep of solid glassy wall, which rose three hundred feet above the water-level, with an unknown depth below it. The sun glittered on the crags, and peaks, and battlements of this ice fortress as if the mysterious inhabitants of the far north had lit up their fires, and planted their artillery to resist further invasion.

The effect upon the minds of the two youths, who were probably the first to gaze upon those wondrous visions of the icy regions, was tremendous. For a long time neither of them could utter a word, and it would be idle to attempt to transcribe the language in which, at length, their excited feelings sought to escape. It was not until their backs had been for some time turned on the scene, and the cape near the valley of red snow had completely shut it out from view, that they could condescend to converse again in their ordinary tones on ordinary subjects.

As they hastened back over the ice-belt at the foot of the cliffs, a loud boom rang out in the distance, and rolled in solemn echoes along the shore.

“There goes a gun,” exclaimed Tom Singleton, hastily pulling out his watch. “Hallo! do you know what time it is?”

“Pretty late, I suppose; it was afternoon, I know, when we started, and we must have been out a good while now. What time is it?”

“Just two o’clock in the morning!”

“What! do you mean to say it was yesterday when we started, and that we’ve been walking all night, and got into to-morrow morning without knowing it?”

“Even so, Fred. We have overshot our time, and the captain is signalling us to make haste. He said that he would not fire unless there seemed some prospect of the ice moving, so we had better run, unless we wish to be left behind; come along.”

They had not proceeded more than half a mile when a Polar bear walked leisurely out from behind a lump of ice, where it had been regaling itself on a dead seal, and sauntered slowly out towards the icebergs seaward, not a hundred yards in advance of them.

“Hallo! look there! what a monster!” shouted Fred, as he cocked his musket and sprang forward. “What’ll you do, Tom, you’ve no gun?”

“Never mind, I’ll do what I can with the hammer. Only make sure you don’t miss. Don’t fire till you are quite close to him.”

They were running after the bear at top speed while they thus conversed in hasty and broken sentences, when suddenly they came to a yawning crack in the ice, about thirty feet wide, and a mile long on either hand, with the rising tide boiling at the bottom of it. Bruin’s pursuers came to an abrupt halt.

“Now, isn’t that disgusting!”

Probably it was, and the expression of chagrin on Fred’s countenance as he said so evidently showed that he meant it, but there is no doubt that this interruption to their hunt was extremely fortunate; for to attack a polar bear with a musket charged only with small shot, and a geological hammer, would have been about as safe and successful an operation as trying to stop a locomotive with one’s hand. Neither of them had yet had experience of the enormous strength of this white monarch of the frozen regions and his tenacity of life, although both were reckless enough to rush at him with any arms they chanced to have.

“Give him a long shot quick!” cried Singleton.

Fred fired instantly, and the bear stopped, and looked round, as much as to say: “Did you speak, gentlemen?” Then, not receiving a reply, he walked away with dignified indifference, and disappeared among the ice-hummocks.

An hour afterwards the two wanderers were seated at a comfortable breakfast

in the cabin of the Dolphin, relating their adventures to the captain and mates, and, although unwittingly, to Mivins, who generally managed so to place himself, while engaged in the mysterious operations of his little pantry, that most of the cabin-talk reached his ear, and travelled thence through his mouth to the forecastle. The captain was fully aware of this fact, but he winked at it, for there was nothing but friendly feeling on board the ship, and no secrets. When, however, matters of serious import had to be discussed, the cabin door was closed, and Mivins turned to expend himself on Davie Summers, who, in the capacity of a listener, was absolutely necessary to the comfortable existence of the worthy steward.

Having exhausted their appetites and their information, Fred and Tom were told that, during their absence, a bear and two seals had been shot by Meetuck, the Esquimaux interpreter, whom they had taken on board at Uppernavik; and they were further informed that the ice was in motion to the westward, and that there was every probability of their being released by the falling tide. Having duly and silently weighed these facts for a few minutes, they simultaneously, and as if by a common impulse, yawned and retired to bed.

Chapter Nine.

The Dolphin gets beset in the IcePreparations for Wintering in the IceCaptain Guy’s Code of Laws.

An accident now befell the Dolphin which effectually decided the fate of the ship and her crew, at least for that winter. This was her getting aground near the ravine of the giant flagstaff before mentioned, and being finally beset by ice from which all efforts on the part of the men to extricate her proved abortive, and in which she was ultimately frozen inhard and fast.

The first sight the crew obtained of the red snow filled them with unbounded amazement, and a few of the more superstitious amongst them with awe approaching to fear. But soon their attention was attracted from this by the wonderful column.

“Och, then! may I niver!” exclaimed O’Riley, the moment he caught sight of it, “if there ben’t the north pole at long lastsure enough!”

The laugh that greeted this remark was almost immediately checked, partly from the feelings of solemnity inspired by the magnificent view which opened up to them, and partly from a suspicion on the part of the more ignorant among the men that there might be some truth in O’Riley’s statement after all.

But their attention and energies were speedily called to the dangerous position

of the ship, which unexpectedly took the ground in a bay where the water proved to be unusually shallow, and before they could warp her off, the ice closed round her in compact, immovable masses. At first Captain Guy was not seriously alarmed by this untoward event, although he felt a little chagrin in consequence of the detention, for the summer was rapidly advancing, and it behoved him to return to Baffin's Bay, and prosecute the whale-fishing as energetically as possible; but when day after day passed, and the ice round the ship still remained immovable, he became alarmed, and sought by every means in his power to extricate himself.

His position was rendered all the more aggravating by the fact that, a week after he was beset, the main body of the ice in the strait opened up and drifted to the southward, leaving a comparatively clear sea through which he could have pushed his way without much difficulty in any direction, but the solid masses in which they lay embedded were fast to the ground for about fifty yards beyond the vessel, seaward, and until these should be floated away there was no chance of escape.

"Get up some powder and canisters, Mr Bolton," he exclaimed, one morning after breakfast; "I'll try what can be done by blasting the ice. The highest spring tide will occur to-morrow, and if the ship don't move then we shall"

He did not finish the sentence, but turned on his heel, and walked forward, where he found Buzzby and some of the men preparing the ice-saws.

"Ay, ay," muttered the mate, as he went below to give the necessary directions, "you don't need to conclude your speech, Captain. If we don't get out to-morrow, we're locked up for one winter at least if not more."

"Ay, and ye'll no get oot to-morrow," remarked Saunders with a shake of his head as he looked up from the log-book in which he was making an entry. "We're hard and fast, so we'll just have to make the best o't."

Saunders was right as the efforts of the next day proved. The ice lay around the vessel in solid masses, as we have said, and with each of the last three tides these masses had been slightly moved. Saws and ice chisels, therefore, had been in constant operation, and the men worked with the utmost energy, night and day, taking it by turns, and having double allowance of hot coffee served out to them. We may mention here that the Dolphin carried no spirits, except what was needed for medicinal purposes, and for fuel to several small cooking-lamps that had been recently invented. It had now been proved by many voyagers of experience that in cold countries, as well as hot, men work harder, and endure the extremity of hardship better, without strong drink than with it, and the Dolphin's crew were engaged on the distinct understanding

that coffee, and tea, and chocolate were to be substituted for rum, and that spirits were never to be given to anyone on board, except in cases of extreme necessity.

But, to returnalthough the men worked as only those can who toil for liberation from long imprisonment, no impression worth mentioning could be made on the ice. At length the attempt to rend it by means of gunpowder was made.

A jar containing about thirty pounds of powder was sunk in a hole in an immense block of ice which lay close against the stern of the ship. Mivins, being light of foot, was set to fire the train. He did so, and ranran so fast that he missed his footing in leaping over a chasm, and had well-nigh fallen into the water below. There was a whiz and a loud report, and the enormous mass of ice heaved upwards in the centre, and fell back in huge fragments. So far the result was satisfactory, and the men were immediately set to sink several charges in various directions around the vessel, to be in readiness for the highest tide, which was soon expected. Warps and hawsers were also got out and fixed to the seaward masses, ready to heave on them at a moment's notice; the ship was lightened as much as possible, by lifting her stores upon the ice, and the whole crewcaptain, mates, and allworked and heaved like horses, until the perspiration streamed from their faces, while Mizzle kept supplying them with a constant deluge of hot coffee. Fred and the young surgeon, too, worked like the rest, with their coats off, handkerchiefs bound round their heads, and shirt-sleeves tucked up to their shoulders.

At last the tide roseinch by inch, and slowly, as if it grudged to give them even a chance of escape.

Mivins grew impatient and unbelieving under it. "I don't think it'll rise another hinch," he remarked to O'Riley, who stood near him.

"Niver fear, boy. The capting knows a sight better than you do, and he says it'll rise a fut yit."

"Does he?" asked Grim, who was also beginning to despond.

"Ov coorse he does. Sure he towld me in a confidential way, just before he wint to turn in last nightif it wasn't yisturday forenoon, for it's meself as niver knows an hour o' the day since the sun became dissipated, and tuck to sittin' up all night in this fashion."

"Shut up yer tatie trap and open yer weather eye," muttered Buzzby, who had charge of the gang, "there'll be time enough to speak after we're off."

Gradually, as the tide rose, the ice and the ship moved, and it became evident that the latter was almost afloat though the former seemed to be only partly raised from the ground. The men were at their several posts ready for instant action, and gazing in anxious expectation at the captain, who stood, watch in hand, ready to give the word.

“Now, then, fire!” he said in a low voice.

In a moment the ice round the ship was rent and upheaved, as if some leviathan of the deep were rising from beneath it and the vessel swung slowly round. A loud cheer burst from the men.

“Now, lads, heave with a will!” roared the captain.

Round went the capstan, the windlass clanked, and the ship forged slowly ahead as the warps and hawsers became rigid. At that moment a heavy block of ice, which had been overbalanced by the motion of the vessel, fell with a crash on the rudder, splitting off a large portion of it, and drawing the iron bolts that held it completely out of the stern-post.

“Never mind; heave awayfor your lives!” cried the captain. “Jump on board all of you!”

The few men who had until now remained on the ice scrambled up the side. There was a sheet of ice right ahead which the ship could not clear, but which she was pushing out to sea in advance of her. Suddenly this took the ground and remained motionless.

“Out there with ice-chisels. Sink a hole like lightning. Prepare a canister, Mr Bolton; quick!” shouted the captain in desperation, as he sprang over the side and assisted to cut into the unwieldy obstruction. The charge was soon fixed and fired, but it only split the block in two, and left it motionless as before. A few minutes after, the ship again grounded; the ice settled round her; the spring tide was lost, and they were not delivered.

Those who know the bitterness of repeated disappointment, and of hope deferred, may judge of the feelings with which the crew of the Dolphin now regarded their position. Little, indeed, was said, but the grave looks of most of the men, and the absence of the usual laugh, and jest, and disposition to skylark, which on almost all other occasions characterised them, showed too plainly how heavily the prospect of a winter in the Arctic regions weighed upon their spirits. They continued their exertions to free the ship, however, for several days after the high tide, and did not finally give in until all reasonable hope of moving her was utterly annihilated. Before this, however, a reaction began to take place; the prospects of the coming winter were discussed, and

some of the more sanguine looked even beyond the winter, and began to consider how they would contrive to get the ship out of her position into deep water again.

Fred Ellice, too, thought of his father, and this abrupt check to the search, and his spirits sank again as his hopes decayed. But poor Fred, like the others, at last discovered that it was of no use to repine, and that it was best to face his sorrows and difficulties “like a man!”

Among so many men there were all shades of character, and the fact that they were doomed to a year’s imprisonment in the frozen regions was received in very different ways. Some looked grave and thought of it seriously; others laughed and treated it lightly; a few grumbled and spoke profanely, but most of them became quickly reconciled, and in a week or two nearly all forgot the past and the future in the duties, and cares, and amusements of the present. Captain Guy and his officers, however, and a few of the more sedate men, among whom were Buzzby and Peter Grim, looked forward with much anxiety, knowing full well the dangers and trials that lay before them.

It is true the ship was provisioned for more than a year, but most of the provisions were salt, and Tom Singleton could have told them, had they required to be told, that without fresh provisions they stood a poor chance of escaping that dire disease, scurvy, before which have fallen so many gallant tars whom nothing in the shape of dangers or difficulties could subdue. There were, indeed, myriads of wild fowl flying about the ship, on which the men feasted and grew fat every day; and the muskets of Meetuck, and those who accompanied him, seldom failed to supply the ship with an abundance of the flesh of seals, walrus, and polar bears, portions of all of which creatures were considered very good indeed by the men, and particularly by the dogs, which grew so fat that they began to acquire a very disreputable waddle in their gait as they walked the deck for exercise, which they seldom did, by the way, being passionately fond of sleep! But birds and, perchance, beasts might be expected to take themselves off when the winter arrived, and leave the crew without fresh food.

Then, although the Dolphin was supplied with every necessary for a whaling expedition, and with many luxuries besides, she was ill-provided with the supplies that men deem absolutely indispensable for a winter in the Arctic regions, where the cold is so bitterly intense that, after a prolonged sojourn, men’s minds become almost entirely engrossed by two clamant demands of naturefood and heat. They had only a small quantity of coal on board, and nothing except a few extra spars that could be used as a substitute, while the bleak shores afforded neither shrub nor tree of any kind. Meanwhile they had a sufficiency of everything they required for at least two or three months to

come, and for the rest as Grim said, they had “stout hearts and strong arms.”

As soon as it became apparent that they were to winter in the bay, which the captain named the Bay of Mercy, all further attempt to extricate the ship was abandoned, and every preparation for spending the winter was begun and carried out vigorously. It was now that Captain Guy’s qualities as a leader began to be displayed. He knew, from long experience and observation, that in order to keep up the morale of any body of men it was absolutely necessary to maintain the strictest discipline. Indeed this rule is so universal in its application that many men find it advantageous to impose strict rules on themselves in the regulation of their time and affairs, in order to keep their own spirits under command. One of the captain’s first resolves, therefore, was to call the men together and address them on this subject, and he seized the occasion of the first Sabbath morning they spent in the Bay of Mercy, when the crew were assembled on the quarterdeck, to speak to them.

It was an exceedingly bright day. Captain Guy stood up, and, in an earnest, firm tone, said:

“My lads, I consider it my duty to say a few plain words to you in reference to our present situation and prospects. I feel that the responsibility of having brought you here rests very much upon myself, and I deem it my solemn duty, in more than the ordinary sense, to do all I can to get you out of the ice again. You know as well as I do that this is impossible at the present time, and that we are compelled to spend a winter here. Some of you know what that means, but the most of you know it only by hearsay, and that’s much the same as knowing nothing about it at all. Before the winter is done your energies and endurance will probably be taxed to the uttermost. I think it right to be candid with you. The life before you will not be child’s-play, but I assure you that it may be mingled with much that will be pleasant and hearty if you choose to set about it in the right way. Well, then, to be short about it. There is no chance whatever of our getting through the winter in this ship comfortably, or even safely, unless the strictest discipline is maintained aboard. I know, for I’ve been in similar circumstances before, that when cold and hunger, and, it may be, sickness, press upon usshould it please the Almighty to send these on us in great severityyou will feel duty to be irksome, and you’ll think it useless, and perhaps be tempted to mutiny. Now I ask you solemnly, while your minds are clear from all prejudices, each individually to sign a written code of laws, and a written promise that you will obey the same, and help me to enforce them even with the punishment of death, if need be. Now, lads, will you agree to that?”

“Agreed, agreed!” cried the men at once, and in a tone of prompt decision that convinced their leader he had their entire confidencea matter of the highest

importance in the critical circumstances in which they were placed.

“Well, then, I’ll read the rules; they are few, but sufficiently comprehensive.

“First. Prayers shall be read every morning before breakfast, unless circumstances render it impossible to do so.”

The captain laid down the paper, and looked earnestly at the men.

“My lads, I have never felt so strongly as I now do the absolute need we have of the blessing and guidance of the Almighty, and I am persuaded that it is our duty as well as our interest to begin, not only the Sabbath, but every day with prayer.

“Second. The ordinary duties of the ship shall be carried on, the watches regularly set and relieved, regular hours observed, and the details of duty attended to in the usual way, as when in harbour.

“Third. The officers shall take watch and watch about as heretofore, except when required to do otherwise; the log-books, and meteorological observations, etcetera, shall be carried on as usual.

“Fourth. The captain shall have supreme and absolute command as when at sea, but he, on his part, promises that, should any peculiar circumstance arise, in which the safety of the crew or ship shall be implicated, he will, if the men are so disposed, call a council of the whole crew, in which case the decision of the majority shall become law, but the minority in that event shall have it in their option to separate from the majority and carry along with them their share of the general provisions.

“Fifth. Disobedience to orders shall be punishable according to the decision of a council, to be appointed specially for the purpose of framing a criminal code, hereafter to be submitted for the approval of the crew.”

The rules above laid down were signed by every man in the ship. Several of them could not write, but these affixed a cross (x) at the foot of the page, against which their names were written by the captain in presence of witnesses, which answered the same purpose. And from that time, until events occurred which rendered all such rules unnecessary, the work of the ship went on pleasantly and well.

Chapter Ten.

Beginning of winterMeetuck effects a remarkable change in the men’s appearanceMossing, and working, and plans for a winter campaign.

In August the first frost came and formed “young ice” on the sea, but this lasted only for a brief hour or two, and was broken up by the tide and melted. By the 10th of September the young ice cemented the floes of last year’s ice together, and soon rendered the ice round the ship immovable. Hummocks clustered round several rocky islets in the neighbourhood, and the rising and falling of the tide covered the sides of the rocks with bright crystals. All the feathered tribes took their departure for less rigorous climes, with the exception of a small white bird about the size of a sparrow, called the snow-bird, which is the last to leave the icy north. Then a tremendous storm arose, and the sea became choked up with icebergs and floes which the frost soon locked together into a solid mass. Towards the close of the storm snow fell in great abundance, and when the mariners ventured again to put their heads up the opened hatchways, the decks were knee-deep, the drift to windward was almost level with the bulwarks, every yard was edged with white, every rope and cord had a light side and a dark, every point and truck had a white button on it, and every hole, corner, crack, and crevice was choked up.

The land and the sea were also clothed with this spotless garment, which is indeed a strikingly appropriate emblem of purity, and the only dark objects visible in the landscape were those precipices which were too steep for the snow to lie on, the towering form of the giant flag-staff, and the leaden clouds that rolled angrily across the sky. But these leaden clouds soon rolled off, leaving a blue wintry sky and a bright sun behind.

The storm blew itself out early in the morning, and at breakfast-time on that day, when the sun was just struggling with the last of the clouds, Captain Guy remarked to his friends, who were seated round the cabin table: “Well, gentlemen, we must begin hard work to-day.”

“Hard work, Captain!” exclaimed Fred Ellice, pausing for a second or two in the hard work of chewing a piece of hard salt junk; “why, what do you call the work we’ve been engaged in for the last few weeks?”

“Play, my lad; that was only playjust to bring our hands in, before setting to work in earnest! What do you think of the health of the men, Doctor?”

“Never was better, but I fear the hospital will soon fill if you carry out your threat in regard to work.”

“No fear,” remarked the second mate; “the more work the better health is my experience. Busy men have no time to git seek.”

“No doubt of it sir,” said the first mate, bolting a large mouthful of pork. “Nothing so good for ’em as work.”

“There are two against you, Doctor,” said the captain.

“Then it’s two to two,” cried Fred, as he finished breakfast, “for I quite agree with Tom, and with that excellent proverb which says: ‘All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.’”

The captain shook his head as he said: “Of all the nuisances I ever met with in a ship a semi-passenger is the worst. I think, Fred, I must get you bound apprentice, and give you regular work to do, you good-for-nothing.”

We need scarcely say that the captain jested, for Fred was possessed of a spirit that cannot rest, so to speak, unless at work. He was able to do almost anything after a fashion, and was never idle for a moment. Even when his hands chanced to be unemployed his brows were knitted, busily planning what to do next.

“Well now, gentlemen,” resumed the captain, “let us consider the order of business. The first thing that must be done now is to unstow the hold, and deposit its contents on the small island astern of us, which we shall call Store Island, for brevity’s sake. Get a tent pitched there, Mr Bolton, and bank it up with snow. You can leave Grim to superintend the unloading. Then, Mr Saunders, do you go and set a gang of men to cut a canal through the young ice from the ship to the island. Fortunately the floes there are wide enough apart to let our quarter-boats float between them. The unshipping won’t take long. Tell Buzzby to take a dozen men with him and collect moss; we’ll need a large quantity for fuel, and if another storm like this comes, it’ll be hard work to get down to it. Send Meetuck to me when you go on deck; I shall talk to him as to our prospects of finding deer hereabouts, and arrange a hunt. Doctor, you may either join the hunting party or post up the observations, etcetera, which have accumulated of late.”

“Thank you, Captain,” said Singleton, “I’ll accept the latter duty, the more willingly that I wish to have a careful examination of my botanical specimens.”

“And what am I to do, Captain?” enquired Fred.

“What you please, lad.”

“Then I’ll go and take care of Meetuck; he’s apt to get into mischief when left”

At this moment a tremendous shout of laughter, long-continued, came from the deck, and a sound as of numbers of men dancing overhead was heard.

The party in the cabin seized their caps and sprang up the companion, where they beheld a scene that accounted for the laughter, and induced them to join in it. At first sight it seemed as if thirty polar bears had boarded the vessel, and were executing a dance of triumph before proceeding to make a meal of the crew; but on closer inspection it became apparent that the men had undergone a strange transformation, and were capering with delight at the ridiculous appearance they presented. They were clad from head to foot in Esquimaux costume, and now bore as strong a resemblance to polar bears as man could attain to.

Meetuck was the pattern and the chief instrument in effecting this change. At Uppernavik Captain Guy had been induced to purchase a large number of fox-skins, deer-skins, seal-skins, and other furs as a speculation, and had them tightly packed and stowed away in the hold, little imagining the purpose they were ultimately destined to serve. Meetuck had come on board in a mongrel sort of worn-out seal-skin dress, but the instant the cold weather set in he drew from a bundle, which he had brought with him, a dress made of the furs of the Arctic fox, some of the skins being white and the others blue. It consisted of a loose coat somewhat in the form of a shirt, with a large hood to it, and a short elongation behind like the commencement of a tail. The boots were made of white bear-skin which, at the end of the foot, were made to terminate with the claws of the animal, and they were so long that they came up the thigh under the coat, or “jumper” as the men called it, and thus served instead of trousers. He also wore fur mittens, with a bag for the fingers, and a separate little bag for the thumb. The hair on these garments was long and soft, and worn outside, so that when a man enveloped himself in them, and put up the hood, which well-nigh concealed the face, he became very much like a bear, or some such creature, standing on its hind-legs.

Meetuck was a short, fat, burly little fellow by nature, but when he put on his winter dress he became such a round, soft, squat, hairy, and comical-looking creature that no one could look at him without laughing; and the shout with which he was received on deck the first time he made his appearance in his new costume was loud and prolonged. But Meetuck was as good-humoured an Esquimaux as ever speared a walrus or lanced a polar bear. He joined in the laugh, and cut a caper or two to show that he entered into the spirit of the joke.

When the ship was set fast, and the thermometer fell pretty low, the men found that their ordinary dreadnoughts and pea-jackets, etcetera, were not a sufficient protection against the cold, and it occurred to the captain that his furs might now be turned to good account. Sailors are proverbially good needle-men of a rough kind. Meetuck showed them how to set about their work; each man made his own garments, and in less than a week they were completed. It is

true the boots perplexed them a little, and the less ingenious among the men made very rare and curious-looking foot-gear for themselves, but they succeeded after a fashion, and at last the whole crew appeared on deck in their new habiliments, as we have already mentioned, capering among the snow like bears, to their own entire satisfaction and to the intense delight of Meetuck, who now came to regard the white men as brothersso true is it that "the tailor makes the man!"

"'Ow 'orribly 'eavy it is, hain't it?" gasped Mivins, after dancing round the main-hatch till he was nearly exhausted.

"Heavy?" cried Buzzby, whose appearance was such that you would have hesitated to say whether his breadth or length was greater,"heavy, d'ye say? It must be your sperrits wot's heavy, then, for I feel as light as a feather myself."

"O morther! then may I niver sleep on a bed made o' sich feathers!" cried O'Riley, capering up to Green, the carpenter's mate, and throwing a mass of snow in his face. The frost rendered it impossible to form the snow into balls, but the men made up for this by throwing it about each other's eyes and ears in handfuls.

"What d'ye mean by insultin' my mate?take that!" said Peter Grim, giving the Irishman a twirl that tumbled him on the deck.

"Oh, bad manners to ye," spluttered O'Riley, as he rose and ran away, "why don't ye hit a man o' yer own size."

"'Deed, then, it must be because there's not one o' my own size to hit," remarked the carpenter with a broad grin.

This was true. Grim's colossal proportions were increased so much by his hairy dress that he seemed to spread out into the dimensions of two large men rolled into one. But O'Riley was not to be overturned with impunity. Skulking round behind the crew, who were laughing at Grim's joke, he came upon the giant in the rear, and seizing the short tail of his jumper, pulled him violently down on the deck.

"Ah! then give it him, boys," cried O'Riley, pushing the carpenter flat down, and obliterating his black beard and his whole visage in a mass of snow. Several of the wilder spirits among the men leaped on the prostrate Grim, and nearly smothered him before he could gather himself up for a struggle; then they fled in all directions, while their victim regained his feet and rushed wildly after them. At last he caught O'Riley, and grasping him by the two shoulders gave him a heave that was intended and "calc'lated," as Amos Parr afterwards remarked, "to pitch him over the foretop-sail-yard!" But an

Irishman is not easily overcome. O'Riley suddenly straightened himself and held his arms up over his head, and the violent heave, which, according to Parr, was to have sent him to such an uncomfortable elevation, only pulled the jumper completely off his body, and left him free to laugh in the face of his big friend, and run away.

At this point the captain deemed it prudent to interfere.

"Come, come, my lads," he cried, "enough o' this! That's not the morning work, is it? I'm glad to find that your new dresses," he added with a significant smile, "make you fond of rough work in the snow; there's plenty of it before us. Come down below with me, Meetuck; I wish to talk with you."

As the captain descended to the cabin the men gave a final cheer, and in ten minutes they were working laboriously at their various duties.

Buzzby and his party were the first ready and off to cut moss. They drew a sledge after them towards the Red-snow Valley, which was not more than two miles distant from the ship. This "mossing", as it was termed, was by no means a pleasant duty. Before the winter became severe the moss could be cut out from the beds of the snow streams with comparative ease, but now the mixed turf of willows, heaths, grasses, and moss was frozen solid, and had to be quarried with crowbars and carried to the ship like so much stone. However, it was prosecuted vigorously, and a sufficient quantity was soon procured to pack on the decks of the ship, and around its sides, so as to keep out the cold. At the same time the operation of discharging the stores was carried on briskly, and Fred, in company with Meetuck, O'Riley, and Joseph West, started with the dog-sledge on a hunting expedition.

In order to enable the reader better to understand the condition of the Dolphin and her crew, we will detail the several arrangements that were made at this time and during the succeeding fortnight. As a measure of precaution, the ship, by means of blasting, sawing, and warping, was with great labour got into deeper water, where one night's frost set her fast with a sheet of ice three inches thick round her; in a few weeks this ice became several feet thick, and the snow drifted up her hull so much that it seemed as if she were resting on the land, and had taken final leave of her native element. Strong hawsers were then secured to Store Island in order to guard against the possibility of her being carried away by any sudden disruption of the ice. The disposition of the masts, yards, and sails were next determined on; the top-gallant masts were struck, the lower yards got down to the housings. The top-sail yards, gaff, and jib-boom, however, were left in their places. The top-sails and courses were kept bent to the yards, the sheets being unrove, and the clews tucked in. The rest of the binding sails were stowed on deck to prevent their thawing during

winter; and the spare spars were lashed over the ship's sides, to leave a clear space for taking exercise in bad weather.

The stores, in order to relieve the strain on the ship, were removed to Store Island, and snugly housed under the tent erected there, and then a thick bank of snow was heaped up round it. After this was accomplished, all the boats were hauled up beside the tent and covered with snow, except the two quarter boats, which were left hanging at the davits all winter. When the thermometer fell below zero it was found that the vapours below, and the breath of the men, condensed on the beams of the lower deck and in the cabin near the hatchway. It was therefore resolved to convert some sheet-iron, which they fortunately possessed, into pipes, which, being conducted from the cooking-stove through the length of the ship, served in some degree to raise the temperature and ventilate the cabins. A regular daily allowance of coal was served out, and four steady men appointed to attend to the fire in regular watches, for the double purpose of seeing that none of the fuel should be wasted, and of guarding against fire. They had likewise charge of the fire-pumps and buckets, and two tanks of water, all of which were kept in the hatchway in constant readiness in case of accidents. In addition to this, a fire-brigade was formed, with Joseph West, a steady, quiet, active young seaman, as its captain, and their stations in the event of fire were fixed beforehand; also a hole was kept constantly open in the ice alongside to ensure at all times a sufficient supply of water.

Strict regulations as to cleanliness, and the daily airing of the hammocks, were laid down, and adhered to throughout the winter. A regular allowance of provisions was appointed to each man, so that they should not run the risk of starving before the return of the wild fowl in spring. But those provisions were all salt, and the captain trusted much to their hunting expeditions for a supply of fresh food, without which there would be little hope of their continuing in a condition of good health. Coffee was served out at breakfast, and cocoa at supper, besides being occasionally supplied at other times to men who had been engaged in exhausting work in extremely cold weather. Afterwards, when the dark season set in, and the crew were confined by the intense cold more than formerly within the ship, various schemes were set afoot for passing the time profitably and agreeably. Among others a school was started by the captain for instructing such of the crew as chose to attend in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and in this hyperborean academy Fred Ellice acted as the writing-master, and Tom Singleton as the accountant. The men were much amused at first at the idea of "goin' to school", and some of them looked rather shy at it, but O'Riley, after some consideration, came boldly forward and said: "Well, boys, bad luck to me if I don't think I'll be a scholard afther all. My old gran'mother used to tell me, whin I refused to go to the school that was kip be an owld man as tuck his fees out in murphies and photteen,says she: 'Ah ye

spalpeen, ye'll niver be cliverer nor the pig, ye wont.' 'Ah, then, I hope not,' says I, 'for sure she's far the cliverest in the house, an' ye wouldn't have me to be cliverer than me own gran'mother, would ye?' says I. So I niver wint to school, and more be token, I can't sign me name, and if it was only to learn how to do that, I'll go and jine; indeed I will." So O'Riley joined, and before long every man in the ship was glad to join, in order to have something to do.

The doctor also, twice a week, gave readings from Shakespeare, a copy of which he had fortunately brought with him. He also read extracts from the few other books they happened to have on board, and after a time, finding unexpectedly that he had a talent that way, he began to draw upon his memory and his imagination, and told long stories (which were facetiously called lectures) to the men, who listened to them with great delight. Then Fred started an illustrated newspaper once a week, which was named the Arctic Sun, and which was in great favour during the whole course of its brief existence. It is true, only one copy was issued each morning of publication, because, besides supplying the greater proportion of the material himself, and executing the illustrations in a style that would have made Mr Leech of the present day envious, he had to transcribe the various contributions he received from the men and others in a neat, legible hand. But this one copy was perused and reperused as no single copy of any paper extantnot excepting The Times or Punchhas ever yet been perused; and when it was returned to the editor to be carefully placed in the archives of the Dolphin, it was emphatically the worse for wear. Besides all this, a theatre was set agoingof which we shall have more to say hereafter.

In thus minutely recounting the various expedients which these banished men fell upon to pass the long dark hours of an Arctic winter, we may, perhaps, give the reader the impression that a great deal of thought and time were bestowed upon amusement, as if that were the chief end and object of their life in those regions. But we must remind him that though many more pages might be filled in recounting all the particulars, but a small portion of their time was, after all, taken up in this way; and it would have been well for them had they been able to find more to amuse them than they did, for the depressing influence of the long-continued darkness, and the want of a sufficiency of regular employment for so many months, added to the rigorous nature of the climate in which they dwelt, well-nigh broke their spirits at last.

In order to secure warmth during winter, the deck of the ship was padded with moss about a foot deep, and, down below, the walls were lined with the same material. The floors were carefully plastered with common paste, and covered with oakum a couple of inches deep, over which a carpet of canvas was spread. Every opening in the deck was fastened down and covered deeply over

with moss, with the exception of one hatch, which was their only entrance, and this was kept constantly closed, except when it was desirable to ventilate. Curtains were hung up in front of it to prevent draughts. A canvas awning was also spread over the decks from stem to stern, so that it was confidently hoped the Dolphin would prove a snug tenement even in the severest cold.

As has been said before, the snow-drift almost buried the hull of the ship; and, as snow is a good non-conductor of heat, this further helped to keep up the temperature within. A staircase of snow was built up to the bulwarks on the larboard quarter, and on the starboard side an inclined plane of snow was sloped down to the ice to facilitate the launching of the sledges when they had to be pulled on deck.

Such were the chief arrangements and preparations that were made by our adventurers for spending the winter; but although we have described them at this point in our story, many of them were not completed until a much later period.

Chapter Eleven.

A Hunting Expedition, in the Course of which the Hunters meet with many Interesting, Dangerous, Peculiar, and Remarkable Experiences, and make Acquaintance with Seals, Walrus, Deer, and Rabbits.

We must now return to Fred Ellice and his companions, Meetuck the Esquimaux, O'Riley, and Joseph West, whom we left while they were on the point of starting on a hunting expedition.

They took the direction of the ice hummocks out to the sea, and, seated comfortably on a large sledge, were dragged by the team of dogs over the ice at the rate of ten miles an hour.

"Well! did I iver expect to ride in a carriage and six?" exclaimed O'Riley in a state of great glee as the dogs dashed forward at full speed, while Meetuck flourished his awful whip, making it crack like a pistol-shot ever and anon.

The sledge on which they travelled was of the very curious and simple construction peculiar to the Esquimaux, and was built by Peter Grim under the direction of Meetuck. It consisted of two runners of about ten feet in length, six inches high, two inches broad, and three feet apart. They were made of tough hickory, slightly curved in front, and were attached to each other by cross bars. At the stem of the vehicle there was a low back composed of two uprights and a single bar across. The whole machine was fastened together by means of tough lashings of raw seal-hide, so that, to all appearance, it was a

rickety affair, ready to fall to pieces. In reality, however, it was very strong. No metal nails of any kind could have held in the keen frost; they would have snapped like glass at the first jolt; but the seal-skin fastenings yielded to the rude shocks and twistings to which the sledge was subjected, and seldom gave way, or, if they did, were easily and speedily renewed without the aid of any other implement than a knife.

But the whip was the most remarkable part of the equipage. The handle was only sixteen inches in length, but the lash was twenty feet long, made of the toughest seal-skin, and as thick as a man's wrist near the handle, whence it tapered off to a fine point. The labour of using such a formidable weapon is so great that Esquimaux usually, when practicable, travel in couples, one sledge behind the other. The dogs of the last sledge follow mechanically and require no whip, and the riders change about so as to relieve each other. When travelling, the whip trails behind, and can be brought with a tremendous crack that makes the hair fly from the wretch that is struckand Esquimaux are splendid shots, so to speak. They can hit any part of a dog with certainty, but usually rest satisfied with simply cracking the whip, a sound that produces an answering yell of terror whether the lash takes effect or not.

Our hunters were clothed in their Esquimaux garments, and cut the oddest imaginable figures. They had a soft, rotund, cuddled-up appearance that was powerfully suggestive of comfort. The sled carried one day's provisions, a couple of walrus harpoons, with a sufficient quantity of rope, four muskets, with the requisite ammunition, an Esquimaux cooking-lamp, two stout spears, two tarpaulins to spread on the snow, and four blanket sleeping-bags. These last were six feet long, and just wide enough for a man to crawl into at night, feet first.

"What a jolly style of travelling, isn't it?" cried Fred, as the dogs sprang wildly forward, tearing the sledge behind them, Dumps and Poker leading, and looking as lively as crickets.

"Well now, isn't it true that wits jump?that's jist what I was sayin' to meself," remarked O'Riley, grinning from ear to ear as he pulled the fur hood farther over his head, crossed his arms more firmly on his breast, and tried to double himself up as he sat there like an overgrown rat. "I wouldn't exchange it with the Lord Mayor o' London and his coach an' sixso I wouldn't. Arrah! have a care, Meetuck, ye baste, or ye'll have us kilt."

This last exclamation was caused by the reckless driver dashing over a piece of rough ice that nearly capsized the sledge. Meetuck did not answer, but he looked over his shoulder with a quiet smile on his oily countenance.

“Ah, then, ye may laugh!” said O’Riley, with a menacing look, “but av ye break a bone o’ me body I’ll”

Down went the dogs into a crack in the ice as he spoke, over went the sledge, and hurled them all out upon the ice.

“Musha! but ye’ve done it!”

“Hallo, West, are you hurt?” cried Fred anxiously, as he observed the sailor fall heavily on the ice.

“Oh no, sir; all right, thank you!” replied the man, rising alertly and limping to the sledge. “Only knocked the skin off my shin, sir.”

West was a quiet, serious, polite man, an American by birth, who was much liked by the crew in consequence of a union of politeness and modesty with a disposition to work far beyond his strength. He was not very robust, however, and in powers of physical endurance scarcely fitted to engage in an Arctic expedition.

“An’ don’t ye think it’s worth makin’ enquiries about me?” cried O’Riley, who had been tossed into a crevice in a hummock, where he lay jammed and utterly unable to move.

Fred and the Esquimaux laughed heartily, while O’Riley extricated himself from his awkward position. Fortunately no damage was done, and in five minutes they were flying over the frozen sea as madly as ever in the direction of the point at the opposite side of Red-snow Valley, where a cloud of frost-smoke indicated open water.

“Now, look you, Mr Meetuck, av ye do that again ye’ll better don’t, let me tell ye. Sure the back o’ me’s track entirely,” said O’Riley, as he rearranged himself with a look of comfort that belied his words. “Och, there ye go again,” he cried, as the sled suddenly fell about six inches, from a higher level to a lower, where the floe had cracked, causing the teeth of the whole party to come together with a snap. “A man dursen’t spake for fear o’ bitin’ his tongue off.”

“No fee,” said Meetuck, looking over his shoulder with a broader smirk.

“No fee, ye lump of pork! it’s a double fee I’ll have to pay the dacter an ye go on like that.”

No fee was Meetuck’s best attempt at the words no fear. He had picked up a little English during his brief sojourn with the sailors, and already understood much of what was said to him, but words were as yet few, and his manner of

pronouncing them peculiar.

“Holo! look! look!” cried the Esquimaux, leaping suddenly off the sledge and checking the dogs.

“Eh! what! where?” ejaculated Fred, seizing his musket.

“I think I see something, sir,” cried West, shading his eyes with his hand, and gazing earnestly in the direction indicated by Meetuck.

“So do I, be the mortial!” said O’Riley in a hoarse whisper. “I see the mountains and the sky, I do, as plain as the nose on me face!”

“Hush! stop your nonsense, man,” said Fred. “I see a deer, I’m certain of it.”

Meetuck nodded violently to indicate that Fred was right.

“Well, what’s to be done? luckily we are well to leeward, and it has neither sighted nor scented us.”

Meetuck replied by gestures and words to the effect that West and O’Riley should remain with the dogs, and keep them quiet, under the shelter of a hummock, while he and Fred should go after the reindeer. Accordingly, away they went making a pretty long détour in order to gain the shore, and come upon it under the shelter of the grounded floes, behind which they might approach without being seen. In hurrying along the coast they observed the footprints of a musk ox, and also of several Arctic hares and foxes, which delighted them much, for hitherto they had seen none of those animals, and were beginning to be fearful lest they should not visit that part of the coast at all. Of course Fred knew not what sort of animals had made the tracks in question, but he was an adept at guessing, and the satisfied looks of his companion gave him reason to believe that he was correct in his surmises.

In half an hour they came within range, and Fred, after debating with himself for some time as to the propriety of taking the first shot, triumphed over himself, and, stepping back a pace, motioned to the Esquimaux to fire. But Meetuck was an innate gentleman, and modestly declined, so Fred advanced, took a good aim, and fired.

The deer bounded away, but stumbled as it went, showing that it was wounded.

“Ha! ha! Meetuck,” exclaimed Fred, as he recharged in tremendous excitement (taking twice as long to load in consequence), “I’ve improved a little you see in my shoot, o’ bother thisramrod!tut! tut! there, that’s it.”

Bang went Meetuck's musket at that moment, and the deer tumbled over upon the snow.

"Well done, old fellow!" cried Fred, springing forward. At the same instant a white hare darted across his path, at which he fired, without even putting the gun to his shoulder, and knocked it over, to his own intense amazement.

The three shots were the signal for the men to come up with the sledge, which they did at full gallop, O'Riley driving, and flourishing the long whip about in a way that soon entangled it hopelessly with the dogs' traces.

"Ah, then, ye've done it this time, ye have, sure enough! Musha! what a purty crature it is. Now, isn't it, West? Stop, then, won't ye (to the restive dogs), ye've broke my heart entirely, and the whip's tied up into iver so many knots. Arrah, Meetuck! ye may drive yer coach yerself for me, you may; I've had more nor enough of it."

In a few minutes the deer and the hare were lashed to the sledgewhich the Irishman asserted was a great improvement, inasmuch as the carcass of the former made an excellent seatand they were off again at full gallop over the floes. They travelled without further interruption or mishap until they drew near to the open water, when suddenly they came upon a deep fissure or crack in the ice, about four feet wide, with water in the bottom. Here they came to a dead stop.

"Arrah! what's to be done now?" enquired O'Riley.

"Indeed I don't know," replied Fred, looking toward Meetuck for advice.

"Hup, cut-up ice, mush, hurroo!" said that fat individual. Fortunately he followed his advice with a practical illustration of its meaning. Seizing an axe he ran to the nearest hummock, and, chopping it down, rolled the heaviest pieces he could move into the chasm. The others followed his example, and, in the course of an hour, the place was bridged across, and the sledge passed over. But the dogs required a good deal of coaxing to get them to trust to this rude bridge, which their sagacity taught them was not to be depended on like the works of nature.

A quarter of an hour's drive brought them to a place where there was another crack of little more than two feet across. Meetuck stretched his neck and took a steady look at this as they approached it at full gallop. Being apparently satisfied with his scrutiny, he resumed his look of self-satisfied placidity.

"Look out, Meetuck, pull up!" cried Fred in some alarm; but the Esquimaux paid no attention.

“O morther, we’re gone now, for iver,” exclaimed O’Riley, shutting his eyes and clenching his teeth as he laid fast hold of the sides of the sledge.

The feet of the dogs went faster and faster until they pattered on the hard surface of the snow like rain. Round came the long whip, as O’Riley said, “like the shot of a young cannon,” and the next moment they were across, skimming over the ice on the other side like the wind.

It happened that there had been a break in the ice at this point on the previous night, and the floes had been cemented by a sheet of ice only an inch thick. Upon this, to the consternation even of Meetuck himself, they now passed, and in a moment, ere they were aware, they were passing over a smooth, black surface that undulated beneath them like the waves of the sea and crackled fearfully. There was nothing for it but to go on. A moment’s halt would have allowed the sledge to break through and leave them struggling in the water. There was no time for remark. Each man held his breath. Meetuck sent the heavy lash with a tremendous crack over the backs of the whole team, but just as they neared the solid floe, the left runner broke through. In a moment the men flung themselves horizontally upon their breasts, and scrambled over the smooth surface until they gained the white ice, while the sledge and the dogs nearest to it were sinking. One vigorous pull, however, by dogs and men together, dragged the sledge upon the solid floe, even before the things in it had got wet.

“Safe!” cried Fred, as he hauled on the sledge rope to drag it farther out of danger.

“So we are,” replied O’Riley, breathing very hard, “and it’s meself thought to have had a wet skin at this minute. Come, West, lind a hand to fix the dogs, will ye?”

A few minutes sufficed to put all to rights and enable them to start afresh. Being now in the neighbourhood of dangerous ice, they advanced with a little more caution; the possibility of seals being in the neighbourhood also rendered them more circumspect. It was well that they were on the alert, for a band of seals were soon after descried in a pool of open water not far ahead, and one of them was lying on the ice.

There were no hummocks, however, in the neighbourhood to enable them to approach unseen; but the Esquimaux was prepared for such a contingency. He had brought a small sledge, of about two feet in length by a foot and a half in breadth, which he now unfastened from the large sledge, and proceeded quietly to arrange it, to the surprise of his companions, who had not the least

idea what he was about to do, and watched his proceedings with much interest.

“Is it to sail on the ice ye’re goin’, boy?” enquired O’Riley, at last, when he saw Meetuck fix a couple of poles, about four feet long, into a hole in the little sledge, like two masts, and upon these spread a piece of canvas upwards of a yard square, with a small hole in the centre of it. But Meetuck answered not. He fastened the canvas “sail” to a cross-yard above and below. Then, placing a harpoon and coil of rope on the sledge, and taking up his musket, he made signs to the party to keep under the cover of a hummock, and, pushing the sledge before him, advanced towards the seals in a stooping posture, so as to be completely hid behind the bit of canvas.

“Oh the haythen, I see it now!” exclaimed O’Riley, his face puckering up with fun. “Ah, but it’s a cliver trick, no doubt of it!”

“What a capital dodge!” said Fred, crouching behind the hummock, and watching the movements of the Esquimaux with deep interest.

“West, hand me the little telescope; you’ll find it in the pack.”

“Here it is, sir,” said the man, pulling out a glass of about six inches long, and handing it to Fred.

“How many is there, an’ ye plaze?”

“Six, I think; yesone, two, three,I can’t make them out quite, but I think there are six, besides the one on the ice. Hist! there he sees him. Ah! Meetuck, he’s too quick for you.”

As he spoke, the seal on the ice began to show symptoms of alarm. Meetuck had approached to within shot, but he did not fire; the wary Esquimaux had caught sight of another object which a lump of ice had hitherto concealed from view. This was no less a creature than a walrus, who chanced at that time to come up to take a gulp of fresh air, and lave his shaggy front in the brine, before going down again to the depths of his ocean home. Meetuck, therefore, allowed the seal to glide quietly into the sea, and advanced towards this new object of attack. At length he took a steady aim through the hole in the canvas screen, and fired. Instantly the seal dived, and at the same time the water round the walrus was lashed into foam, and tinged with red. It was evidently badly wounded, for had it been only slightly hurt it would probably have dived.

Meetuck immediately seized his harpoon, and rushed towards the struggling monster, while Fred grasped a gun, and O’Riley a harpoon, and ran to his assistance. West remained to keep back the dogs. As Meetuck gained the edge

of the ice the walrus recovered partially and tried, with savage fury, to reach his assailant, who planted the harpoon deep in its breast, and held on to the rope while the animal dived.

“Whereabouts is he?” cried O’Riley, as he came panting to the scene of action.

As he spoke, the walrus ascended almost under his nose, with a loud bellow, and the Irishman started back in terror as he surveyed at close quarters, for the first time, the colossal and horrible countenance of this elephant of the northern sea. O’Riley was no coward, but the suddenness of the apparition was too much for him, and we need not wonder that in his haste he darted the harpoon far over the animal’s head into the sea beyond. Neither need we feel surprised that when Fred took aim at its forehead, the sight of its broad muzzle, fringed with bristling moustache and defended by huge tusks, caused him to miss it altogether. But O’Riley recovered, hauled his harpoon back, and succeeded in planting it deep under the creature’s left flipper, and Fred, reloading, lodged a ball in its head which finished it. With great labour the four men, aided by the dogs, drew it out upon the ice.

This was a great prize, for walrus flesh is not much inferior to beef, and would be an acceptable addition of fresh meat for the use of the Dolphin’s crew, and there was no chance of it spoiling, for the frost was now severe enough to freeze every animal solid almost immediately after it was killed.

The body of this walrus was not less than eighteen feet long and eleven in circumference. It was more like an elephant in bulk and rotundity than any other creature. It partook very much of the form of a seal, having two large paw-like flippers, with which, when struggling for life, it had more than once nearly succeeded in getting upon the ice. Its upper face had a square, bluff aspect, and its broad muzzle and cheeks were completely covered by a coarse, quill-like beard of bristles, which gave to it a peculiarly ferocious appearance. The notion that the walrus resembles man is very much overrated. The square, bluff shape of the head already referred to, destroys the resemblance to humanity when distant, and its colossal size does the same when near. Some of the seals deserve this distinction more, their drooping shoulders and oval faces being strikingly like to those of man when at a distance. The white ivory tusks of this creature were carefully measured by Fred, and found to be thirty inches long.

The resemblance of the walrus to our domestic land-animals has obtained for it, among sailors, the names of the sea-horse and sea-cow, and the records of its ferocity when attacked are numerous. Its hide is nearly an inch thick, and is put to many useful purposes by the Esquimaux, who live to a great extent on the flesh of this creature. They cut up his hide into long lines to attach to the

harpoons with which they catch himself, the said harpoons being pointed with his own tusks. This tough hide is not the only garment the walrus wears to protect him from the cold. He also wears under-flannels of thick fat and a top-coat of close hair, so that he can take a siesta on an iceberg without the least inconvenience. Talking of siestas, by the way, the walrus is sometimes “caught napping”. Occasionally, when the weather is intensely cold, the hole through which he crawls upon the ice gets frozen over so solidly that, on waking, he finds it beyond even his enormous power to break it. In this extremity there is no alternative but to go to sleep again, anddie! which he does as comfortably as he can. The polar bears, however, are quick to smell him out, and assembling round his carcass for a feast, they dispose of him, body and bones, without ceremony.

As it was impossible to drag this unwieldy animal to the ship that night, for the days had now shortened very considerably, the hunters hauled it towards the land, and, having reached the secure ice, prepared to encamp for the night under the lee of a small iceberg.

Chapter Twelve.

A Dangerous Sleep interruptedA Night in a Snow-Hut, and an Unpleasant VisitorSnowed up.

“Now then,” cried Fred, as they drew up on a level portion of the ice-floe, where the snow on its surface was so hard that the runners of the sledge scarce made an impression on it, “let us to work, lads, and get the tarpaulins spread; we shall have to sleep to-night under star-spangled bed-curtains.”

“Troth,” said O’Riley, gazing round towards the land, where the distant cliffs loomed black and heavy in the fading light, and out upon the floes and hummocks, where the frost smoke from pools of open water on the horizon circled round the pinnacles of the icebergs,“troth, it’s a cowld place intirely to go to wan’s bed in, but that fat-faced Exqueemaw seems to be settin’ about it quite coolly; so here goes!”

“It would be difficult to set about it otherwise than coolly with the thermometer thirty-five below zero,” remarked Fred, beating his hands together, and stamping his feet, while the breath issued from his mouth like dense clouds of steam, and fringed the edges of his hood and the breast of his jumper with hoar-frost.

“It’s quite purty, it is,” remarked O’Riley, in reference to this wreath of hoar-frost, which covered the upper parts of each of them; “it’s jist like the ermine that kings and queens wear, so I’m towld, and it’s chaper a long way.”

“I don’t know that,” said Joseph West. “It has cost us a rough voyage and a winter in the Arctic regions, if it doesn’t cost us more yet, to put that ermine fringe on our jumpers. I can make nothing of this knot; try what you can do with it, messmate, will you?”

“Sorra wan o’ me ’ll try it,” cried O’Riley, suddenly leaping up and swinging both arms violently against his shoulders; “I’ve got two hands, I have, but niver a finger on themleastwise I feel none, though it is some small degrae o’ comfort to see them.”

“My toes are much in the same condition,” said West, stamping vigorously until he brought back the circulation.

“Dance, then, wid me,” cried the Irishman, suiting his action to the word. “I’ve a mortial fear o’ bein’ bit wid the frost for it’s no joke, let me tell you. Didn’t I see a whole ship’s crew wance that wos wrecked in the Gulf o’ Saint Lawrence about the beginnin’ o’ winter, and before they got to a part o’ the coast where there was a house belongin’ to the fur-traders, ivery man-jack o’ them was frost-bit more or less, they wor. Wan lost a thumb, and another the jint of a finger or two, and most o’ them had two or three toes off, an’ there wos wan poor fellow who lost the front half o’ wan fut, an’ the heel o’ the other, an’ two inches o’ the bone was stickin’ out. Sure, it’s truth I’m tellin’ ye, for I seed it wid me own two eyes, I did.”

The earnest tones in which the last words were spoken convinced his comrades that O’Riley was telling the truth, so, having a decided objection to be placed in similar circumstances, they danced and beat each other until they were quite in a glow.

“Why, what are you at there, Meetuck?” exclaimed Fred, pausing.

“Igloe, make,” replied the Esquimaux.

“Ig what?” enquired O’Riley.

“Oh, I see!” shouted Fred, “he’s going to make a snow-hut,igloes they call them here. Capital!I never thought of that! Come along; let’s help him!”

Meetuck was indeed about to erect one of those curious dwellings of snow in which, for the greater part of the year, his primitive countrymen dwell. He had no taste for star-spangled bed-curtains, when solid walls, whiter than the purest dimity, were to be had for nothing. His first operation in the erection of this hut was to mark out a circle of about seven feet diameter. From the inside

of this circle the snow was cut by means of a long knife in the form of slabs nearly a foot thick, and from two to three feet long, having a slight convexity on the outside. These slabs were then so cut and arranged that, when they were piled upon each other round the margin of the circle, they formed a dome-shaped structure like a bee-hive, which was six feet high inside, and remarkably solid. The slabs were cemented together with loose snow, and every accidental chink or crevice filled up with the same material. The natives sometimes insert a block of clear ice in the roof for a window, but this was dispensed with on the present occasionfirstly, because there was no light to let in; and, secondly, because if there had been, they didn't want it.

The building of the hut occupied only an hour, for the hunters were cold and hungry, and in their case the old proverb might have been paraphrased: "No work, no supper." A hole, just large enough to permit a man to creep through on his hands and knees, formed the door of this bee-hive. Attached to this hole, and cemented to it, was a low tunnel of about four feet in length. When finished, both ends of the tunnel were closed up with slabs of hard snow, which served the purpose of double doors, and effectually kept out the cold.

While this tunnel was approaching completion, Fred retired to a short distance, and sat down to rest a few minutes on a block of ice.

A great change had come over the scene during the time they were at work on the snow-hut. The night had settled down, and now the whole sky was lit up with the vivid and beautiful coruscations of the Aurora Borealisthat magnificent meteor of the north which, in some measure, makes up to the inhabitants for the absence of the sun. It spread over the whole extent of the sky in the form of an irregular arch, and was intensely brilliant. But the brilliancy varied, as the green ethereal fire waved mysteriously to and fro, or shot up long streamers toward the zenith. These streamers, or "merry dancers" as they are sometimes termed, were at times peculiarly bright. Their colour was most frequently yellowish white, sometimes greenish, and once or twice of a lilac tinge. The strength of the light was something greater than that of the moon in her quarter, and the stars were dimmed when the Aurora passed over them as if they had been covered with a delicate gauze veil.

But that which struck our hero as being most remarkable was the magnitude and dazzling brightness of the host of stars that covered the black firmament. It seemed as if they were magnified in glory, and twinkled so much that the sky seemed, as it were, to tremble with light. A feeling of deep solemnity filled Fred's heart as he gazed upwards; and as he thought upon the Creator of these mysterious worldsand remembered that He came to this little planet of ours to work out the miracle of our redemption, the words that he had often read in the Bible: "Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him?" came

forcibly to his remembrance, and he felt the appropriateness of that sentiment which the sweet singer of Israel has expressed in the words: “Praise ye him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light.”

There was a deep, solemn stillness all arounda stillness widely different from that peaceful composure which characterises a calm day in an inhabited land. It was the death-like stillness of that most peculiar and dreary desolation which results from the total absence of animal existence. The silence was so oppressive that it was with a feeling of relief he listened to the low, distant voices of the men as they paused ever and anon in their busy task to note and remark on the progress of their work. In the intense cold of an Arctic night the sound of voices can be heard at a much greater distance than usual, and although the men were far off, and hummocks of ice intervened between them and Fred, their tones broke distinctly, though gently, on his ear. Yet these sounds did not interrupt the unusual stillness. They served rather to impress him more forcibly with the vastness of that tremendous solitude in the midst of which he stood.

Gradually his thoughts turned homeward, and he thought of the dear ones who circled round his own fireside, and, perchance, talked of him; of the various companions he had left behind, and the scenes of life and beauty where he used to wander; but such memories led him irresistibly to the far north again, for in all home-scenes the figure of his father started up, and he was back again in an instant, searching toilsomely among the floes and icebergs of the Polar Seas. It was the invariable ending of poor Fred’s meditations, and, however successful he might be in entering, for a time, into the spirit of fun that characterised most of the doings of his shipmates, and in following the bent of his own joyous nature, in the hours of solitude, and in the dark night, when no one saw him, his mind ever reverted to the one engrossing subject, like the oscillating needle to the pole.

As he continued to gaze up, long and earnestly, into the starry sky, his thoughts began to wander over the past and the present at random, and a cold shudder warned him that it was time to return to the hut; but the wandering thoughts and fancies seemed to chain him to the spot, so that he could not tear himself away. Then a dreamy feeling of rest and comfort began to steal over his senses, and he thought how pleasant it would be to lie down and slumber; but he knew that would be dangerous, so he determined not to do it.

Suddenly he felt himself touched, and heard a voice whispering in his ear. Then it sounded loud. “Hallo, sir! Mr Ellice! Wake up, sir, d’ye hear me?” and he felt himself shaken so violently that his teeth rattled together. Opening his eyes reluctantly, he found that he was stretched at full length on the snow, and Joseph West was shaking him by the shoulder as if he meant to dislocate his

arm.

“Hallo, West! is that you? Let me alone, man, I want to sleep.” Fred sank down again instantlythat deadly sleep, produced by cold, and from which those who indulge in it never awaken, was upon him.

“Sleep!” cried West frantically, “you’ll die, sir, if you don’t rouse up. Hallo! Meetuck! O’Riley! help here!”

“I tell you,” murmured Fred faintly, “I want to sleeponly a moment or twoah! I see; is the hut finished? Well, well, go, leave me. I’ll followina”

His voice died away again, just as Meetuck and O’Riley came running up. The instant the former saw how matters stood, he raised Fred in his powerful arms, set him on his feet, and shook him with such vigour that it seemed as if every bone in his body must be forced out of joint.

“What mane ye by that, ye blubber-bag?” cried the Irishman wrathfully, doubling his mittened fists and advancing in a threatening manner towards the Esquimaux; but, seeing that the savage paid not the least attention to him, and kept on shaking Fred violently with a good-humoured smile on his countenance, he wisely desisted from interfering.

In a few minutes Fred was able to stand and look about him with a stupid expression, and immediately the Esquimaux dragged, and pushed, and shook him along towards the snow-hut, into which he was finally thrust, though with some trouble, in consequence of the lowness of the tunnel. Here, by means of rubbing and chafing, with a little more buffeting, he was restored to some degree of heat; on seeing which Meetuck uttered a quiet grunt, and immediately set about preparing supper.

“I do believe I’ve been asleep,” said Fred, rising and stretching himself vigorously as the bright flame of a tin lamp shot forth and shed a yellow lustre on the white walls.

“Aslape is it! be me conscience an’ ye have just. Oh then, may I never indulge in the same sort o’ slumber!”

“Why so?” asked Fred in some surprise.

“You fell asleep on the ice, sir,” answered West, while he busied himself in spreading the tarpaulin and blanket-bags on the floor of the hut, “and you were very near frozen to death.”

“Frozen, musha! I’m not too shure that he’s melted yit!” said O’Riley, taking him by the arm and looking at him dubiously.

Fred laughed. “Oh yes; I’m melted now! But let’s have supper, else I shall faint for hunger. Did I sleep many hours?”

“You slept only five minutes,” said West, in some surprise at the question. “You were only gone about ten minutes altogether.”

This was indeed the case. The intense desire for sleep which is produced in Arctic countries when the frost seizes hold of the frame soon confuses the faculties of those who come under its influence. As long as Fred had continued to walk and work, he felt quite warm, but the instant he sat down on the lump of ice to rest, the frost acted on him. Being much exhausted, too, by labour and long fasting, he was more susceptible than he would otherwise have been to the influence of cold, so that it chilled him at once, and produced that deadly lethargy from which, but for the timely aid of his companions, he would never have recovered.

The arrangements for supping and spending the night made rapid progress, and under the influence of fire and animal heatfor the dogs were taken in beside themthe igloe became comfortably warm; yet the snow-walls did not melt, or become moist, the intense cold without being sufficient to counteract and protect them from the heat within. The fair roof, however, soon became very dingy, and the odour of melted fat rather powerful. But Arctic travellers are proof against such trifles.

The tarpaulin was spread over the floor, and a tin lamp, into which several fat portions of the walrus were put, was suspended from a stick thrust into the wall. Round this lamp the hunters circled, each seated on his blanket-bag, and each attended to the duty which devolved upon him. Meetuck held a tin kettle over the flame till the snow with which it was filled melted and became cold water, and then gradually heated until it boiled; and all the while he employed himself in masticating a lump of raw walrus flesh, much to the amusement of Fred, and to the disgust, real or pretended, of O’Riley. But the Irishman, and Fred too, and every man on board the Dolphin, came at last to relish raw meat, and to long for it. The Esquimaux prefer it raw in these parts of the world (although some travellers assert that in more southern latitudes they prefer cooked meat), and with good reason, for it is much more nourishing than cooked flesh; and learned, scientific men, who have wintered in the Arctic regions, have distinctly stated that in those cold countries they found raw meat to be better for them than cooked meat, and they assure us that they at last came to prefer it! We would not have our readers to begin forthwith to dispense with the art of cookery, and cast Soyer to the dogs; but we would have them henceforth refuse to accept that common opinion, and vulgar error, that Esquimaux eat their food raw because they are savages. They do it

because nature teaches them that, under the circumstances, it is best.

The duty that devolved upon O'Riley was to roast small steaks of the walrus, in which operation he was assisted by West, while Fred undertook to get out the biscuit-bag and pewter plates, and to infuse the coffee when the water should boil. It was a strange feast in a strange place, but it proved to be a delightful one; for hunger requires not to be tempted, and is not fastidious.

"Oh, but it's good, isn't it?" remarked O'Riley, smacking his lips, as he swallowed a savoury morsel of the walrus and tossed the remnanta sinewy bitto Dumps, who sat gazing sulkily at the flame of the lamp, having gorged himself long before the bipeds began supper.

"Arrah! ye won't take it, won't ye? Here, Poker!"

Poker sprang forward, wagging the stump of his tail, and turned his head to one side, as if to say: "Well, what's up? Any fun going?"

"Here, take that, old boy; Dumps is sulky."

Poker took it at once, and a single snap caused it to vanish. He, too, had finished supper, and evidently ate the morsel to please the Irishman.

"Hand me the coffee, Meetuck," said Fred. "The biscuit lies beside you, don't give in so soon, man."

"Thank you, sir, I have about done."

"Meetuck, ye haythen, try a bit o' the roast; do now, av it was only to plaaze me."

Meetuck shook his head quietly, and, cutting a fifteenth lump off the mass of raw walrus that lay beside him, proceeded leisurely to devour it.

"The dogs is nothin' to him," muttered O'Riley. "Isn't it a curious thing, now, to think that we're all at sea a eatin', and drinkin', and slaapin'or goin' to slaapejist as if we wor on the land, and the great ocean away down below us there, wid whales, and seals, and walrusses, and mermaids, for what I know, a swimmin' about jist under whare we sit, and maybe lookin' through the ice at us this very minute. Isn't it quare?"

"It is odd," said Fred, laughing, "and not a very pleasant idea. However, as there is at least twelve feet of solid ice between us and the company you mention, we don't need to care much."

"Ov coorse not," replied O'Riley, nodding his head approvingly as he lighted

his pipe; “that’s my mind intirely, in all cases o’ danger, when ye don’t need to be afeared, ye needn’t much care. It’s a good chart to steer by, that same.”

This last remark seemed to afford so much food for thought to the company that nothing further was said by anyone until Fred rose and proposed to turn in. West had already crawled into his blanket-bag, and was stretched out like a mummy on the floor, and the sound of Meetuck’s jaws still continued as he winked sleepily over the walrus meat, when a scraping was heard outside the hut.

“Sure, it’s the foxes; I’ll go and look,” whispered O’Riley, laying down his pipe and creeping to the mouth of the tunnel.

He came back, however, faster than he went, with a look of consternation, for the first object that confronted him on looking out was the enormous head of a Polar bear. To glance round for their firearms was the first impulse, but these had unfortunately been left on the sledge outside. What was to be done? They had nothing but their clasp-knives in the igloe. In this extremity Meetuck cut a large hole in the back of the hut intending to creep out and procure one of the muskets, but the instant the opening was made the bear’s head filled it up. With a savage yell O’Riley seized the lamp and dashed the flaming fat in the creature’s face. It was a reckless deed, for it left them all in the dark, but the bear seemed to think himself insulted, for he instantly retreated, and when Meetuck emerged and laid hold of a gun he had disappeared.

They found, on issuing into the open air, that a stiff breeze was blowing, which, from the threatening appearance of the sky, promised to become a gale; but as there was no apprehension to be entertained in regard to the stability of the floe, they returned to the hut, taking care to carry in their arms along with them. Having patched up the hole, closed the doors, rekindled the lamp, and crept into their respective bags, they went to sleep, for, however much they might dread the return of Bruin, slumber was a necessity of nature that would not be denied.

Meanwhile the gale freshened into a hurricane, and was accompanied with heavy snow, and when they attempted to move next morning they found it impossible to face it for a single moment. There was no alternative, therefore, but to await the termination of the gale, which lasted two days, and kept them close prisoners all the time. It was very wearisome, doubtless, but they had to submit, and sought to console themselves and pass the time as pleasantly as possible by sleeping, and eating, and drinking coffee.