The World of Ice
Vol.II

By
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The World of Ice

Chapter Thirteen.

Journey resumedThe Hunters meet with Bears and have a Great Fight, in which the Dogs are SufferersA Bear’s DinnerMode in which Arctic Rocks travelThe Ice-belt.

In the abating of the great storm, referred to in the last chapter, the hunters sought to free themselves from their snowy prison, and succeeded in burrowing, so to speak, upwards, after severe labour, for the hut was buried in drift which the violence of the gale had rendered extremely compact.

O’Riley was the first to emerge into the upper world. Having dusted the snow from his garments, and shaken himself like a Newfoundland dog, he made sundry wry faces, and gazed round him with the look of a man that did not know very well what to do with himself.

“It’s a quare place, it is, intirely,” he remarked, with a shake of the head that betokened intense sagacity, while he seated himself on a mound of snow and watched his comrades as they busied themselves in dragging their sleeping-bags and cooking utensils from the cavern they had just quitted. O’Riley seemed to be in a contemplative mood, for he did not venture any further remark, although he looked unutterable things as he proceeded quietly to fill his little black pipe.

“Ho, O’Riley! lend a hand, you lazy fellow,” cried Fred; “work first and play afterwards, you skulker.”

“Sure that same is what I’m doin’,” replied O’Riley with a bland smile which he eclipsed in a cloud of smoke. “Haven’t I bin workin’ like a naagur for two hours to git out of that hole, and ain’t I playin’ a tune on me pipe now? But I won’t be cross-grained. I’ll lind ye a hand av ye behave yerself. It’s a bad thing to be cross-grained,” he continued, pocketing his pipe and assisting to arrange the sledge; “me owld grandmother always towld me that, and she was wise, she wos, beyand ordn’r. More like Salomon nor anything else.”

“She must have directed that remark specially to you, I think,” said Fred“let Dumps lead, West, he’s tougher than the others,did she not, O’Riley?”

“Be no manes. It wos to the pig she said it. Most of her conversation (and she had a power of it) wos wid the pig, and many’s the word o’ good advice she gave it, as it sat in its usual place beside the fire forenint her; but it was all thrown away, it wos, for there wosn’t another pig in all the length o’ Ireland as had sich a will o’ its own; and it had a screech, too, when it wasn’t plaazed, as bate all the steam whistles in the world, it did. I’ve often moralated on that same, and I’ve noticed that as it is wid pigs, so it is wid men and womensome of them at lastethe more advice ye give them, the less they take.”

“Down, Poker; quiet, good dog!” said West, as he endeavoured to restrain the ardour of the team, which, being fresh and full fed, could scarcely be held in by the united efforts of himself and Meetuck while their companions lashed their provisions, etcetera, on the sledge.

“Hold on, lads!” cried Fred, as he fastened the last lashing. “We’ll be ready in a second. Now, then, jump on, two of you! Catch hold of the tail-line, Meetuck! All right!”

“Hall right!” yelled the Esquimaux, as he let go the dogs and sprang upon the sledge.

The team struggled and strained violently for a few seconds in their efforts to overcome the vis inertiae of the sledge, and it seemed as if the traces would part, but they were made of tough walrus hide, and held on bravely, while the heavy vehicle gradually fetched way, and at length flew over the floes at the rate of seven or eight miles an hour. Travelling, however, was not now quite as agreeable as it had been when they set out from the ship, for the floes were swept bare in some places by the gale, while in other places large drifts had collected, so that the sledge was either swaying to and fro on the smooth ice, and swinging the dogs almost off their feet, or it was plunging heavily through banks of soft snow.

As the wind was still blowing fresh, and would have been dead against them had they attempted to return by a direct route to the ship, they made for the shore, intending to avail themselves of the shelter afforded by the ice-belt. Meanwhile the carcass of the walrus, at least as much of it as could not be packed on the sledge, was buried in the hut, and a spear planted above it to mark the spot.

“Hah! an’ it’s cowld,” said O’Riley, wrapping himself more closely in his fur jumper as they sped along. “I wish we wos out o’ the wind, I do.”

“You’ll have your wish soon, then,” answered West, “for that row of icebergs we’re coming to will shelter us nearly all the way to the land.”

“Surely you are taking us too much off to the right, Meetuck,” said Fred; “we are getting farther away from the ship.”

“No fee. Be win’ too ’trong. We turn hup ’long shore very quick, soonha!”

Meetuck accompanied each word with a violent nod of his head, at the same time opening and shutting his mouth and winking with both eyes, being apparently impressed with the conviction that such contortions of visage rendered his meaning more apparent.

“Look! look! ho! Nannook, nannook!” (a bear, a bear!) whispered the Esquimaux with sudden animation, just as they gained the lee of the first iceberg.

The words were unnecessary, however, for the whole party were looking ahead with the most intense eagerness at a bear which their sudden advent had aroused from a nap in the crevice of the iceberg. A little cub was discerned a moment after, standing by her side, and gazing at the intruders with infantine astonishment. While the muskets were being loosened and drawn out, Meetuck let slip all the dogs, and in a few seconds they were engaged in active warfare with the enemy.

“Oh! musha! Dumps is gone intirely!” The quadruped referred to was tossed to a height of about thirty feet, and alighted senseless upon the ice. The bear seized him with her teeth and tossed him with an incredibly slight effort. The other dogs, nothing daunted by the fate of their comrade, attacked the couple in the rear, biting their heels, and so distracting their attention that they could not make an energetic attack in any direction. Another of the dogs, however, a young one, waxing reckless, ventured too near the old bear, and was seized by the back, and hurled high into the air, through which it wriggled violently, and descended with a sounding whack upon the ice. At the same moment a volley

from the hunters sent several balls into the carcass of both mother and cub; but, although badly wounded, neither of them evinced any sign of pain and exhaustion as they continued to battle with the remaining dogs.

The dogs that had already fallen in the fray had not been used to bear-huntinghence their signal defeat; but this was not the case with the others, all of which were old campaigners; and Poker especially, although not old in years, was a practical fighter, having been trained not to attack but to harass. The systematic and steady way in which they advanced before the bear, and retired, right and left, leading her into a profitless pursuit, was very interesting to witness. Another volley from the hunters caused them to make off more rapidly, and wounded the cub severely, so much so that in a few minutes it began to flag. Seeing this, the mother placed it in front of her, and urged it forward with her snout so quickly that it was with the utmost difficulty the men could keep up with them. A well-directed shot, however, from Fred Ellice brought the old bear to the ground; but she rose instantly, and again advanced, pushing her cub before her, while the dogs continued to embarrass her. They now began to fear that, in spite of dogs and men, the wounded bears would escape, when an opportune crack in the ice presented itself, into which they both tumbled, followed by the yelping, and, we may add, limping, dogs. Before they could scramble up on the other side, Meetuck and Fred, being light of foot, gained upon them sufficiently to make sure shots.

“There they go,” cried Fred, as the she-bear bounced out of the crack with Poker hanging to her heels. Poker’s audacity had at last outstripped his sagacity, and the next moment he was performing a tremendous somersault. Before he reached the ice, Meetuck and Fred fired simultaneously, and when the smoke cleared away, the old bear was stretched out in death. Hitherto the cub had acted exclusively on the defensive, and entrusted itself entirely to the protection of its dam, but now it seemed to change its character entirely. It sprang upon its mother’s body, and, assuming an attitude of extreme ferocity, kept the dogs at bay, snapping and snarling right and left until the hunters came up.

For the first time since the chase began, a feeling of intense pity touched Fred’s heart, and he would have rejoiced at that moment had the mother risen up, and made her escape with her cub. He steeled his heart, however, by reflecting that fresh provisions were much wanted on board the Dolphin; still, neither he nor his shipmates could bring themselves to shoot the gallant little animal, and it is possible that they might have made up their minds to allow it to escape after all, had not Meetuck quietly ended their difficulty by putting a ball through its heart.

“Ah, then, Meetuck!” said O’Riley, shaking his head as they examined their

prize, “ye’re a hard-hearted spalpeen, ye are, to kill a poor little baby like that in cowld blood. Well, it’s yer natur’, an’ yer trade, so I s’pose it’s all right.”

The weight of this bear, which was not of the largest size, was afterwards found to be above five hundred pounds, and her length was eight feet nine inches. The cub weighed upwards of a hundred pounds, and was larger than a Newfoundland dog.

The operation of cutting out the entrails, preparatory to packing on the sledge, was now commenced by Meetuck, whose practised hand applied the knife with the skill, though not with the delicacy, of a surgeon.

“She has been a hungry bear, it seems,” remarked Fred, as he watched the progress of the work, “if we may judge from the emptiness of her stomach.”

“Och, but she’s had a choice morsel, if it was a small wan!” exclaimed O’Riley in surprise, as he picked up a plug of tobacco. On further examination being made, it was found that this bear had dined on raisins, tobacco, pork, and adhesive plaster! Such an extraordinary mixture of articles, of course, led the party to conclude that either she had helped herself to the stores of the Dolphin placed on Store Island, or that she had fallen in with those of some other vessel. This subject afforded food for thought and conversation during the next hour or two, as they drove towards the ship along the ice-belt of the shore.

The ice-belt referred to is a zone of ice which extends along the shore from the unknown regions of the north. To the south it breaks up in summer and disappears altogether, but, in the latitude which our travellers had now reached, it was a permanent feature of the scenery all the year round, following the curvatures and indentations of bays and rivers, and increasing in winter or diminishing in summer, but never melting entirely away. The surface of this ice-belt was covered with immense masses of rock many tons in weight, which had fallen from the cliffs above. Pointing to one of these, as they drove along, West remarked to Fred:

“There is a mystery explained, sir; I have often wondered how huge solitary stones, that no machinery of man’s making could lift, have come to be placed on sandy shores where there were no other rocks of any kind within many miles of them. The ice must have done it, I see.”

“True, West, the ice, if it could speak, would explain many things that now seem to us mysterious, and yonder goes a big rock on a journey that may perhaps terminate at a thousand miles to the south of this.”

The rock referred to was a large mass that became detached from the cliffs and

fell, as he spoke, with a tremendous crash upon the ice-belt, along which it rolled for fifty yards. There it would lie all winter, and in spring the mass of ice to which it was attached would probably break off and float away with it to the south, gradually melting until it allowed the rock to sink to the bottom of the sea, or depositing it, perchance, on some distant shore, where such rocks are not wont to liethere to remain an object of speculation and wonderment to the unlearned of all future ages.

Some of the bergs close to which they passed on the journey were very fantastically formed, and many of them were more than a mile long, with clear, blue, glassy surfaces, indicating that they had been but recently thrown off from the great glacier of the north. Between two of these they drove for some time before they found that they were going into a sort of blind alley.

“Sure the road’s gittin’ narrower,” observed O’Riley, as he glanced up at the blue walls, which rose perpendicularly to a height of sixty feet on either hand. “Have a care, Meetuck, or ye’ll jam us up, ye will.”

“’Tis a pity we left the ice-belt,” remarked Fred, “for this rough work among the bergs is bad for man and dog. How say you, Meetuck, shall we take to it again when we get through this place?”

“Faix, then, well niver git through,” said O’Riley, pointing to the end of the chasm, where a third iceberg had entirely closed the opening.

The Esquimaux pulled up, and, after advancing on foot a short way to examine, returned with a rueful expression on his countenance.

“Ha! no passage, I suppose?” said Fred.

“Bad luck to ye,” cried O’Riley, “won’t ye spaake?”

“No rodmuss go back,” replied Meetuck, turning the dogs in the direction whence they had come, and resuming his place on the sledge.

The party had to retrace their steps half a mile in consequence of this unfortunate interruption, and return to the level track of the ice-belt, which they had left for a time and taken to the sea-ice, in order to avoid the sinuosities of the land. To add to their misfortunes, the dogs began to flag, so that they were obliged to walk behind the sledge at a slow pace, and snow began to fall heavily. But they pressed forward manfully, and, having regained the shore-ice, continued to make their way northward towards the ship, which was now spoken of by the endearing name of home.

Chapter Fourteen.

Departure of the SunEffects of Darkness on DogsWinter Arrangements in the Interior of the Dolphin.

It is sad to part with an old friend, especially if he be one of the oldest and best friends we ever had. When the day of departure arrives, it is of no avail that he tells us kindly he will come back again. That assurance is indeed a comfort after he is gone, and a sweet star of hope that shines brighter and brighter each day until he comes back; but it is poor consolation to us at the time of parting, when we are squeezing his hand for the last time, and trying to crush back the drops that will overflow.

The crew of the Dolphin had, in the course of that winter, to part with one of their best friends; one whom they regarded with the most devoted attachment; one who was not expected to return again till the following spring, and one, therefore, whom some of them might perhaps, never see again.

Mivins became quite low-spirited about it, and said “as ’ow ’e’d ’ave a ’eavy ’eart for hever and hever, hamen,” after he was gone. O’Riley remarked, in reference to his departure, that every man in the ship was about to lose a “son!” Yes, indeed he did; he perpetrated that atrocious pun, and wasn’t a bit ashamed of it. O’Riley had perpetrated many a worse pun than that before; it’s to be hoped that for the credit of his country he has perpetrated a few better ones since!

Yes, the period at length arrived when the great source of light and heat was about to withdraw his face from these Arctic navigators for a long, long time, and leave them in unvarying night. It was a good while, however, before he went away altogether, and for many weeks after winter set in in all its intensity, he paid them a daily visit which grew gradually shorter and shorter, until that sad evening in which he finally bade them farewell.

About the middle of October the dark months overspread the Bay of Mercy, and the reign of perpetual night began. There was something terribly depressing at first in this uninterrupted gloom, and for some time after the sun ceased to show his disc above the horizon the men of the Dolphin used to come on deck at noon, and look out for the faint streak of light that indicated the presence of the life-giving luminary with all the earnestness and longing of Eastern fire-worshippers.

The dogs, too, became sensibly affected by the continued absence of light, and seemed to draw more sympathetically than ever to their human companions in banishment. A curious and touching instance of this feeling was exhibited

when the pack were sent to sleep on Store Island. A warm kennel had been erected for them there, partly in order that the ship might be kept more thoroughly clean, and partly that the dogs might act as a guard over the stores, in case bears or wolves should take a fancy to examine them. But nothing would induce the poor animals to keep away from the ship, and remain beyond the sound of human voices. They deserted their comfortable abode, with one consent, the first time they were sent to it, preferring to spend the night by the side of the ship upon the bare snow. Coaxing them was of no use. O'Riley tried it in vain.

"At, then," said he to Dumps with a wheedling air and expression of intense affection that would have taken by storm the heart of any civilised dog, "won't ye come now an' lay in yar own kennel? Sure it's a beautiful wan, an' as warm as the heart of an iceberg. Doo come now, avic, an' I'll show ye the way."

But Dumps's heart was marble. He wouldn't budge. By means of a piece of walrus, however, he was at length induced to go with the Irishman to the kennel, and was followed by the entire pack. Here O'Riley endeavoured to make them comfortable, and prevailed on them to lie down and go to sleep, but whenever he attempted to leave them they were up and at his heels in a moment.

"Och, but ye're too fond o' me entirely! Doo lie down agin, and I'll sing ye a ditty!"

True to his word, O'Riley sat down by the dog-kennel, and gave vent to a howl which his "owld grandmother," he said, "used to sing to the pig," and whether it was the effects of this lullaby, or of the cold, it is impossible to say, but O'Riley at length succeeded in slipping away and regaining the ship, unobserved by his canine friends. Half an hour later he went on deck to take a mouthful of fresh air before supper, and on looking over the side he saw the whole pack of dogs lying in a circle close to the ship, with Dumps comfortably asleep in the middle, and using Poker's back for a pillow.

"Faix, but ye must be fond of the cowld, to lie there all night when ye've got a palace on Store Island."

"Fond of society, rather," observed Captain Guy, who came on deck at the moment, "the poor creatures cannot bear to be left alone. It is a strange quality in dogs which I have often observed before."

"Have ye, Capting? Sure I thought it was all owin' to the bad manners o' that baste Dumps, which is for iver leadin' the other dogs into mischief."

"Supper's ready, sir," said Mivins, coming up the hatchway and touching his

cap.

“Look here, Mivins,” said O’Riley, as the captain went below, “can ye point out the mornin’ star to me, lad?”

“The morning star?” said Mivins slowly, as he thrust his hands into the breast of his jumper, and gazed upwards into the dark sky, where the starry host blazed in Arctic majesty. “No, of course I can’t. Why, don’t you know that there hain’t no morning star when it’s night all round?”

“Faix ye’re right. I niver thought o’ that.”

Mivins was evidently a little puffed up with a feeling of satisfaction at the clever way in which he had got out of the difficulty without displaying his ignorance of astronomy, and was even venturing, in the pride of his heart, to make some speculative and startling assertions in regard to the “’eavenly bodies” generally, when Buzzby put his head up the hatchway.

“Hallo! messmates, wot’s ado now? Here’s the supper awaitin’, and the tea bilin’ like blazes!”

Mivins instantly dived down below, as the sailors express it; and we may remark, in passing, that the expression, in this particular case, was not inappropriate, for Mivins, as we have elsewhere said, was remarkably agile and supple, and gave beholders a sort of impression that he went head-foremost at everything. O’Riley followed at a more reasonable rate, and in a few minutes the crew of the Dolphin were seated at supper in the cabin, eating with as much zest, and laughing and chatting as blithely as if they were floating calmly on their ocean home in temperate climes. Sailors are proverbially lighthearted, and in their moments of comfort and social enjoyment they easily forget their troubles. The depression of spirits that followed the first disappearance of the sun soon wore off, and they went about their various avocations cheerfully by the light of the Aurora Borealis and the stars.

The cabin, in which they now all lived together, had undergone considerable alterations. After the return of Fred Ellice and the hunting-party, whom we left on the ice-belt in the last chapter, the bulk-head, or partition, which separated the cabin from the hold, had been taken down, and the whole was thrown into one large apartment, in order to secure a freer circulation of air and warmth. All round the walls inside of this apartment moss was piled to the depth of twelve inches to exclude the cold, and this object was further gained by the spreading of a layer of moss on the deck above. The cabin hatchway was closed, and the only entrance was at the farther end, through the hold, by means of a small doorway in the bulkhead, to which was attached a sort of

porch, with a curtain of deer-skins hung in front of it. In the centre of the floor stood an iron cooking-stove, which served at once the purpose of preparing food and warming the cabin, which was lighted by several small oil-lamps. These were kept burning perpetually, for there was no distinction between day and night in midwinter, either in the cabin or out-of-doors.

In this snug-looking place the officers and men of the ship messed, and dwelt, and slept together; but, notwithstanding the apparent snugness, it was with the greatest difficulty they could keep themselves in a sufficient degree of warmth to maintain health and comfort. Whenever the fire was allowed to get low, the beams overhead became coated with hoar-frost; and even when the temperature was raised to the utmost possible pitch it was cold enough, at the extreme ends of the apartment, to freeze a jug of water solid.

A large table occupied the upper end of the cabin, between the stove and the stern, and round this the officers and crew were seated, when O'Riley entered and took his place among them. Each individual had his appointed place at the mess-table, and with unvarying regularity these places were filled at the appointed hours.

"The dogs seem to be disobedient," remarked Amos Parr, as his comrade sat down; "they'd be the better of a taste o' Meetuck's cat I think."

"It's truth ye're sayin'," replied O'Riley, commencing a violent assault on a walrus steak; "they don't obey orders at all, at all. An' Dumps, the blaggard, is as cross-grained as me grandmother's owld pig"

A general laugh here interrupted the speaker, for O'Riley could seldom institute a disparaging comparison without making emphatic allusion to the pig that once shared with him the hospitalities of his grandmother's cabin.

"Why, everything you speak of seems to be like that wonderful pig, messmate," said Peter Grim.

"Ye're wrong there intirely," retorted O'Riley. "I niver seed nothing like it in all me thravels except yerself, and that only in regard to its muzzle, which was black and all kivered over with bristles, it wos. I'll trouble for another steak, messmate; that walrus is great livin'. We owe ye thanks for killin' it, Mister Ellice."

"You're fishing for compliments, but I'm afraid I have none to give you. Your first harpoon, you know, was a little wide of the mark, if I recollect right, wasn't it?"

"Yis, it wosabout as wide as the first bullet. I misremember exactly who fired

it; wos it you, Meetuck?”

Meetuck, being deeply engaged with a junk of fat meat at that moment expressed all he had to say in a convulsive gasp, without interrupting his supper.

“Try a bit of the bear,” said Fred to Tom Singleton; “it’s better than the walrus to my taste.”

“I’d rather not,” answered Tom, with a dubious shake of the head.

“It’s a most unconscionable thing to eat a beast o’ that sort,” remarked Saunders gravely.

“Especially one who has been in the habit of living on raisins and sticking-plaster,” said Bolton with a grin.

“I have been thinking about that,” said Captain Guy, who had been for some time listening in silence to the conversation, “and I cannot help thinking that Esquimaux must have found a wreck somewhere in this neighbourhood, and carried away her stores, which Bruin had managed to steal from them.”

“May they not have got some of the stores of the brig we saw nipped some months ago?” suggested Singleton.

“Possibly they may.”

“I dinna think that’s likely,” said Saunders, shaking his head. “Yon brig had been deserted long ago, and her stores must have been consumed, if they were taken out of her at all, before we thought o’ comin’ here.”

For some time the party in the cabin ate in silence.

“We must wait patiently,” resumed the captain, as if he were tired of following up a fruitless train of thought. “What of your theatricals, Fred? we must get them set a-going as soon as possible.”

The captain spoke animatedly, for he felt that, with the prospect of a long dark winter before them, it was of the greatest importance that the spirits of the men should be kept up.

“I find it difficult to beat up recruits,” answered Fred, laughing; “Peter Grim has flatly refused to act, and O’Riley says he could no more learn a part off by heart than”

“His grandmother’s pig could,” interrupted David Mizzle, who, having concluded supper, now felt himself free to indulge in conversation.

“Och! ye spalpeen,” whispered the Irishman.

“I have written out the half of a play which I hope to produce in a few days on the boards of our Arctic theatre with a talented company, but I must have one or two more menone to act the part of a lady. Will you take that part, Buzzby?”

“Wot! me?” cried the individual referred to with a stare of amazement.

“Oh yes! do, Buzzby,” cried several of the men with great delight. “You’re just cut out for it.”

“Blue eyes,” said one.

“Fair hair,” cried another.

“And plump,” said a third.

“Wid cheeks like the hide of a walrus,” cried O’Riley; “but, sure, it won’t show wid a veil on.”

“Come, now, you won’t refuse.”

But Buzzby did refuse; not, however, so determinedly but that he was induced at last to allow his name to be entered in Fred’s note-book as a supernumerary.

“Hark!” cried the captain; “surely the dogs must have smelt a bear.”

There was instantly a dead silence in the cabin, and a long, loud wail from the dogs was heard outside.

“It’s not like their usual cry when game is near,” said the second mate.

“Hand me my rifle, Mivins,” said the captain, springing up and pulling forward the hood of his jumper, as he hurried on deck followed by the crew.

It was a bright, still, frosty night, and the air felt intensely sharp, as if needles were pricking the skin, while the men’s breath issued from their lips in white clouds, and settled in hoar-frost on the edges of their hoods. The dogs were seen galloping about the ice hummocks as if in agitation, darting off to a considerable distance at times, and returning with low whines to the ship.

“It is very strange,” remarked the captain. “Jump down on the ice, boys, and search for footprints. Extend as far as Store Island and see that all is right there.”

In a few seconds the men scattered themselves right and left, and were lost in

the gloom, while the vessel was left in charge of Mivins and four men. A strict search was made in all directions, but no traces of animals could be found; the stores on the island were found undisturbed, and gradually the dogs ceased their agitated gyrations and seemed inclined to resume their slumbers on the ice.

Seeing this, and supposing that they were merely restless, Captain Guy recalled his men, and, not long after, every man in the cabin of the Dolphin was buried in profound slumber.

Chapter Fifteen.

Strangers appear on the SceneThe Esquimaux are hospitably entertained by the SailorsA Spirited TrafficThieving Propensities and Summary Justice.

Dumps sat on the top of a hummock, about quarter of a mile from the ship, with an expression of subdued melancholy on his countenance, and thinking, evidently, about nothing at all. Poker sat in front of him, gazing earnestly and solemnly right into his eyes with a look that said, as plain as if he had spoken: “What a tremendously stupid old fellow you are, to be sure!” Having sat thus for full five minutes Dumps wagged his tail. Poker, observing the action, returned the compliment with his stump. Then Poker sprang up and barked savagely, as much as to say: “Play, won’t you!” but Dumps wouldn’t; so Poker endeavoured to relieve his mind by gambolling violently round him.

We would not have drawn your attention, reader, to the antics of our canine friends, were it not for the fact that these antics attracted the notice of a personage who merits particular description. This was no other than one of the Esquimaux inhabitants of the landa woman, and such a woman! Most people would have pronounced her a man, for she wore precisely the same dressfur jumper and long bootsthat was worn by the men of the Dolphin. Her lips were thick and her nose was blunt; she wore her hair turned up, and twisted into a knot on the top of her head; her hood was thrown back, and inside of this hood there was a babya small and a very fat baby! It was, so to speak, a conglomerate of dumplings. Its cheeks were two dumplings, and its arms were four dumplingsone above each elbow and one below. Its hands, also, were two smaller dumplings, with ten extremely little dumplings at the end of them. This baby had a nose, of course, but it was so small that it might as well have had none; and it had a mouth, too, but that was so capacious that the half of it would have been more than enough for a baby double the size. As for its eyes, they were large and blackblack as two coalsand devoid of all expression save that of astonishment.

Such were the pair that stood on the edge of the ice-belt gazing down upon

Dumps and Poker. And no sooner did Dumps and Poker catch sight of them than they sprang hastily towards them, wagging their tailsor, more correctly speaking, their tail and a quarter. But on a nearer approach those sagacious animals discovered that the woman and her child were strangers, whereupon they set up a dismal howl, and fled towards the ship as fast as they could run.

Now it so happened that, at this very time, the howl of the dogs fell upon the ears of two separate parties of travellersthe one was a band of Esquimaux who were moving about in search of seals and walrus, to which band this woman and her baby belonged; the other was a party of men under command of Buzzby, who were returning to the ship after an unsuccessful hunt. Neither party saw the other, for one approached from the east, the other from the west, and the ice-belt, on the point of which the woman stood, rose up between them.

“Hallo! what’s yon,” exclaimed Peter Grim, who was first to observe the woman.

“Dunno,” said Buzzby, halting; “it looks like a bear.”

“Faix an it is, then, it’s got a young wan on its back,” cried O’Riley.

“We had better advance and find out,” remarked West, as he led the way, while several of the men threw up their arms in token of their friendly intentions. O’Riley capered somewhat extravagantly as he drew near, partly with the intention of expressing his feelings of good-will towards the unknown, and partly in order to relieve the excitement caused by the unexpected apparition.

These demonstrations, however, had the effect of terrifying the woman, who wheeled suddenly round and made off.

“Och! it is a man. Hooray, boys! give chase.”

“Men don’t usually carry babies on their backs and tie their hair up into top-knots,” remarked Grim, as he darted past in pursuit.

A few seconds sufficed to enable Grim to overtake the woman, who fell on her knees the instant she felt the sailor’s heavy hand on her shoulder.

“Don’t be afeard; we won’t hurt ye,” said Buzzby in a soothing tone, patting the woman on the head and raising her up.

“No, avic, we’s yer frinds; we’ll not harm a hair o’ yer beautiful head, we won’t. Ah, then, it’s a swate child, it is, bless its fat face!” said O’Riley, stroking the baby’s head tenderly with his big hand.

It was with difficulty that the poor creature's fears were calmed at first, but the genuine tenderness displayed by the men towards the baby, and the perfect complacency with which that conglomerate of dumplings received their caresses, soon relieved her mind, and she began to regard her captors with much curiosity, while they endeavoured by signs and words to converse with her. Unfortunately Meetuck was not with the party, he having been left on board ship to assist in a general cleaning of the cabin that had been instituted that day.

"Sure, now, ye don't know how to talk with a girl at all, ye don't; let me try," cried O'Riley, after several of the party had made numerous ineffectual attempts to convey their meaning. "Listen to me, darlint, and don't mind them stupid grampusses. Where have ye comed from, now; tell me, dear, doo now?"

O'Riley accompanied the question with a smile of ineffable sweetness and a great deal of energetic pantomime, which, doubtless, explained much of his meaning to himself, but certainly to no one else.

"Ah, then, ye don't onderstand me? Well, well, now, isn't that strange? Look you, avic, have ye seen a brig or a brig's crew anywhere betune this and the north poletry, now, an' remimber." He illustrated this question by holding up both arms straight above his head to represent the masts of a brig, and sticking his right leg straight out in front of him, to represent the bowsprit; but the woman gazed at him with an air of obtuse gravity that might have damped the hopes even of an Irishman. O'Riley prided himself, however, on not being easily beat, and despite his repeated failure, and the laughter of his messmates, was proceeding to make a third effort, when a loud shout from the cliffs caused the whole party to start and turn their eyes in that direction. The cry had been uttered by a figure whose costume bore so close a resemblance to that which they themselves wore that they thought for a moment it was one of their own shipmates, but a second glance proved that they were mistaken, for the individual in question carried a spear which he brandished with exceedingly fierce and warlike intentions.

"Faix, it must be her husband," said O'Riley.

"Hallo, lads, there's more on 'em!" cried Grim, as ten or twelve Esquimaux emerged from the rents and caverns of the ice-belt, and, scrambling to the top of surrounding hummocks and eminences, gazed towards the party of white men, while they threw about their arms and legs, and accompanied their uncouth and violent gesticulations with loud, excited cries. "I've a notion," he added, "that it was the scent o' them chaps set the dogs off after yon strange fashion t'other night."

It was evident that the Esquimaux were not only filled with unbounded astonishment at this unexpected meeting with strangers, but were also greatly alarmed to see one of their own women in their power.

“Let’s send the woman over to them,” suggested one of the men.

“No, no; keep her as a hostage,” said another.

“Look out, lads,” cried Buzzby, hastily examining the priming of his musket, as additional numbers of the wild inhabitants of the north appeared on the scene, and crowned the ice-belt and the hummocks around them.

“Let’s show a bold front. Draw up in single line and hold on to the woman. West, put her in front.”

The men instantly drew up in battle array, and threw forward their muskets; but as there was only a dozen of them, they presented a very insignificant group compared with the crowds of Esquimaux who appeared on the ice in front of them.

“Now, then, stand fast, men, and I’ll show ye wot’s the way to manage them chaps. Keep yer weather-eyes open, and don’t let them git in rear o’ ye.”

So saying, Buzzby took the woman by the arm and led her out a few yards in front of his party, while the Esquimaux drew closer together, to prepare either to receive or make an attack, as the case might be. He then laid his musket down on the ice, and, still holding the woman by the arm, advanced boldly towards the natives unarmed. On approaching to within about twenty yards of them he halted, and raised both arms above his head as a sign of friendship. The signal was instantly understood, and one big fellow leaped boldly from his elevated position on a lump of ice, threw down his spear, and ran to meet the stranger.

In a few minutes Buzzby and the Esquimaux leader came to a mutual understanding as to the friendly disposition of their respective parties, and the woman was delivered up to this big fellow, who turned out to be her husband after all, as O’Riley had correctly guessed. The other Esquimaux, seeing the amicable terms on which the leaders met, crowded in and surrounded them.

“Leave the half o’ ye to guard the arms, and come on the rest of ye without ’em,” shouted Buzzby.

The men obeyed, and in a few minutes the two parties mingled together with the utmost confidence. The sailors, however, deemed it prudent to get possession of their arms again as soon as possible, and, after explaining as

well as they could by signs that their home was only at a short distance, the whole band started off for the ship. The natives were in a most uproarious state of hilarity, and danced and yelled as they ambled along in their hairy dresses, evidently filled with delight at the prospect of forming a friendship with the white strangers, as they afterwards termed the crew of the Dolphin, although some of the said crew were, from exposure, only a few shades lighter than themselves.

Captain Guy was busily engaged with Fred Ellice and Tom Singleton in measuring and registering the state of the tide when this riotous band turned the point of the ice-belt to the northward, and came suddenly into view.

“Jump down below, Fred, and fetch my rifle and sword; there are the natives,” cried the captain, seizing his telescope. “Call all hands, Mivins, and let them arm; look alive!”

“All ’ands, ahoy!” shouted the steward, looking down the hatchway; “tumble up there, tumble up, ’ere come the Heskimows. Bring your harms with ye. Look alive!”

“Ay, ay,” shouted the men from below; and in a few minutes they crowded up the hatchway, pulling up their hoods and hauling on their mittens, for it was intensely cold.

“Why, Captain, there are some of our men with them,” exclaimed Tom Singleton, as he looked through his pocket-glass at them.

“So there areI see Buzzby and Grim; come, that’s fortunate, for they must have made friends with them, which it is not always easy to do. Hide your muskets, men, but keep on your cutlasses; it’s as well to be prepared, though I don’t expect to find those people troublesome. Is the soup in the coppers, David Mizzle?”

“Yes, sir, it is.”

“Then put in an extra junk of pork, and fill it up to the brim.”

While the cook went below to obey this order, the captain and half of the crew descended to the ice, and advanced unarmed to meet the natives. The remainder of the men stayed behind to guard the ship, and be ready to afford succour if need be; but the precaution was unnecessary, for the Esquimaux met the sailors in the most frank and confiding manner, and seemed quite to understand Captain Guy when he drew a line round the ship, and stationed sentries along it to prevent them from crossing. The natives had their dogs and sledges with them, and the former they picketed to the ice, while a few of their

number, and the woman, whose name was Aninga, were taken on board and hospitably entertained.

It was exceedingly interesting and amusing to observe the feelings of amazement and delight expressed by those barbarous but good-humoured and intelligent people at everything they saw. While food was preparing for them, they were taken round the ship, on deck and below, and the sailors explained, in pantomime, the uses of everything. They laughed, and exclaimed, and shouted, and even roared with delight, and touched everything with their fingers, just as monkeys are wont to do when let loose. Captain Guy took Aninga and her tall husband, Awatok, to the cabin, where, through the medium of Meetuck, he explained the object of their expedition, and questioned the chief as to his knowledge of the country. Unfortunately Awatok and his band had travelled from the interior to the coast, and, never having been more than twenty or thirty miles to the north of the Bay of Mercy, could give no information either in regard to the formation of the coast or the possibility of Europeans having wintered there. In fact, neither he nor his countrymen had ever seen Europeans before; and they were so much excited that it was difficult to obtain coherent answers to questions. The captain, therefore, postponed further enquiries until they had become somewhat accustomed to the novelty of their position.

Meanwhile, David Mizzle furnished them with a large supply of pea-soup, which they seemed to relish amazingly. Not so, however, the salt pork with which it had been made. They did, indeed, condescend to eat it, but they infinitely preferred a portion of raw walrus flesh, which had been reserved as food for the dogs, and which they would speedily have consumed had it not been removed out of their reach. Having finished this, they were ordered to return to their camp on the ice beside the ship, and a vigorous barter was speedily begun.

First of all, however, a number of presents were made to them, and it would really have done your heart good, reader, to have witnessed the extravagant joy displayed by them on receiving such trifles as bits of hoopiron, beads, knives, scissors, needles, etcetera. Iron is as precious among them as gold is among civilised people. The small quantities they possessed of it had been obtained from the few portions of wrecks that had drifted ashore in their ice-bound land. They used it for pointing their spear-heads and harpoons, which, in default of iron, were ingeniously made of ivory from the tusks of the walrus and the horn of the narwal. A bit of iron, therefore, was received with immense glee, and a penny looking-glass with shouts of delight.

But the present which drew forth the most uproarious applause was a Union Jack, which the captain gave to their chief, Awatok. He was in the cabin when

it was presented to him. On seeing its gaudy colours unrolled, and being told that it was a gift to himself and his wife, he caught his breath, and stared, as if in doubt, alternately at the flag and the captain, then he gave vent to a tremendous shout, seized the flag, hugged it in his arms, and darted up on deck literally roaring with delight. The sympathetic hearts of the natives on the ice echoed the cry before they knew the cause of it; but when they beheld the prize, they yelled, and screamed, and danced, and tossed their arms in the air in the most violent manner.

“They’re all mad, ivery mother’s son o’ them,” exclaimed O’Riley, who for some time had been endeavouring to barter an old, rusty knife for a pair of sealskin boots.

“They looks like it,” said Grim, who stood looking on with his legs apart and his arms crossed, and grinning from ear to ear.

To add to the confusion, the dogs became affected with the spirit of excitement that filled their masters, and gave vent to their feelings in loud and continuous howling, which nothing could check. The imitative propensity of these singular people was brought rather oddly into play during the progress of traffic. Busby had produced a large roll of tobaccowhich they knew the use of, having already been shown how to use a pipeand cut off portions of it, which he gave in exchange for fox-skins, and deer-skins, and seal-skin boots. Observing this, a very sly old Esquimaux began to slice up a deer-skin into little pieces, which he intended to offer for the small pieces of tobacco! He was checked, however, before doing much harm to the skin, and the principles of exchange were more perfectly explained to him.

The skins and boots, besides walrus and seals’ flesh, which the crew were enabled to barter at this time, were of the utmost importance, for their fresh provisions had begun to get low, and their boots were almost worn out, so that the scene of barter was exceedingly animated. Davie Summers and his master, Mivins, shone conspicuous as bargain-makers, and carried to their respective bunks a large assortment of native articles. Fred and Tom Singleton, too, were extremely successful, and in a few hours a sufficient amount of skins were bartered to provide them with clothing for the winter. The quantity of fresh meat obtained, however, was not enough to last them a week, for the Esquimaux lived from hand to mouth, and the crew felt that they must depend on their own exertions in the hunt for this indispensable article of food, without which they could not hope to escape the assaults of the sailors’ dread enemy, scurvy.

Meetuck’s duties were not light upon this occasion, as you may suppose.

“Arrah, then, don’t ye onderstand me?” cried O’Riley in an excited tone to a particularly obtuse and remarkably fat Esquimaux, who was about as sharp at a bargain as himself. “Hallo! Meetuck, come here, do, and tell this pork-faced spalpeen what I’m sayin’. Sure I couldn’t spake it plainer av I was to try.”

“I’ll never get this fellow to understand,” said Fred. “Meetuck, my boy, come here and explain to him.”

“Ho, Meetuck!” shouted Peter Grim, “give this old blockhead a taste o’ your lingo. I never met his match for stupidity.”

“I do believe that this rascal wants the ’ole of this ball o’ twine for the tusk of a sea-’oss. Meetuck! w’ere’s Meetuck! I say, give us a ’and ’ere like a good fellow,” cried Mivins; but Mivins cried in vain, for at that moment Saunders had violently collared the interpreter, and dragged him towards an old Esquimaux woman, whose knowledge of Scotch had not proved sufficient to enable her to understand the energetically-expressed words of the second mate.

During all this time the stars had been twinkling brightly in the sky, and the aurora shed a clear light upon the scene, while the air was still calm and cold; but a cloud or two now began to darken the horizon to the north-east, and a puff of wind blew occasionally over the icy plain, and struck with such chilling influence on the frames of the traffickers that with one consent they closed their business for that day, and the Esquimaux prepared to return to their snow village, which was about ten miles to the southward, and which village had been erected by them only three days previous to their discovery of the ship.

“I’m sorry to find,” remarked the captain to those who were standing near him, “that these poor creatures have stolen a few trifling articles from below. I don’t like to break the harmonious feeling which now exists between us for the sake of a few worthless things, but I know that it does more harm than good to pass over an offence with the natives of these regions, for they attribute our forbearance to fear.”

“Perhaps you had better tax them with the theft,” suggested the surgeon; “they may confess it, if we don’t look very angry.”

A few more remarks were made by several of those who stood on the quarter-deck, suggesting a treatment of the Esquimaux which was not of the gentlest nature, for they felt indignant that their hospitality had been abused.

“No, no,” replied the captain to such suggestions, “we must exercise forbearance. These poor fellows do not regard theft in the same light that we

do; besides, it would be foolish to risk losing their friendship. Go down, Meetuck, and invite Awatok and his wife, and half a dozen of the chief men, into the cabin. Say I wish to have a talk with them."

The interpreter obeyed, and in a few minutes the officers of the ship and the chiefs of the Esquimaux were assembled in solemn conclave round the cabin table.

"Tell them, Meetuck," said the captain, "that I know they have stolen two pieces of hoop iron and a tin kettle, and ask them why they were so ungrateful as to do it."

The Esquimaux, who were becoming rather alarmed at the stern looks of those around them, protested earnestly that they knew nothing about it, and that they had not taken the things referred to.

"Say that I do not believe them," answered the captain sternly. "It is an exceedingly wicked thing to steal and to tell lies. White men think those who are guilty of such conduct to be very bad."

"Ah, ye villain!" cried Saunders, seizing one of the Esquimaux named Oosuck by the shoulder, and drawing forth an iron spoon which he observed projecting from the end of his boot.

An exclamation of surprise and displeasure burst from the officers, but the Esquimaux gave vent to a loud laugh. They evidently thought stealing to be no sin, and were not the least ashamed of being detected. Awatok, however, was an exception. He looked grave and annoyed, but whether this was at being found out, or at the ingratitude of his people, they could not decide.

"Tell them," said the captain, "that I am much displeased. If they promise to return the stolen goods immediately, I will pass over their offence this time, and we will trade together, and live like brothers, and do each other good; but if not, and if any more articles are taken, I will punish them."

Having had this translated to them, the chiefs were dismissed, but the expression of indifference on some of their faces proved that no impression had been made upon them.

In a quarter of an hour the articles that had been mentioned as missing were returned; and, in order to restore harmony, several plugs of tobacco and a few additional trinkets were returned by the messenger. Soon after, the dogs were harnessed, the sledges packed, and, with many protestations of good-will on both sides, the parties separated. A few cracks of their long whipsa few answering howls from the dogsand the Esquimaux were off and out of sight,

leaving the Dolphin in her former solitude under the shadow of the frowning cliffs.

“Fetch me the telescope, Mivins,” said the captain, calling down the hatchway.

“Ay, ay, sir,” answered the steward.

“Where’s my hatchet?” cried Peter Grim, striding about the deck, and looking into every corner in search of his missing implement. “It’s my best one, and I can’t get on without it, nohow.”

The captain bit his lip for he knew full well the cause of its absence.

“Please, sir,” said the steward, coming on deck with a very perturbed expression of countenance, “thethea”

“Speak out, man; what’s the matter with you?”

“The glass ain’t nowhere to be seen, sir.”

“Turn up all hands!” shouted the captain, jumping down the hatchway, “Arm the men, Mr Bolton, and order the largest sledge to be got ready instantly. This will never do. Harness the whole team.”

Instantly the Dolphin’s deck was a scene of bustling activity. Muskets were loaded, jumpers and mittens put on, dogs caught and harnessed, and every preparation made for a sudden chase.

“There, that will do,” cried the captain, hurrying on deck with a brace of pistols and a cutlass in his belt, “six men are enough; let twelve of the remainder follow on foot. Jump on the sledge, Grim and Buzzby; O’Riley, you go too. Have a care, Fred; not too near the front! Now, Meetuck”

One crack of the long whip terminated the sentence as if with a full stop, and in another moment the sledge was bounding over the snow like a feather at the tails of twelve dogs.

It was a long chase, for it was a “stern” one, but the Esquimaux never dreamed of pursuit, and, as their dogs were not too well fed, they had progressed rather slowly. In less than two hours they were distinguished on the horizon, far off to the southward, winding their way among the hummocks.

“Now, Meetuck,” said the captain, “drive like the wind, and lay me alongside of Awatok’s sledge, and be ready, men, to act.”

“Ay, ay, sir!” was the prompt reply, as the heavy whip fell on the flanks of the leaders.

A few minutes brought them up with Awatok's sledge, and Captain Guy, leaping upon it with a clasp-knife in his hand, cut the traces in a twinkling, set the dogs free, and, turning round, seized the Esquimaux by the collar. The big chief at first showed a disposition to resent this unceremonious treatment, but before he could move, Grim seized his elbows in his iron grasp, and tied them adroitly together behind his back with a cord. At the same time poor Aninga and her baby were swiftly transferred to the sailors' sledge.

Seeing this, the whole band of natives turned back, and rushed in a body to the rescue, flourishing their lances and yelling fiercely.

"Form line!" shouted the captain, handing Awatok and Aninga over to the care of O'Riley. "Three of you on the right fire over their heads, and let the rest reserve their fire. I will kill one of their dogs, for it won't do to let them fancy that nothing but noise comes out of our muskets. Readypresent!"

A rattling volley followed, and at the same moment one of the dogs fell with a death-yell on the ice and dyed it with its blood.

"Forward!" shouted the captain.

The men advanced in a body at a smart run, but the terrified Esquimaux, who had never heard the report of firearms before, did not wait for them; they turned and fled precipitately, but not before Grim captured Oosuck and dragged him forcibly to the rear, where he was pinioned and placed on the sledge with the others.

"Now then, lads, that will do; get upon the sledge again. Away with you, Meetuck. Look after Awatok, Grim; O'Riley will see that Aninga does not jump off."

"That he will, darlint," said the Irishman, patting the woman on the back.

"And I shall look after the baby," said Fred, chucking that series of dumplings under the chinan act of familiarity that seemed to afford it immense satisfaction, for, notwithstanding the melancholy position of its father and mother as prisoners, it smiled on Fred benignly.

In five minutes the party were far on their way back to the ship; and in less than five hours after the Esquimaux had closed their barter, and left for their village, four of their number, including the baby, were close prisoners in the Dolphin's hold. It was not Captain Guy's intention, however, to use unnecessarily harsh means for the recovery of the missing articles. His object was to impress the Esquimaux with a salutary sense of the power,

promptitude, and courage of Europeans, and to check at the outset their propensity for thieving. Having succeeded in making two of their chief men prisoners, he felt assured that the lost telescope and hatchet would soon make their appearance; and in this he was not mistaken. Going to the hold, where the prisoners sat with downcast looks, he addressed to them a lengthened speech as to the sin and meanness of stealing in general, and of stealing from those who had been kind to them in particular. He explained to them the utter hopelessness of their attempting to deceive or impose upon the white men in any way whatever, and assured them that if they tried that sort of thing again he would punish them severely; but that if they behaved well, and brought plenty of walrus flesh to the ship, he would give them hoop-iron, beads, looking-glasses, etcetera. These remarks seemed to make a considerable impression on his uncouth hearers.

“And now,” said the captain in conclusion, “I shall keep Awatok and his wife and child prisoners here until my telescope and hatchet are returned (Awatok’s visage fell, and his wife looked stolid), and I shall send Oosuck to his tribe (Oosuck’s face lit up amazingly) to tell them what I have said.”

In accordance with this resolve Oosuck was set free, and, making use of his opportunity, with prompt alacrity he sped away on foot over the ice to the southward, and was quickly lost to view.

Chapter Sixteen.

The Arctic Theatre enlarged uponGreat Success of the First PlayThe Esquimaux submit and become Fast Friends.

The 1st of December was a great day on board the Dolphin, for on that day it was announced to the crew that “The Arctic Theatre” would be opened, under the able management of Mr F. Ellice, with the play of “Blunderbore; or, The Arctic Giant”. The bill, of which two copies were issued gratis to the crew, announced that the celebrated Peter Grim, Esquire, who had so long trodden the boards of the Dolphin with unparalleled success, had kindly consented to appear in the character of Blunderbore for one winter only. The other parts were as follows: Whackinta, a beautiful Esquimaux widow, who had been captured by two Polar bears, both of which were deeply in love with her, by Frederick Ellice, Esquire. First Bear, a big one, by Terence O’Riley, Esquire. Second Bear, a little one, by David Summers, Esquire. Ben Bolt, a brave British seaman, who had been wrecked in Blunderbore’s desolate dominions, all the crew having perished except himself, by John Buzzby, Esquire. These constituted the various characters of the piece, the name of which had been kept a profound secret from the crew until the morning of the day on which it

was acted.

Fred's duties as manager and author upon this occasion were by no means light, for his troop, being unaccustomed to study, found the utmost difficulty in committing the simplest sentences to memory. O'Riley turned out to be the sharpest among them, but having agreed to impersonate the First Bear, and having to act his part in dumb showbears not being supposed capable of speechhis powers of memory had not to be exerted. Grim was also pretty good, but Davie Summers could not be got to remember even the general arrangements of the piece; and as for Buzzby, he no sooner mastered a line than he forgot the one before it, and almost gave it up in despair; but by dint of much study and many rehearsals in secret, under the superintendence of Fred and Tom Singleton, who undertook to assist, they succeeded at last in going through with it, with only a few mistakes.

On the morning of the 1st December, while the most of the crew were away at Red Snow Valley cutting moss, Fred collected his Corps Dramatique for a last rehearsal in the forecastle, where they were secure from interruption, the place being so cold that no one would willingly go into it except under the force of necessity. A dim lantern lit up the apartment faintly.

"We must do it without a mistake this time," said Fred Ellice, opening his book and calling upon Grim to begin.

"'Tis cold," began Grim.

"Stop, you're wrong."

"Oh, so I am!" cried Grim, slapping his thigh; "I'll begin again." It may be remarked here that although Blunderbore was supposed to be an Esquimaux monarch, he was compelled to speak English, being unfortunately ignorantif we may so speakof his native tongue!

"Oh! 'tis a dismal thing," began Grim again, "to dwell in solitude and cold! 'Tis very cold," (Grim shuddered here tremendously) "andand what's next?"

"Hunger," said Fred.

"Hunger gnaws my vitals. My name is Blunderbore. 'Twere better had I been born a Blunderbuss, 'cause then I have gone off and dwelt in climes more shootable to my tender constitoosion. Ha! is that a bear I sees before me?"

"It's not sees," interrupted Fred.

At this moment a tremendous roar was heard, and O'Riley bounded from behind a top-sail which represented an iceberg, dressed from head to foot in

the skin of a white bear which had been killed a few days before.

“Stop, O’Riley,” cried Fred, “you’re too soon, man. I have to come on first as an Esquimaux woman, and when Grim says to the woman he wishes he could see a bear, then you are to come.”

“Och! whirra, but me brains is confuged intirely wid it all,” said O’Riley, rising on his hind-legs and walking off with his tail, literally as well as figuratively, between his legs.

“Now, Buzzby, now; it’s your timewhen you hear the word ‘misery’ come on and fight like a Trojan with the bears. The doctor will remind you.”

Fred was remarkably patient and painstaking, and his pupils, though not apt scholars, were willing, so that the morning rehearsal was gone through with fewer mistakes than might have been expected, and when the crew came back to dinner about mid-day, which, however, was as dark as midnight, their parts were sufficiently well got up, and nothing remained to be done but to arrange the stage and scenery for the evening’s entertainmentit having been resolved that the performance should commence after supper. The stage was at the after part of the cabin, and raised about a foot above the deck, and its management had been intrusted to the doctor, who, assisted by Peter Grim, transformed that portion of the ship into a scene so romantically beautiful that the first sight of it petrified the crew with surprise. But until the curtain should rise all arrangements were carefully concealed from everyone except the dramatis personae. Even the captain and officers were forbidden to peep behind the sail that formed a curtain to the stage, and this secrecy, besides being necessary, was extremely useful, inasmuch as it excited the curiosity of the men and afforded them food for converse and speculation, for a week before the great day arrived.

The longed-for hour came at last. The cabin tables having been removed, and rows of seats placed in front of the stage, the men were admitted from the deck, to which they had been expelled an hour previous in order not to impede preliminary arrangements. There was great joking, of course, as they took their seats and criticised the fittings up. David Mizzle was of opinion that the foot-lights “wos oncommon grand”, which was an unquestionable fact, for they consisted of six tin lamps filled with seal-oil, from the wicks of which rose a compound of yellow flame and smoke that had a singularly luminous effect. Amos Parr guessed that the curtain would be certain sure to get jammed at the first haul, and several of the others were convinced that O’Riley would stick his part in one way or another. However, an end was put to all remarks, and expectation raised on tiptoe by the ringing of a small hand-bell, and immediately thereafter a violent pulling at the curtain which concealed the

stage; but the curtain remained immovable (they always do on such occasions), and a loud whispering was heard behind the scenes.

“Clap on extra tackle and call all hands to hoist away,” suggested one of the audience.

The laugh with which this advice was received was checked in the bud by the sudden rising of the curtain with such violence that the whole framework of the theatre shook again.

For a few seconds a dead silence reigned, for the men were stricken dumb with genuine amazement at the scene before them. The stage was covered with white sheets arranged in such a manner as to represent snow, and the more effectually to carry out the idea, several huge blocks of real ice and a few patches of snow were introduced here and there, the cold in the after-part of the cabin being too great to permit of their melting. A top-gallant sail, on which were painted several blue cracks and some strong white lights, did duty for an iceberg, and filled up the whole back of the scene. In front of this, in the centre of the stage, on an extemporised hummock, sat Peter Grim as the Giant Blunderbore. His colossal proportions were enhanced by the addition of an entire white bearskin to his ordinary hairy dress, and which was thrown round his broad shoulders in the form of a tippet. A broad scarlet sash was tied round his waist, and a crown of brown paper, painted in alternate diamonds of blue, red, and yellow, sat upon his brow. Grim was in truth a magnificent-looking fellow, with his black beard and moustache; and the mock-heroic frown with which he gazed up (as one of the audience suggested) at the Aurora Borealis, while he grasped an enormous club in his right hand, became him well.

The first few seconds of dead silence, with which this was received, were succeeded by a long and loud burst of applause, the heartiness of which plainly showed that the scene far exceeded the expectations of the men.

“Bravo!” cried the captain, “excellent! nothing could be better.”

“It beats natur, quite,” said one.

“All to sticks,” cried another.

“And wot a tree-mendous giant he makes. Three cheers for Peter Grim, lads!”

Three cheers were promptly given, with right good-will, but the Giant did not move a muscle. He was far too deeply impressed with the importance of playing his part well to acknowledge the compliment. Having gazed long enough to enable the men to get rid of their first flow of enthusiasm, Blunderbore rose majestically, and, coming forward to the foot-lights, looked

straight over the heads of the men, and addressed himself to the opposite bulkhead.

“Oh! ’tis a dismal thing,” he began, and continued to spout his part with flashing eyes and considerable energy until he came to the word Blunderbuss, when, either from a mistaken notion as to when it was his time to go on, or nervous forgetfulness of the plan of the piece, the Little Bear sprang over the edge of the iceberg and alighted on the middle of the stage.

“Oh! bad luck to yees intirely,” said the Big Bear from behind the scenes in an angry whisper, which was distinctly heard by the audience, “ye’ve gone and spoiled it all, ye have. Come off, will ye, and take yer turn at the right time, won’t ye?”

In the midst of the shout of delight caused by this mistake, O’Riley, forgetting that he was a bear, rushed on the stage on his hind-legs, seized the Little Bear by the fore-leg, and dragged him off at the other side amid loud applause. Blunderbore, with admirable self-possession, resumed his part the instant there was a calm, and carried it successfully to a close.

Just as he ended, Fred waddled on, in the guise of an Esquimaux woman, and so well was he got up that the crew looked round to see if Aninga (who, with her husband, had been allowed to witness the play) was in her place. Fred had intentionally taken Aninga as his model, and had been very successful in imitating the top-knot of hair. The baby, too, was hit off to perfection, having been made by Mivins, who proved himself a genius in such matters. Its head was a ball of rags covered with brown leather, and two white bone buttons with black spots in the centre did duty for its eyes.

The first thing Whackinta did on coming forward was to deposit the baby on the snow with its head downwards by mistake, whereat it began to scream vociferously. This scream was accomplished by Davie Summers creeping below the stage and putting his mouth to a hole in the flooring close to which the baby’s head lay. Davie’s falsetto was uncommonly like to a child’s voice, and the effect was quite startling. Of course Whackinta tried to soothe it, and, failing in this she whipped it, which caused it to yell with tenfold violence. Thereafter, losing all patience, she covered its face and stuffed its mouth with a quantity of snow, and, laying it down on its back, placed a large block of ice on its head. This, as might be expected, had the desired effect, and the baby was silenced,not, however, until Whackinta had twice called down the hole in a hoarse whisper: “That’ll do, Davie; stop, man, stop!” Then, sitting down on the hummock which Blunderbore had just leftand from behind which he was now eagerly watching her,she began to weep.

Having given full vent to her feelings in a series of convulsive sobs, Whackinta addressed a lengthened harangue, in a melancholy tone of voice, to the audience, the gist of which was that she was an unfortunate widow; that two bears had fallen in love with her, and stolen her away from her happy home in Nova Zembla; and, although they allowed her to walk about as much as she chose, they watched her closely and prevented her escaping to her own country. Worst of all, they had told her that she must agree to become the wife of one or other of them, and if she did not make up her mind, and give them an answer that very day, she was to be killed and eaten by both of them. In order the more strongly to impress the audience with her forlorn condition, Whackinta sang a tender and touching ditty, composed by herself expressly for the occasion, and sang it so well that it was encored twice.

To all this Blunderbore listened with apparent rapture, and at length ventured to advance and discover himself, but the instant Whackinta saw him she fell on her knees and trembled violently.

“Spare me, good king,” she said; “do not slay me. I am a poor widow, and have been brought here by two bears against my will.”

“Woman,” said the Giant, “my name is Blunderbore. I am, as you perceive by my crown, a king, and I am a lonely man. If I kill the two bears you speak of, will you marry me?”

“Oh, do not ask me, good Blunderbore, I cannot! It is impossible. I cannot love you; you areforgive me for saying ittoo big, and fierce, and ugly to love.”

Blunderbore frowned angrily, and the audience applauded vociferously at this.

“You cannot love me! Hah!” exclaimed the Giant, glaring round with clenched teeth.

At this moment the Big Bear uttered an awful roar, Whackinta gave a piercing scream and fled, and Blunderbore hid himself hastily behind the hummock. The next moment the two bears bounded on the stage and began to gambol round it, tossing up their hind-legs and roaring and leaping in a manner that drew forth repeated plaudits. At length the Little Bear discovered the baby, and, uttering a frantic roar of delight, took it in its fore-paws and held it up. The Big Bear roared also of course, and, rushing forward, caught the baby by the leg, and endeavoured to tear it away from the Little Bear, at which treatment the poor baby again commenced to cry passionately. In the struggle the baby’s head came off, upon which the Little Bear put the head into its mouth and swallowed it. The Big Bear immediately did the same with the body; but its mouth was too small, and the body stuck fast and could not be finally disposed of until the Little Bear came to the rescue and pushed it

forcibly down its throat. Having finished this delicate little morsel, the two bears rose on their hind-legs and danced a hornpipe togetherTom Singleton playing the tune for them on a flute behind the scenes. When this was done they danced off the stage, and immediately, as if in the distance, was heard the voice of a man singing. It came gradually nearer, and at last Buzzby, in the character of Ben Bolt, swaggered up to the foot-lights with his hands in his breeches pockets.

"I'm a jolly, jolly tar,

Wot has comed from afar,

An' it's all for to seek my fortin,"

sang Buzzby. "But I've not found it yit," he continued, breaking into prose, "and there don't seem much prospect o' findin' it here anyhow. Wot an 'orrible cold place it is, ugh!"

Buzzby was received with enthusiastic cheers, for he was dressed in the old familiar blue jacket, white ducks, pumps, and straw hat set jauntily on one side of his heada costume which had not been seen for so many months by the crew of the Dolphin that their hearts warmed to it as if it were an old friend.

Buzzby acted with great spirit and was evidently a prime favourite. He could scarcely recollect a word of his part, but he remembered the general drift of it, and had ready wit enough to extemporise. Having explained that he was the only survivor of a shipwrecked crew, he proceeded to tell some of his adventures in foreign lands, and afterwards described part of his experiences in a song, to which the doctor played an accompaniment behind the scenes. The words were composed by himself, sung to the well-known Scotch air, "Corn Riggs", and ran as follows:

"The Jolly Tar.

"My comrades, you must know

It was many years ago

I left my daddy's cottage in the green wood O!

And I jined a man-o'-war

An' became a jolly tar,

An' fought for king and country on the high seas O!

Pull, boys, cheerily, our home is on the sea.

Pull, boys, merrily and lightly O!

Pull, boys, cheerily, the wind is passing free

An’ whirling up the foam and water sky-high O!

“There’s been many a noble fight,

But Trafalgar was the sight

That beat the Greeks and Romans in their glory O!

For Britain’s jolly sons

Worked the thunder-blazing guns,

And Nelson stood the bravest in the fore-front O!

Pull, boys, etcetera.

“A roaring cannon shot

Came an’ hit the very spot

Where my leg goes click-an’-jumble in the socket O!

And swept it overboard

With the precious little hoard

Of pipe, an’ tin, an’ baccy in the pocket O!

Pull, boys, etcetera.

“They took me down below,

An’ they laid me with a row

Of killed and wounded messmates on a table O!

Then up comes Dr Keg,

An’ says, Here’s a livin’ leg

I’ll sew upon the stump if I am able O!

Pull, boys, etcetera.

“This good and sturdy limb

Had belonged to fightin’ Tim,

An’ scarcely had they sewed it on the socket O!

When up the hatch I flew,

An’ dashed among the crew,

An’ sprang on board the Frenchman like a rocket O!

Pull, boys, etcetera.

“’Twas this that gained the day,

For that leg it cleared the way

And the battle raged like fury while it lasted O!

Then ceased the shot and shell

To fall upon the swell,

And the Union-Jack went bravely to the mast-head O!

Pull, boys, etcetera.”

We need scarcely say that this song was enthusiastically encored, and that the chorus was done full justice to by the audience, who picked it up at once and zang it with lusty vehemence. At the last word Ben Bolt nodded familiarly, thrust his hands into his pockets, and swaggered off whistling “Yankee Doodle”. It was a matter of uncertainty where he had swaggered off to, but it was conjectured that he had gone on his journey to anywhere that might turn up.

Meanwhile Blunderbore had been bobbing his head up and down behind the hummock in amazement at what he heard and saw, and when Ben Bolt made his exit he came forward. This was the signal for the two bears to discover him and rush on with a terrific roar. Blunderbore instantly fetched them each a sounding whack on their skulls, leaped over both their backs, and bounded up the side of the iceberg, where he took refuge, and turned at bay on a little ice

pinnacle constructed expressly for that purpose.

An awful fight now ensued between the Giant and the two bears. The pinnacle on which Blunderbore stood was so low that the Big Bear, by standing up on its hind-legs, could just scratch his toes, which caused the Giant to jump about continually, but the sides of the iceberg were so smooth that the bears could not climb up it. This difficulty, indeed, constituted the great and amusing feature of the fight, for no sooner did the Little Bear creep up to the edge of the pinnacle than the Giant's tremendous club came violently down on his snout (which had been made of hard wood on purpose to resist the blows) and sent it sprawling back on the stage, where the Big Bear invariably chanced to be in the way, and always fell over it. Then they both rose, and, roaring fearfully, renewed the attack, while Blunderbore laid about him with the club ferociously. Fortune, however, did not on this occasion favour the brave. The Big Bear at last caught the Giant by the heel and pulled him to the ground; the Little Bear instantly seized him by the throat, and, notwithstanding his awful yells and struggles, it would have gone ill with Blunderbore had not Ben Bolt opportunely arrived at that identical spot at that identical moment in the course of his travels.

Oh! it was a glorious thing to see the fear-nothing, dare-anything fashion in which, when he saw how matters stood, Ben Bolt threw down his stick and bundle, drew his cutlass, and attacked the two bears at once, single-handed, crying "Come on," in a voice of thunder. And it was a satisfactory thing to behold the way in which he cut and slashed at their heads (the heads having been previously prepared for such treatment), and the agility he displayed in leaping over their backs and under their legs, and holding on by their tails, while they vainly endeavoured to catch him. The applause was frequent and prolonged, and the two Esquimaux prisoners rolled about their burly figures and laughed till the tears ran down their fat cheeks. But when Ben Bolt suddenly caught the two bears by their tails, tied them together in a double knot, and fled behind a hummock, which the Big Bear passed on one side and the little Bear on the other, and so, as a matter of course, stuck hard and fast, the laughter was excessive; and when the gallant British seaman again rushed forward, massacred the Big Bear with two terrific cuts, slew the Little Bear with one tremendous back-hander, and then sank down on one knee and pressed his hand to his brow as if he were exhausted, a cheer ran from stem to stern of the Dolphin the like of which had not filled the hull of that good ship since she was launched upon her ocean home!

It was just at this moment that Whackinta chanced, curiously enough, to return to this spot in the course of her wanderings. She screamed in horror at the sight of the dead bears, which was quite proper and natural, and then she

started at the sight of the exhausted Bolt, and smiled sweetlywhich was also naturalas she hastened to assist and sympathise with him. Ben Bolt fell in love with her at once, and told her so off-hand, to the unutterable rage of Blunderbore, who recovered from his wounds at that moment and, seizing the sailor by the throat, vowed he would kill, and quarter, and stew, and boil, and roast, and eat him in one minute if he didn't take care what he was about.

The audience felt some fears for Ben Bolt at this point, but their delight knew no bounds when, shaking the Giant off, and springing backwards, he buttoned up his coat and roared, rather than said, that though he were all the Blunderbores and Blunderbusses in the world rolled together, and changed into one immortal blunder-cannon, he didn't care a pinch of bad snuff for him, and would knock all the teeth in his head down his throat. This valorous threat he followed up by shaking his fist close under the Giant's nose, and crying out: "Come on!"

But the Giant did not come on; he fortunately recollected that he owed his life to the brave sailor, so he smiled, and, saying he would be his friend through life, insisted on seizing him by the hand and shaking it violently. Thereafter he took Ben Bolt and Whackinta by their right hands, and, leading them forward to the foot-lights, made them a long speech to the effect that he owed a debt of gratitude to the former for saving his life which he could never repay, and that he loved the latter too sincerely to stand in the way of her happiness. Then he joined their right hands, and they went down on one knee, and he placed his hands on their heads, and looked up at the audience with a benignant smile, and the curtain fell amid rapturous cheers.

In this play it seemed somewhat curious and unaccountable that Whackinta forgot to enquire for her demolished baby, and appeared to feel no anxiety whatever about it; it was also left a matter of uncertainty whether Ben Bolt and his Esquimaux bride returned to live happily during the remainder of their lives in England, or took up their permanent abode with Blunderbore; but it is not our province to criticisewe merely chronicle events as they occurred.

The entertainments were to conclude with a hornpipe from Mivins, but just as that elastic individual had completed the first of a series of complicated evolutions, and was about to commence the second, a vociferous barking of the dogs was heard outside, accompanied by the sound of human voices. The benches were deserted in a moment and the men rushed upon deck, catching up muskets and cutlasses, which always stood in readiness, as they went. The sounds proceeded from a party of about twenty Esquimaux, who had been sent from the camp with the stolen property, and with a humble request that the offence might be forgiven, and their chief and his wife returned to them. They were all unarmed, and the sincerity of their repentance was further attested by

the fact that they brought back, not only the hatchet and telescope, but a large assortment of minor articles that had not been missed.

Of course the apology was accepted; and after speeches were delivered, and protestations of undying friendship made on both sides, the party were presented with a few trinkets and a plug of tobacco each, and sent back in a state of supreme happiness to their village, where for a week Awatok kept the men of his tribe, and Aninga the women, in a state of intense amazement by their minute descriptions of the remarkable doings of the white strangers.

The friendship thus begun between the Esquimaux and the Dolphin's crew was never once interrupted by any unpleasant collision during the months that they afterwards travelled and hunted in company. Strength of muscle and promptitude in action are qualities which all nations in a savage state understand and respect; and the sailors proved that they possessed these qualities in a higher degree than themselves during the hardships and dangers incident to Arctic life, while at the same time their seemingly endless resources and contrivances impressed the simple natives with the belief that white men could accomplish anything they chose to attempt.

Chapter Seventeen.

Expeditions on FootEffects of Darkness on Dogs and MenThe first DeathCaught in a TrapThe Esquimaux Camp.

"Don't know how it is, an' I can't tell wot it is, but so it is," remarked Buzzby to Grim, a week after the first night of the theatricals, "that that 'ere actin' has done us all a sight o' good. Here we are as merry as crickets every one, although we're short of fresh meat, and symptoms o' scurvy are beginnin' to show on some of us."

"It's the mind havin' occupation, an' bein' prewented from broodin' over its misfortins," replied Grim with the air of a philosopher.

Grim did not put this remark in turned commas, although he ought to have done so, seeing that it was quoted from a speech made by the captain to Singleton the day before.

"You see," continued Grim, "we've been actin' every night for a week past; well, if we hadn't been actin', we should ha' been thinkin' an' sleepin'too much of which, you see, ain't good for us, Buzzby, and would never pay."

Buzzby was not quite sure of this, but contented himself by saying: "Well, mayhap ye're right. I'm sorry it's to come to an end so soon, but there is no

doubt that fresh meat is ondispensablean' that reminds me, messmate, that I've not cleaned my musket for two days, an' it wouldn't do to go on a hunt with a foul piece, nohow. We start at 10 o'clock a.m., don't we?"

Grim admitted that they didremarking that it might just as well be 10 p.m., for all the difference the sun would make in itand went below with Buzzby.

In the cabin active preparations were making for an extended hunting expedition, which the empty state of the larder rendered absolutely necessary. For a week past the only fresh provisions they had procured were a white fox and a rabbit, notwithstanding the exertions of Meetuck, Fred, and the doctor, who with three separate parties had scoured the country for miles round the ship. Scurvy was now beginning to appear among them, and Captain Guy felt that although they had enough of salt provisions to last them the greater part of the winter, if used with economy, they could not possibly subsist on these alone. An extended expedition in search of seals and walrus was therefore projected.

It was determined that this should consist of two parties, the one to proceed north, the other to travel south in the tracks of the Esquimaux, who had left their temporary village in search of walrusthey also being reduced almost to a state of starvation.

The plan of the expedition was as follows:

One party, consisting of ten men, under Bolton, the first mate, was to take the largest sledge, and the whole team of dogs, on which, with twelve days' provisions and their sleeping-bags, they were to proceed northward along the coast as far as possible; and, in the event of being unsuccessful, they were to turn homeward on the eighth day, and make the best of their way back on short allowance.

The other party, consisting of fifteen men under Saunders, the second mate, was to set off to the southward on foot, dragging a smaller sledge behind them, and endeavour to find the Esquimaux, who, it was supposed, could not be far off, and would probably have fresh meat in their camp.

It was a clear, cold, and beautiful starlight day, when the two parties started simultaneously on their separate journeys. The coruscations of the aurora were more than usually vivid, and the snow gave forth that sharp, dry, crunching sound, under the heels of the men as they moved about, that denotes intense frost.

"Mind that you hug the land, Mr Bolton," said the captain at parting, "don't get farther out on the floes than you can help. To meet with a gale on the ice is

no joke in these latitudes.”

The first mate promised obedience, and the second mate having been also cautioned to hug the land, and not to use their small supply of spirits for any other purpose than that of lighting the lamp, except in cases of the most urgent need, they set off with three hearty cheers, which were returned by Captain Guy and those who remained with him in the ship. All the able and effective men were sent on these expeditions; those who remained behind were all more or less affected with scurvy, except the captain himself, whose energetic nature seemed invulnerable, and whose flow of spirits never failed. Indeed it is probable that to this hearty and vigorous temperament, under God, he owed his immunity from disease, for, since provisions began to fail, he, along with all his officers, had fared precisely like the menthe few delicacies they possessed having been reserved for the sick.

Unfortunately their stock of lime-juice was now getting low, and the crew had to be put on short allowance. As this acid is an excellent anti-scorbutic, or preventive of scurvy, as well as a cure, its rapid diminution was viewed with much concern by all on board. The long-continued absence of the sun, too, now began to tell more severely than ever on men and dogs. On the very day the expeditions took their departure, one of the latter, which had been left behind on account of illness, was attacked with a strange disease, of which several of the team eventually died before the winter came to an end. It was seized with spasms, and, after a few wild paroxysms, lapsed into a lethargic state. In this condition the animal functions went on apparently as well as usual, the appetite continued not only good but voracious. The disease was clearly mental. It barked furiously at nothing, and walked in straight or curved lines perseveringly; or at other times it remained for hours in moody silence, and then started off howling as if pursued. In thirty-six hours after the first attack the poor animal died, and was buried in the snow on Store Island.

This was the first death that had occurred on board, and although it was only a dog, and not one of the favourites, its loss cast a gloom over the crew for several days. It was the first blow of the fell destroyer in the midst of their little community, which could ill spare the life even of one of the lower animals, and they felt as if the point of the wedge had now been entered, and might be driven farther home ere long.

The expressive delight of the poor dogs on being admitted to the light of the cabin showed how ardently they longed for the return of the sun. It was now the beginning of December, and the darkness was complete. Not the faintest vestige of twilight appeared, even at noon. Midnight and noonday were alike. Except when the stars and aurora were bright, there was not light enough to distinguish a man’s form at ten paces distant, and a blacker mass than the

surrounding darkness alone indicated where the high cliffs encompassed the Bay of Mercy. When, therefore, anyone came on deck, the first thing he felt on groping his way about was the cold noses of the dogs pushed against his hands, as they frisked and gambolled round him. They howled at the appearance of an accidental light, as if they hoped the sun, or at least the moon, were going to rise once more, and they rejoiced on being taken below, and leaped up in the men's faces for sympathy, and whined, and all but spoke, with excess of satisfaction.

The effect of the monotony of long-continued darkness, and the absence of novelty, had much to do also with the indifferent health of many of the men. After the two expeditions were sent out, those who remained behind became much more low-spirited, and the symptoms of scurvy increased. In these circumstances Captain Guy taxed his inventive genius to the utmost to keep up their spirits and engage their minds. He assumed an air of bustling activity, and attached a degree of importance to the regular performance of the light duties of the ship that they did not in reality possess, apart from their influence as discipline. The cabin was swept and aired, the stove cleaned, the fittings dusted, the beds made, the tides, thermometers, and barometers registered; the logs posted up, clothes mended, food cooked, traps visited, etcetera, with the regularity of clockwork, and every possible plan adopted to occupy every waking hour, and to prevent the men from brooding over their position. When the labours of the day were over, plans were proposed for getting up a concert, or a new play, in order to surprise the absentees on their return. Stories were told over and over again, and enjoyed if good, or valued far beyond their worth if bad. When old stories failed, and old books were read, new stories were invented, and here the genius of some was drawn out, while the varied information of others became of great importance. Tom Singleton, in particular, entertained the men with songs and lively tunes on the flute, and told stories, as one of them remarked, "like a book". Joseph West, too, was an invaluable comrade in this respect. He had been a studious boy at school, and a lover of books of all kinds, especially books of travel and adventure. His memory was good, and his inventive powers excellent, so that he recalled wonderful and endless anecdotes from the unfathomable stores of his memory, strung them together into a sort of story, and told them in a soft, pleasant voice that captivated the ears of his audience; but poor West was in delicate health, and could not speak so long as his messmates would have wished. The rough life they led, and the frequent exposure to intense cold, had considerably weakened a frame which had never been robust, and an occasional cough, when he told a long story, sometimes warned him to desist. Games, too, were got up. "Hide-and-seek" was revived with all the enthusiasm of boyhood, and "fox-chase" was got up with tremendous energy. In all this the captain was the most earnest and vigorous, and in doing good to others he unconsciously did

the greatest possible amount of good to himself; for his forgetfulness of self, and the activity of his mind in catering for the wants and amusements of his men, had the effect of imparting a cheerfulness to his manner, and a healthy tone to his mind, that tended powerfully to sustain and invigorate his body. But despite all this, the men grew worse, and a few of them showed such alarming symptoms that the doctor began to fear there would soon be a breach in their numbers.

Meanwhile Saunders and his fifteen men trudged steadily to the southward, dragging their sledge behind them. The ice-floes, however, turned out to be very rugged and hummocky, and retarded them so much that they made but slow progress until they passed the Red Snow Valley, and doubled the point beyond it. Here they left the floes, and took to the natural highway afforded by the ice-belt, along which they sped more rapidly, and arrived at the Esquimaux village in the course of about five hours.

Here all was deserted and silent. Bits of seal and walrus, hide, and bones and tusks were scattered about in all directions, but no voices issued from the dome-shaped huts of snow.

“They’re the likest things to bee-skeps I ever saw,” remarked Saunders, as he and his party stood contemplating the little group of huts. “And they don’t seem to care much for big doors.”

Saunders referred here to the low tunnels, varying from three to twelve feet, that formed the entrance to each hut.

“Mayhap there’s some o’ them asleep inside,” suggested Tom Green, the carpenter’s mate; “suppose we go in and see?”

“I dare say ye’re no far wrong,” replied the second mate, to whom the idea seemed to be a new one. “Go in, Davie Summers, ye’re a wee chap, and can bend your back better than the most o’ us.”

Davie laughed as he went down on his hands and knees, and, creeping in at the mouth of one of the tunnels, which barely permitted him to enter in that position, disappeared.

Several of the party at the same time paid similar visits to the other huts, but they all returned with the same remark, “empty”. The interiors were begrimed with lamp-black and filth, and, from their appearance, seemed to have been deserted only a short time before.

Buzzby, who formed one of the party, rubbed his nose for some time in great perplexity, until he drew from Davie Summers the remark that his proboscis

was red enough by nature and didn't need rubbing. "It's odd," he remarked, "they seems to ha' bin here for some time, and yit they've niver looked near the ship but once. Wot's become on 'em I don't know."

"Don't you?" said Davie in a tone of surprise; "now that is odd. One would have thought that a fellow who keeps his weather-eye so constantly open should know everything."

"Don't chaff; boy, but lend a hand to undo the sled-lashings. I see that Mr Saunders is agoin' to anchor here for the night."

The second mate, who had been taking a hasty glance at the various huts of the village, selected two of the largest as a lodging for his men, and, having divided them into two gangs, ordered them to turn in and sleep as hard as possible.

"'Spose we may sup first," said Summers in a whining tone of mock humility.

"In coorse you may," answered Tom Green, giving the lad a push that upset him in the snow.

"Come here, Buzzby, I want to speak to 'ee," said Saunders, leading him aside. "It seems to me that the Esquimaux canna be very far off, and I observe their tracks are quite fresh in the snow leadin' to the southward, so I mean to have a night march after them, but as the men seem pretty weel tired I'll only take two o' the strongest. Who d'ye think might go?"

"I'll go myself, sir."

"Very good, and who else, think 'ee? Amos Parr seems freshest."

"I think Tom Green's the man wot can do it. I seed him capsize Davie Summers jist now in the snow, an' when a man can skylark, I always know he's got lots o' wind in 'im."

"Very good. Then go, Buzzby, and order him to get ready, and look sharp about it."

"Ay, ay, sir," cried Buzzby, as he turned to prepare Green for the march.

In pursuance of this plan, an hour afterwards Saunders and his two followers left the camp with their sleeping-bags and a day's provisions on their shoulders, having instructed the men to follow with the sledge at the end of five hours, which period was deemed sufficient time for rest and refreshment.

For two hours the trio plodded silently onward over the icebelt by the light of

a clear, starry sky. At the end of that time clouds began to gather to the westward, rendering the way less distinct, but still leaving sufficient light to render travelling tolerably easy. Then they came to a part of the coast where the ice-belt clung close to a line of perpendicular cliffs of about three miles in extent. The ice-belt here was about twenty feet broad. On the left the cliffs referred to rose sheer up several hundred feet; on the right the ice-belt descended only about three feet to the floes. Here our three adventurous travellers were unexpectedly caught in a trap. The tide rose so high that it raised the sea ice to a level with the ice-belt and, welling up between the two, completely overflowed the latter.

The travellers pushed on as quickly as possible, for the precipices on their left forbade all hope of escape in that direction, while the gap between the ice-belt and the floes, which was filled with a gurgling mixture of ice and water, equally hemmed them in on the right. Worse than all, the tide continued to rise, and when it reached half-way to their knees, they found it dangerous to advance for fear of stepping into rents and fissures which were no longer visible.

“What’s to be done noo?” enquired Saunders, coming to a full stop, and turning to Buzzby with a look of blank despair.

“Dunno,” replied Buzzby, with an equally blank look of despair, as he stood with his legs apart and his arms hanging down by his sidethe very personification of imbecility. “If I wos a fly I’d know wot to do. I’d walk up the side o’ that cliff till I got to a dry bit, and then I’d stick on. But, not bein’ a fly, in coorse I can’t.”

Buzzby said this in a recklessly facetious tone, and Tom Green followed it up with a remark to the effect that “he’d be blowed if he ever wos in sich a fix in his life;” intimating his belief, at the same time, that his “toes wos freezin’.”

“No fear o’ that,” said the second mate, “they’ll no’ freeze as lang as they’re in the water. We’ll just have to stand here till the tide goes doon.”

Saunders said this in a dogged tone, and immediately put his plan in force by crossing his arms and planting his feet firmly on the submerged ice and wide apart. Buzzby and Green, however, adopted the wiser plan of moving constantly about within a small circle, and after Saunders had argued for half an hour as to the advantages of this plan, he followed their example. The tide rose above their knees, but they had fortunately on boots, made by the Esquimaux, which were perfectly waterproof; their feet, therefore, although very cold, were quite dry. In an hour and three-quarters the ice-belt was again uncovered, and the half-frozen travellers resumed their march with the utmost

energy.

Two hours later and they came to a wide expanse of level ground at the foot of the high cliffs, where a group of Esquimaux huts, similar to those they had left, was descried.

“They’re all deserted too,” remarked Buzzby.

But Buzzby was wrong, for at that moment a very small and particularly fat little boy in a fox-skin dress appeared at the mouth of one of the low tunnels that formed the entrance to the nearest hut. This boy looked exactly like a lady’s muff with a hairy head above it and a pair of feet below. The instant he observed the strangers he threw up his arms, uttered a shrill cry of amazement, and disappeared in the tunnel. Next instant a legion of dogs rushed out of the huts, barking furiously, and on their heels came the entire population, creeping on their hands and knees out of the tunnel mouths like dark hairy monsters issuing from their holes. They had spears and knives of ivory with them, but a glance showed the two parties that they were friends, and in a few moments Awatok and his comrades were chattering vociferously round the sailors, and endeavouring by word and sign to make themselves understood.

The Esquimaux received the three visitors and the rest of the sledge-party, who came up a few hours later, with the utmost hospitality. But we have not space to tell of how they dragged them into their smoky huts of snow, and how they offered them raw seals’ flesh to eat; and how, on the sailors expressing disgust they laughed, and added moss mixed with oil to their lamps to enable them to cook their food; and how they managed, by signs and otherwise, to understand that the strangers had come in search of food, at which they (the Esquimaux) were not surprised; and how they assured their visitors (also by means of signs) that they would go a-hunting with them on the following day, whereat they (the sailors) were delighted, and shook hands all round. Neither have we space to tell of how the visitors were obliged to conform to custom, and sleep in the same huts with men, women, children, and dogs, and how they felt thankful to be able to sleep anywhere and anyhow, without being frozen. All this, and a great deal more, we are compelled to skip over here, and leave it unwillingly, to the vivid imagination of our reader.

Chapter Eighteen.

The Hunting PartyReckless DrivingA Desperate Encounter with a Walrus, etcetera.

Late in the day, by the bright light of the stars, the sailors and the Esquimaux left the snow-huts of the village, and, travelling out to seaward on the floes,

with dogs and sledges, lances and spears, advanced to do battle with the walrus.

The northern lights were more vivid than usual, making the sky quite luminous, and there was a sharp freshness in the air, which, while it induced the hunters to pull their hoods more tightly round their faces, also sent their blood careering more briskly through their veins, as they drove swiftly over the ice in the Esquimaux sledges.

“Did ye ever see walrusses a’fore, Davie!” enquired Buzzby who sat beside Summers on the leading sledge.

“None but what I’ve seed on this voyage.”

“They’re remarkable creeturs,” rejoined Buzzby, slapping his hand on his thigh. “I’ve seed many a one in my time, an I can tell ye, lad, they’re ugly customers. They fight like good ’uns, and give the Esquimaux a deal o’ trouble to kill themthey do.”

“Tell me a story about ’em, Buzzbydo, like a good chap,” said Davie Summers, burying his nose in the skirts of his hairy garment to keep it warm. “You’re a capital hand at a yarn, now, fire away.”

“A story, lad; I don’t know as how I can exactly tell ye a story, but I’ll give ye wot they calls a hanecdote. It wos about five years ago, more or less, I wos out in Baffin’s Bay, becalmed off one o’ the Eskimo settlements, when we wos lookin’ over the side at the lumps of ice floatin’ past, up got a walrus not very far offshore, and out went half a dozen kayaks, as they call the Eskimo men’s boats, and they all sot on the beast at once. Well, it wos one o’ the brown walrusses, which is always the fiercest; and the moment he got the first harpoon he went slap at the man that threw it; but the fellow backed out, and then a cry was raised to let it alone, as it wos a brown walrus. One young Eskimo, howsiver, would have another slap at it and went so close that the brute charged, upset the kayak, and ripped the man up with his tusks. Seein’ this, the other Eskimos made a dash at it, and wounded it badly; but the upshot wos that the walrus put them all to flight and made off, clear away, with six harpoons fast in its hide.”

“Buzzby’s tellin’ ye gammon,” roared Tom Green, who rode on the second sledge in rear of that on which Davie Summers sat. “What is’t all about?”

“About gammon, of coorse,” retorted Davie. “Keep yer mouth shut for fear your teeth freeze.”

“Can’t ye lead us a better road?” shouted Saunders, who rode on the third

sledge; “my bones are rattlin’ about inside a’ me like a bag o’ ninepins.”

“Give the dogs a cut, old fellow,” said Buzzby, with a chuckle and a motion of his arm to the Esquimaux who drove his sledge.

The Esquimaux did not understand the words, but he quite understood the sly chuckle and the motion of the arm, so he sent the lash of the heavy whip with a loud crack over the backs of the team.

“Hold on for life!” cried Davie, as the dogs sprang forward with a bound.

The part they were about to pass over was exceedingly rough and broken, and Buzzby resolved to give his shipmates a shake. The pace was tremendous. The powerful dogs drew their loads after them with successive bounds, which caused a succession of crashes as the sledges sprang from lump to lump of ice, and the men’s teeth snapped in a truly savage manner.

“Ba–a–ck ye–e–r to–o–psails, will ye?” shouted Amos Parr.

But the delighted Esquimaux leader, who entered quite into the joke, had no intention whatever of backing his top-sails; he administered another crack to the team, which yelled madly, and, bounding over a wide chasm in the ice, came down with a crash which snapped the line of the leading dog and set it free. Here Buzzby caused the driver to pull up.

“Stop, ye varmint! Come to an anchor!” said he. “Is that a way to drive the poor dogs!”

“Ye might have stopped him sooner, I think,” cried the second mate in wrath.

“Hai!” shouted the band of Esquimaux, pointing to a hummock of ice a few hundred yards in advance of the spot on which they stood.

Instantly all were silent, and gazing intently ahead at a dark object that burst upwards through the ice.

“A walrus!” whispered Buzzby.

“So it is,” answered Amos Parr.

“I’ve my doobts on that point,” remarked Saunders.

Before the doubts of the second mate could be resolved, the Esquimaux uttered another exclamation and pointed to another dark object a quarter of a mile to the right. It was soon found that there were several of these ocean elephants sporting about in the neighbourhood, and bursting up the young ice that had formed on several holes, by using their huge heads as battering-rams.

It was quickly arranged that the party should divide into three, and while a few remained behind to watch and restrain the dogs the remainder were to advance on foot to the attack.

Saunders, Buzzby, Amos Parr, Davie Summers, and Awatok formed one party, and advanced with two muskets and several spears towards the walrus that had been first seen, the sailors taking care to keep in rear of Awatok in order to follow his lead, for they were as yet ignorant of the proper mode of attack.

Awatok led the party stealthily towards a hummock, behind which he caused them to crouch until the walrus should dive. This it did in a few minutes, and then they all rushed from their place of concealment towards another hummock that lay about fifty yards from the hole. Just as they reached it, and crouched, the walrus rose, snorting the brine from its shaggy muzzle, and lashing the water into foam with its flippers.

“Losh, what a big ’un!” exclaimed Saunders in amazement; and well he might, for this was an unusually large animal, more like an elephant in size than anything else.

It had two enormous ivory tusks, with which it tore and pounded large fragments from the ice-tables, while it barked like a gigantic dog, and rolled its heavy form about in sport.

Awatok now whispered to his comrades, and attempted to get them to understand that they must follow him as fast as possible at the next run. Suddenly the walrus dived. Awatok rushed forward, and in another instant stood at the edge of the hole with his spear in readiness in his right hand, and the coil of line in his left. The others joined him instantly, and they had scarcely come up when the huge monster again rose to the surface.

Saunders and Buzzby fired at his head the moment it appeared above water, and Awatok at the same time planted a spear in his breast, and ran back with the coil. The others danced about in an excited state, throwing their spears and missing their mark, although it was a big one, frequently.

“Give him a lance-thrust, Amos,” cried Saunders, reloading his piece.

But Amos could not manage it, for the creature lashed about so furiously that, although he made repeated attempts, he failed to do more than prick its tough sides, and render it still more savage. Buzzby, too, made several daring efforts to lance it, but failed, and nearly slipped into the hole in his recklessness. It was a wild scene of confusionthe spray was dashed over the ice round the hole, and the men, as they ran about in extreme excitement, slipped and occasionally tumbled in their haste, while the maddened brute glared at them

like a fiend, and bellowed in its anger and pain.

Suddenly it dived, leaving the men staring at each other. The sudden cessation of noise and turmoil had a very strange effect.

“Is’t away?” enquired Saunders with a look of chagrin.

He was answered almost instantly by the walrus reappearing, and making furious efforts by means of its flippers and tusks to draw itself out upon the ice, while it roared with redoubled energy. The shot that was instantly fired seemed to have no effect, and the well-directed harpoon of Awatok was utterly disregarded by it. Amos Parr, however, gave it a lance-thrust that caused it to howl vehemently, and dyed the foam with its blood.

“Hand me a spear, Buzzby,” cried Saunders, “the musket-balls seem to hurt him as little as peas. Oot o’ my gait.”

The second mate made a rush so tremendous that something awful would infallibly have resulted had he not struck his foot against a bit of ice and fallen violently on his breast. The impetus with which he had started shot him forward till his head was within a foot of the walrus’s grim muzzle. For one moment the animal looked at the man as if it were surprised at his audacity, and then it recommenced its frantic struggles, snorting blood, and foam, and water into Saunders’s face as he scrambled out of its way. Immediately after, Awatok fixed another harpoon in its side, and it dived again.

The struggle that ensued was tremendous, and the result seemed for a long time to be doubtful. Again and again shots were fired and spear-thrusts made with effect, but the huge creature seemed invulnerable. Its ferocity and strength remained unabated, while the mensailors and Esquimaux alikewere nearly exhausted. The battle had now lasted three hours; the men were panting from exertion; the walrus, still bellowing, was clinging to the edge of the ice, which for several yards round the hole was covered with blood and foam.

“Wot a brute it is!” said Buzzby, sitting down on a lump of ice and looking at it in despair.

“We might have killed it lang ago had I not wet my gun,” growled Saunders, regarding his weapon, which was completely drenched, with a look of contempt.

“Give it another poke, Awatok,” cried Amos Parr; “you’ll know best whereabouts its life lies; I can make nothin’ o’t.”

Awatok obeyed, and gave it a thrust under the left flipper that seemed to reach

its heart, for it fell back into the water and struggled violently. At the same moment Davie Summers mounted to the top of a hummock, part of which overhung the pool, and launched a harpoon down upon its back. This latter blow seemed to revive its ferocity, for it again essayed to clamber out on the ice, and looked up at Davie with a glance of seeming indignation, while Buzzby, who had approached, fell backward as he retreated from before it. At the same time Saunders succeeded in getting his musket to go off. The ball struck it in the eye, and, entering the brain, caused instant death, a result which was greeted with three enthusiastic cheers.

The getting of this enormous creature out of the water would have been a matter of no small difficulty had there not been such a large party present. Even as it was, it took them a considerable time to accomplish this feat, and to cut it up and pack it on the sledges.

While the battle above described was going on, two smaller walrus had been killed and secured, and the Esquimaux were in a state of great glee, for previous to the arrival of the sailors they had been unsuccessful in their hunts, and had been living on short allowance. On returning home there was a general feasting and merry-making, and Saunders felt that if he remained there long they would not only eat up their own meat, but his also. He therefore resolved to return immediately to the ship with his prize, and leave part of his men behind to continue the hunt until he should return with the sledge.

But he was prevented from putting this intention into practice by a hurricane which burst over the Arctic regions with inconceivable bitterness, and for two days kept all the inhabitants of the snow-village confined to their huts. This hurricane was the fiercest that had swept over these bleak regions of ice since the arrival of the Dolphin. The wind shrieked, as it swept round the cliffs, and down the ravines, and out upon the frozen sea, as if a legion of evil spirits were embodied and concentrated in each succeeding blast. The snow-drift rose in solid masses, whirled madly round for a few seconds, and then was caught by the blast, and swept away like sheets of white flame. The thermometer stood at 23 degrees below zero, a temperature that was mild compared with what it usually had been of late, but the fierce wind abstracted heat from everything exposed to it so rapidly that neither man nor beast could face it for a moment.

Buzzby got a little bit of his chin frozen while he merely put his head out at the door of the hut to see how the weather looked, and Davie Summers had one of his fingers slightly frozen while in the act of carrying in one of the muskets that had been left outside by mistake.

As for the Esquimaux, they recked not of the weather. Their snow-huts were

warm, and their mouths were full, so like wise men and women they waited patiently within-doors till the storm should blow itself out. The doings of these poor people were very curious. They ate voraciously, and evidently preferred their meat raw. But when the sailors showed disgust at this, they at once made a small fire of moss, mingled with blubber, over which they half-cooked their food.

Their mode of procuring fire was curious. Two small stones were taken, one a piece of white quartz, the other a piece of iron-stone, and struck together smartly; the few sparks that flew out were thrown upon a kind of white down, found on the willows, under which was placed a lump of dried moss. It was usually a considerable time before they succeeded in catching a spark, but once caught they had no difficulty in blowing it into a flame.

They had also an ingenious contrivance for melting snow. This was a flat stone, supported by two other stones, and inclined slightly at one end; upon this flat stone a lump of snow was placed, and below it was kindled a small fire of moss and blubber. When the stone became heated, the snow melted and flowed down the incline into a small seal-skin cup placed there to catch it.

During the continuance of the storm the sailors shared the food and lodging of these Esquimaux. They were a fat, oily, hospitable, dirty race, and vied with each other in showing kindness to those who had been thus thrown into their society. As Davie Summers expressed it, “they were regular trumps”; and, according to Buzzby’s opinion, “they wos the jolliest set o’ human walrusses wot he had ever comed across in all his travels, and he ought to know, for he had always kep’ his weather-eye open, he had, and wouldn’t give in on that p’int, he wouldn’t, to no man livin’.”

Chapter Nineteen.
The Northern PartyA Narrow Escape, and a Great DiscoveryEsquimaux again, and a Joyful Surprise.

It is interesting to meditate, sometimes, on the deviousness of the paths by which men are led in earthly affairseven when the starting-point and object of pursuit are the same. The two parties which left the Dolphin had for their object the procuring of fresh food. The one went south and the other north, but their field was the samethe surface of the frozen sea and the margin of the ice-girt shore. Yet how different their experiences and results were the sequel will show.

As we have already said, the northern party was in command of Bolton, the first mate, and consisted of ten men, among whom were our hero Fred, Peter Grim, O’Riley, and Meetuck, with the whole team of dogs, and the large

sledge.

Being fine weather when they set out, they travelled rapidly, making twenty miles, as near as they could calculate, in the first six hours. The dogs pulled famously, and the men stepped out well at first, being cheered and invigorated mentally by the prospect of an adventurous excursion and fresh meat. At the end of the second day they buried part of their stock of provisions at the foot of a conspicuous cliff, intending to pick it up on their return, and, thus lightened, they advanced more rapidly, keeping farther out on the floes, in hopes of falling in with walrus or seals.

Their hopes, however, were doomed to disappointment. They got only one seal, and that was a small onescarcely sufficient to afford a couple of meals to the dogs.

They were “misfortunate entirely”, as O’Riley remarked, and, to add to their misfortunes, the floe-ice became so rugged that they could scarcely advance at all.

“Things grow worse and worse,” remarked Grim, as the sledge, for the twentieth time that day, plunged into a crack in the ice, and had to be unloaded ere it could be got out. “The sledge won’t stand much o’ sich work, and if it breaksgood-bye to it, for it won’t mend without wood, and there’s none here.”

“No fear of it,” cried Bolton encouragingly; “it’s made of material as tough as your own sinews, Grim, and won’t give way easily, as the thumps it has withstood already prove. Has it never struck you, Fred,” he continued, turning to our hero, who was plodding forward in silence,“has it never struck you that when things in this world get very bad, and we begin to feel inclined to give up, they somehow or other begin to get better.”

“Why, yes, I have noticed that; but I have a vague sort of feeling just now that things are not going to get better. I don’t know whether it’s this long-continued darkness, or the want of good food, but I feel more downcast than I ever was in my life before.”

Bolton’s remark had been intended to cheer, but Fred’s answer proved that a discussion of the merits of the question was not likely to have a good effect on the men, whose spirits were evidently very much cast down, so he changed the subject.

Fortunately at that time an incident occurred which effected the mate’s purpose better than any efforts man could have made. It has frequently happened that when Arctic voyagers have, from sickness and long confinement during a monotonous winter, become so depressed in spirits that

games and amusements of every kind failed to rouse them from their lethargic despondency, sudden danger has given to their minds the needful impulse, and effected a salutary change, for a time at least, in their spirits. Such was the case at the present time. The men were so worn with hard travel and the want of fresh food, and depressed by disappointment and long-continued darkness, that they failed in their attempts to cheer each other, and at length relapsed into moody silence. Fred's thoughts turned constantly to his father, and he ceased to remark cheerfully, as was his wont, on passing objects. Even O'Riley's jests became few and far between, and at last ceased altogether. Bolton alone kept up his spirits, and sought to cheer his men, the feeling of responsibility being, probably, the secret of his superiority over them in this respect. But even Bolton's spirits began to sink at last.

While they were thus groping sadly along among the hummocks, a large fragment of ice was observed to break off from a berg just over their heads.

"Look out! follow me, quick!" shouted the first mate in a loud, sharp voice of alarm, at the same time darting in towards the side of the berg.

The startled men obeyed the order just in time, for they had barely reached the side of the berg when the enormous pinnacle fell, and was shattered into a thousand fragments on the spot they had just left. A rebounding emotion sent the blood in a crimson flood to Fred's forehead, and this was followed by a feeling of gratitude to the Almighty for the preservation of himself and the party. Leaving the dangerous vicinity of the bergs, they afterwards kept more inshore.

"What can yonder mound be?" said Fred, pointing to an object that was faintly seen at a short distance off upon the bleak shore.

"An Esquimaux hut, maybe," replied Grim. "What think'ee, Meetuck?"

Meetuck shook his head and looked grave, but made no reply.

"Why don't you answer?" said Bolton; "but come along, we'll soon see."

Meetuck now made various ineffectual attempts to dissuade the party from examining the mound, which turned out to be composed of stones heaped upon each other; but, as all the conversation of which he was capable failed to enlighten his companions as to what the pile was, they instantly set to work to open a passage into the interior, believing that it might contain fresh provisions, as the Esquimaux were in the habit of thus preserving their superabundant food from bears and wolves. In half an hour a hole large enough for a man to creep through was formed, and Fred entered, but started back with an exclamation of horror on finding himself in the presence of a

human skeleton, which was seated on the ground in the centre of this strange tomb with its head and arms resting on the knees.

“It must be an Esquimaux grave,” said Fred, as he retreated hastily; “that must be the reason why Meetuck tried to hinder us.”

“I should like to see it,” said Grim, stooping and thrusting his head and shoulders into the hole.

“What have you got there?” asked Bolton, as Grim drew back and held up something in his hand.

“Don’t know exactly. It’s like a bit o’ cloth.” On examination the article was found to be a shred of coarse cloth, of a blue or black colour, and, being an unexpected substance to meet with in such a place, Bolton turned round with it to Meetuck in the hope of obtaining some information. But Meetuck was gone. While the sailors were breaking into the grave, Meetuck had stood aloof with a displeased expression of countenance, as if he were angry at the rude desecration of a countryman’s tomb; but the moment his eye fell on the shred of cloth an expression of mingled surprise and curiosity crossed his countenance, and without uttering a word he slipped noiselessly into the hole, from which he almost immediately issued bearing several articles in his hand. These he held up to view, and with animated words and gesticulations explained that this was the grave of a white man, not of a native.

The articles he brought out were a pewter plate and a silver table-spoon.

“There’s a name of some kind written here,” said Bolton, as he carefully scrutinised the spoon. “Look here, Fred, your eyes are better than mine; see if you can make it out.”

Fred took it with a trembling hand, for a strange feeling of dread had seized possession of his heart, and he could scarcely bring himself to look upon it. He summoned up courage, however, but at the first glance his hand fell down by his side, and a dimness came over his eyes, for the word “Pole Star” was engraven on the handle. He would have fallen to the ground had not Bolton caught him.

“Don’t give way, lad, the ship may be all right. Perhaps this is one o’ the crew that died.”

Fred did not answer, but, recovering himself with a strong effort, he said: “Pull down the stones, men.”

The men obeyed in silence, and the poor boy sat down on a rock to await the

result in trembling anxiety. A few minutes sufficed to disentomb the skeleton, for the men sympathised with their young comrade, and worked with all their energies.

“Cheer up, Fred,” said Bolton, coming and laying his hand on the youth’s shoulder, “it’s not your father. There is a bit of black hair sticking to the scalp.”

With a fervent expression of thankfulness Fred rose and examined the skeleton, which had been placed in a sort of sack of skin, but was destitute of clothing. It was quite dry, and must have been there a long time. Nothing else was found, but from the appearance of the skull, and the presence of the plate and spoon, there could be no doubt that it was that of one of the Pole Star’s crew.

It was now resolved that they should proceed along the coast and examine every creek and bay for traces of the lost vessel.

“Oh, Bolton, my heart misgives me!” said Fred, as they drove along; “I fear that they have all perished.”

“Niver a bit sir,” said O’Riley in a sympathising tone, “yon chap must have died and been buried here be the crew as they wint past.”

“You forget that sailors don’t bury men under mounds of stone, with pewter plates and spoons beside them.”

O’Riley was silenced, for the remark was unanswerable.

“He may ha’ bin left or lost on the shore, and been found by the Esquimaux,” suggested Peter Grim.

“Is that not another tomb?” enquired one of the men, pointing towards an object which stood on the end of a point or cape towards which they were approaching.

Ere anyone could reply, their ears were saluted by the well-known bark of a pack of Esquimaux dogs. In another moment they dashed into the midst of a snow village, and were immediately surrounded by the excited natives. For some time no information could be gleaned from their interpreter, who was too excited to make use of his meagre amount of English. They observed, however, that the natives, although much excited, did not seem to be so much surprised at the appearance of white men amongst them as those were whom they had first met with near the ship. In a short time Meetuck apparently had expended all he had to say to his friends, and turned to make explanations to

Bolton in a very excited tone; but little more could be made out than that what he said had some reference to white men. At length, in desperation, he pointed to a large hut which seemed to be the principal one of the village, and, dragging the mate towards it, made signs to him to enter.

Bolton hesitated an instant.

“He wants you to see the chief of the tribe, no doubt,” said Fred; “you’d better go in at once.”

A loud voice shouted something in the Esquimaux language from within the hut. At the sound Fred’s heart beat violently, and pushing past the mate he crept through the tunnelled entrance and stood within. There was little furniture in this rude dwelling. A dull flame flickered in a stone lamp which hung from the roof, and revealed the figure of a large Esquimaux reclining on a couch of skins at the raised side of the hut.

The man looked up hastily as Fred entered, and uttered a few unintelligible words.

“Father!” cried Fred, gasping for breath, and springing forward.

Captain Ellice, for it was indeed he, started with apparent difficulty and pain into a sitting posture, and, throwing back his hood, revealed a face whose open, hearty, benignant expression shone through a coat of dark brown which long months of toil and exposure had imprinted on it. It was thin, however, and careworn, and wore an expression that seemed to be the result of long-continued suffering.

“Father!” he exclaimed in an earnest tone; “who calls me father?”

“Don’t you know me, Father?don’t you remember Fred?look at”

Fred checked himself, for the wild look of his father frightened him.

“Ah! these dreams,” murmured the old man, “I wish they did not come so”

Placing his hand on his forehead he fell backwards in a state of insensibility into the arms of his son.

Chapter Twenty.
Keeping it DownMutual ExplanationsDeathNew-Year’s Day.

It need scarcely be said that the sailors outside did not remain long in ignorance of the unexpected and happy discovery related in the last chapter. Bolton, who had crept in after Fred, with proper delicacy of feeling retired the

moment he found how matters stood, and left father and son to expend, in the privacy of that chamber of snow, those feelings and emotions which can be better imagined than described.

The first impulse of the men was to give three cheers, but Bolton checked them in the bud.

“No, no, lads. We must hold on,” he said in an eager but subdued voice. “Doubtless it would be pleasant to vent our feelings in a hearty cheer, but it would startle the old gentleman inside. Get along with you, and let us get ready a good supper.”

“Oh morther!” exclaimed O’Riley, holding on to his sides as if he believed what he said, “me biler’ll bust av ye don’t let me screech.”

“Squeeze down the safety-valve a bit longer, then,” cried Bolton, as they hurried along with the whole population to the outskirts of the village. “Now, then, ye may fire away; they won’t hear yeHuzza!”

A long enthusiastic cheer distantly burst from the sailors, and was immediately followed by a howl of delight from the Esquimaux, who capered round their visitors with uncouth gestures and grinning faces.

Entering one of the largest huts, preparations for supper were promptly begun. The Esquimaux happened to be well supplied with walrus flesh, so the lamps were replenished, and the hiss of the frying steaks and dropping fat speedily rose above all other sounds.

Meanwhile Fred and his father, having mutually recovered somewhat of their wonted composure, began to tell each other the details of their adventures since they last met, while the former prepared a cup of coffee and a steak for their mutual comfort.

“But, Father,” said Fred, busying himself at the lamp, “you have not yet told me how you came here, and what has become of the Pole Star, and how it was that one of your men came to be buried in the Esquimaux fashion, and how you got your leg broken?”

“Truly, Fred, I have not told you all that; and to give it you all in detail will afford us many a long hour of converse hereafter, if it please God, whose tenderness and watchful care of me has never failed. But I can give you a brief outline of it thus:

“I got into Baffin’s Bay and made a good fishing of it the first year, but was beset in the ice and compelled to spend two winters in these regions. The third

year we were liberated, and had almost got fairly on our homeward voyage, when a storm blew us to the north, and carried us up here. Then our good brig was nipped and went to the bottom, and all the crew were lost except myself and one man. We succeeded in leaping from one piece of loose ice to another until we reached the solid floe and gained the land, where we were kindly received by the Esquimaux. But poor Wilson did not survive long. His constitution had never been robust, and he died of consumption a week after we landed. The Esquimaux buried him after their own fashion, and, as I afterwards found, had buried a plate and a spoon along with him. These, with several other articles, had been washed ashore from the wreck. Since then I have been living the life of an Esquimaux, awaiting an opportunity of escape, either by a ship making its appearance or a tribe of natives travelling south. I soon picked up their language, and was living in comparative comfort when, during a sharp fight I chanced to have with a Polar bear, I fell and broke my leg. I have lain here for many months and have suffered much, Fred; but, thank God, I am now almost well, and can walk a little, though not yet without pain."

"Dear Father," said Fred, "how terribly you must have felt the want of kind hands to nurse you during those dreary months, and how lonely you must have been!"

It were impossible here to enter minutely into the details of all that Captain Ellice related to Fred during the next few days, while they remained together in the Esquimaux village. To tell of the dangers, the adventures, and the hairbreadth escapes that the crew of the Pole Star went through before the vessel finally went down would require a whole volume. We must pass it all over, and also the account of the few days that followed, during which sundry walrus were captured, and return to the Dolphin, to which Captain Ellice had been conveyed on the sledge, carefully wrapped up in deer-skins and tended by Fred.

A party of the Esquimaux accompanied them, and as a number of the natives from the other village had returned with Saunders and his men to the ship, the scene she presented, when all parties were united, was exceedingly curious and animated.

The Esquimaux soon built quite a little town of snow-huts all round the Dolphin, and the noise of traffic and intercourse was peculiarly refreshing to the ears of those who had long been accustomed to the death-like stillness of an Arctic winter. The beneficial effect of the change on men and dogs was instantaneous. Their spirits rose at once, and this, with the ample supply of fresh meat that had been procured, soon began to drive scurvy away.

There was one dark spot, however, in this otherwise pleasant sceneone impending event that cast a gloom over all. In his narrow berth in the cabin Joseph West lay dying. Scurvy had acted more rapidly on his delicate frame than had been expected. Despite Tom Singleton's utmost efforts and skill the fell disease gained the mastery, and it soon became evident that this hearty and excellent man was to be taken away from them.

During the last days of his illness Captain Ellice was his greatest comfort and his constant companion.

It was on Christmas-day that West died.

Next day the body of Joseph West was put in a plain deal coffin and conveyed to Store Island, where it was placed on the ground. They had no instruments that could penetrate the hard rock, so were obliged to construct a tomb of stones, after the manner of the Esquimaux, under which the coffin was laid and left in solitude.

New-year's Day came, and preparations were made to celebrate the day with the usual festivities. But the recent death had affected the crew too deeply to allow them to indulge in the unrestrained hilarity of that season. Prayers were read in the morning, and both Captain Guy and Captain Ellice addressed the men feelingly in allusion to their late shipmate's death and their own present position. A good dinner was also prepared, and several luxuries served out, among which were the materials for the construction of a large plum-pudding. But no grog was allowed, and they needed it not. As the afternoon advanced, stories were told, and even songs were sung, but these were of a quiet kind, and the men seemed, from an innate feeling of propriety, to suit them to the occasion. Old friends were recalled, and old familiar scenes described. The hearths of home were spoken of with a depth of feeling that showed how intense was the longing to be seated round them again, and future prospects were canvassed with keen interest and with hopeful voices. New year's Day came and went, and when it was gone the men of the Dolphin did not say, "What a jolly day it was!" They said little or nothing, but, long after, they thought of it as a bright spot in their dreary winter in the Bay of Mercyas a day in which they had enjoyed earnest, glad, and sober communings of heart.

Chapter Twenty One.
First Gleam of LightTrip to welcome the SunBears and Strange DiscoveriesO'Riley is RecklessFirst View of the Sun.

The wisest of men has told us that, "it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun," but only those who spend a winter in the Arctic regions can fully appreciate the import of that inspired saying.

It is absolutely essential to existence that the bright beams of the great luminary should fall on animal as well as plant. Most of the poor dogs died for want of this blessed light, and had it been much longer withheld, doubtless our navigators would have sunk also.

About the 20th of January a faint gleam of light on the horizon told of the coming day. It was hailed with rapture, and, long before the bright sun himself appeared on the southern horizon, the most of the men made daily excursions to the neighbouring hill-tops to catch sight of as much as possible of his faint rays. Day by day those rays expanded, and at last a sort of dawn enlightened a distant portion of their earth, which, faint though it was at first, had much the appearance in their eyes of a bright day. But time wore on, and real day appeared! The red sun rose in all its glory, showed a rim of its glowing disc above the frozen sea, and then sank, leaving a long gladsome smile of twilight behind. This great event happened on the 19th of February, and would have occurred sooner but for the high cliffs to the southward, which intervened between the ship and the horizon.

On the day referred to a large party was formed to go to the top of the cliffs at Red Snow Valley to welcome back the sun.

“There’s scarce a man left behind,” remarked Captain Guy, as they started on this truly joyous expedition.

“Only Mizzle, sir,” said Buzzby, slapping his hands together, for the cold was intense; “he said as how he’d stop and have dinner ready agin our return.”

There was a general laugh from the men, who knew that the worthy cook had other reasons for not goingnamely, his shortness of wind and his inveterate dislike to ascend hills.

“Come, Fred,” cried Captain Ellice, who had completely recovered from his accident, “I shall be quite jealous of your friend Singleton if you bestow so much of your company on him. Walk with me, sirrah, I command you, as I wish to have a chat.”

“You are unjust to me,” replied Fred, taking his father’s arm, and falling with him a little to the rear of the party; “Tom complains that I have quite given him up of late.”

“Och! isn’t it a purty sight,” remarked O’Riley to Mivins, “to see us all goin’ out like good little childers to see the sun rise of a beautiful mornin’ like this?”

“So it his,” answered Mivins, “but I wish it wasn’t quite so cold.”

It was indeed coldso cold that the men had to beat their hands together, and stamp their feet, and rush about like real children, in order to keep their bodies warm. This month of February was the coldest they had yet experienced. Several times the thermometer fell to the unexampled temperature of 75 degrees below zero, or 107 degrees below the freezing-point of water. When we remind our young readers that the thermometer in England seldom falls so low as zero, except in what we term weather of the utmost severity, they may imagineor, rather, they may try to imaginewhat 75 degrees below zero must have been.

It was not quite so cold as that upon this occasion, otherwise the men could not have shown face to it.

“Let’s have leap-frog,” shouted Davie; “we can jump along as well as walk along. Hooray! hup!”

The “hup” was rather an exclamation of necessity than of delight inasmuch as that it was caused by Davie coming suddenly down flat on the ice in the act of vainly attempting to go leap-frog over Mivins’s head.

“That’s your sort,” cried Amos Parr; “down with you, Buzzby.”

Buzzby obeyed, and Amos, being heavy and past the agile time of life, leaped upon, instead of over, his back, and there stuck.

“Not so high, lads,” cried Captain Guy. “Come, Mr Saunders, give us a back.”

“Faix, he’d better go on his hands an’ knees.”

“That’s it! over you go; hurrah, lads!”

In five minutes nearly the whole crew were panting from their violent exertions, and those who did not, or could not, join, panted as much from laughter. The desired result, however, was speedily gained. They were all soon in a glow of heat, and bade defiance to the frost.

An hour’s sharp climb brought the party almost to the brow of the hill, from which they hoped to see the sun rise for the first time for nearly five months. Just as they were about to pass over a ridge in the cliffs, Captain Guy, who had pushed on in advance with Tom Singleton, was observed to pause abruptly and make signals for the men to advance with caution. He evidently saw something unusual, for he crouched behind a rock and peeped over it. Hastening up as silently as possible, they discovered that a group of Polar bears were amusing themselves on the other side of the cliffs, within long gunshot. Unfortunately not one of the party had brought firearms. Intent only

on catching a sight of the sun, they had hurried off, unmindful of the possibility of their catching sight of anything else. They had not even a spear, and the few oak cudgels that some carried, however effectual they might have proved at Donnybrook, were utterly worthless there.

There were four large bears and a young one, and the gambols they performed were of the most startling as well as amusing kind. But that which interested and surprised the crew most was the fact that these bears were playing with barrels, and casks, and tent-poles, and sails! They were engaged in a regular frolic with these articles, tossing them up in the air, pawing them about, and leaping over them like kittens. In these movements they displayed their enormous strength several times. Their leaps, although performed with the utmost ease, were so great as to prove the iron nature of their muscles. They tossed the heavy casks, too, high in the air like tennis-balls; and in two instances, while the crew were watching them, dashed a cask in pieces with a slight blow of their paws. The tough canvas yielded before them like sheets of paper, and the havoc they committed was wonderful to behold.

“Most extraordinary!” exclaimed Captain Guy, after watching them for some time in silence. “I cannot imagine where these creatures can have got hold of such things. Were not the goods at Store Island all right this morning, Mr Bolton?”

“Yes, sir, they were.”

“Nothing missing from the ship!”

“No, sir, nothing.”

“It’s most unaccountable.”

“Captain Guy,” said O’Riley, addressing his commander with a solemn face, “haven’t ye more nor wance towld me the queer thing in the deserts they calls the mirage?”

“I have,” answered the captain with a puzzled look.

“An’ didn’t ye say there was something like it in the Polar seas, that made ye see flags, an’ ships, an’ things o’ that sort when there was no sich things there at all?”

“True, O’Riley, I did.”

“Faix, then, it’s my opinion that yon bears is a mirage, an’ the sooner we git out o’ their way the better.”

A smothered laugh greeted this solution of the difficulty.

“I think I can give a better explanationbegging your pardon, O’Riley,” said Captain Ellice, who had hitherto looked on with a sly smile. “More than a year ago, when I was driven past this place to the northward, I took advantage of a calm to land a supply of food, and a few stores and medicines, to be a stand-by in case my ship should be wrecked to the northward. Ever since the wreck actually took place I have looked forward to this cache of provisions as a point of refuge on my way south. As I have already told you, I have never been able to commence the southward journey, and now I don’t require these things, which is lucky, for the bears seem to have appropriated them entirely.”

“Had I known of them sooner, Captain,” said Captain Guy, “the bears should not have had a chance.”

“That accounts for the supply of tobacco and sticking-plaster we found in the bear’s stomach,” remarked Fred, laughing.

“True, boy, yet it surprises me that they succeeded in breaking into my cache, for it was made of heavy masses of stone, many of which required two and three men to lift them, even with the aid of handspikes.”

“What’s wrong with O’Riley?” said Fred, pointing to that eccentric individual, who was gazing intently at the bears, muttering between his teeth, and clenching his cudgel nervously.

“Shure, it’s a cryin’ shame,” he soliloquised in an undertone, quite unconscious that he was observed, “that ye should escape, ye villains; av’ I only had a musket nowbut I han’t. Arrah, av’ it was only a spear! Be the mortial! I think I could crack the skull o’ the small wan! Faix, then; I’ll try!”

At the last word, before anyone was aware of his intentions, this son of Erin, whose blood was now up, sprang down the cliffs towards the bears, flourishing his stick, and shouting wildly as he went. The bears instantly paused in their game, but showed no disposition to retreat.

“Come back, you madman!” shouted the captain; but the captain shouted in vain.

“Stop! halt! come back!” chorused the crew.

But O’Riley was deaf; he had advanced to within a few yards of the bears, and was rushing forward to make a vigorous attack on the little one.

“He’ll be killed!” exclaimed Fred in dismay.

“Follow me, men,” shouted the captain, as he leaped the ridge; “make all the noise you can.”

In a moment the surrounding cliffs were reverberating with the loud halloos and frantic yells of the men, as they burst suddenly over the ridge, and poured down upon the bears like a torrent of maniacs!

Bold though they were they couldn’t stand this. They turned tail and fled, followed by the disappointed howls of O’Riley, and also by his cudgel, which he hurled violently after them as he pulled up.

Having thus triumphantly put the enemy to flight the party continued their ascent of the hill and soon gained the summit.

“There it is!” shouted Fred, who, in company with Mivins, first crossed the ridge and tossed his arms in the air.

The men cheered loudly as they hurried up, and one by one emerged into a red glow of sunshine. It could not be termed warm, for it had no power in that frosty atmosphere, and only a small portion of the sun’s disc was visible. But his light was on every crag and peak around; and as the men sat down in groups, and, as it were, bathed in the sunshine, winking at the bright gleam of light with half-closed eyes, they declared that it felt warm, and wouldn’t hear anything to the contrary, although Saunders, true to his nature, endeavoured to prove to them that the infinitely small degree of heat imparted by such feeble rays could not by any possibility be felt except in imagination. But Saunders was outvoted. Indeed, under the circumstances, he had not a chance of proving his point; for the more warm the dispute became the greater was the amount of animal heat that was created, to be placed, falsely, to the credit of the sun.

Patience, however, is a virtue which is sure to meet with a reward. The point which Saunders failed to prove by argument was pretty well proved to everyone (though not admitted) by the agency of John Frost. That remarkably bitter individual nestled round the men as they sat sunning themselves, and soon compelled them to leap up and apply to other sources for heat. They danced about vigorously, and again took to leap-frog. Then they tried their powers at the old familiar games of home. Hop-step-and-jump raised the animal thermometer considerably; and the standing leap, running leap, and high leap sent it up many degrees. But a general race brought them almost to a summer temperature, and at the same time, most unexpectedly, secured to them a hare. This little creature, of which very few had yet been procured, darted in an evil hour out from behind a rock right in front of the men, who having begun the race for sport now continued it energetically for profit. A dozen sticks were hurled at the luckless hare, and one of these felled it to the

ground.

After this they returned home in triumph, keeping up all the way an animated dispute as to the amount of heat shed upon them by the sun, and upon that knotty question:

“Who killed the hare?”

Neither point was settled when they reached the Dolphin, and, we may add, for the sake of the curious reader, neither point is settled yet.

Chapter Twenty Two.
“The Arctic Sun”Rats! Rats! Rats!A Hunting-PartyOut on the FloesHardships.

Among the many schemes that were planned and carried out for lightening the long hours of confinement to their wooden home in the Arctic regions, was the newspaper started by Fred Ellice, and named, as we have already mentioned, The Arctic Sun.

It was so named because, as Fred stated in his first leading article, it was intended to throw light on many things at a time when there was no other sun to cheer them. We cannot help regretting that it is not in our power to present a copy of this well-thumbed periodical to our readers; but being of opinion that something is better than nothing, we transcribe the following extract as a specimen of the contributions from the forecastle. It was entitled

“John Buzzby’s Oppinyuns o’ Things in Gin’ral.”

“Mr Editer,As you was so good as to ax from me a contribootion to your waluable peeryoddical, I beg heer to stait that this heer article is intended as a gin’ral summery o’ the noos wots agoin’. Your reeders will be glad to no that of late the wether’s bin gittin’ colder, but they’ll be better pleased to no that before the middle o’ nixt sumer it’s likely to git a long chawk warmer. There’s a gin’ral complaint heer that Mivins has bin eatin’ the shuger in the pantry, an’ that’s wot’s makin’ it needfull to put us on short allowance. Davie Summers sais he seed him at it, and it’s a dooty the guvermint owes to the publik to have the matter investigated. It’s gin’rally expected, howsever, that the guvermint won’t trubble its hed with the matter. There’s bin an onusual swarmin’ o’ rats in the ship of late, an’ Davie Summers has had a riglar hunt after them. The lad has becum more than ornar expert with his bow an’ arrow, for he niver misses nowexceptin’ always, when he dusn’t hitan’ for the most part takes them on the pint on the snowt with his blunt-heded arow, which he drives inthe snowt, not the arow. There’s a gin’ral wish among the crew to no whether the north

pole is a pole or a dot. Mizzle sais it’s a dot and O’Riley swears (no, he don’t do that, for we’ve gin up swearin’ in the fog-sail); but he sais that it’s a real post ’bout as thick again as the main-mast, an’ nine or ten times as hy. Grim sais it’s nother wun thing nor anuther, but a hydeear that is sumhow or other a fact, but yit don’t exist at all. Tom Green wants to no if there’s any conexshun between it an’ the pole that’s connected with elections. In fact, we’re all at sea, in a riglar muz abut this, an’ as Dr Singleton’s a syentiffick man, praps he’ll give us a leadin’ article in your nixtso no more at present from

“Yours to command, John Buzzby.”

This contribution was accompanied with an outline illustration of Mivins eating sugar with a ladle in the pantry, and Davie Summers peeping in at the doorboth likenesses being excellent.

Some of the articles in the Arctic Sun were grave, and some were gay, but all of them were profitable, for Fred took care that they should be charged either with matter of interest or matter provocative of mirth. And, assuredly, no newspaper of similar calibre was ever looked forward to with such expectation, or read and reread with such avidity. It was one of the expedients that lasted longest in keeping up the spirits of the men.

The rat-hunting referred to in the foregoing “summery” was not a mere fiction of Buzzby’s brain. It was a veritable fact. Notwithstanding the extreme cold of this inhospitable climate, the rats in the ship increased to such a degree that at last they became a perfect nuisance. Nothing was safe from their attacks; whether substances were edible or not, they were gnawed through and ruined, and their impudence, which seemed to increase with their numbers, at last exceeded all belief. They swarmed everywhereunder the stove, about the beds, in the lockers, between the sofa-cushions, amongst the moss round the walls, and inside the boots and mittens (when empty) of the men. And they became so accustomed to having missiles thrown at them that they acquired to perfection that art which Buzzby described as “keeping one’s weather-eye open.”

You couldn’t hit one if you tried. If your hand moved towards an object with which you intended to deal swift destruction, the intruder paused and turned his sharp eyes towards you as if to say: “What! going to try it again?come, then, here’s a chance for you.” But when you threw, at best you could only hit the empty space it had occupied the moment before. Or if you seized a stick, and rushed at the enemy in wrath, it grinned fiercely, showed its long white teeth, and then vanished with a fling of its tail that could be construed into nothing but an expression of contempt.

At last an expedient was hit upon for destroying these disagreeable inmates. Small bows and arrows were made, the latter having heavy, blunt heads, and with these the men slaughtered hundreds. Whenever anyone was inclined for a little sport he took up his bow and arrows, and, retiring to a dark corner of the cabin, watched for a shot. Davie Summers acquired the title of Nimrod, in consequence of his success in this peculiar field.

At first the rats proved a capital addition to the dogs' meals, but at length some of the men were glad to eat them, especially when fresh meat failed altogether, and scurvy began its assaults. White or Arctic foxes, too, came about the ship, sometimes in great numbers, and proved an acceptable addition to their fresh provisions; but at one period all these sources failed, and the crew were reduced to the utmost extremity, having nothing to eat except salt provisions. Notwithstanding the cheering influence of the sun, the spirits of the men fell as their bodily energies failed. Nearly two-thirds of the ship's company were confined to their berths. The officers retained much of their wonted health and vigour, partly in consequence, no doubt, of their unwearied exertions in behalf of others. They changed places with the men at last, owing to the force of circumstancesministering to their wants, drawing water, fetching fuel, and cooking their food,carrying out, in short, the divine command, "by love serve one another."

During the worst period of their distress a party was formed to go out upon the floes in search of walrus.

"If we don't get speedy relief," remarked Captain Guy to Tom Singleton in reference to this party, "some of us will die. I feel certain of that. Poor Buzzby seems on his last legs, and Mivins is reduced to a shadow."

The doctor was silent, for the captain's remark was too true.

"You must get up your party at once, and set off after breakfast, Mr Bolton," he added, turning to the first mate. "Who can accompany you?"

"There's Peter Grim, sir, he's tough yet, and not much affected by scurvy, and Mr Saunders, I think, may"

"No," interrupted the doctor, "Saunders must not go. He does not look very ill, and I hope is not, but I don't like some of his symptoms."

"Well, Doctor, we can do without him. There's Tom Green and O'Riley. Nothing seems able to bring down O'Riley. Then there's"

"There's Fred Ellice," cried Fred himself, joining the group; "I'll go with you if you'll take me."

“Most happy to have you, sir; our healthy hands are very short, but we can muster sufficient, I think.”

The captain suggested Amos Parr and two or three more men, and then dismissed his first mate to get ready for an immediate start.

“I don’t half like your going, Fred,” said his father. “You’ve not been well lately, and hunting on the floes, I know from experience, is hard work.”

“Don’t fear for me, Father; I’ve quite recovered from my recent attack, which was but slight after all, and I know full well that those who are well must work as long as they can stand.”

“Ho, lads, look alive there! are you ready?” shouted the first mate down the hatchway.

“Ay, ay, sir!” replied Grim, and in a few minutes the party were assembled on the ice beside the small sledge, with their shoulder-belts on, for most of the dogs were either dead or dying of that strange complaint to which allusion has been made in a previous chapter.

They set out silently, but ere they had got a dozen yards from the ship Captain Guy felt the impropriety of permitting them thus to depart.

“Up, lads, and give them three cheers,” he cried, mounting the ship’s side and setting the example.

A hearty, generous spirit, when vigorously displayed, always finds a ready response from human hearts. The few sailors who were on deck at the time, and one or two of the sick men who chanced to put their heads up the hatchway, rushed to the side, waved their mittensin default of capsand gave vent to three hearty British cheers. The effect on the drooping spirits of the hunting-party was electrical. They pricked up like chargers that had felt the spur, wheeled round, and returned the cheer with interest. It was an apparently trifling incident, but it served to lighten the way, and make it seem less dreary for many a long mile.

“I’m tired of it entirely,” cried O’Riley, sitting down on a hummock, on the evening of the second day after setting out on the hunt; “here we is, two days out, and not a sign o’ life nowhere.”

“Come, don’t give in,” said Bolton cheerfully, “we’re sure to fall in with a walrus to-day.”

“I think so,” cried Fred; “we have come so far out upon the floes that there

must be open water near."

"Come on, then," cried Peter Grim; "don't waste time talking."

Thus urged, O'Riley rose, and, throwing his sledge-strap over his shoulder, plodded on wearily with the rest.

Their provisions were getting low now, and it was felt that if they did not soon fall in with walrus or bears they must return as quickly as possible to the ship in order to avoid starving. It was, therefore, a matter of no small satisfaction that, on turning the edge of an iceberg, they discovered a large bear walking leisurely towards them. To drop their sledge-lines and seize their muskets was the work of a moment. But unfortunately, long travelling had filled the pans with snow, and it required some time to pick the touch-holes clear. In this extremity Peter Grim seized a hatchet and ran towards it, while O'Riley charged it with a spear. Grim delivered a tremendous blow at its head with his weapon, but his intention was better than his aim, for he missed the bear and smashed the corner of a hummock of ice. O'Riley was more successful. He thrust the spear into the animal's shoulder, but the shoulder-blade turned the head of the weapon, and caused it to run along at least three feet, just under the skin. The wound, although not fatal, was so painful that Bruin uttered a loud roar of disapproval, wheeled round, and ran away!an act of cowardice so unusual on the part of a Polar bear that the whole party were taken by surprise. Several shots were fired after him, but he soon disappeared among the ice-hummocks, having fairly made off with O'Riley's spear.

The disappointment caused by this was great; but they had little time to think of it, for, soon after, a stiff breeze of wind sprang up, which freshened into a gale, compelling them to seek the shelter of a cluster of icebergs, in the midst of which they built a snow-hut. Before night a terrific storm was raging, with the thermometer 40 degrees below zero. The sky became black as ink; drift whirled round them in horrid turmoil; and the wild blast came direct from the north, over the frozen sea, shrieking and howling in its strength and fury.

All that night and the next day it continued. Then it ceased; and for the first time that winter a thaw set in, so that ere morning their sleeping-bags and socks were thoroughly wetted. This was of short duration, however. In a few hours the frost set in again as intense as ever, converting all their wet garments and bedding into hard cakes of ice. To add to their misfortunes their provisions ran out, and they were obliged to abandon the hut and push forward towards the ship with the utmost speed. Night came on them while they were slowly toiling through the deep drifts that the late gale had raised, and to their horror they found they had wandered out of their way, and were still but a short distance from their snow-hut. In despair they returned to pass the night in it,

and, spreading their frozen sleeping-bags on the snow, they lay down, silent and supperless, to rest till morning.

Chapter Twenty Three.
Unexpected ArrivalsThe Rescue-PartyLost and FoundReturn to the Ship.

The sixth night after the hunting-party had left the ship, Grim and Fred Ellice suddenly made their appearance on board. It was quite dark, and the few of the ship's company who were able to quit their berths were seated round the cabin at their meagre evening meal.

"Hallo, Fred!" exclaimed Captain Ellice, as his son staggered rather than walked in, and sank down on a locker. "What's wrong, boy? where are the rest of you?"

Fred could not answer; neither he nor Grim were able to utter a word at first. It was evident that they laboured under extreme exhaustion and hunger. A mouthful of hot soup administered by Tom Singleton rallied them a little, however.

"Our comrades are lost, I fear."

"Lost!" exclaimed Captain Guy. "How so? Speak, my boy; but hold, take another mouthful before you speak. Where did you leave them, say you?"

Fred looked at the captain with a vacant stare. "Out upon the ice to the north; but, I say, what a comical dream I've had!" Here he burst into a loud laugh. Poor Fred's head was evidently affected, so his father and Tom carried him to his berth.

All this time Grim had remained seated on a locker, swaying to and fro like a drunken man, and paying no attention to the numerous questions that were put to him by Saunders and his comrades.

"This is bad!" exclaimed Captain Guy, pressing his hand on his forehead.

"A search must be made," suggested Captain Ellice. "It's evident that the party have broken down out on the floes, and Fred and Grim have been sent to let us know."

"I know it," answered Captain Guy; "a search must be made, and that instantly, if it is to be of any use; but in which direction are we to go is the question. These poor fellows cannot tell us. 'Out on the ice to the north' is a wide word. Fred, Fred, can you not tell us in which direction we ought to go to search for them?"

“Yes, far out on the floesamong hummocksfar out,” murmured Fred half-unconsciously.

“We must be satisfied with that. Now, Mr Saunders, assist me to get the small sledge fitted out. I’ll go to look after them myself.”

“An’ I’ll go with ’ee, sir,” said the second mate promptly.

“I fear you are hardly able.”

“No fear o’ me, sir. I’m better than ’ee think.”

“I must go too,” added Captain Ellice; “it is quite evident that you cannot muster a party without me.”

“That’s impossible,” interrupted the doctor; “your leg is not strong enough, nearly, for such a trip; besides, my dear sir, you must stay behind to perform my duties, for the ship can’t do without a doctor, and I shall go with Captain Guy, if he will allow me.”

“That he won’t,” cried the captain. “You say truly the ship cannot be left without a doctor. Neither you nor my friend Ellice shall leave the ship with my permission. But don’t let us waste time talking. Come, Summers and Mizzle, you are well enough to join, and Meetuck, you must be our guide; look alive and get yourselves ready.”

In less than half an hour the rescue party were equipped and on their way over the floes. They were six in allone of the freshest among the crew having volunteered to join those already mentioned.

It was a very dark night, and bitterly cold, but they took nothing with them except the clothes on their backs, a supply of provisions for their lost comrades, their sleeping-bags, and a small leather tent. The captain also took care to carry with them a flask of brandy.

The colossal bergs, which stretched like well-known landmarks over the sea, were their guides at first, but after travelling ten hours without halting they had passed the greater number of those with which they were familiar, and entered upon an unknown region. Here it became necessary to use the utmost caution. They knew that the lost men must be within twenty miles of them, but they had no means of knowing the exact spot, and any footprints that had been made were now obliterated. In these circumstances Captain Guy had to depend very much on his own sagacity.

Clambering to the top of a hummock he observed a long stretch of level floe to

the northward.

“I think it likely,” he remarked to Saunders, who had accompanied him, “that they may have gone in that direction. It seems an attractive road among the chaos of ice-heaps.”

“I’m no sure o’ that,” objected Saunders; “yonder’s a pretty clear road away to the west, maybe they took that.”

“Perhaps they did, but as Fred said they had gone far out on the ice to the north, I think it likely they’ve gone in that direction.”

“Maybe yer right sir, and maybe yer wrang,” answered Saunders, as they returned to the party. As this was the second mate’s method of intimating that he felt that he ought to give in (though he didn’t give in, and never would give in, absolutely), the captain felt more confidence in his own opinion.

“Now, Meetuck, keep your eyes open,” he added, as they resumed their rapid march.

After journeying on for a considerable distance, the men were ordered to spread out over the neighbouring ice-fields, in order to multiply the chances of discovering tracks; but there seemed to be some irresistible power of attraction which drew them gradually together again, however earnestly they might try to keep separate. In fact, they were beginning to be affected by the long-continued march and the extremity of the cold.

This last was so great that constant motion was absolutely necessary in order to prevent them from freezing. There was no time allowed for restlife and death were in the scale. Their only hope lay in a continuous and rapid advance, so as to reach the lost men ere they should freeze or die of starvation.

“Holo! look ’eer!” shouted Meetuck, as he halted and went down on his knees to examine some marks on the snow.

“These are tracks,” cried Captain Guy eagerly. “What think you, Saunders?”

“They look like it.”

“Follow them up, Meetuck. Go in advance, my lad, and let the rest of you scatter again.”

In a few minutes there was a cry heard, and as the party hastened towards the spot whence it came, they found Davie Summers pointing eagerly to a little snow-hut in the midst of a group of bergs.

With hasty steps they advanced towards it and the captain, with a terrible misgiving at heart, crept in.

“Ah, then, is it yerself, darlint?” were the first words that greeted him.

A loud cheer from those without told that they heard and recognised the words. Immediately two of them crept in, and, striking a light, kindled a lamp, which revealed the careworn forms of their lost comrades stretched on the ground in their sleeping-bags. They were almost exhausted for want of food, but otherwise they were uninjured.

The first congratulations over, the rescue party immediately proceeded to make arrangements for passing the night. They were themselves little better than those whom they had come to save, having performed an uninterrupted march of eighteen hours without food or drink.

It was touching to see the tears of joy and gratitude that filled the eyes of the poor fellows, who had given themselves up for lost as they watched the movements of their comrades while they prepared food for them; and the broken, fitful conversation was mingled strangely with alternate touches of fun and deep feeling, indicating the conflicting emotions that struggled in their breasts.

“I knowed ye would come, Captain; bless you, sir,” said Amos Parr in an unsteady voice.

“Come! Av coorse ye knowed it,” cried O’Riley energetically. “Och, but don’t be long wid the mate, darlints, me stummik’s shut up intirely.”

“There won’t be room for us all here, I’m afraid,” remarked Bolton.

This was true. The hut was constructed to hold six, and it was impossible that ten could sleep in it, although they managed to squeeze in.

“Never mind that,” cried the captain. “Here, take a drop of soup; gently, not too much at a time.”

“Ah, then, it’s cruel of ye, it is, to give me sich a small taste!”

It was necessary, however, to give men in their condition a “small taste” at first, so O’Riley had to rest content. Meanwhile the rescue party supped heartily, and, after a little more food had been administered to the half-starved men, preparations were made for spending the night. The tent was pitched, and the sleeping-bags spread out on the snow, then Captain Guy offered up fervent thanks to God for his protection thus far, and prayed shortly but earnestly for deliverance from their dangerous situation, after which they all lay down and

slept soundly till morningor at least as soundly as could be expected with a temperature at 55 degrees below zero.

Next morning they prepared to set out on their return to the ship. But this was no easy task. The exhausted men had to be wrapped up carefully in their blankets, which were sewed closely round their limbs, then packed in their sleeping-bags and covered completely up, only a small hole being left opposite their mouths to breathe through, and after that they were lashed side by side on the small sledge. The larger sledge, with the muskets, ammunition, and spare blankets, had to be abandoned. Then the rescue party put their shoulders to the tracking-belts, and away they went briskly over the floes.

But the drag was a fearfully heavy one for men who, besides having walked so long and so far on the previous day, were, most of them, much weakened by illness and very unfit for such laborious work. The floes, too, were so rugged that they had frequently to lift the heavy sledge and its living load over deep rents and chasms which, in circumstances less desperate, they would have scarcely ventured to do. Work as they would, however, they could not make more than a mile an hour, and night overtook them ere they reached the level floes. But it was of the utmost importance that they should continue to advance, so they pushed forward until a breeze sprang up that pierced them through and through.

Fortunately there was a bright moon in the sky, which enabled them to pick their way among the hummocks. Suddenly, without warning, the whole party felt an alarming failure of their energies. Captain Guy, who was aware of the imminent danger of giving way to this feeling, cheered the men to greater exertion by word and voice, but failed to rouse them. They seemed like men walking in their sleep.

“Come, Saunders, cheer up, man,” cried the captain, shaking the mate by the arm; but Saunders stood still, swaying to and fro like a drunken man. Mizzle begged to be allowed to sleep, if it were only for two minutes, and poor Davie Summers deliberately threw himself down on the snow, from which, had he been left, he would never more have risen.

The case was now desperate. In vain the captain shook and buffeted the men. They protested that they did not feel cold“they were quite warm, and only wanted a little sleep.” He saw that it was useless to contend with them, so there was nothing left for it but to pitch the tent.

This was done as quickly as possible, though with much difficulty, and the men were unlashed from the sledge and placed within it. The others then crowded in, and, falling down beside each other, were asleep in an instant. The

excessive crowding of the little tent was an advantage at this time, as it tended to increase their animal heat. Captain Guy allowed them to sleep only two hours, and then roused them in order to continue the journey; but short though the period of rest was, it proved sufficient to enable the men to pursue their journey with some degree of spirit. Still, it was evident that their energies had been overtaxed, for when they neared the ship next day, Tom Singleton, who had been on the lookout, and advanced to meet them, found that they were almost in a state of stupor, and talked incoherently; sometimes giving utterance to sentiments of the most absurd nature, with expressions of the utmost gravity.

Meanwhile good news was brought them from the ship. Two bears and a walrus had been purchased from the Esquimaux, a party of whomsleek, fat, oily, good-humoured, and hairywere encamped on the lee side of the Dolphin, and busily engaged in their principal and favourite occupationeating!

Chapter Twenty Four.
Winter endsThe First InsectPreparations for DepartureNarrow EscapeCutting outOnce more AfloatShip on FireCrew take to the Boats.

Winter passed away, with its darkness and its frost, and, happily, with its sorrows; and summerbright, glowing summercame at last to gladden the heart of man and beast in the Polar regions.

We have purposely omitted to make mention of spring, for there is no such season, properly so called, within the Arctic Circle. Winter usually terminates with a gushing thaw, and summer then begins with a blaze of fervent heat. Not that the heat is really so intense as compared with that of southern climes, but the contrast is so great that it seems as though the torrid zones had rushed towards the Pole.

About the beginning of June there were indications of the coming heat. Fresh water began to trickle from the rocks, and streamlets commenced to run down the icebergs. Soon everything became moist, and a marked change took place in the appearance of the ice-belt, owing to the pools that collected on it everywhere and overflowed.

Seals now became more numerous in the neighbourhood, and were frequently killed near the atluks, or holes; so that fresh meat was secured in abundance, and the scurvy received a decided check. Reindeer, rabbits, and ptarmigan, too, began to frequent the bay, so that the larder was constantly full, and the mess-table presented a pleasing varietyrats being no longer the solitary dish of fresh meat at every meal. A few small birds made their appearance from the southward, and these were hailed as harbingers of the coming summer.

One day O’Riley sat on the taffrail, basking in the warm sun, and drinking in health and gladness from its beams. He had been ill, and was now convalescent. Buzzby stood beside him.

“I’ve bin thinkin’,” said Buzzby, “that we don’t half know the blessin’s that are given to us in this here world till we’ve had ’em taken away. Look, now, how we’re enjoyin’ the sun an’ the heat just as if it wos so much gold!”

“Goold!” echoed O’Riley in a tone of contempt; “faix, I niver thought so little o’ goold before, let me tell ye. Goold can buy many a thing, it can, but it can’t buy sunshine. Hallo! what’s this!”

O’Riley accompanied the question with a sudden snatch of his hand.

“Look here, Buzzby! Have a care, now! jist watch the opening o’ my fist.”

“Wot is it?” enquired Buzzby, approaching, and looking earnestly at his comrade’s clenched hand with some curiosity.

“There he comes! Now, then; not so fast, ye spalpeen!”

As he spoke, a small fly, which had been captured, crept out from between his fingers, and sought to escape. It was the first that had visited these frozen regions for many, many months, and the whole crew were summoned on deck to meet it, as if it were an old and valued friend.

“Let it go, poor thing?” cried half a dozen of the men, gazing at the little prisoner with a degree of interest that cannot be thoroughly understood by those who have not passed through experiences similar to those of our Arctic voyagers.

“Ay, don’t hurt it, poor thing! You’re squeezin’ it too hard!” cried Amos Parr.

“Squaazing it! no, then, I’m not. Go, avic, an’ me blessin’ go wid ye.”

The big, rough hand opened, and the tiny insect, spreading its gossamer wings, buzzed away into the bright atmosphere, where it was soon lost to view.

“Rig up the ice-saws, Mr Bolton, set all hands at them, and get out the powder-canisters,” cried Captain Guy, coming hastily on deck.

“Ay, ay, sir,” responded the mate. “All hands to the ice-saws! Look alive, boys! Ho! Mr Saunders! where’s Mr Saunders?”

“Here I am,” answered the worthy second mate in a quiet voice.

“Oh, you’re there? get up some powder, Mr Saunders, and a few canisters.”

There was a heartiness in the tone and action with which these orders were given and obeyed that proved they were possessed of more than ordinary interest; as, indeed, they were, for the time had now come for making preparations for cutting the ship out of winter-quarters, and getting ready to take advantage of any favourable opening in the ice that might occur.

“Do you hope to effect much?” enquired Captain Ellice of Captain Guy, who stood at the gangway watching the men as they leaped over the side, and began to cut holes with ice chisels preparatory to fixing the saws and powder-canisters.

“Not much,” replied the captain; “but a little in these latitudes is worth fighting hard for, as you are well aware. Many a time have I seen a ship’s crew strain and heave on warps and cables for hours together, and only gain a yard by all their efforts; but many a time, also, have I seen a single yard of headway save a ship from destruction.”

“True,” rejoined Captain Ellice; “I have seen a little of it myself. There is no spot on earth, I think, equal to the Polar regions for bringing out into bold relief two great and apparently antagonistic truthsnamely, man’s urgent need of all his powers to accomplish the work of his own deliverance, and man’s utter helplessness and entire dependence on the sovereign will of God.”

“When shall we sink the canisters, sir?” asked Bolton, coming up and touching his hat.

“In an hour, Mr Bolton; the tide will be full then, and we shall try what effect a blast will have.”

“My opeenion is,” remarked Saunders, who passed at the moment with two large bags of gunpowder under his arms, “that it’ll have no effect at a’. It’ll just loosen the ice roond the ship.”

The captain smiled as he said: “That is all the effect I hope for, Mr Saunders. Should the outward ice give way soon, we shall then be in a better position to avail ourselves of it.”

As Saunders predicted, the effect of powder and saws was merely to loosen and rend the ice-tables in which the Dolphin was imbedded; but deliverance was coming sooner than any of those on board expected. That night a storm arose, which, for intensity of violence, equalled, if it did not surpass, the severest gales they had yet experienced. It set the great bergs of the Polar seas in motion, and these moving mountains of ice slowly and majestically began

their voyage to southern climes, crashing through the floes, overturning the hummocks, and ripping up the ice-tables with quiet, but irresistible momentum. For two days the war of ice continued to rage, and sometimes the contending forces, in the shape of huge tongues and corners of bergs, were forced into the Bay of Mercy, and threatening swift destruction to the little craft, which was a mere atom that might have been crushed and sunk and scarcely missed in such a wild scene.

At one time a table of ice was forced out of the water and reared up, like a sloping wall of glass, close to the stern of the Dolphin, where all the crew were assembled with ice-poles ready to do their utmost; but their feeble efforts could have availed them nothing had the slowly-moving mass continued its onward progress.

“Lower away the quarter-boat,” cried the captain, as the sheet of ice six feet thick came grinding down towards the starboard quarter.

Buzzby, Grim, and several others sprang to obey, but, before they could let go the fall-tackles, the mass of ice rose suddenly high above the deck, over which it projected several feet, and caught the boat. In another moment the timbers yielded; the thwarts sprang out or were broken across, and slowly, yet forcibly, as a strong hand might crush an egg-shell, the boat was squeezed flat against the ship’s side.

“Shove, lads; if it comes on we’re lost,” cried the captain, seizing one of the long poles with which the men were vainly straining every nerve and muscle. They might as well have tried to arrest the progress of a berg. On it came, and crushed in the starboard quarter bulwarks. Providentially at that moment it grounded and remained fast; but the projecting point that overhung them broke off and fell on the deck with a crash that shook the good ship from stem to stern. Several of the men were thrown violently down, but none were seriously hurt in this catastrophe.

When the storm ceased, the ice out in the strait was all in motion, and that round the ship had loosened so much that it seemed as if the Dolphin might soon get out into open water and once more float upon its natural element. Every preparation, therefore, was made; the stores were reshipped from Store Island; the sails were shaken out, and those of them that had been taken down were bent on to the yards. Tackle was overhauled, and, in short, everything was done that was possible under the circumstances. But a week passed away ere they succeeded in finally warping out of the bay into the open sea beyond.

It was a lovely morning when this happy event was accomplished. Before the tide was quite full, and while they were waiting until the command to heave

on the warps should be given, Captain Guy assembled the crew for morning prayers in the cabin. Having concluded, he said:

“My lads, through the great mercy of Heaven we have been all, except one, spared through the trials and anxieties of a long and dreary winter, and are now, I trust, about to make our escape from the ice that has held us fast so long. It becomes me at such a time to tell you that, if I am spared to return home, I shall be able to report that every man in this ship has done his duty. You have never flinched in the hour of danger, and never grumbled in the hour of trial. Only one manour late brave and warm-hearted comrade, Joseph Westhas fallen in the struggle. For the mercies that have never failed us, and for our success in rescuing my gallant friend, Captain Ellice, we ought to feel the deepest gratitude. We have need, however, to pray for a blessing on the labours that are yet before us, for you are well aware that we shall probably have many a struggle with the ice before we are once more afloat on blue water. And now, lads, away with you on deck, and man the capstan, for the tide is about full.”

The capstan was manned, and the hawsers were hove taut. Inch by inch the tide rose, and the Dolphin floated. Then a lusty cheer was given, and Amos Parr struck up one of those hearty songs intermingled with “Ho!” and “Yo heave ho!” that seem to be the life and marrow of all nautical exertion. At last the good ship forged ahead, and, boring through the loose ice, passed slowly out of the Bay of Mercy.

“Do you know I feel quite sad at quitting this dreary spot?” said Fred to his father, as they stood gazing backward over the taffrail. “I could not have believed that I should have become so much attached to it.”

“We become attached to any spot, Fred, in which incidents have occurred to call forth, frequently, our deeper feelings. These rocks and stones are intimately associated with many events that have caused you joy and sorrow, hope and fear, pain and happiness. Men cherish the memory of such feelings, and love the spots of earth with which they are associated.”

“Ah, Father, yonder stands one stone, at least, that calls forth feelings of sorrow.”

Fred pointed, as he spoke, to Store Island, which was just passing out of view. On this lonely spot the men had raised a large stone over the grave of Joseph West. O’Riley, whose enthusiastic temperament had caused him to mourn over his comrade more, perhaps, than any other man in the ship, had carved the name and date of his death in rude characters on the stone. It was a conspicuous object on the low island, and every eye in the Dolphin was fixed

on it as they passed. Soon the point of rock, that had sheltered them so long from many a westerly gale, intervened and shut it out from view for ever.

A week of uninterrupted fair wind and weather had carried the Dolphin far to the south of their dreary wintering-ground, and all was going well, when the worst of all disasters befell the shipshe caught fire! How it happened no one could tell. The smoke was first seen rising suddenly from the hold. Instantly the alarm was spread.

“Firemen to your posts!” shouted the captain. “Man the water-buckets; steady, men, no hurry. Keep order.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” was the short, prompt response, and the most perfect order was kept. Every command was obeyed instantly, with a degree of vigour that is seldom exhibited save in cases of life and death.

Buzzby was at the starboard, and Peter Grim at the larboard gangway, while the men stood in two rows, extending from each to the main hatch, up which ever-thickening clouds of dark smoke were rolling. Bucket after bucket of water was passed along and dashed into the hold, and everything that could be done was done, but without effect. The fire increased. Suddenly a long tongue of flame issued from the smoking cavern, and lapped round the mast and rigging with greedy eagerness.

“There’s no hope,” said Captain Ellice in a low voice, laying his hand gently on Captain Guy’s shoulder.

The captain did not reply, but gazed with an expression of the deepest regret, for one moment, at the work of destruction.

Next instant he sprang to the falls of the larboard quarterboat.

“Now, lads,” he cried energetically, “get out the boats. Bring up provisions, Mr Bolton, and a couple of spare sails. Mr Saunders, see to the ammunition and muskets. Quick, men. The cabin will soon be too hot to hold you.”

Setting the example, the captain sprang below, followed by Fred and Tom Singleton, who secured the charts, a compass, chronometer, and quadrant; also the log-book and the various journals and records of the voyage. Captain Ellice also did active service, and, being cool and self-possessed, he recollected and secured several articles which were afterwards of the greatest use, and which, but for him, would in such a trying moment have probably been forgotten.

Meanwhile the two largest boats in the ship were lowered. Provisions, masts,

sails, and oars, etcetera, were thrown in. The few remaining dogs, among whom were Dumps and Poker, were also embarked, and the crew, hastily leaping in, pushed off. They were not a moment too soon. The fire had reached the place where the gunpowder was kept and, although there was not a great quantity of it, there was enough, when it exploded, to burst open the deck. The wind, having free ingress, fanned the fire into a furious blaze, and in a few moments the Dolphin was wrapped in flames from stem to stern. It was a little after sunset when the fire was discovered; in two hours later the good ship was burned to the water's edge; then the waves swept in, and, while they extinguished the fire, they sank the blackened hull, leaving the two crowded boats floating in darkness on the bosom of the ice-laden sea.

Chapter Twenty Five.
Escape to UppernavikLetter from HomeMeetuck's GrandmotherDumps and Poker again.

For three long weeks the shipwrecked mariners were buffeted by winds and waves in open boats, but at last they were guided in safety through all their dangers and vicissitudes to the colony of Uppernavik. Here they found several vessels on the point of setting out for Europe, one of which was bound for England; and in this vessel the crew of the Dolphin resolved to ship.

Nothing of particular interest occurred at this solitary settlement except one thing, but that one thing was a great event, and deserves very special notice. It was nothing less than the receipt of a letter by Fred from his cousin Isobel! Fred and Isobel, having been brought up for several years together, felt towards each other like brother and sister.

Fred received the letter from the pastor of the settlement shortly after landing, while his father and the captain were on board the English brig making arrangements for their passage home. He could scarcely believe his eyes when he beheld the well-known hand, but, having at last come to realise the fact that he actually held a real letter in his hand, he darted behind one of the curious, primitive cottages to read it. Here he was met by a squad of inquisitive natives; so, with a gesture of impatience, he rushed to another spot; but he was observed and followed by half a dozen Esquimaux boys, and in despair he sought refuge in the small church near which he chanced to be. He had not been there a second, however, when two old women came in, and, approaching him, began to scan him with critical eyes. This was too much, so Fred thrust the letter into his bosom, darted out, and was instantly surrounded by a band of natives, who began to question him in an unknown tongue. Seeing that there was no other resource, Fred turned him round and fled towards the mountains at a pace that defied pursuit, and, coming to a halt in

the midst of a rocky gorge that might have served as an illustration of what chaos was, he sat him down behind a big rock to peruse Isobel's letter.

Having read it, he re-read it; having re-read it, he read it over again. Having read it over again, he meditated a little, exclaiming several times emphatically: "My darling Isobel," and then he read bits of it here and there; having done which, he read the other bits, and so got through it again. As the letter was a pretty long one it took him a considerable time to do all this; then it suddenly occurred to him that he had been thus selfishly keeping it all to himself instead of sharing it with his father, so he started up and hastened back to the village, where he found old Mr Ellice in earnest confabulation with the pastor of the place. Seizing his parent by the arm, Fred led him into a room in the pastor's house, and, looking round to make sure that it was empty, he sought to bolt the door, but the door was a primitive one and had no bolt, so Fred placed a huge old-fashioned chair against it, and, sitting down therein, while his father took a seat opposite, he unfolded the letter, and, yet once again, read it through.

The letter was about twelve months old, and ran thus:

"Grayton, 25th July.

"My Darling Fred,

"It is now two months since you left us, and it seems to me two years. Oh, how I do wish that you were back! When I think of the terrible dangers that you may be exposed to amongst the ice my heart sinks, and I sometimes fear that we shall never see you or your dear father again. But you are in the hands of our Father in heaven, dear Fred, and I never cease to pray that you may be successful and return to us in safety. Dear, good old Mr Singleton told me yesterday that he had an opportunity of sending to the Danish settlements in Greenland, so I resolved to write, though I very much doubt whether this will ever find you in such a wild far-off land.

"Oh, when I think of where you are, all the romantic stories I have ever read of Polar regions spring up before me, and you seem to be the hero of them all. But I must not waste my paper thus. I know you will be anxious for news. I have very little to give you, however. Good old Mr Singleton has been very kind to us since you went away. He comes constantly to see us, and comforts dear Mamma very much. Your friend, Dr Singleton, will be glad to hear that he is well and strong. Tell my friend Buzzby that his wife sends her 'compliments'. I laugh while I write the word! Yes, she actually sends er 'compliments' to her husband. She is a very stern but a really excellent woman. Mamma and I visit her frequently when we chance to be in the village. Her two boys are the finest little fellows I ever saw. They are both so

like each other that we cannot tell which is which when they are apart, and both are so like their father that we can almost fancy we see him, when looking at either of them.

“The last day we were there, however, they were in disgrace, for Johnny had pushed Freddy into the washing-tub, and Freddy, in revenge, had poured a jug of treacle over Johnny’s head! I am quite sure that Mrs Buzzby is tired of being a widowas she calls herselfand will be very glad when her husband comes back. But I must reserve chit-chat to the end of my letter, and first give you a minute account of all your friends.”

Here followed six pages of closely-written quarto, which, however interesting they might be to those concerned, cannot be expected to afford much entertainment to our readers, so we will cut Isobel’s letter short at this point.

“Cap’n’s ready to go aboord, sir,” said O’Riley, touching his cap to Captain Ellice while he was yet engaged in discussing the letter with his son.

“Very good.”

“An’, plaaze sir, av ye’ll take the throuble to look in at Mrs Meetuck in passin’, it’ll do yer heart good, it will.”

“Very well, we’ll look in,” replied the captain as he quitted the house of the worthy pastor.

The personage whom O’Riley chose to style Mrs Meetuck was Meetuck’s grandmother. That old lady was an Esquimaux whose age might be algebraically expressed as an unknown quantity. She lived in a boat turned upside down, with a small window in the bottom of it, and a hole in the side for a door. When Captain Ellice and Fred looked in, the old woman, who was a mere mass of bones and wrinkles, was seated on a heap of moss beside a fire, the only chimney to which was a hole in the bottom of the boat. In front of her sat her grandson, Meetuck, and on a cloth spread out at her feet were displayed all the presents with which that good hunter had been loaded by his comrades of the Dolphin. Meetuck’s mother had died many years before, and all the affection in his naturally warm heart was transferred to, and centred upon, his old grandmother. Meetuck’s chief delight in the gifts he received was in sharing them, as far as possible, with the old woman. We say as far as possible, because some things could not be shared with her, such as a splendid new rifle, and a silver-mounted hunting-knife and powder-horn, all of which had been presented to him by Captain Guy over and above his wages, as a reward for his valuable services. But the trinkets of every kind which had been given to him by the men were laid at the feet of the old woman, who looked at everything in blank amazement yet with a smile on her wrinkled visage that

betokened much satisfaction. Meetuck's oily countenance beamed with delight as he sat puffing his pipe in his grandmother's face. This little attention, we may remark, was paid designedly, for the old woman liked it, and the youth knew that.

"They have enough to make them happy for the winter," said Captain Ellice, as he turned to leave the hut.

"Faix, they have. There's only two things wantin' to make it complate."

"What are they?" enquired Fred.

"Murphies and a pig, sure. That's all they need."

"Wots come o' Dumps and Poker?" enquired Buzzby, as they reached the boat.

"Oh, I quite forgot them!" cried Fred; "stay a minute, I'll run up and find them. They can't be far off."

For some time Fred searched in vain. At last he bethought him of Meetuck's hut as being a likely spot in which to find them. On entering he found the couple as he had left them, the only difference being that the poor old woman seemed to be growing sleepy over her joys.

"Have you seen Dumps or Poker anywhere?" enquired Fred.

Meetuck nodded and pointed to a corner where, comfortably rolled up on a mound of dry moss, lay Dumps; Poker, as usual, making use of him as a pillow.

"Thems is go bed," said Meetuck.

"Thems must get up then and come aboard," cried Fred, whistling.

At first the dogs, being sleepy, seemed indisposed to move, but at last they consented, and, following Fred to the beach, were soon conveyed aboard the ship.

Next day Captain Guy and his men bade Meetuck and the kind, hospitable people of Uppernavik farewell, and, spreading their canvas to a fair breeze, set sail for England.

Chapter Twenty Six.
The returnThe surpriseBuzzby's Sayings and DoingsThe NarrativeFighting Battles o'er againConclusion.

Once again we are on the end of the quay at Grayton. As Fred stands there, all that has occurred during the past year seems to him but a vivid dream.

Captain Guy is there, and Captain Ellice, and Buzzby, and Mrs Buzzby too, and the two little Buzzbys also, and Mrs Bright, and Isobel, and Tom Singleton, and old Mr Singleton, and the crew of the wrecked Dolphin, and, in short, the “whole world”of that part of the country.

It was a great day for Grayton, that. It was a wonderful dayquite an indescribable day; but there were also some things about it that made Captain Ellice feel somehow that it was a mysterious day, for, while there were hearty congratulations, and much sobbing for joy on the part of Mrs Bright, there were also whisperings which puzzled him a good deal.

“Come with me, brother,” said Mrs Bright at length, taking him by the arm, “I have to tell you something.”

Isobel, who was on the watch, joined them, and Fred also went with them towards the cottage.

“Dear brother,” said Mrs Bright, “IIOh, Isobel, tell him! I cannot.”

“What means all this mystery?” said the captain in an earnest tone, for he felt that they had something serious to communicate.

“Dear Uncle,” said Isobel, “you remember the time when the pirates attacked”

She paused, for her uncle’s look frightened her.

“Go on, Isobel,” he said quickly.

“Your dear wife, Uncle, was not lost at that time”

Captain Ellice turned pale. “What mean you, girl? How came you to know this?” Then a thought flashed across him. Seizing Isobel by the shoulder he gasped, rather than said:

“Speak quickisis she alive?”

“Yes, dear Uncle, she”

The captain heard no more. He would have fallen to the ground had not Fred, who was almost as much overpowered as his father, supported him. In a few minutes he recovered, and he was told that Alice was alivein Englandin the cottage. This was said as they approached the door. Alice was aware of her husband’s arrival. In another moment husband, and wife, and son were reunited.

Scenes of intense joy cannot be adequately described, and there are meetings in this world which ought not to be too closely touched upon. Such was the present. We will therefore leave Captain Ellice and his wife and son to pour out the deep feelings of their hearts to each other, and follow the footsteps of honest John Buzzby, as he sailed down the village with his wife and children, and a host of admiring friends in tow.

Buzzby's feelings had been rather powerfully stirred up by the joy of all around, and a tear would occasionally tumble over his weather-beaten cheek, and hang at the point of his sunburnt, and oft frost-bitten nose, despite his utmost efforts to subdue such outrageous demonstrations.

"Sit down, John, dear," said Mrs Buzzby in kind but commanding tones, when she got her husband fairly into his cottage, the little parlour of which was instantly crowded to excess. "Sit down, John, dear, and tell us all about it."

"Wot! begin to spin the whole yarn o' the voyage afore I've had time to say 'How d'ye do?'" exclaimed Buzzby, at the same time grasping his two uproarious sons, who had, the instant he sat down, rushed at his legs like two miniature midshipmen, climbed up them as if they had been two masts, and settled on his knees as if they had been their own favourite cross-trees!

"No, John, not the yarn of the voyage," replied his wife, while she spread the board before him with bread and cheese and beer, "but tell us how you found old Captain Ellice, and where, and what's comed of the crew."

"Werry good, then here goes!"

Buzzby was a man of action. He screwed up his weather-eye (the one next his wife, of course, that being the quarter from which squalls might be expected) and began a yarn which lasted the better part of two hours.

It is not to be supposed that Buzzby spun it off without interruption. Besides the questions that broke in upon him from all quarters, the two Buzzbys junior scrambled, as far as was possible, into his pockets, pulled his whiskers as if they had been hoisting a main-sail therewith, and, generally, behaved in such an obstreperous manner as to render coherent discourse all but impracticable. He got through with it, however, and then Mrs Buzzby intimated her wish, pretty strongly, that the neighbours should vacate the premises; which they did, laughingly, pronouncing Buzzby to be a "trump", and his better half a "true blue."

"Good-day, old chap," said the last who made his exit; "tiller's fixed aginnailed amidships? eh!"

“Hard and fast,” replied Buzzby with a broad grin, as he shut the door and returned to the bosom of his family.

Two days later a grand feast was given at Mrs Bright’s cottage, to which all the friends of the family were invited to meet with Captain Ellice and those who had returned from their long and perilous voyage. It was a joyful gathering, that, and glad and grateful hearts were there.

Two days later still, and another feast was given. On this occasion Buzzby was the host, and Buzzby’s cottage was the scene. It was a joyful meeting, too, and a jolly one to boot, for O’Riley was there, and Peter Grim, and Amos Parr, and David Mizzle, and Mivinsin short the entire crew of the lost Dolphin,captain, mates, surgeon, and all. Fred and his father were also there, and old Mr Singleton, and a number of other friends, so that all the rooms in the house had to be thrown open, and even then Mrs Buzzby had barely room to move. It was on this occasion that Buzzby related to his shipmates how Mrs Ellice had escaped from drowning on the night they were attacked by pirates on board the Indiaman. He took occasion to relate the circumstances just before the “people from the house” arrived, and as the reader may perhaps prefer Buzzby’s account to ours, we give it as it was delivered.

“You see, it happened this way,” began Buzzby.

“Hand us a coal, Buzzby, to light my pipe, before ye begin,” said Peter Grim.

“Ah, then, howld yer tongue, Blunderbore!” cried O’Riley, handing the glowing coal demanded, with as much nonchalance as if his fingers were made of cast-iron.

“Well, ye see,” resumed Buzzby, “when poor Mrs Ellice wos pitched overboard, as I seed her with my own two eyes”

“Stop, Buzzby,” said Mivins, “’ow was ’er ’ead at the time?”

“Shut up!” cried several of the men; “go on, Buzzby.”

“Well, I think her ’ead was sou’-west, if it warn’t nor’-east. Anyhow it was pintin’ somewhere or other round the compass. But, as I wos sayin’, when Mrs Ellice struck the water (an’ she told me all about it herself, ye must know) she sank, and then she comed up, and didn’t know how it wos, but she caught hold of an oar that wos floatin’ close beside her, and screamed for help, but no help came, for it was dark, and the ship had disappeared, so she gave herself up for lost, but in a little the oar struck agin a big piece o’ the wreck o’ the pirate’s boat, and she managed to clamber upon it, and lay there, a’most dead with

cold, till mornin'. The first thing she saw when day broke forth wos a big ship, bearin' right down on her, and she wos just about run down when one o' the men observed her from the bow.

"'Hard a-port!' roared the man.

"'Port it is,' cried the man at the wheel, an' round went the ship like a duck, jist missin' the bit of wreck as she passed. A boat wos lowered, and Mrs Ellice wos took aboard. Well, she found that the ship wos bound for the Sandwich Islands, and as they didn't mean to touch at any port in passin', Mrs Ellice had to go on with her. Misfortins don't come single, howsiver. The ship was wrecked on a coral reef, and the crew had to take to their boats, w'ich they did, an' got safe to land, but the land they got to wos an out-o'-the-way island among the Feejees, and a spot where ships never come, so they had to make up their minds to stop there."

"I thought," said Amos Parr, "that the Feejees were cannibals, and that whoever was wrecked or cast ashore on their coasts was killed and roasted, and eat up at once."

"So ye're right," rejoined Buzzby; "but Providence sent the crew to one o' the islands that had bin visited by a native Christian missionary from one o' the other islands, and the people had gin up some o' their worst practices, and wos thinkin' o' turnin' over a new leaf altogether. So the crew wos spared, and took to livin' among the natives, quite comfortable like. But they soon got tired and took to their boats agin, and left. Mrs Ellice, however, determined to remain and help the native Christians, till a ship should pass that way. For three years nothin' but canoes hove in sight o' that lonesome island; then, at last a brig came, and cast anchor offshore. It wos an Australian trader that had been blown out o' her course on her way to England, so they took poor Mrs Ellice aboard, and brought her homeand that's how it wos."

Buzzby's outline, although meagre, is so comprehensive that we do not think it necessary to add a word. Soon after he had concluded, the guests of the evening came in, and the conversation became general.

"Buzzby's jollification", as it was called in the village, was long remembered as one of the most interesting events that had occurred for many years. One of the chief amusements of the evening was the spinning of long yarns about the incidents of the late voyage, by men who could spin them well.

Their battles in the Polar Seas were all fought o'er again. The wondering listeners were told how Esquimaux were chased and captured; how walrus were lanced and harpooned; how bears were speared and shot; how long and weary journeys were undertaken on foot over immeasurable fields of ice and

snow; how icebergs had crashed around their ship, and chains had been snapped asunder, and tough anchors had been torn from the ground, or lost; how schools had been set agoing and a theatre got up; and how, provisions having failed, rats were eatenand eaten, too, with gusto. All this and a great deal more was told on that celebrated nightsometimes by one, sometimes by another, and sometimes, to the confusion of the audience, by two or three at once, and, not unfrequently, to the still greater confusion of story-tellers and audience alike, the whole proceedings were interrupted by the outrageous yells and turmoil of the two indomitable young Buzzbys, as they romped, in reckless joviality, with Dumps and Poker. But at length the morning light broke up the party, and stories of the World of Ice came to an end.

And now, reader, our tale is told. But we cannot close without a parting word in regard to those with whom we have held intercourse so long.

It must not be supposed that from this date everything in the affairs of our various friends flowed on in a tranquil, uninterrupted course. This world is a battle-field, on which no warrior finds rest until he dies; and yet, to the Christian warrior on that field, the hour of death is the hour of victory. “Change” is written in broad letters on everything connected with Time; and he who would do his duty well, and enjoy the greatest possible amount of happiness here, must seek to prepare himself for every change. Men cannot escape the general law. The current of their particular stream may long run smooth, but, sooner or later, the rugged channel and the precipice will come. Some streams run quietly for many a league, and only at the last are troubled. Others burst from their very birth on rocks of difficulty, and rush throughout their course in tortuous, broken channels.

So was it with the actors in our story. Our hero’s course was smooth. Having fallen in love with his friend Tom Singleton’s profession, he studied medicine and surgery, became an M.D., and returned to practise in Grayton, which was a flourishing sea-port, and, during the course of Fred’s career, extended considerably. Fred also fell in love with a pretty young girl in a neighbouring town, and married her. Tom Singleton also took up his abode in Grayton, there being, as he said, “room for two”. Ever since Tom had seen Isobel on the end of the quay, on the day when the Dolphin set sail for the Polar regions, his heart had been taken prisoner. Isobel refused to give it back unless he, Tom, should return the heart which he had stolen from her. This he could not do, so it was agreed that the two hearts should be tied together, and they two should be constituted joint guardians of both. In short, they were married, and took Mrs Bright to live with them, not far from the residence of old Mr Singleton, who was the fattest and jolliest old gentleman in the place, and the very idol of dogs and boys, who loved him to distraction.

Captain Ellice, having had, as he said, “more than his share of the sea,” resolved to live on shore, and, being possessed of a moderately comfortable income, he purchased Mrs Bright’s cottage on the green hill that overlooked the harbour and the sea. Here he became celebrated for his benevolence, and for the energy with which he entered into all the schemes that were devised for the benefit of the town of Grayton. Like Tom Singleton and Fred, he became deeply interested in the condition of the poor, and had a special weakness for poor old women, which he exhibited by searching up, and doing good to, every poor old woman in the parish. Captain Ellice was also celebrated for his garden, which was a remarkably fine one; for his flag-staff, which was a remarkably tall and magnificent one; and for his telescope, which constantly protruded from his drawing-room window, and pointed in the direction of the sea.

As for the othersCaptain Guy continued his career at sea, as commander of an East Indiaman. He remained stout and true-hearted to the last, like one of the oak timbers of his own good ship.

Bolton, Saunders, Mivins, Peter Grim, Amos Parr, and the rest of them, were scattered in a few years, as sailors usually are, to the four quarters of the globe. O’Riley alone was heard of again. He wrote to Buzzby, “by manes of the ritin’ he had larn’d aboord the Dolfin,” informing him that he had forsaken the “say” and become a small farmer near Cork. He had plenty of murphies and also a pigthe latter “bein’,” he said, “so like the wan that belonged to his owld grandmother that he thought it must be the same wan comed alive agin, or its darter.”

And Buzzbypoor Buzzbyhe, also, gave up the sea, much against his will, by command of his wife, and took to miscellaneous work, of which there was plenty for an active man in a seaport like Grayton. His rudder, poor man, was again (and this time permanently) lashed amidships, and whatever breeze Mrs Buzzby chanced to blow, his business was to sail right before it. The two little Buzzbys were the joy of their father’s heart. They were genuine little true-blues, both of them, and went to sea the moment their legs were long enough, and came home, voyage after voyage, with gifts of curiosities and gifts of money to their worthy parents.

Dumps resided during the remainder of his days with Captain Ellice, and Poker dwelt with Buzzby. These truly remarkable dogs kept up their attachment to each other to the end. Indeed, as time passed by, they drew closer and closer together, for Poker became more sedate, and, consequently, a more suitable companion for his ancient friend. The dogs formed a connecting-link between the Buzzby and Ellice familiesconstantly reminding each of the other’s existence, by the daily interchange of visits.

Fred and Tom soon came to be known as skilful doctors. Together they went through life respected by all who knew themeach year as it passed cementing closer and closer that undying friendship which had first started into being in the gay season of boyhood, and had bloomed and ripened amid the adventures, dangers, and vicissitudes of the World of Ice.