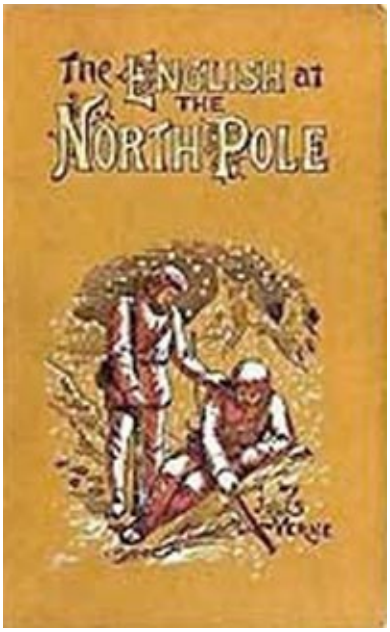
The English at the North Pole




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The English at the North Pole, by Jules Verne

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THE ENGLISH AT THE NORTH POLE

PART I OF THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN HATTERAS

BY

JULES VERNE

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CHAPTER I

THE "FORWARD"

"To-morrow, at low tide, the brig *Forward*, Captain K. Z----, Richard Shandon mate, will start from New Prince's Docks for an unknown destination."

The foregoing might have been read in the *Liverpool Herald* of April 5th, 1860. The departure of a brig is an event of little importance for the most commercial port in England. Who would notice it in the midst of vessels of all sorts of tonnage and nationality that six miles of docks can hardly contain? However, from daybreak on the 6th of April a considerable crowd covered the wharfs of New Prince's Docks--the innumerable companies of sailors of the town seemed to have met there. Workmen from the neighbouring wharfs had left their work, merchants their dark counting-houses, tradesmen their shops. The different-coloured omnibuses that ran along the exterior wall of the docks brought cargoes of spectators at every moment; the town seemed to have but one pre-occupation, and that was to see the *Forward* go out.

The *Forward* was a vessel of a hundred and seventy tons, charged with a screw and steam-engine of a hundred and twenty horse-power. It might easily have been confounded with the other brigs in the port. But though it offered nothing curious to the eyes of the public, connoisseurs remarked certain peculiarities in it that a sailor cannot mistake. On board the *Nautilus*, anchored at a little distance, a group of sailors were hazarding a thousand conjectures about the destination of the *Forward*.

"I don't know what to think about its masting," said one; "it isn't usual for steamboats to have so much sail."

"That ship," said a quartermaster with a big red face--"that ship will have to depend more on her masts than her engine, and the topsails are the biggest because the others will be often useless. I haven't got the slightest doubt that the *Forward* is destined for the Arctic or Antarctic seas, where the icebergs stop the wind more than is good for a brave and solid ship."

"You must be right, Mr. Cornhill," said a third sailor. "Have you noticed her stern, how straight it falls into the sea?"

"Yes," said the quartermaster, "and it is furnished with a steel cutter as sharp as a razor and capable of cutting a three-decker in two if the *Forward* were thrown across her at top speed."

"That's certain," said a Mersey pilot; "for that 'ere vessel runs her fourteen knots an hour with her screw. It was marvellous to see her cutting the tide when she made her trial trip. I believe you, she's a quick un."

"The canvas isn't intricate either," answered Mr. Cornhill; "it goes straight before the wind, and can be managed by hand. That ship is going to try the Polar seas, or my name isn't what it is. There's something else--do you see the wide helm-port that the head of her helm goes through?"

"It's there, sure enough," answered one; "but what does that prove?"

"That proves, my boys," said Mr. Cornhill with disdainful satisfaction, "that you don't know how to put two and two together and make it four; it proves that they want to be able to take off the helm when they like, and you know it's a manoeuvre that's often necessary when you have ice to deal with."

"That's certain," answered the crew of the *Nautilus*.

"Besides," said one of them, "the way she's loaded confirms Mr. Cornhill's opinion. Clifton told me. The *Forward* is victualled and carries coal enough for five or six years. Coals and victuals are all its cargo, with a stock of woollen garments and sealskins."

"Then," said the quartermaster, "there is no more doubt on the matter; but you, who know Clifton, didn't he tell you anything about her destination?"

"He couldn't tell me; he doesn't know; the crew was engaged without knowing. He'll only know where he's going when he gets there."

"I shouldn't wonder if they were going to the devil," said an unbeliever: "it looks like it."

"And such pay," said Clifton's friend, getting warm--"five times more than the ordinary pay. If it hadn't been for that, Richard Shandon wouldn't have found a soul to go with him. A ship with a queer shape, going nobody knows where, and looking more like not coming back than anything else, it wouldn't have suited

this child."

"Whether it would have suited you or not," answered Cornhill, "you couldn't have been one of the crew of the *Forward*."

"And why, pray?"

"Because you don't fulfil the required conditions. I read that all married men were excluded, and you are in the category, so you needn't talk. Even the very name of the ship is a bold one. The *Forward*--where is it to be forwarded to? Besides, nobody knows who the captain is."

"Yes, they do," said a simple-faced young sailor.

"Why, you don't mean to say that you think Shandon is the captain of the *Forward*?" said Cornhill.

"But----" answered the young sailor--

"Why, Shandon is commander, and nothing else; he's a brave and bold sailor, an experienced whaler, and a jolly fellow worthy in every respect to be the captain, but he isn't any more captain than you or I. As to who is going to command after God on board he doesn't know any more than we do. When the moment has come the true captain will appear, no one knows how nor where, for Richard Shandon has not said and hasn't been allowed to say to what quarter of the globe he is going to direct his ship."

"But, Mr. Cornhill," continued the young sailor, "I assure you that there is someone on board who was announced in the letter, and that Mr. Shandon was offered the place of second to."

"What!" said Cornhill, frowning, "do you mean to maintain that the *Forward* has a captain on board?"

"Yes, Mr. Cornhill."

"Where did you get your precious information from?"

"From Johnson, the boatswain."

"From Johnson?"

"Yes, sir."

"Johnson told you so?"

"He not only told me so, but he showed me the captain."

"He showed him to you!" said Cornhill, stupefied. "And who is it, pray?"

"A dog."

"What do you mean by a dog?"

"A dog on four legs."

Stupefaction reigned amongst the crew of the *Nautilus*. Under any other circumstances they would have burst out laughing. A dog captain of a vessel of a hundred and seventy tons burden! It was enough to make them laugh. But really the *Forward* was such an extraordinary ship that they felt it might be no laughing matter, and they must be sure before they denied it. Besides, Cornhill himself didn't laugh.

"So Johnson showed you the new sort of captain, did he?" added he, addressing the young sailor, "and you saw him?"

"Yes, sir, as plainly as I see you now."

"Well, and what do you think about it?" asked the sailors of the quartermaster.

"I don't think anything," he answered shortly. "I don't think anything, except that the *Forward* is a ship belonging to the devil, or madmen fit for nothing but Bedlam."

The sailors continued silently watching the *Forward*, whose preparations for departure were drawing to an end; there was not one of them who pretended that Johnson had only been laughing at the young sailor. The history of the dog had already made the round of the town, and amongst the crowd of spectators many a one looked out for the dog-captain and believed him to be a supernatural animal. Besides, the *Forward* had been attracting public attention for some

months past. Everything about her was marvellous; her peculiar shape, the mystery which surrounded her, the incognito kept by the captain, the way Richard Shandon had received the proposition to direct her, the careful selection of the crew, her unknown destination, suspected only by a few--all about her was strange.

To a thinker, dreamer, or philosopher nothing is more affecting than the departure of a ship; his imagination plays round the sails, sees her struggles with the sea and the wind in the adventurous journey which does not always end in port; when in addition to the ordinary incidents of departure there are extraordinary ones, even minds little given to credulity let their imagination run wild.

So it was with the *Forward*, and though the generality of people could not make the knowing remarks of Quartermaster Cornhill, it did not prevent the ship forming the subject of Liverpool gossip for three long months. The ship had been put in dock at Birkenhead, on the opposite side of the Mersey. The builders, Scott and Co., amongst the first in England, had received an estimate and detailed plan from Richard Shandon; it informed them of the exact tonnage, dimensions, and store room that the brig was to have. They saw by the details given that they had to do with a consummate seaman. As Shandon had considerable funds at his disposal, the work advanced rapidly, according to the recommendation of the owner. The brig was constructed of a solidity to withstand all tests; it was evident that she was destined to resist enormous pressure, for her ribs were built of teak-wood, a sort of Indian oak, remarkable for its extreme hardness, and were, besides, plated with iron. Sailors asked why the hull of a vessel made so evidently for resistance was not built of sheet-iron like other steamboats, and were told it was because the mysterious engineer had his own reasons for what he did.

Little by little the brig grew on the stocks, and her qualities of strength and delicacy struck connoisseurs. As the sailors of the *Nautilus* had remarked, her stern formed a right angle with her keel; her steel prow, cast in the workshop of R. Hawthorn, of Newcastle, shone in the sun and gave a peculiar look to the brig, though otherwise she had nothing particularly warlike about her. However, a 16-pounder cannon was installed on the forecastle; it was mounted on a pivot, so that it might easily be turned in any direction; but neither the cannon nor the stern, steel-clad as they were, succeeded in looking warlike.

On the 5th of February, 1860, this strange vessel was launched in the midst of an immense concourse of spectators, and the trial trip was perfectly successful. But if the brig was neither a man-of-war, a merchant vessel, nor a pleasure yacht--for a pleasure trip is not made with six years' provisions in the hold--what was it? Was it a vessel destined for another Franklin expedition? It could not be, because in 1859, the preceding year, Captain McClintock had returned from the Arctic seas, bringing the certain proof of the loss of the unfortunate expedition. Was the *Forward* going to attempt the famous North-West passage? What would be the use? Captain McClure had discovered it in 1853, and his lieutenant, Creswell, was the first who had the honour of rounding the American continent from Behring's Straits to Davis's Straits. Still it was certain to competent judges that the *Forward* was prepared to face the ice regions. Was it going to the South Pole, farther than the whaler Weddell or Captain James Ross? But, if so, what for?

The day after the brig was floated her engine was sent from Hawthorn's foundry at Newcastle. It was of a hundred and twenty horse-power, with oscillating cylinders, taking up little room; its power was considerable for a hundred-and-seventy-ton brig, with so much sail, too, and of such fleetness. Her trial trips had left no doubt on that subject, and even the boatswain, Johnson, had thought right to express his opinion to Clifton's friend--

"When the *Forward* uses her engine and sails at the same time, her sails will make her go the quickest."

Clifton's friend did not understand him, but he thought anything possible of a ship commanded by a dog. After the engine was installed on board, the stowage of provisions began. This was no slight work, for the vessel was to carry enough for six years. They consisted of dry and salted meat, smoked fish, biscuit, and flour; mountains of tea and coffee were thrown down the shafts in perfect avalanches. Richard Shandon presided over the management of this precious cargo like a man who knows what he is about; all was stowed away, ticketed, and numbered in perfect order; a very large provision of the Indian preparation called pemmican, which contains many nutritive elements in a small volume, was also embarked. The nature of the provisions left no doubt about the length of the cruise, and the sight of the barrels of lime-juice, lime-drops, packets of mustard, grains of sorrel and *cochlearia*, all antiscorbutic, confirmed the opinion on the destination of the brig for the ice regions; their influence is so necessary in Polar navigation. Shandon had doubtless received particular instructions about this part of the cargo, which, along with the medicine-chest, he attended to

particularly.

Although arms were not numerous on board, the powder-magazine overflowed. The one cannon could not pretend to use the contents. That gave people more to think about. There were also gigantic saws and powerful instruments, such as levers, leaden maces, handsaws, enormous axes, etc., without counting a considerable quantity of blasting cylinders, enough to blow up the Liverpool Customs--all that was strange, not to say fearful, without mentioning rockets, signals, powder-chests, and beacons of a thousand different sorts. The numerous spectators on the wharfs of Prince's Docks admired likewise a long mahogany whaler, a tin *pirogue* covered with gutta-percha, and a certain quantity of halkett-boats, a sort of indiarubber cloaks that can be transformed into canoes by blowing in their lining. Expectation was on the *qui vive*, for the *Forward* was going out with the tide.

CHAPTER II

AN UNEXPECTED LETTER

The letter received by Richard Shandon, eight months before, ran as follows:--

"ABERDEEN,

"August 2nd, 1859.

"To Mr. Richard Shandon,

"Liverpool.

"SIR,--I beg to advise you that the sum of sixteen thousand pounds sterling has been placed in the hands of Messrs. Marcuart and Co., bankers, of Liverpool. I join herewith a series of cheques, signed by me, which will allow you to draw upon the said Messrs. Marcuart for the above-mentioned sum. You do not know me, but that is of no consequence. I know you: that is sufficient. I offer you the place of second on board the brig *Forward* for a voyage that may be long and perilous. If you agree to my conditions you will receive a salary of 500 pounds, and all through the voyage it will be augmented one-tenth at the end of each year. The *Forward* is not yet in existence. You must have it built so as to be ready for sea at the beginning of April, 1860, at the latest. Herewith is a detailed plan and estimate. You will take care that it is scrupulously followed. The ship is to be built by Messrs. Scott and Co., who will settle with you. I particularly recommend you the choice of the *Forward's* crew; it will be composed of a captain, myself, of a second, you, of a third officer, a boatswain, two engineers, an ice pilot, eight sailors, and two others, eighteen men in all, comprising Dr. Clawbonny, of this town, who will introduce himself to you when necessary. The *Forward's* crew must be composed of Englishmen without incumbrance; they should be all bachelors and sober--for no spirits, nor even beer, will be allowed on board--ready to undertake anything, and to bear with anything. You will give the preference to men of a sanguine constitution, as they carry a greater amount of animal heat. Offer them five times the usual pay, with an increase of one-tenth for each year of service. At the end of the voyage five hundred pounds will be placed at the disposition of each, and two thousand at yours. These funds will be placed with Messrs. Marcuart and Co. The voyage will be long and difficult, but

honourable, so you need not hesitate to accept my conditions. Be good enough to send your answer to K. Z., Poste Restante, Goteborg, Sweden.

"P.S.--On the 15th of February next you will receive a large Danish dog, with hanging lips, and tawny coat with black stripes. You will take it on board and have it fed with oaten bread, mixed with tallow grease. You will acknowledge the reception of the said dog to me under the same initials as above, Poste Restante, Leghorn, Italy.

"The captain of the *Forward* will introduce himself to you when necessary. When you are ready to start you will receive further instructions.

"THE CAPTAIN OF THE 'FORWARD,'

"K. Z."

CHAPTER III

DR. CLAWBONNY

Richard Shandon was a good sailor; he had been commander of whalers in the Arctic seas for many years, and had a wide reputation for skill. He might well be astonished at such a letter, and so he was, but astonished like a man used to astonishments. He fulfilled, too, all the required conditions: he had no wife, children, or relations; he was as free as a man could be. Having no one to consult, he went straight to Messrs. Marcuart's bank.

"If the money is there," he said to himself, "I'll undertake the rest."

He was received by the firm with all the attention due to a man with sixteen thousand pounds in their safes. Sure of that fact, Shandon asked for a sheet of letter-paper, and sent his acceptance in a large sailor's hand to the address indicated. The same day he put himself in communication with the Birkenhead shipbuilders, and twenty-four hours later the keel of the *Forward* lay on the stocks in the dockyard.

Richard Shandon was a bachelor of forty, robust, energetic, and brave, three sailor-like qualities, giving their possessor confidence, vigour, and *sang-froid*. He was reputed jealous and hard to be pleased, so he was more feared than loved by his sailors. But this reputation did not increase the difficulty of finding a crew, for he was known to be a clever commander. He was afraid that the mystery of the enterprise would embarrass his movements, and he said to himself, "The best thing I can do is to say nothing at all; there are sea-dogs who will want to know the why and the wherefore of the business, and as I know nothing myself, I can't tell them. K. Z. is a queer fish, but after all he knows me, and has confidence in me; that's enough. As to the ship, she will be a handsome lass, and my name isn't Richard Shandon if she is not destined for the Frozen Seas. But I shall keep that to myself and my officers."

Upon which Richard Shandon set about recruiting his crew upon the conditions of family and health exacted by the captain. He knew a brave fellow and capital sailor, named James Wall. Wall was about thirty, and had made more than one trip to the North Seas. Shandon offered him the post of third officer, and he accepted blindly; all he cared for was to sail, as he was devoted to his profession.

Shandon told him and Johnson (whom he engaged as boatswain) all he knew about the business.

"Just as soon go there as anywhere else," answered Wall. "If it's to seek the North-West passage, many have been and come back."

"Been, yes; but come back I don't answer for," said Johnson; "but that's no reason for not going."

"Besides, if we are not mistaken in our conjectures," said Shandon, "the voyage will be undertaken under good conditions. The *Forward's* a bonny lass, with a good engine, and will stand wear and tear. Eighteen men are all the crew we want."

"Eighteen men?" said Johnson. "That's just the number that the American, Kane, had on board when he made his famous voyage towards the North Pole."

"It's a singular fact that there's always some private individual trying to cross the sea from Davis's Straits to Behring's Straits. The Franklin expeditions have already cost England more than seven hundred and sixty thousand pounds without producing any practical result. Who the devil means to risk his fortune in such an enterprise?"

"We are reasoning now on a simple hypothesis," said Shandon. "I don't know if we are really going to the Northern or Southern Seas. Perhaps we are going on a voyage of discovery. We shall know more when Dr. Clawbonny comes; I daresay he will tell us all about it."

"There's nothing for it but to wait," answered Johnson; "I'll go and hunt up some solid subjects, captain; and as to their animal heat, I guarantee beforehand you can trust me for that."

Johnson was a valuable acquisition; he understood the navigation of these high latitudes. He was quartermaster on board the *Phoenix*, one of the vessels of the Franklin expedition of 1853. He was witness of the death of the French lieutenant Bellot, whom he had accompanied in his expedition across the ice. Johnson knew the maritime population of Liverpool, and started at once on his recruiting expedition. Shandon, Wall, and he did their work so well that the crew was complete in the beginning of December. It had been a difficult task; many, tempted by the high pay, felt frightened at the risk, and more than one enlisted

boldly who came afterwards to take back his word and enlistment money, dissuaded by his friends from undertaking such an enterprise. All of them tried to pierce the mystery, and worried Shandon with questions; he sent them to Johnson.

"I can't tell you what I don't know," he answered invariably; "you'll be in good company, that's all I can tell you. You can take it or leave it alone."

And the greater number took it.

"I have only to choose," added the boatswain; "such salary has never been heard of in the memory of sailors, and then the certainty of finding a handsome capital when we come back. Only think: it's tempting enough."

"The fact is," answered the sailor, "it is tempting; enough to live on till the end of one's days."

"I don't hide from you," continued Johnson, "that the cruise will be long, painful, and perilous; that is formally stated in our instructions, and you ought to know what you undertake; you will very likely be required to attempt all that it is possible for human beings to do, and perhaps more. If you are the least bit frightened, if you don't think you may just as well finish yonder as here, you'd better not enlist, but give way to a bolder man."

"But, Mr. Johnson," continued the sailor, for the want of something better to say, "at least you know the captain?"

"The captain is Richard Shandon till another comes."

Richard Shandon, in his secret heart, hoped that the command would remain with him, and that at the last moment he should receive precise instructions as to the destination of the *Forward*. He did all he could to spread the report in his conversations with his officers, or when following the construction of the brig as it grew in the Birkenhead dockyard, looking like the ribs of a whale turned upside down. Shandon and Johnson kept strictly to their instructions touching the health of the sailors who were to form the crew; they all looked hale and hearty, and had enough heat in their bodies to suffice for the engine of the *Forward*; their supple limbs, their clear and florid complexions were fit to react against the action of intense cold. They were confident and resolute men, energetically and solidly constituted. Of course they were not all equally

vigorous; Shandon had even hesitated about taking some of them, such as the sailors Gripper and Garry, and the harpooner Simpson, because they looked rather thin; but, on the whole, their build was good; they were a warm-hearted lot, and their engagement was signed.

All the crew belonged to the same sect of the Protestant religion; during these long campaigns prayer in common and the reading of the Bible have a good influence over the men and sustain them in the hour of discouragement; it was therefore important that they should be all of the same way of thinking. Shandon knew by experience the utility of these practices, and their influence on the mind of the crew; they are always employed on board ships that are intended to winter in the Polar Seas. The crew once got together, Shandon and his two officers set about the provisions; they strictly followed the instructions of the captain; these instructions were clear, precise, and detailed, and the least articles were put down with their quality and quantity. Thanks to the cheques at the commander's disposition, every article was paid for at once with a discount of 8 per cent, which Richard carefully placed to the credit of K. Z.

Crew, provisions, and cargo were ready by January, 1860; the *Forward* began to look shipshape, and Shandon went daily to Birkenhead. On the morning of the 23rd of January he was, as usual, on board one of the Mersey ferry-boats with a helm at either end to prevent having to turn it; there was a thick fog, and the sailors of the river were obliged to direct their course by means of the compass, though the passage lasts scarcely ten minutes. But the thickness of the fog did not prevent Shandon seeing a man of short stature, rather fat, with an intelligent and merry face and an amiable look, who came up to him, took him by the two hands, and shook them with an ardour, a petulance, and a familiarity "quite meridional," as a Frenchman would have said. But if this person did not come from the South, he had got his temperament there; he talked and gesticulated with volubility; his thought must come out or the machine would burst. His eyes, small as those of witty men generally are, his mouth, large and mobile, were safety-pipes which allowed him to give passage to his overflowing thoughts; he talked, and talked, and talked so much and so fast that Shandon couldn't understand a word he said. However, this did not prevent the *Forward's* mate from recognising the little man he had never seen before; a lightning flash traversed his mind, and when the other paused to take breath, Shandon made haste to get out the words, "Doctor Clawbonny!"

"Himself in person, commander! I've been at least half a quarter of an hour

looking for you, asking everybody everywhere! Just think how impatient I got; five minutes more and I should have lost my head! And so you are the commander Richard? You really exist? You are not a myth? Your hand, your hand! I want to shake it again. It is Richard Shandon's hand, and if there is a commander Shandon, there's a brig *Forward* to command; and if he commands he will start, and if he starts he'll take Dr. Clawbonny on board."

"Well, yes, doctor, I am Richard Shandon; there is a brig *Forward*, and it will start."

"That's logic," answered the doctor, after taking in a large provision of breathing air--"that's logic. And I am ready to jump for joy at having my dearest wishes gratified. I've wanted to undertake such a voyage. Now with you, commander----"

"I don't----" began Shandon.

"With you," continued Clawbonny, without hearing him, "we are sure to go far and not to draw back for a trifle."

"But----" began Shandon again.

"For you have shown what you are made of, commander; I know your deeds of service. You are a fine sailor!"

"If you will allow me----"

"No, I won't have your bravery, audacity, and skill put an instant in doubt, even by you! The captain who chose you for his mate is a man who knows what he's about, I can tell you."

"But that's nothing to do with it," said Shandon, impatient.

"What is it, then? Don't keep me in suspense another minute."

"You don't give me time to speak. Tell me, if you please, doctor, how it comes that you are to take part in the expedition of the *Forward*."

"Read this letter, this worthy letter, the letter of a brave captain--very laconic, but quite sufficient."

Saying which the doctor held out the following letter to Shandon:--

"INVERNESS,

"Jan. 22nd, 1860.

"To Dr. Clawbonny.

"If Dr. Clawbonny wishes to embark on board the *Forward* for a long cruise, he may introduce himself to the commander, Richard Shandon, who has received orders concerning him.

"THE CAPTAIN OF THE 'FORWARD,'

"K. Z."

"This letter reached me this morning, and here I am, ready to embark."

"But, doctor, do you know where we are going to?"

"I haven't the slightest idea, and I do not care so that it is somewhere. They pretend that I am learned; they are mistaken, commander. I know nothing, and if I have published a few books that don't sell badly, I ought not to have done it; the public is silly for buying them. I know nothing, I tell you. I am only an ignorant man. When I have the offer of completing, or rather of going over again, my knowledge of medicine, surgery, history, geography, botany, mineralogy, conchology, geodesy, chemistry, natural philosophy, mechanics, and hydrography, why I accept, of course."

"Then," said Shandon, disappointed, "you do not know where the *Forward* is bound for?"

"Yes, I do; it is bound for where there is something to learn, to discover, and to compare--where we shall meet with other customs, other countries, other nations, to study in the exercise of their functions; it is going, in short, where I have never been."

"But I want to know something more definite than that," cried Shandon.

"Well, I have heard that we are bound for the Northern Seas."

"At least," asked Shandon, "you know the captain?"

"Not the least bit in the world! But he is an honest fellow, you may believe me."

The commander and the doctor disembarked at Birkenhead; the former told the doctor all he knew about the situation of things, and the mystery inflamed the imagination of the doctor. The sight of the brig caused him transports of joy. From that day he stopped with Shandon, and went every day to pay a visit to the shell of the *Forward*. Besides, he was specially appointed to overlook the installation of the ship's medicine-chest. For Dr. Clawbonny was a doctor, and a good one, though practising little. At the age of twenty-five he was an ordinary practitioner; at the age of forty he was a *savant*, well known in the town; he was an influential member of all the literary and scientific institutions of Liverpool. His fortune allowed him to distribute counsels which were none the worse for being gratuitous; beloved as a man eminently lovable must always be, he had never wronged any one, not even himself; lively and talkative, he carried his heart in his hand, and put his hand into that of everybody. When it was known in Liverpool that he was going to embark on board the *Forward* his friends did all they could to dissuade him, and only fixed him more completely in his determination, and when the doctor was determined to do anything no one could prevent him. From that time the suppositions and apprehensions increased, but did not prevent the *Forward* being launched on the 5th of February, 1860. Two months later she was ready to put to sea. On the 15th of March, as the letter of the captain had announced, a dog of Danish breed was sent by railway from Edinburgh to Liverpool, addressed to Richard Shandon. The animal seemed surly, peevish, and even sinister, with quite a singular look in his eyes. The name of the *Forward* was engraved on his brass collar. The commander installed it on board the same day, and acknowledged its reception to K. Z. at Leghorn. Thus, with the exception of the captain, the crew was complete. It was composed as follows:--

1. K. Z., captain; 2. Richard Shandon, commander; 3. James Wall, third officer; 4. Dr. Clawbonny; 5. Johnson, boatswain; 6. Simpson, harpooner; 7. Bell, carpenter; 8. Brunton, chief engineer; 9. Plover, second engineer; 10. Strong (negro), cook; 11. Foker, ice-master; 12. Wolsten, smith; 13. Bolton, sailor; 14. Garry, sailor; 15. Clifton, sailor; 16. Gripper, sailor; 17. Pen, sailor; 18. Warren, stoker.

CHAPTER IV

DOG-CAPTAIN

The day of departure arrived with the 5th of April. The admission of the doctor on board had given the crew more confidence. They knew that where the worthy doctor went they could follow. However, the sailors were still uneasy, and Shandon, fearing that some of them would desert, wished to be off. With the coast out of sight, they would make up their mind to the inevitable.

Dr. Clawbonny's cabin was situated at the end of the poop, and occupied all the stern of the vessel. The captain's and mate's cabins gave upon deck. The captain's remained hermetically closed, after being furnished with different instruments, furniture, travelling garments, books, clothes for changing, and utensils, indicated in a detailed list. According to the wish of the captain, the key of the cabin was sent to Lubeck; he alone could enter his room.

This detail vexed Shandon, and took away all chance of the chief command. As to his own cabin, he had perfectly appropriated it to the needs of the presumed voyage, for he thoroughly understood the needs of a Polar expedition. The room of the third officer was placed under the lower deck, which formed a vast sleeping-room for the sailors' use; the men were very comfortably lodged, and would not have found anything like the same convenience on board any other ship; they were cared for like the most priceless cargo: a vast stove occupied all the centre of the common room. Dr. Clawbonny was in his element; he had taken possession of his cabin on the 6th of February, the day after the *Forward* was launched.

"The happiest of animals," he used to say, "is a snail, for it can make a shell exactly to fit it; I shall try to be an intelligent snail."

And considering that the shell was to be his lodging for a considerable time, the cabin began to look like home; the doctor had a *savant's* or a child's pleasure in arranging his scientific traps. His books, his herbals, his set of pigeon-holes, his instruments of precision, his chemical apparatus, his collection of thermometers, barometers, hygrometers, rain-gauges, spectacles, compasses, sextants, maps, plans, flasks, powders, bottles for medicine-chest, were all classed in an order that would have shamed the British Museum. The space of six square feet

contained incalculable riches: the doctor had only to stretch out his hand without moving to become instantaneously a doctor, a mathematician, an astronomer, a geographer, a botanist, or a conchologist. It must be acknowledged that he was proud of his management and happy in his floating sanctuary, which three of his thinnest friends would have sufficed to fill. His friends came to it in such numbers that even a man as easy-going as the doctor might have said with Socrates, "My house is small, but may it please Heaven never to fill it with friends!"

To complete the description of the *Forward* it is sufficient to say that the kennel of the large Danish dog was constructed under the window of the mysterious cabin but its savage inhabitant preferred wandering between decks and in the hold; it seemed impossible to tame him, and no one had been able to become his master; during the night he howled lamentably, making the hollows of the ship ring in a sinister fashion. Was it regret for his absent master? Was it the instinct of knowing that he was starting for a perilous voyage? Was it a presentiment of dangers to come? The sailors decided that it was for the latter reason, and more than one pretended to joke who believed seriously that the dog was of a diabolical kind. Pen, who was a brutal man, was going to strike him once, when he fell, unfortunately, against the angle of the capstan, and made a frightful wound in his head. Of course this accident was placed to the account of the fantastic animal. Clifton, the most superstitious of the crew, made the singular observation that when the dog was on the poop he always walked on the windward side, and afterwards, when the brig was out at sea, and altered its tack, the surprising animal changed its direction with the wind the same as the captain of the *Forward* would have done in his place. Dr. Clawbonny, whose kindness and caresses would have tamed a tiger, tried in vain to win the good graces of the dog; he lost his time and his pains. The animal did not answer to any name ever written in the dog calendar, and the crew ended by calling him Captain, for he appeared perfectly conversant with ship customs; it was evident that it was not his first trip. From such facts it is easy to understand the boatswain's answer to Clifton's friend, and the credulity of those who heard it; more than one repeated jokingly that he expected one day to see the dog take human shape and command the manoeuvres with a resounding voice.

If Richard Shandon did not feel the same apprehensions he was not without anxiety, and the day before the departure, in the evening of April 5th, he had a conversation on the subject with the doctor, Wall, and Johnson in the poop cabin. These four persons were tasting their tenth grog, and probably their last, for the

letter from Aberdeen had ordered that all the crew, from the captain to the stoker, should be teetotallers, and that there should be no wine, beer, nor spirits on board except those given by the doctor's orders. The conversation had been going on about the departure for the last hour. If the instructions of the captain were realised to the end, Shandon would receive his last instructions the next day.

"If the letter," said the commander, "does not tell me the captain's name, it must at least tell me the destination of the brig, or I shall not know where to take her to."

"If I were you," said the impatient doctor, "I should start whether I get a letter or no; they'll know how to send after you, you may depend."

"You are ready for anything, doctor; but if so, to what quarter of the globe should you set sail?"

"To the North Pole, of course; there's not the slightest doubt about that."

"Why should it not be the South Pole?" asked Wall.

"The South Pole is out of the question. No one with any sense would send a brig across the whole of the Atlantic. Just reflect a minute, and you'll see the impossibility."

"The doctor has an answer to everything," said Wall.

"Well, we'll say north," continued Shandon. "But where north? To Spitzbergen or Greenland? Labrador or Hudson's Bay? Although all directions end in insuperable icebergs, I am not less puzzled as to which to take. Have you an answer to that, doctor?"

"No," he answered, vexed at having nothing to say; "but if you don't get a letter what shall you do?"

"I shall do nothing; I shall wait."

"Do you mean to say you won't start?" cried Dr. Clawbonny, agitating his glass in despair.

"Certainly I do."

"And that would be the wisest plan," said Johnson tranquilly, while the doctor began marching round the table, for he could not keep still; "but still, if we wait too long, the consequences may be deplorable; the season is good now if we are really going north, as we ought to profit by the breaking up of the ice to cross Davis's Straits; besides, the crew gets more and more uneasy; the friends and companions of our men do all they can to persuade them to leave the *Forward*, and their influence may be pernicious for us."

"Besides," added Wall, "if one of them deserted they all would, and then I don't know how you would get another crew together."

"But what can I do?" cried Shandon.

"What you said you would do," replied the doctor; "wait and wait till to-morrow before you despair. The captain's promises have all been fulfilled up to now with the greatest regularity, and there's no reason to believe we shan't be made acquainted with our destination when the proper time comes. I haven't the slightest doubt that to-morrow we shall be sailing in the Irish Channel, and I propose we drink a last grog to our pleasant voyage. It begins in an unaccountable fashion, but with sailors like you there are a thousand chances that it will end well."

And all four drank to their safe return.

"Now, commander," continued Johnson, "if you will allow me to advise you, you will prepare everything to start; the crew must think that you know what you are about. If you don't get a letter to-morrow, set sail; do not get up the steam, the wind looks like holding out, and it will be easy enough to sail; let the pilot come on board; go out of the docks with the tide, and anchor below Birkenhead; our men won't be able to communicate with land, and if the devil of a letter comes it will find us as easily there as elsewhere."

"By heavens! you are right, Johnson!" cried the doctor, holding out his hand to the old sailor.

"So be it," answered Shandon.

Then each one entered his cabin, and waited in feverish sleep for the rising of the sun. The next day the first distribution of letters took place in the town, and not one bore the address of the commander, Richard Shandon. Nevertheless, he

made his preparations for departure, and the news spread at once all over Liverpool, and, as we have already seen, an extraordinary affluence of spectators crowded the wharfs of New Prince's Docks. Many of them came on board to shake hands for the last time with a comrade, or to try and dissuade a friend, or to take a look at the brig, and to know its destination; they were disappointed at finding the commander more taciturn and reserved than ever. He had his reasons for that.

Ten o'clock struck. Eleven followed. The tide began to go out that day at about one o'clock in the afternoon. Shandon from the top of the poop was looking at the crowd with uneasy eyes, trying to read the secret of his destiny on one of the faces. But in vain. The sailors of the *Forward* executed his orders in silence, looking at him all the time, waiting for orders which did not come. Johnson went on preparing for departure. The weather was cloudy and the sea rough; a south-easter blew with violence, but it was easy to get out of the Mersey.

At twelve o'clock nothing had yet been received. Dr. Clawbonny marched up and down in agitation, looking through his telescope, gesticulating, impatient for the sea, as he said. He felt moved, though he struggled against it. Shandon bit his lips till the blood came. Johnson came up to him and said--

"Commander, if we want to profit by the tide, there is no time to be lost; we shall not be clear of the docks for at least an hour."

Shandon looked round him once more and consulted his watch. The twelve o'clock letters had been distributed. In despair he told Johnson to start. The boatswain ordered the deck to be cleared of spectators, and the crowd made a general movement to regain the wharves while the last moorings were unloosed. Amidst the confusion a dog's bark was distinctly heard, and all at once the animal broke through the compact mass, jumped on to the poop, and, as a thousand spectators can testify, dropped a letter at Shandon's feet.

"A letter!" cried Shandon. "*He* is on board, then?"

"He was, that's certain, but he isn't now," said Johnson, pointing to the deserted deck.

Shandon held the letter without opening it in his astonishment.

"But read it, read it, I say," said the doctor.

Shandon looked at it. The envelope had no postmark or date; it was addressed simply to:

"RICHARD SHANDON,

"Commander on board the brig

"*Forward*."

Shandon opened the letter and read as follows:--

"Sail for Cape Farewell. You will reach it by the 20th of April. If the captain does not appear on board, cross Davis's Straits, and sail up Baffin's Sea to Melville Bay.

"THE CAPTAIN OF THE 'FORWARD,'

"K. Z."

Shandon carefully folded this laconic epistle, put it in his pocket, and gave the order for departure. His voice, which rang above the east wind, had something solemn in it.

Soon the *Forward* had passed the docks, and directed by a Liverpool pilot whose little cutter followed, went down the Mersey with the current. The crowd precipitated itself on to the exterior wharf along the Victoria Docks in order to get a last glimpse of the strange brig. The two topsails, the foresail and the brigantine sail were rapidly set up, and the *Forward*, worthy of its name, after having rounded Birkenhead Point, sailed with extraordinary fleetness into the Irish Sea.

CHAPTER V

OUT AT SEA

The wind was favourable, though it blew in April gales. The *Forward* cut through the waves, and towards three o'clock crossed the mail steamer between Liverpool and the Isle of Man. The captain hailed from his deck the last adieu that the *Forward* was destined to hear.

At five o'clock the pilot left the command in the hands of Richard Shandon, the commander of the brig, and regained his cutter, which, turning round, soon disappeared on the south-west. Towards evening the brig doubled the Calf of Man at the southern extremity of the island. During the night the sea was very rough, but the *Forward* behaved well, left the point of Ayr to the north-west, and directed its course for the Northern Channel. Johnson was right; once out at sea the maritime instinct of the sailors gained the upper hand. Life on board went on with regularity.

The doctor breathed in the sea air with delight; he walked about vigorously in the squalls, and for a *savant* he was not a bad sailor.

"The sea is splendid," said he to Johnson, coming up on deck after breakfast. "I have made its acquaintance rather late, but I shall make up for lost time."

"You are right, Mr. Clawbonny. I would give all the continents of the world for a corner of the ocean. They pretend that sailors soon get tired of their profession, but I've been forty years on the sea and I love it as much as the first day."

"It is a great pleasure to feel a good ship under one's feet, and if I'm not a bad judge the *Forward* behaves herself well."

"You judge rightly, doctor," answered Shandon, who had joined the talkers; "she is a good ship, and I acknowledge that a vessel destined for navigation amongst ice has never been better equipped. That reminds me that thirty years ago Captain James Ross, sailing for the North-West passage----"

"In the *Victory*," added the doctor quickly, "a brig about the same tonnage as ours, with a steam-engine too."

"What! you know about that?"

"Judge if I do," answered the doctor. "Machines were then in their infancy, and the *Victory's* kept her back; the captain, James Ross, after having vainly repaired it bit by bit, finished by taking it down, and abandoned it at his first winter quarters."

"The devil!" said Shandon. "You know all about it, I see."

"Yes. I've read the works of Parry, Ross, and Franklin, and the reports of McClure, Kennedy, Kane, and McClintock, and I remember something of what I've read. I can tell you, too, that this same McClintock, on board the *Fox*, a screw brig in the style of ours, went easier to his destination than any of the men who preceded him."

"That's perfectly true," answered Shandon; "he was a bold sailor was McClintock; I saw him at work. You may add that, like him, we shall find ourselves in Davis's Straits in April, and if we succeed in passing the ice our voyage will be considerably advanced."

"Unless," added the doctor, "it happens to us like it did to the *Fox* in 1857, to be caught the very first year by the ice in Baffin's Sea, and have to winter in the midst of the icebergs."

"We must hope for better luck," answered Johnson. "If a ship like the *Forward* can't take us where we want to go, we must renounce all hope for ever."

"Besides," said the doctor, "if the captain is on board he will know better than we do what must be done. We know nothing as yet; his letter says nothing about what our voyage is for."

"It is a good deal to know which way to go," answered Shandon quickly. "We can do without the captain and his instructions for another month at least. Besides, you know what I think about it."

"A short time ago," said the doctor, "I thought like you that the captain would never appear, and that you would remain commander of the ship; but now----"

"Now what?" replied Shandon in an impatient tone.

"Since the arrival of the second letter I have modified that opinion."

"Why, doctor?"

"Because the letter tells you the route to follow, but leaves you ignorant of the *Forward's* destination; and we must know where we are going to. How the deuce are you to get a letter now we are out at sea? On the coast of Greenland the service of the post must leave much to wish for. I believe that our gentleman is waiting for us in some Danish settlement--at Holsteinborg or Uppernawik; he has evidently gone there to complete his cargo of sealskins, buy his sledges and dog, and, in short, get together all the tackle wanted for a voyage in the Arctic Seas. I shouldn't be at all surprised to see him come out of his cabin one of these fine mornings and begin commanding the ship in anything but a supernatural way."

"It's possible," answered Shandon drily; "but in the meantime the wind is getting up, and I can't risk my gallant sails in such weather."

Shandon left the doctor and gave the order to reef the topsails.

"He takes it to heart," said the doctor to the boatswain.

"Yes," answered the latter, "and it's a great pity, for you may be right, Mr. Clawbonny."

In the evening of Saturday the *Forward* doubled the Mull of Galloway, whose lighthouse shone to the north-east; during the night they left the Mull of Cantyre to the north, and Cape Fair, on the coast of Ireland, to the east. Towards three o'clock in the morning, the brig, leaving Rathlin Island on her starboard side, disembogued by the Northern Channel into the ocean. It was Sunday, the 8th of April, and the doctor read some chapters of the Bible to the assembled seamen. The wind then became a perfect hurricane, and tended to throw the brig on to the Irish coast; she pitched, and rolled, and tossed, and if the doctor was not seasick it was because he would not be, for nothing was easier. At noon Cape Malinhead disappeared towards the south; it was the last European ground that these bold sailors were to perceive, and more than one watched it out of sight, destined never to see it again. They were then in 55 degrees 57 minutes latitude and 7 degrees 40 minutes longitude by the Greenwich meridian.

The storm spent itself out about nine o'clock in the evening; the *Forward*, like a

good sailor, maintained her route north-west. She showed by her behaviour during the day what her sailing capacities were, and as the Liverpool connoisseurs had remarked, she was above all, a sailing vessel. During the following days the *Forward* gained the north-west with rapidity; the wind veered round south, and the sea had a tremendous swell on; the brig was then going along under full sail. Some petrels and puffins came sailing over the poop; the doctor skilfully shot one of the latter, and it fell, fortunately, on the deck. The harpooner, Simpson, picked it up and brought it to its owner.

"Nasty game that, Mr. Clawbonny," he said.

"It will make an excellent meal, on the contrary," said the doctor.

"You don't mean to say you are going to eat that thing?"

"And so are you, old fellow," said the doctor, laughing.

"Poh!" replied Simpson, "but it's oily and rancid, like all other sea birds."

"Never mind!" answered the doctor, "I have a peculiar way of cooking that game, and if you recognise it for a sea bird I'll consent never to kill another in my life."

"Do you know how to cook, then?"

"A *savant* ought to know how to do a little of everything."

"You'd better take care, Simpson," said the boatswain; "the doctor's a clever man, and he'll make you take this puffin for a grouse."

The fact is that the doctor was quite right about his fowl; he took off all the fat, which all lies under the skin, principally on the thighs, and with it disappeared the rancidity and taste of fish which is so disagreeable in a sea bird. Thus prepared the puffin was declared excellent, and Simpson acknowledged it the first.

During the late storm Richard Shandon had been able to judge of the qualities of his crew; he had watched each man narrowly, and knew how much each was to be depended upon.

James Wall was devoted to Richard, understood quickly and executed well, but he might fail in initiative; he placed him in the third rank. Johnson was used to struggle with the sea; he was an old stager in the Arctic Ocean, and had nothing to learn either in audacity or *sang-froid*. The harpooner, Simpson, and the carpenter, Bell, were sure men, faithful to duty and discipline. The ice-master, Foker, was an experienced sailor, and, like Johnson, was capable of rendering important service. Of the other sailors Garry and Bolton seemed to be the best; Bolton was a gay and talkative fellow; Garry was thirty-five, with an energetic face, but rather pale and sad-looking. The three sailors, Clifton, Gripper, and Pen, seemed less ardent and resolute; they easily grumbled. Gripper wanted to break his engagement even before the departure of the *Forward*; a sort of shame kept him on board. If things went on all right, if there were not too many risks to run, no dangers to encounter, these three men might be depended upon; but they must be well fed, for it might be said that they were led by their stomachs. Although warned beforehand, they grumbled at having to be teetotallers; at their meals they regretted the brandy and gin; it did not, however, make them spare the tea and coffee, which was prodigally given out on board. As to the two engineers, Brunton and Plover, and the stoker, Warren, there had been nothing for them to do as yet, and Shandon could not tell anything about their capabilities.

On the 14th of April the *Forward* got into the grand current of the Gulf Stream, which, after ascending the eastern coast of America to Newfoundland, inclines to the north-east along the coast of Norway. They were then in 57 degrees 37 minutes latitude by 22 degrees 58 minutes longitude, at two hundred miles from the point of Greenland. The weather grew colder, and the thermometer descended to thirty-two degrees, that is to say to freezing point.

The doctor had not yet begun to wear the garments he destined for the Arctic Seas, but he had donned a sailor's dress like the rest; he was a queer sight with his top-boots, in which his legs disappeared, his vast oilcloth hat, his jacket and trousers of the same; when drenched with heavy rains or enormous waves the doctor looked like a sort of sea-animal, and was proud of the comparison.

During two days the sea was extremely rough; the wind veered round to the north-west, and delayed the progress of the *Forward*. From the 14th to the 16th of April the swell was great, but on the Monday there came such a torrent of rain that the sea became calm immediately. Shandon spoke to the doctor about this phenomenon.

"It confirms the curious observations of the whaler Scoresby, who laid it before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, of which I have the honour to be an honorary member. You see that when it rains the waves are not very high, even under the influence of a violent wind, and when the weather is dry the sea is more agitated, even when there is less wind."

"But how is this phenomenon accounted for?"

"Very simply; it is not accounted for at all."

Just then the ice-master, who was keeping watch on the crossbars of the topsails, signalled a floating mass on the starboard, at about fifteen miles distance before the wind.

"An iceberg here!" cried the doctor.

Shandon pointed his telescope in the direction indicated, and confirmed the pilot's announcement.

"That is curious!" said the doctor.

"What! you are astonished at last!" said the commander, laughing.

"I am surprised, but not astonished," answered the doctor, laughing; "for the brig *Ann*, of Poole, from Greenspond, was caught in 1813 in perfect ice-fields, in the forty-fourth degree of north latitude, and her captain, Dayernent, counted them by hundreds!"

"I see you can teach us something, even upon that subject."

"Very little," answered Clawbonny modestly; "it is only that ice has been met with in even lower latitudes."

"I knew that already, doctor, for when I was cabinboy on board the war-sloop *Fly*----"

"In 1818," continued the doctor, "at the end of March, almost in April, you passed between two large islands of floating ice under the forty-second degree of latitude."

"Well, I declare you astonish me!" cried Shandon.

"But the iceberg doesn't astonish me, as we are two degrees further north."

"You are a well, doctor," answered the commander, "and all we have to do is to be water-buckets."

"You will draw me dry sooner than you think for; and now, Shandon, if we could get a nearer look at this phenomenon, I should be the happiest of doctors."

"Just so, Johnson," said Shandon, calling his boatswain. "It seems to me that the breeze is getting up."

"Yes, commander," answered Johnson; "we are making very little way, and the currents of Davis's Straits will soon be against us."

"You are right, Johnson, and if we wish to be in sight of Cape Farewell on the 20th of April we must put the steam on, or we shall be thrown on the coasts of Labrador. Mr. Wall, will you give orders to light the fires?"

The commander's orders were executed, an hour afterwards the steam was up, the sails were furled, and the screw cutting the waves sent the *Forward* against the north-west wind.

CHAPTER VI

THE GREAT POLAR CURRENT

A short time after the flights of birds became more and more numerous. Petrels, puffins, and mates, inhabitants of those desolate quarters, signalled the approach of Greenland. The *Forward* was rapidly nearing the north, leaving to her leeward a long line of black smoke.

On Tuesday the 17th of April, about eleven o'clock in the morning, the ice-master signalled the first sight of the ice-blink; it was about twenty miles to the N.N.W. This glaring white strip was brilliantly lighted up, in spite of the presence of thick clouds in the neighbouring parts of the sky. Experienced people on board could make no mistake about this phenomenon, and declared, from its whiteness, that the blink was owing to a large ice-field, situated at about thirty miles out of sight, and that it proceeded from the reflection of luminous rays. Towards evening the wind turned round to the south, and became favourable; Shandon put on all sail, and for economy's sake caused the fires to be put out. The *Forward,* under her topsails and foresails, glided on towards Cape Farewell.

At three o'clock on the 18th they came across the ice-stream, and a white thick line of a glaring colour cut brilliantly the lines of the sea and sky. It was evidently drifting from the eastern coast of Greenland more than from Davis's Straits, for ice generally keeps to the west coast of Baffin's Sea. An hour afterwards the *Forward* passed in the midst of isolated portions of the ice-stream, and in the most compact parts, the icebergs, though welded together, obeyed the movements of the swell. The next day the man at the masthead signalled a vessel. It was the *Valkirien,* a Danish corvette, running alongside the *Forward,* and making for the bank of Newfoundland. The current of the Strait began to make itself felt, and Shandon had to put on sail to go up it. At this moment the commander, the doctor, James Wall, and Johnson were assembled on the poop examining the direction and strength of the current. The doctor wanted to know if the current existed also in Baffin's Sea.

"Without the least doubt," answered Shandon, "and the sailing vessels have much trouble to stem it."

"Besides there," added Wall, "you meet with it on the eastern coast of America,

as well as on the western coast of Greenland."

"There," said the doctor, "that is what gives very singular reason to the seekers of the North-West passage! That current runs about five miles an hour, and it is a little difficult to suppose that it springs from the bottom of a gulf."

"It is so much the more probable, doctor," replied Shandon, "that if this current runs from north to south we find in Behring's Straits a contrary current which runs from south to north, and which must be the origin of this one."

"According to that," replied the doctor, "we must admit that America is totally unconnected with the Polar lands, and that the waters of the Pacific run round the coasts of America into the Atlantic. On the other hand, the greater elevation of the waters of the Pacific gives reason to the supposition that they fall into the European seas."

"But," sharply replied Shandon, "there must be facts to establish that theory, and if there are any," added he with irony, "our universally well-informed doctor ought to know them."

"Well," replied the above-mentioned, with amiable satisfaction, "if it interests you, I can tell you that whales, wounded in Davis's Straits, are caught some time afterwards in the neighbourhood of Tartary with the European harpoon still in their flanks."

"And unless they have been able to double Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope," replied Shandon, "they must necessarily have rounded the septentrional coasts of America--that's what I call indisputable, doctor."

"However, if you were not convinced, my dear fellow," said the doctor, smiling, "I could still produce other facts, such as drift-wood, of which Davis's Straits are full, larch, aspen, and other tropical trees. Now we know that the Gulf Stream hinders those woods from entering the Straits. If, then, they come out of it they can only get in from Behring's Straits."

"I am convinced, doctor, and I avow that it would be difficult to remain incredulous with you."

"Upon my honour," said Johnson, "there's something that comes just in time to help our discussion. I perceive in the distance a lump of wood of certain

dimensions; if the commander permits it we'll haul it in, and ask it the name of its country."

"That's it," said the doctor, "the example after the rule."

Shandon gave the necessary orders; the brig was directed towards the piece of wood signalled, and soon afterwards, not without trouble, the crew hoisted it on deck. It was the trunk of a mahogany tree, gnawed right into the centre by worms, but for which circumstance it would not have floated.

"This is glorious," said the doctor enthusiastically, "for as the currents of the Atlantic could not carry it to Davis's Straits, and as it has not been driven into the Polar basin by the streams of septentrional America, seeing that this tree grew under the Equator, it is evident that it comes in a straight line from Behring; and look here, you see those sea-worms which have eaten it, they belong to a hot-country species."

"It is evident," replied Wall, "that the people who do not believe in the famous passage are wrong."

"Why, this circumstance alone ought to convince them," said the doctor; "I will just trace you out the itinerary of that mahogany; it has been floated towards the Pacific by some river of the Isthmus of Panama or Guatemala, from thence the current has dragged it along the American coast as far as Behring's Straits, and in spite of everything it was obliged to enter the Polar Seas. It is neither so old nor so soaked that we need fear to assign a recent date to its setting out; it has had the good luck to get clear of the obstacles in that long suite of straits which lead out of Baffin's Bay, and quickly seized by the boreal current came by Davis's Straits to be made prisoner by the *Forward* to the great joy of Dr. Clawbonny, who asks the commander's permission to keep a sample of it."

"Do so," said Shandon, "but allow me to tell you that you will not be the only proprietor of such a wreck. The Danish governor of the Isle of Disko----"

"On the coast of Greenland," continued the doctor, "possesses a mahogany table made from a trunk fished up under the same circumstances. I know it, but I don't envy him his table, for if it were not for the bother, I should have enough there for a whole bedroom."

During the night, from Wednesday to Thursday, the wind blew with extreme

violence, and driftwood was seen more frequently. Nearing the coast offered many dangers at an epoch in which icebergs were so numerous; the commander caused some of the sails to be furled, and the *Forward* glided away under her foresail and foremast only. The thermometer sank below freezing-point. Shandon distributed suitable clothing to the crew, a woollen jacket and trousers, a flannel shirt, wadmel stockings, the same as those the Norwegian country-people wear, and a pair of perfectly waterproof sea-boots. As to the captain, he contented himself with his natural fur, and appeared little sensible to the change in the temperature; he had, no doubt, gone through more than one trial of this kind, and besides, a Dane had no right to be difficult. He was seen very little, as he kept himself concealed in the darkest parts of the vessel.

Towards evening the coast of Greenland peeped out through an opening in the fog. The doctor, armed with his glass, could distinguish for an instant a line of peaks, ridged with large blocks of ice; but the fog closed rapidly on this vision, like the curtain of a theatre falling in the most interesting moment of the piece.

On the morning of the 20th of April the *Forward* was in sight of an iceberg a hundred and fifty feet high, stranded there from time immemorial; the thaws had taken no effect on it, and had respected its strange forms. Snow saw it; James Ross took an exact sketch of it in 1829; and in 1851 the French lieutenant Bellot saw it from the deck of the *Prince Albert*. Of course the doctor wished to keep a memento of the celebrated mountain, and made a clever sketch of it. It is not surprising that such masses should be stranded and adhere to the land, for to each foot above water they have two feet below, giving, therefore, to this one about eighty fathoms of depth.

At last, under a temperature which at noon was only 12 degrees, under a snowy and foggy sky, Cape Farewell was perceived. The *Forward* arrived on the day fixed; if it pleased the unknown captain to come and occupy his position in such diabolical weather he would have no cause to complain.

"There you are, then," said the doctor to himself, "cape so celebrated and so well named! Many have cleared it like us who were destined never to see it again. Is it, then, an eternal adieu said to one's European friends? You have all passed it. Frobisher, Knight, Barlow, Vaughan, Scroggs, Barentz, Hudson, Blosseville, Franklin, Crozier, Bellot, never to come back to your domestic hearth, and that cape has been really for you the cape of adieus."

It was about the year 970 that some navigators left Iceland and discovered Greenland. Sebastian Cabot forced his way as far as latitude 56 degrees in 1498. Gaspard and Michel Cotreal, in 1500 and 1502, went as far north as 60 degrees; and Martin Frobisher, in 1576, arrived as far as the bay that bears his name. To John Davis belongs the honour of having discovered the Straits in 1585; and two years later, in a third voyage, that bold navigator and great whaler reached the sixty-third parallel, twenty-seven degrees from the Pole.

Barentz in 1596, Weymouth in 1602, James Hall in 1605 and 1607, Hudson, whose name was given to that vast bay which hollows out so profoundly the continent of America, James Poole, in 1611, advanced far into the Strait in search of that North-West passage the discovery of which would have considerably shortened the track of communication between the two worlds. Baffin, in 1616, found the Straits of Lancaster in the sea that bears his own name; he was followed, in 1619, by James Munk, and in 1719 by Knight, Barlow, Vaughan, and Scroggs, of whom no news has ever been heard. In 1776 Lieutenant Pickersgill, sent out to meet Captain Cook, who tried to go up Behring's Straits, reached the sixty-eighth degree; the following year Young, for the same purpose, went as far north as Woman's Island.

Afterwards came Captain James Ross, who, in 1818, rounded the coasts of Baffin's Sea, and corrected the hydrographic errors of his predecessors. Lastly, in 1819 and 1820, the celebrated Parry passed through Lancaster Straits, and penetrated, in spite of unnumbered difficulties, as far as Melville Island, and won the prize of 5,000 pounds promised by Act of Parliament to the English sailors who would reach the hundred and seventeenth meridian by a higher latitude than the seventy-seventh parallel.

In 1826 Beechey touched Chamisso Island; James Ross wintered from 1829 to 1833 in Prince Regent Straits, and amongst other important works discovered the magnetic pole. During this time Franklin, by an overland route, traversed the septentrional coasts of America from the River Mackenzie to Turnagain Point. Captain Back followed in his steps from 1823 to 1835, and these explorations were completed in 1839 by Messrs. Dease and Simpson and Dr. Rae.

Lastly, Sir John Franklin, wishing to discover the North-West passage, left England in 1845 on board the *Erebus* and the *Terror*; he penetrated into Baffin's Sea, and since his passage across Disko Island no news had been heard of his expedition.

That disappearance determined the numerous investigations which have brought about the discovery of the passage, and the survey of these Polar continents, with such indented coast lines. The most daring English, French, and American sailors made voyages towards these terrible countries, and, thanks to their efforts, the maps of that country, so difficult to make, figured in the list of the Royal Geographical Society of London. The curious history of these countries was thus presented to the doctor's imagination as he leaned on the rail, and followed with his eyes the long track left by the brig. Thoughts of the bold navigators weighed upon his mind, and he fancied he could perceive under the frozen arches of the icebergs the pale ghosts of those who were no more.

CHAPTER VII

DAVIS'S STRAITS

During that day the *Forward* cut out an easy road amongst the half-broken ice; the wind was good, but the temperature very low; the currents of air blowing across the ice-fields brought with them their penetrating cold. The night required the severest attention; the floating icebergs drew together in that narrow pass; a hundred at once were often counted on the horizon; they broke off from the elevated coasts under the teeth of the grinding waves and the influence of the spring season, in order to go and melt or to be swallowed up in the depths of the ocean. Long rafts of wood, with which it was necessary to escape collision, kept the crew on the alert; the crow's nest was put in its place on the mizenmast; it consisted of a cask, in which the ice-master was partly hidden to protect him from the cold winds while he kept watch over the sea and the icebergs in view, and from which he signalled danger and sometimes gave orders to the crew. The nights were short; the sun had reappeared since the 31st of January in consequence of the refraction, and seemed to get higher and higher above the horizon. But the snow impeded the view, and if it did not cause complete obscurity it rendered navigation laborious.

On the 21st of April Desolation Cape appeared in the midst of thick mists; the crew were tired out with the constant strain on their energies rendered necessary ever since they had got amongst the icebergs; the sailors had not had a minute's rest; it was soon necessary to have recourse to steam to cut a way through the heaped-up blocks. The doctor and Johnson were talking together on the stern, whilst Shandon was snatching a few hours' sleep in his cabin. Clawbonny was getting information from the old sailor, whose numerous voyages had given him an interesting and sensible education. The doctor felt much friendship for him, and the boatswain repaid it with interest.

"You see, Mr. Clawbonny," Johnson used to say, "this country is not like all others; they call it *Green*land, but there are very few weeks in the year when it justifies its name."

"Who knows if in the tenth century this land did not justify its name?" added the doctor. "More than one revolution of this kind has been produced upon our

globe, and I daresay I should astonish you if I were to tell you that according to Icelandic chronicles two thousand villages flourished upon this continent about eight or nine hundred years ago."

"You would so much astonish me, Mr. Clawbonny, that I should have some difficulty in believing you, for it is a miserable country."

"However miserable it may be, it still offers a sufficient retreat to its inhabitants, and even to civilised Europeans."

"Without doubt! We met men at Disko and Uppernawik who consented to live in such climates; but my ideas upon the matter were that they lived there by compulsion and not by choice."

"I daresay you are right, though men get accustomed to everything, and the Greenlanders do not appear to me so unfortunate as the workmen of our large towns; they may be unfortunate, but they are certainly not unhappy. I say unhappy, but the word does not translate my thought, for if these people have not the comforts of temperate countries, they are formed for a rude climate, and find pleasures in it which we are not able to conceive."

"I suppose we must think so, as Heaven is just. Many, many voyages have brought me upon these coasts, and my heart always shrinks at the sight of these wretched solitudes; but they ought to have cheered up these capes, promontories, and bays with more engaging names, for Farewell Cape and Desolation Cape are not names made to attract navigators."

"I have also remarked that," replied the doctor, "but these names have a geographical interest that we must not overlook. They describe the adventures of those who gave them those names. Next to the names of Davis, Baffin, Hudson, Ross, Parry, Franklin, and Bellot, if I meet with Cape Desolation I soon find Mercy Bay; Cape Providence is a companion to Port Anxiety; Repulsion Bay brings me back to Cape Eden, and leaving Turnagain Point I take refuge in Refuge Bay. I have there under my eyes an unceasing succession of perils, misfortunes, obstacles, successes, despairs, and issues, mixed with great names of my country, and, like a series of old-fashioned medals, that nomenclature retraces in my mind the whole history of these seas."

"You are quite right, Mr. Clawbonny, and I hope we shall meet with more Success Bays than Despair Capes in our voyage."

"I hope so too, Johnson; but, I say, is the crew come round a little from its terrors?"

"Yes, a little; but since we got into the Straits they have begun to talk about the fantastic captain; more than one of them expected to see him appear at the extremity of Greenland; but between you and me, doctor, doesn't it astonish you a little too?"

"It does indeed, Johnson."

"Do you believe in the captain's existence?"

"Of course I do."

"But what can be his reasons for acting in that manner?"

"If I really must tell you the whole of my thoughts, Johnson, I believe that the captain wished to entice the crew far enough out to prevent them being able to come back. Now if he had been on board when we started they would all have wanted to know our destination, and he might have been embarrassed."

"But why so?"

"Suppose he should wish to attempt some superhuman enterprise, and to penetrate where others have never been able to reach, do you believe if the crew knew it they would ever have enlisted? As it is, having got so far, going farther becomes a necessity."

"That's very probable, Mr. Clawbonny. I have known more than one intrepid adventurer whose name alone was a terror, and who would never have found any one to accompany him in his perilous expeditions----"

"Excepting me," ventured the doctor.

"And me, after you," answered Johnson, "and to follow you; I can venture to affirm that our captain is amongst the number of such adventurers. No matter, we shall soon see; I suppose the unknown will come as captain on board from the coast of Uppernawik or Melville Bay, and will tell us at last where it is his good pleasure to conduct the ship."

"I am of your opinion, Johnson, but the difficulty will be to get as far as Melville Bay. See how the icebergs encircle us from every point! They scarcely leave a passage for the *Forward*. Just examine that immense plain over there."

"The whalers call that in our language an ice-field, that is to say a continued surface of ice the limits of which cannot be perceived."

"And on that side, that broken field, those long pieces of ice more or less joined at their edges?"

"That is a pack; if it was of a circular form we should call it a patch; and, if the form was longer, a stream."

"And there, those floating icebergs?"

"Those are drift-ice; if they were a little higher they would be icebergs or hills; their contact with vessels is dangerous, and must be carefully avoided. Here, look over there: on that ice-field there is a protuberance produced by the pressure of the icebergs; we call that a hummock; if that protuberance was submerged to its base we should call it a calf. It was very necessary to give names to all those forms in order to recognise them."

"It is truly a marvellous spectacle!" exclaimed the doctor, contemplating the wonders of the Boreal Seas; "there is a field for the imagination in such pictures!"

"Yes," answered Johnson, "ice often takes fantastic shapes, and our men are not behindhand in explaining them according to their own notions."

"Isn't that assemblage of ice-blocks admirable? Doesn't it look like a foreign town, an Eastern town, with its minarets and mosques under the pale glare of the moon? Further on there is a long series of Gothic vaults, reminding one of Henry the Seventh's chapel or the Houses of Parliament."

"They would be houses and towns very dangerous to inhabit, and we must not sail too close to them. Some of those minarets yonder totter on their base, and the least of them would crush a vessel like the *Forward*."

"And yet sailors dared to venture into these seas before they had steam at their command! How ever could a sailing vessel be steered amongst these moving

rocks?"

"Nevertheless, it has been accomplished, Mr. Clawbonny. When the wind became contrary--and that has happened to me more than once--we quietly anchored to one of those blocks, and we drifted more or less with it and waited for a favourable moment to set sail again. I must acknowledge that such a manner of voyaging required months, whilst with a little good fortune we shall only want a few days."

"It seems to me," said the doctor, "that the temperature has a tendency to get lower."

"That would be a pity," answered Johnson, "for a thaw is necessary to break up these masses and drive them away into the Atlantic; besides, they are more numerous in Davis's Straits, for the sea gets narrower between Capes Walsingham and Holsteinborg; but on the other side of the 67th degree we shall find the seas more navigable during the months of May and June."

"Yes; but first of all we must get to the other side."

"Yes, we must get there, Mr. Clawbonny. In June and July we should have found an open passage, like the whalers do, but our orders were precise; we were to be here in April. I am very much mistaken if our captain has not his reasons for getting us out here so early."

The doctor was right in stating that the temperature was lowering; the thermometer at noon only indicated 6 degrees, and a north-west breeze was getting up, which, although it cleared the sky, assisted the current in precipitating the floating masses of ice into the path of the *Forward*. All of them did not obey the same impulsion, and it was not uncommon to encounter some of the highest masses drifting in an opposite direction, seized at their base by an undercurrent.

It is easy to understand the difficulties of this kind of navigation; the engineers had not a minute's rest; the engines were worked from the deck by means of levers, which opened, stopped, and reversed them according to the orders of the officers on watch. Sometimes the brig had to hasten through an opening in the ice-fields, sometimes to struggle against the swiftness of an iceberg which threatened to close the only practicable issue, or, again, some block, suddenly overthrown, compelled the brig to back quickly so as not to be crushed to pieces. This mass of ice, carried along, broken up and amalgamated by the northern

current, crushed up the passage, and if seized by the frost would oppose an impassable barrier to the passage of the *Forward*.

Birds were found in innumerable quantities on these coasts, petrels and other sea-birds fluttered about here and there with deafening cries, a great number of big-headed, short-necked sea-gulls were amongst them; they spread out their long wings and braved in their play the snow whipped by the hurricane. This animation of the winged tribe made the landscape more lively.

Numerous pieces of wood were floating to leeway, clashing with noise; a few enormous, bloated-headed sharks approached the vessel, but there was no question of chasing them, although Simpson, the harpooner, was longing to have a hit at them. Towards evening several seals made their appearance, nose above water, swimming between the blocks.

On the 22nd the temperature again lowered; the *Forward* put on all steam to catch the favourable passes: the wind was decidedly fixed in the north-west; all sails were furled.

During that day, which was Sunday, the sailors had little to do. After the reading of Divine service, which was conducted by Shandon, the crew gave chase to sea-birds, of which they caught a great number. They were suitably prepared according to the doctor's method, and furnished an agreeable increase of provisions to the tables of the officers and crew.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the *Forward* had attained Thin de Sael, Sukkertop Mountain; the sea was very rough; from time to time a vast and inopportune fog fell from the grey sky; however, at noon an exact observation could be taken. The vessel was in 65 degrees 20 minutes latitude by 54 degrees 22 minutes longitude. It was necessary to attain two degrees more in order to meet with freer and more favourable navigation.

During the three following days, the 24th, 25th, and 26th of April, the *Forward* had a continual struggle with the ice; the working of the machines became very fatiguing. The steam was turned off quickly or got up again at a moment's notice, and escaped whistling from its valves. During the thick mist the nearing of icebergs was only known by dull thundering produced by the avalanches; the brig was instantly veered; it ran the risk of being crushed against the heaps of fresh-water ice, remarkable for its crystal transparency, and as hard as a rock.

Richard Shandon never missed completing his provision of water by embarking several tons of ice every day. The doctor could not accustom himself to the optical delusions that refraction produces on these coasts. An iceberg sometimes appeared to him like a small white lump within reach, when it was at least at ten or twelve miles' distance. He endeavoured to accustom his eyesight to this singular phenomenon, so that he might be able to correct its errors rapidly.

At last the crew were completely worn out by their labours in hauling the vessel alongside of the ice-fields and by keeping it free from the most menacing blocks by the aid of long perches. Nevertheless, the *Forward* was still held back in the impassable limits of the Polar Circle on Friday, the 27th of April.

CHAPTER VIII

GOSSIP OF THE CREW

However, the *Forward* managed, by cunningly slipping into narrow passages, to gain a few more minutes north; but instead of avoiding the enemy, it was soon necessary to attack it. The ice-fields, several miles in extent, were getting nearer, and as these moving heaps often represent a pressure of more than ten millions of tons, it was necessary to give a wide berth to their embraces. The ice-saws were at once installed in the interior of the vessel, in such a manner as to facilitate immediate use of them. Part of the crew philosophically accepted their hard work, but the other complained of it, if it did not refuse to obey. At the same time that they assisted in the installation of the instruments, Garry, Bolton, Pen and Gripper exchanged their opinions.

"By Jingo!" said Bolton gaily, "I don't know why the thought strikes me that there's a very jolly tavern in Water-street where it's comfortable to be between a glass of gin and a bottle of porter. Can't you imagine it, Gripper?"

"To tell you the truth," quickly answered the questioned sailor, who generally professed to be in a bad temper, "I don't imagine it here."

"It's for the sake of talking, Gripper; it's evident that the snow towns Dr. Clawbonny admires so don't contain the least public where a poor sailor can get a half-pint of brandy."

"That's sure enough, Bolton; and you may as well add that there's nothing worth drinking here. It's a nice idea to deprive men of their grog when they are in the Northern Seas."

"But you know," said Garry, "that the doctor told us it was to prevent us getting the scurvy. It's the only way to make us go far."

"But I don't want to go far, Garry; it's pretty well to have come this far without trying to go where the devil is determined we shan't."

"Well, we shan't go, that's all," replied Pen. "I declare I've almost forgotten the taste of gin."

"But remember what the doctor says," replied Bolton.

"It's all very fine for them to talk. It remains to be seen if it isn't an excuse for being skinny with the drink."

"Pen may be right, after all," said Gripper.

"His nose is too red for that," answered Bolton. "Pen needn't grumble if it loses a little of its colour in the voyage."

"What's my nose got to do with you?" sharply replied the sailor, attacked in the most sensitive place. "My nose doesn't need any of your remarks; take care of your own."

"Now, then, don't get angry, Pen; I didn't know your nose was so touchy. I like a glass of whisky as well as anybody, especially in such a temperature; but if I know it'll do me more harm than good, I go without."

"You go without," said Warren, the stoker; "but everyone don't go without."

"What do you mean, Warren?" asked Garry, looking fixedly at him.

"I mean that for some reason or other there are spirits on board, and I know they don't go without in the stern."

"And how do you know that?" asked Garry.

Warren did not know what to say: he talked for the sake of talking.

"You see Warren don't know anything about it, Garry," said Bolton.

"Well," said Pen, "we'll ask the commander for a ration of gin; we've earned it well and we'll see what he says."

"I wouldn't if I were you," answered Garry.

"Why?" cried Pen and Gripper.

"Because he'll refuse. You knew you weren't to have any when you enlisted; you should have thought of it then."

"Besides," replied Bolton, who took Garry's part because he liked his character, "Richard Shandon isn't master on board; he obeys, like us."

"Who is master if he isn't?"

"The captain."

"Always that unfortunate captain!" exclaimed Pen. "Don't you see that on these ice-banks there's no more a captain than there is a public? It's a polite way of refusing us what we've a right to claim."

"But if there's a captain," replied Bolton, "I'll bet two months' pay we shall see him before long."

"I should like to tell the captain a bit of my mind," said Pen.

"Who's talking about the captain?" said a new-comer. It was Clifton, the sailor, a superstitious and envious man. "Is anything new known about the captain?" he asked.

"No," they all answered at once.

"Well, I believe we shall find him one fine morning installed in his cabin, and no one will know how he got there."

"Get along, do!" replied Bolton. "Why, Clifton, you imagine that he's a hobgoblin--a sort of wild child of the Highlands."

"Laugh as much as you like, Bolton, you won't change my opinion. Every day as I pass his cabin I look through the keyhole. One of these fine mornings I shall come and tell you what he's like."

"Why, he'll be like everyone else," said Pen, "and if he thinks he'll be able to do what he likes with us, he'll find himself mistaken, that's all!"

"Pen don't know him yet," said Bolton, "and he's beginning to quarrel with him already."

"Who doesn't know him?" said Clifton, looking knowing; "I don't know that he don't!"

"What the devil do you mean?" asked Gripper.

"I know very well what I mean."

"But we don't."

"Well, Pen has quarrelled with him before."

"With the captain?"

"Yes, the dog-captain--it's all one."

The sailors looked at one another, afraid to say anything.

"Man or dog," muttered Pen, "I declare that that animal will have his account one of these days."

"Come, Clifton," asked Bolton seriously, "you don't mean to say that you believe the dog is the real captain?"

"Indeed I do," answered Clifton with conviction. "If you noticed things like I do, you would have noticed what a queer beast it is."

"Well, tell us what you've noticed."

"Haven't you noticed the way he walks on the poop with such an air of authority, looking up at the sails as if he were on watch?"

"That's true enough," added Gripper, "and one evening I actually found him with his paws on the paddle-wheel."

"You don't mean it!" said Bolton.

"And now what do you think he does but go for a walk on the ice-fields, minding neither the bears nor the cold?"

"That's true enough," said Bolton.

"Do you ever see that 'ere animal, like an honest dog, seek men's company, sneak about the kitchen, and set his eyes on Mr. Strong when's he taking something good to the commander? Don't you hear him in the night when he goes away two

or three miles from the vessel, howling fit to make your blood run cold, as if it weren't easy enough to feel that sensation in such a temperature as this? Again, have you ever seen him feed? He takes nothing from any one. His food is always untouched and unless a secret hand feeds him on board, I may say that he lives without eating, and if he's not unearthly, I'm a fool!"

"Upon my word," said Bell, the carpenter, who had heard all Clifton's reasoning, "I shouldn't be surprised if such was the case." The other sailors were silenced.

"Well, at any rate, where's the *Forward* going to?"

"I don't know anything about it," replied Bell. "Richard Shandon will receive the rest of his instructions in due time."

"But from whom?"

"From whom?"

"Yes, how?" asked Bolton, becoming pressing.

"Now then, answer, Bell!" chimed in all the other sailors.

"By whom? how? Why, I don't know," said the carpenter, embarrassed in his turn.

"Why, by the dog-captain," exclaimed Clifton. "He has written once already; why shouldn't he again? If I only knew half of what that 'ere animal knows, I shouldn't be embarrassed at being First Lord of the Admiralty!"

"So then you stick to your opinion that the dog is the captain?"

"Yes."

"Well," said Pen in a hoarse voice, "if that 'ere animal don't want to turn up his toes in a dog's skin, he's only got to make haste and become a man, or I'm hanged if I don't settle him."

"What for?" asked Garry.

"Because I choose," replied Pen brutally; "besides, it's no business of any one."

"Enough talking, my boys," called out Mr. Johnson, interfering just in time, for the conversation was getting hot. "Get on with your work, and set up your saws quicker than that. We must clear the iceberg."

"What! on a Friday?" replied Clifton, shrugging his shoulders. "You'll see she won't get over the Polar circle as easily as you think."

The efforts of the crew were almost powerless during the whole day. The *Forward* could not separate the ice-fields even by going against them full speed, and they were obliged to anchor for the night. On Saturday the temperature lowered again under the influence of an easterly wind. The weather cleared up, and the eye could sweep over the white plains in the distance, which the reflection of the sun's rays rendered dazzling. At seven in the morning the thermometer marked eight degrees below zero. The doctor was tempted to stay quietly in his cabin, and read the Arctic voyages over again; but, according to his custom, he asked himself what would be the most disagreeable thing he could do, which he settled was to go on deck and assist the men to work in such a temperature. Faithful to the line of conduct he had traced out for himself, he left his well-warmed cabin and came to help in hauling the vessel. His was a pleasant face, in spite of the green spectacles by which he preserved his eyes from the biting of the reflected rays; in his future observations he was always careful in making use of his snow spectacles, in order to avoid ophthalmia, very frequent in these high latitudes.

Towards evening the *Forward* had made several miles further north, thanks to the activity of the men and Shandon's skill, which made him take advantage of every favourable circumstance; at midnight he had got beyond the sixty-sixth parallel, and the fathom line declared twenty-three fathoms of water; Shandon discovered that he was on the shoal where Her Majesty's ship *Victoria* struck, and that land was drawing near, thirty miles to the east. But now the heaps of ice, which up till now had been motionless, divided and began to move; icebergs seemed coming from every point of the horizon; the brig was entangled in a series of moving rocks, the crushing force of which it was impossible to resist. Moving became so difficult that Garry, the best helmsman, took the wheel; the mountains had a tendency to close up behind the brig; it then became essential to cut through the floating ice, and prudence as well as duty ordered them to go ahead. Difficulties became greater from the impossibility that Shandon found in establishing the direction of the vessel amongst such changing points, which kept moving without offering one firm perspective. The crew was divided into

two tacks, larboard and starboard; each one, armed with a long perch with an iron point, drove back the two threatening blocks. Soon the *Forward* entered into a pass so narrow, between two high blocks, that the extremity of her yards struck against the walls, hard as rock; by degrees she entangled herself in the midst of a winding valley, filled up with eddies of snow, whilst the floating ice was crashing and splitting with sinister cracklings. But it soon became certain that there was no egress from this gullet. An enormous block, caught in the channel, was driving rapidly on to the *Forward*! It seemed impossible to avoid it, and equally impossible to back out along a road already obstructed.

Shandon and Johnson, standing on the prow, were contemplating the position. Shandon was pointing with his right hand at the direction the helmsman was to take, and with his left was conveying to James Wall, posted near the engineer, his orders for the working of the machine.

"How will this end?" asked the doctor of Johnson.

"As it may please God," replied the boatswain.

The block of ice, at least a hundred feet high, was only about a cable's length from the *Forward,* and threatened to pound her under it.

"Cursed luck!" exclaimed Pen, swearing frightfully.

"Silence!" exclaimed a voice which it was impossible to recognise in the midst of the storm.

The block seemed to be precipitating itself upon the brig; there was a moment of undefinable anguish; the men forsook their poles and flocked to the stern in spite of Shandon's orders.

Suddenly a frightful sound was heard; a genuine waterspout fell upon deck, heaved up by an enormous wave. A cry of terror rang out from the crew whilst Garry, at the helm, held the *Forward* in a straight line in spite of the frightful incumbrance. When their frightened looks were drawn towards the mountain of ice it had disappeared; the pass was free, and further on a long channel, illuminated by the oblique rays of the sun, allowed the brig to pursue her track.

"Well, Mr. Clawbonny," said Johnson, "can you explain to me the cause of that phenomenon?"

"It is a very simple one," answered the doctor, "and happens very often. When those floating bodies are disengaged from each other by the thaw, they sail away separately, maintaining their balance; but by degrees, as they near the south, where the water is relatively warmer, their base, shaken by the collision with other icebergs, begins to melt and weaken; it then happens that their centre of gravity is displaced, and, naturally, they overturn. Only, if that one had turned over two minutes later, it would have crushed our vessel to pieces."

CHAPTER IX

NEWS

The Polar circle was cleared at last. On the 30th of April, at midday, the *Forward* passed abreast of Holsteinborg; picturesque mountains rose up on the eastern horizon. The sea appeared almost free from icebergs, and the few there were could easily be avoided. The wind veered round to the south-east, and the brig, under her mizensail, brigantine, topsails, and her topgallant sail, sailed up Baffin's Sea. It had been a particularly calm day, and the crew were able to take a little rest. Numerous birds were swimming and fluttering about round the vessel; amongst others, the doctor observed some *alca-alla*, very much like the teal, with black neck, wings and back, and white breast; they plunged with vivacity, and their immersion often lasted forty seconds.

The day would not have been remarkable if the following fact, however extraordinary it may appear, had not occurred on board. At six o'clock in the morning Richard Shandon, re-entering his cabin after having been relieved, found upon the table a letter with this address:

"To the Commander,

"RICHARD SHANDON,

"On board the 'FORWARD,'

"Baffin's Sea."

Shandon could not believe his own eyes, and before reading such a strange epistle he caused the doctor, James Wall and Johnson to be called, and showed them the letter.

"That grows very strange," said Johnson.

"It's delightful!" thought the doctor.

"At last," cried Shandon, "we shall know the secret."

With a quick hand he tore the envelope and read as follows:

"COMMANDER,--The captain of the *Forward* is pleased with the coolness, skill, and courage that your men, your officers, and yourself have shown on the late occasions, and begs you to give evidence of his gratitude to the crew.

"Have the goodness to take a northerly direction towards Melville Bay, and from thence try and penetrate into Smith's Straits.

"THE CAPTAIN OF THE *Forward*,

"K. Z.

"Monday, April 30th,

"Abreast of Cape Walsingham."

"Is that all?" cried the doctor.

"That's all," replied Shandon, and the letter fell from his hands.

"Well," said Wall, "this chimerical captain doesn't even mention coming on board, so I conclude that he never will come."

"But how did this letter get here?" said Johnson.

Shandon was silent.

"Mr. Wall is right," replied the doctor, after picking up the letter and turning it over in every direction; "the captain won't come on board for an excellent reason----"

"And what's that?" asked Shandon quickly.

"Because he is here already," replied the doctor simply.

"Already!" said Shandon. "What do you mean?"

"How do you explain the arrival of this letter if such is not the case?"

Johnson nodded his head in sign of approbation.

"It is not possible!" said Shandon energetically. "I know every man of the crew. We should have to believe, in that case, that the captain has been with us ever since we set sail. It is not possible, I tell you. There isn't one of them that I haven't seen for more than two years in Liverpool; doctor, your supposition is inadmissible."

"Then what do you admit, Shandon?"

"Everything but that! I admit that the captain, or one of his men, has profited by the darkness, the fog, or anything you like, in order to slip on board; we are not very far from land; there are Esquimaux kayaks that pass unperceived between the icebergs; someone may have come on board and left the letter; the fog was intense enough to favour their design."

"And to hinder them from seeing the brig," replied the doctor; "if we were not able to perceive an intruder slip on board, how could *he* have discovered the *Forward* in the midst of a fog?"

"That is evident," exclaimed Johnson.

"I come back, then," said the doctor, "to my first hypothesis. What do you think about it, Shandon?"

"I think what you please," replied Shandon fiercely, "with the exception of supposing that this man is on board my vessel."

"Perhaps," added Wall, "there may be amongst the crew a man of his who has received instructions from him."

"That's very likely," added the doctor.

"But which man?" asked Shandon. "I tell you I have known all my men a long time."

"Anyhow," replied Johnson, "if this captain shows himself, let him be man or devil, we'll receive him; but we have another piece of information to draw from this letter."

"What's that?" asked Shandon.

"Why, that we are to direct our path not only towards Melville Bay, but again into Smith's Straits."

"You are right," answered the doctor.

"Smith's Straits?" echoed Shandon mechanically.

"It is evident," replied Johnson, "that the destination of the *Forward* is not to seek a North-West passage, as we shall leave to our left the only track that leads to it--that is to say, Lancaster Straits; that's what forebodes us difficult navigation in unknown seas."

"Yes, Smith's Straits," replied Shandon, "that's the route the American Kane followed in 1853, and at the price of what dangers! For a long time he was thought to be lost in those dreadful latitudes! However, as we must go, go we must. But where? how far? To the Pole?"

"And why not?" cried the doctor.

The idea of such an insane attempt made the boatswain shrug his shoulders.

"After all," resumed James Wall, "to come back to the captain, if he exists, I see nowhere on the coast of Greenland except Disko or Uppernawik where he can be waiting for us; in a few days we shall know what we may depend upon."

"But," asked the doctor of Shandon, "aren't you going to make known the contents of that letter to the crew?"

"With the commander's permission," replied Johnson, "I should do nothing of the kind."

"And why so?" asked Shandon.

"Because all that mystery tends to discourage the men: they are already very anxious about the fate of our expedition, and if the supernatural side of it is increased it may produce very serious results, and in a critical moment we could not rely upon them. What do you say about it, commander?"

"And you, doctor--what do you think?" asked Shandon.

"I think Johnson's reasoning is just."

"And you, Wall?"

"Unless there's better advice forthcoming, I shall stick to the opinion of these gentlemen."

Shandon reflected seriously during a few minutes, and read the letter over again carefully.

"Gentlemen," said he, "your opinion on this subject is certainly excellent, but I cannot adopt it."

"Why not, Shandon?" asked the doctor.

"Because the instructions of this letter are formal: they command me to give the captain's congratulations to the crew, and up till to-day I have always blindly obeyed his orders in whatever manner they have been transmitted to me, and I cannot----"

"But----" said Johnson, who rightly dreaded the effect of such a communication upon the minds of the sailors.

"My dear Johnson," answered Shandon, "your reasons are excellent, but read--'he begs you to give evidence of his gratitude to the crew.'"

"Act as you think best," replied Johnson, who was besides a very strict observer of discipline. "Are we to muster the crew on deck?"

"Do so," replied Shandon.

The news of a communication having been received from the captain spread like wildfire on deck; the sailors quickly arrived at their post, and the commander read out the contents of the mysterious letter. The reading of it was received in a dead silence; the crew dispersed, a prey to a thousand suppositions. Clifton had heard enough to give himself up to all the wanderings of his superstitious imagination; he attributed a considerable share in this incident to the dog-captain, and when by chance he met him in his passage he never failed to salute him. "I told you the animal could write," he used to say to the sailors. No one said anything in answer to this observation, and even Bell, the carpenter himself,

would not have known what to answer.

Nevertheless it was certain to all that, in default of the captain, his spirit or his shadow watched on board; and henceforward the wisest of the crew abstained from exchanging their opinions about him.

On the 1st of May, at noon, they were in 68 degrees latitude and 56 degrees 32 minutes longitude. The temperature was higher and the thermometer marked twenty-five degrees above zero. The doctor was amusing himself with watching the antics of a white bear and two cubs on the brink of a pack that lengthened out the land. Accompanied by Wall and Simpson, he tried to give chase to them by means of the canoe; but the animal, of a rather warlike disposition, rapidly led away its offspring, and consequently the doctor was compelled to renounce following them up.

Chilly Cape was doubled during the night under the influence of a favourable wind, and soon the high mountains of Disko rose in the horizon. Godhavn Bay, the residence of the Governor-General of the Danish Settlements, was left to the right. Shandon did not consider it worth while to stop, and soon outran the Esquimaux pirogues who were endeavouring to reach his ship.

The Island of Disko is also called Whale Island. It was from this point that on the 12th of July, 1845, Sir John Franklin wrote to the Admiralty for the last time. It was also on that island on the 27th of August, 1859, that Captain McClintock set foot on his return, bringing back, alas! proofs too complete of the loss of the expedition. The coincidence of these two facts were noted by the doctor; that melancholy conjunction was prolific in memories, but soon the heights of Disko disappeared from his view.

There were, at that time, numerous icebergs on the coasts, some of those which the strongest thaws are unable to detach; the continual series of ridges showed themselves under the strangest forms.

The next day, towards three o'clock, they were bearing on to Sanderson Hope to the north-east. Land was left on the starboard at a distance of about fifteen miles; the mountains seemed tinged with a red-coloured bistre. During the evening, several whales of the finners species, which have fins on their backs, came playing about in the midst of the ice-trails, throwing out air and water from their blow-holes. It was during the night between the 3rd and 4th of May that the

doctor saw for the first time the sun graze the horizon without dipping his luminous disc into it. Since the 31st of January the days had been getting longer and longer till the sun went down no more. To strangers not accustomed to the persistence of this perpetual light it was a constant subject of astonishment, and even of fatigue; it is almost impossible to understand to what extent obscurity is requisite for the well-being of our eyes. The doctor experienced real pain in getting accustomed to this light, rendered still more acute by the reflection of the sun's rays upon the plains of ice.

On May 5th the *Forward* headed the seventy-second parallel; two months later they would have met with numerous whalers under these high latitudes, but at present the straits were not sufficiently open to allow them to penetrate into Baffin's Bay. The following day the brig, after having headed Woman's Island, came in sight of Uppernawik, the most northerly settlement that Denmark possesses on these coasts.

CHAPTER X

DANGEROUS NAVIGATION

Shandon, Dr. Clawbonny, Johnson, Foker, and Strong, the cook, went on shore in the small boat. The governor, his wife, and five children, all of the Esquimaux race, came politely to meet the visitors. The doctor knew enough Danish to enable him to establish a very agreeable acquaintance with them; besides, Foker, who was interpreter of the expedition, as well as ice-master, knew about twenty words of the Greenland language, and if not ambitious, twenty words will carry you far. The governor was born on the island, and had never left his native country. He did the honours of the town, which is composed of three wooden huts, for himself and the Lutheran minister, of a school, and magazines stored with the produce of wrecks. The remainder consists of snow-huts, the entrance to which is attained by creeping through a hole.

The greater part of the population came down to greet the *Forward*, and more than one native advanced as far as the middle of the bay in his kayak, fifteen feet long and scarcely two wide. The doctor knew that the word Esquimaux signified raw-fish-eater, and he likewise knew that the name was considered an insult in the country, for which reason he did not fail to address them by the title of Greenlanders, and nevertheless only by the look of their oily sealskin clothing, their boots of the same material, and all their greasy tainted appearance, it was easy to discover their accustomed food. Like all Ichthyophagans, they were half-eaten up with leprosy; and yet, for all that, were in no worse health.

The Lutheran minister and his wife, with whom the doctor promised himself a private chat, were on a journey towards Proven on the south of Uppernawik; he was therefore reduced to getting information out of the governor. This chief magistrate did not seem to be very learned; a little less and he would have been an ass, a little more and he would have known how to read. The doctor, however, questioned him upon the commercial affairs, the customs and manners of the Esquimaux, and learnt by signs that seals were worth about 40 pounds delivered in Copenhagen, a bearskin forty Danish dollars, a blue foxskin four, and a white one two or three dollars. The doctor also wished, with an eye to completing his personal education, to visit one of the Esquimaux huts; it is almost impossible to imagine of what a learned man who is desirous of knowledge is capable. Happily

the opening of those hovels was too narrow, and the enthusiastic fellow was not able to crawl in; it was very lucky for him, for there is nothing more repulsive than that accumulation of things living and dead, seal flesh or Esquimaux flesh, rotten fish and infectious wearing apparel, which constitute a Greenland hovel; no window to revive the unbreathable air, only a hole at the top of the hut, which gives free passage to the smoke, but does not allow the stench to go out.

Foker gave these details to the doctor, who did not curse his corpulence the less for that. He wished to judge for himself about these emanations, *sui generis*.

"I am sure," said he, "one gets used to it in the long run."

In the long run depicts Dr. Clawbonny in a single phrase. During the ethnographical studies of the worthy doctor, Shandon, according to his instructions, was occupied in procuring means of transport to cross the ice. He had to pay 4 pounds for a sledge and six dogs, and even then he had great difficulty in persuading the natives to part with them. Shandon wanted also to engage Hans Christian, the clever dog-driver, who made one of the party of Captain McClintock's expedition; but, unfortunately, Hans was at that time in Southern Greenland. Then came the grand question, the topic of the day, was there in Uppernawik a European waiting for the passage of the *Forward*? Did the governor know if any foreigner, an Englishman probably, had settled in those countries? To what epoch could he trace his last relations with whale or other ships? To these questions the governor replied that not one single foreigner had landed on that side of the coast for more than ten months.

Shandon asked for the names of the last whalers seen there; he knew none of them. He was in despair.

"You must acknowledge, doctor, that all this is quite inconceivable. Nothing at Cape Farewell, nothing at Disko Island, nothing at Uppernawik."

"If when we get there you repeat 'Nothing in Melville Bay,' I shall greet you as the only captain of the *Forward*."

The small boat came back to the brig towards evening, bringing back the visitors. Strong, in order to change the food a little, had procured several dozens of eider-duck eggs, twice as big as hens' eggs, and of greenish colour. It was not much, but the change was refreshing to a crew fed on salted meat. The wind became favourable the next day, but, however, Shandon did not command them

to get under sail; he still wished to stay another day, and for conscience' sake to give any human being time to join the *Forward*. He even caused the 16-pounder to be fired from hour to hour; it thundered out with a great crash amidst the icebergs, but the noise only frightened the swarms of molly-mokes and rotches. During the night several rockets were sent up, but in vain. And thus they were obliged to set sail.

On the 8th of May, at six o'clock in the morning, the *Forward* under her topsails, foresails, and topgallant, lost sight of the Uppernawik settlement, and the hideous stakes to which were hung seal-guts and deer-paunches. The wind was blowing from the south-east, and the temperature went up to thirty-two degrees. The sun pierced through the fog, and the ice was getting a little loosened under its dissolving action. But the reflection of the white rays produced a sad effect on the eyesight of several of the crew. Wolsten, the gunsmith, Gripper, Clifton, and Bell were struck with snow blindness, a kind of weakness in the eyes very frequent in spring, and which determines, amongst the Esquimaux, numerous cases of blindness. The doctor advised those who were so afflicted and their companions in general to cover their faces with green gauze, and he was the first to put his own prescription into execution.

The dogs bought by Shandon at Uppernawik were of a rather savage nature, but in the end they became accustomed to the ship; the captain did not take the arrival of these new comrades too much to heart, and he seemed to know their habits. Clifton was not the last to remark the fact that the captain must already have been in communication with his Greenland brethren, as on land they were always famished and reduced by incomplete nourishment; they only thought of recruiting themselves by the diet on board.

On the 9th of May the *Forward* touched within a few cables' length the most westerly of the Baffin Isles. The doctor noticed several rocks in the bay between the islands and the continent, those called Crimson Cliffs; they were covered over with snow as red as carmine, to which Dr. Kane gives a purely vegetable origin. Clawbonny wanted to consider this phenomenon nearer, but the ice prevented them approaching the coast; although the temperature had a tendency to rise, it was easy enough to see that the icebergs and ice-streams were accumulating to the north of Baffin's Sea. The land offered a very different aspect from that of Uppernawik; immense glaciers were outlined on the horizon against a greyish sky. On the 10th the *Forward* left Hingston Bay on the right, near to the seventy-fourth degree of latitude. Several hundred miles westward

the Lancaster Channel opened out into the sea.

But afterwards that immense extent of water disappeared under enormous fields of ice, upon which hummocks rose up as regularly as a crystallisation of the same substance. Shandon had the steam put on, and up to the 11th of May the *Forward* wound amongst the sinuous rocks, leaving the print of a track on the sky, caused by the black smoke from her funnels. But new obstacles were soon encountered; the paths were getting closed up in consequence of the incessant displacement of the floating masses; at every minute a failure of water in front of the *Forward's* prow became imminent, and if she had been nipped it would have been difficult to extricate her. They all knew it, and thought about it.

On board this vessel, without aim or known destination, foolishly seeking to advance towards the north, some symptoms of hesitation were manifested amongst those men, accustomed to an existence of danger; many, forgetting the advantages offered, regretted having ventured so far, and already a certain demoralisation prevailed in their minds, still more increased by Clifton's fears, and the idle talk of two or three of the leaders, such as Pen, Gripper, Warren, and Wolston.

To the uneasiness of the crew were joined overwhelming fatigues, for on the 12th of May the brig was closed in on every side; her steam was powerless, and it was necessary to force a road through the ice-fields. The working of the saws was very difficult in the floes, which measured from six to seven feet in thickness. When two parallel grooves divided the ice for the length of a hundred feet, they had to break the interior part with hatchets or handspikes; then took place the elongation of the anchors, fixed in a hole by means of a thick auger; afterwards the working of the capstan began, and in this way the vessel was hauled over. The greatest difficulty consisted in driving the smashed pieces under the floes in order to open up a free passage for the ship, and to thrust them away they were compelled to use long iron-spiked poles.

At last, what with the working of the saws, the hauling, the capstan and poles, incessant, dangerous, and forced work, in the midst of fogs or thick snow, the temperature relatively low, ophthalmic suffering and moral uneasiness, all contributed to discourage the crew, and react on the men's imagination. When sailors have an energetic, audacious, and convinced man to do with, who knows what he wants, where he is bound for, and what end he has in view, confidence sustains them in spite of everything. They make one with their chief, feeling

strong in his strength, and quiet in his tranquillity; but on the brig it was felt that the commander was not sure of himself, that he hesitated before his unknown end and destination. In spite of his energetic nature, his weakness showed itself in his changing orders, incomplete manoeuvres, stormy reflections, and a thousand details which could not escape the notice of the crew.

Besides, Shandon was not captain of the ship, a sufficient reason for argument about his orders; from argument to a refusal to obey the step is easy. The discontented soon added to their number the first engineer, who up to now had remained a slave to his duty.

On May 16th, six days after the *Forward's* arrival at the icebergs, Shandon had not gained two miles northward, and the ice threatened to freeze in the brig till the following season. This was becoming dangerous. Towards eight in the evening Shandon and the doctor, accompanied by Garry, went on a voyage of discovery in the midst of the immense plains; they took care not to go too far away from the vessel, as it was difficult to fix any landmarks in those white solitudes, the aspects of which changed constantly.

The refraction produced strange effects; they still astonished the doctor; where he thought he had only one foot to leap he found it was five or six, or the contrary; and in both cases the result was a fall, if not dangerous, at least painful, on the frozen ice as hard as glass.

Shandon and his two companions went in search of a practicable passage. Three miles from the ship they succeeded, not without trouble, in climbing the iceberg, which was perhaps three hundred feet high.

From this point their view extended over that desolated mass which looked like the ruins of a gigantic town with its beaten-down obelisks, its overthrown steeples and palaces turned upside down all in a lump--in fact, a genuine chaos. The sun threw long oblique rays of a light without warmth, as if heat-absorbing substances were placed between it and that gloomy country. The sea seemed to be frozen to the remotest limits of view.

"How shall we get through?" exclaimed the doctor.

"I have not the least idea," replied Shandon; "but we will get through, even if we are obliged to employ powder to blow up those mountains, for I certainly won't let that ice shut me up till next spring."

"Nevertheless, such was the fate of the *Fox*, almost in these same quarters. Never mind," continued the doctor, "we shall get through with a little philosophy. Believe me, that is worth all the engines in the world."

"You must acknowledge," replied Shandon, "that the year doesn't begin under very favourable auspices."

"That is incontestable, and I notice that Baffin's Sea has a tendency to return to the same state in which it was before 1817."

"Then you think, doctor, that the present state of things has not always existed?"

"Yes; from time to time there are vast breakings up which scientific men can scarcely explain; thus, up to 1817 this sea was constantly obstructed, when suddenly an immense cataclysm took place which drove back these icebergs into the ocean, the great part of which were stranded on Newfoundland Bank. From that time Baffin's Bay has been almost free, and has become the haunt of numerous whalers."

"Then, since that epoch, voyages to the north have been easier?"

"Incomparably so; but for the last few years it has been observed that the bay has a tendency to be closed up again, and according to investigations made by navigators, it may probably be so for a long time--a still greater reason for us to go on as far as possible. Just now we look like people who get into unknown galleries, the doors of which are always shut behind them."

"Do you advise me to back out?" asked Shandon, endeavouring to read the answer in the doctor's eyes.

"I! I have never known how to take a step backward, and should we never return, I say 'Go ahead.' However, I should like to make known to you that if we do anything imprudent, we know very well what we are exposed to."

"Well, Garry, what do you think about it?" asked Shandon of the sailor.

"I? Commander, I should go on; I'm of the same opinion as Mr. Clawbonny; but you do as you please; command, and we will obey."

"They don't all speak like you, Garry," replied Shandon. "They aren't all in an

obedient humour! Suppose they were to refuse to execute my orders?"

"Commander," replied Garry coldly, "I have given you my advice because you asked me for it; but you are not obliged to act upon it."

Shandon did not reply; he attentively examined the horizon, and descended with his two companions on to the ice-field.

CHAPTER XI

THE DEVIL'S THUMB

During the commander's absence the men had gone through divers works in order to make the ship fit to avoid the pressure of the ice-fields. Pen, Clifton, Gripper, Bolton, and Simpson were occupied in this laborious work; the stoker and the two engineers were even obliged to come to the aid of their comrades, for, from the instant they were not wanted at the engine, they again became sailors, and, as such, they could be employed in all kinds of work on board. But this was not accomplished without a great deal of grumbling.

"I'll tell you what," said Pen, "I've had enough of it, and if in three days the breaking up isn't come, I'll swear to God that I'll chuck up!"

"You'll chuck up?" replied Gripper; "you'd do better to help us to back out. Do you think we are in the humour to winter here till next year?"

"To tell you the truth, it would be a dreary winter," said Plover, "for the ship is exposed from every quarter."

"And who knows," added Brunton, "if even next spring we should find the sea freer than it is now?"

"We aren't talking about next spring," said Pen; "to-day's Thursday; if next Sunday morning the road ain't clear, we'll back out south."

"That's the ticket!" cried Clifton.

"Are you all agreed?" said Pen.

"Yes," answered all his comrades.

"That's right enough," answered Warren, "for if we are obliged to work like this, hauling the ship by the strength of our arms, my advice is to backwater."

"We'll see about that on Sunday," answered Wolsten.

"As soon as I get the order," said Brunton, "I'll soon get my steam up."

"Or we'd manage to get it up ourselves," said Clifton.

"If any of the officers," said Pen, "wants to have the pleasure of wintering here, we'll let him. He can build himself a snow-hut like the Esquimaux."

"Nothing of the kind, Pen," replied Brunton; "we won't leave anybody. You understand that, you others. Besides, I don't think it would be difficult to persuade the commander; he already seems very uncertain, and if we were quietly to propose it----"

"I don't know that," said Plover; "Richard Shandon is a hard, headstrong man, and we should have to sound him carefully."

"When I think," replied Bolton, with a covetous sigh, "that in a month we might be back in Liverpool; we could soon clear the southern ice-line. The pass in Davis's Straits will be open in the beginning of June, and we shall only have to let ourselves drift into the Atlantic."

"Besides," said the prudent Clifton, "if we bring back the commander with us, acting under his responsibility, our pay and bounty money will be sure; whilst if we return alone it won't be so certain."

"That's certain!" said Plover; "that devil of a Clifton speaks like a book. Let us try to have nothing to explain to the Admiralty; it's much safer to leave no one behind us."

"But if the officers refuse to follow us?" replied Pen, who wished to push his comrades to an extremity.

To such a question they were puzzled to reply.

"We shall see about it when the time comes," replied Bolton; "besides, it would be enough to win Richard Shandon over to our side. We shall have no difficulty about that."

"Anyhow," said Pen, swearing, "there's something I'll leave here if I get an arm eaten in the attempt."

"Ah! you mean the dog," said Plover.

"Yes, the dog; and before long I'll settle his hash!"

"The more so," replied Clifton, coming back to his favourite theme, "that the dog is the cause of all our misfortunes."

"He's cast an evil spell over us," said Plover.

"It's through him we're in an iceberg," said Gripper.

"He's the cause that we've had more ice against us than has ever been seen at this time of year," said Wolsten.

"He's the cause of my bad eyes," said Brunton.

"He's cut off the gin and brandy," added Pen.

"He's the cause of everything," said the assembly, getting excited.

"And he's captain into the bargain!" cried Clifton.

"Well, captain of ill-luck," said Pen, whose unreasonable fury grew stronger at every word; "you wanted to come here, and here you'll stay."

"But how are we to nap him?" said Plover.

"We've a good opportunity," replied Clifton; "the commander isn't on deck, the lieutenant is asleep in his cabin, and the fog's thick enough to stop Johnson seeing us."

"But where's the dog?" cried Pen.

"He's asleep near the coalhole," replied Clifton, "and if anybody wants----"

"I'll take charge of him," answered Pen furiously.

"Look out, Pen, he's got teeth that could snap an iron bar in two."

"If he moves I'll cut him open," cried Pen, taking his knife in one hand. He bounced in between decks, followed by Warren, who wanted to help him in his

undertaking. They quickly came back, carrying the animal in their arms, strongly muzzled, with his paws bound tightly together. They had taken him by surprise whilst he slept, so that the unfortunate dog could not escape them.

"Hurrah for Pen!" cried Plover.

"What do you mean to do with him now you've got him?" asked Clifton.

"Why, drown him, and if ever he gets over it----" replied Pen, with a fearful smile of satisfaction.

About two hundred steps from the vessel there was a seal-hole, a kind of circular crevice cut out by the teeth of that amphibious animal, hollowed out from underneath, and through which the seal comes up to breathe on to the surface of the ice. To keep this aperture from closing up he has to be very careful because the formation of his jaws would not enable him to bore through the hole again from the outside, and in a moment of danger he would fall a prey to his enemies. Pen and Warren directed their steps towards this crevice, and there, in spite of the dog's energetic efforts, he was unmercifully precipitated into the sea. An enormous lump of ice was then placed over the opening, thus closing all possible issue to the poor animal, walled up in a watery prison.

"Good luck to you, captain," cried the brutal sailor.

Shortly afterwards Pen and Warren returned on deck. Johnson had seen nothing of this performance. The fog thickened round about the ship, and snow began to fall with violence. An hour later, Richard Shandon, the doctor, and Garry rejoined the *Forward*. Shandon had noticed a pass in a north-eastern direction of which he was resolved to take advantage, and gave his orders in consequence. The crew obeyed with a certain activity, not without hinting to Shandon that it was impossible to go further on, and that they only gave him three more days' obedience. During a part of the night and the following day the working of the saws and the hauling were actively kept up; the *Forward* gained about two miles further north. On the 18th she was in sight of land, and at five or six cable-lengths from a peculiar peak, called from its strange shape the Devil's Thumb.

It was there that the *Prince Albert* in 1851, and the *Advance* with Kane, in 1853, were kept prisoners by the ice for several weeks. The odd form of the Devil's Thumb, the dreary deserts in its vicinity, the vast circus of icebergs--some of them more than three hundred feet high--the cracking of the ice, reproduced by

the echo in so sinister a manner, rendered the position of the *Forward* horribly dreary. Shandon understood the necessity of getting out of it and going further ahead. Twenty-four hours later, according to his estimation, he had been able to clear the fatal coast for about two miles, but this was not enough. Shandon, overwhelmed with fear, and the false situation in which he was placed, lost both courage and energy; in order to obey his instructions and get further north, he had thrown his vessel into an excessively perilous situation. The men were worn out by the hauling; it required more than three hours to hollow out a channel twenty feet long, through ice that was usually from four to five feet thick. The health of the crew threatened to break down. Shandon was astonished at the silence of his men and their unaccustomed obedience, but he feared that it was the calm before the storm. Who can judge, then, of his painful disappointment, surprise, and despair when he perceived that in consequence of an insensible movement of the ice-field the *Forward* had, during the night from the 18th to the 19th, lost all the advantage she had gained with so much toil? On the Saturday morning they were once more opposite the ever-threatening Devil's Thumb, and in a still more critical position. The icebergs became more numerous, and drifted by in the fog like phantoms. Shandon was in a state of complete demoralisation, for fright had taken possession of the dauntless man and his crew. Shandon had heard the dog's disappearance spoken about, but dared not punish those who were guilty of it. He feared that a rebellion might be the consequence. The weather was fearful during the whole day; the snow rose up in thick whirlpools, wrapping up the *Forward* in an impenetrable cloak. Sometimes, under the action of the storm, the fog was torn asunder, and displayed towards land, raised up like a spectre, the Devil's Thumb.

The *Forward* was anchored to an immense block of ice; it was all that could be done; there was nothing more to attempt; the obscurity became denser, and the man at the helm could not see James Wall, who was on duty in the bow. Shandon withdrew to his cabin, a prey to unremitting uneasiness; the doctor was putting his voyage notes in order; one half the crew remained on deck, the other half stayed in the common cabin. At one moment, when the storm increased in fury, the Devil's Thumb seemed to rise up out of all proportion in the midst of the fog.

"Good God!" cried Simpson, drawing back with fright.

"What the devil's that?" said Foker, and exclamations rose up in every direction.

"It is going to smash us!"

"We are lost!"

"Mr. Wall! Mr. Wall!"

"It's all over with us!"

"Commander! Commander!"

These cries were simultaneously uttered by the men on watch. Wall fled to the quarter-deck, and Shandon, followed by the doctor, rushed on deck to look. In the midst of the fog the Devil's Thumb seemed to have suddenly neared the brig, and seemed to have grown in a most fantastic manner. At its summit rose up a second cone, turned upside down and spindled on its point; its enormous mass threatened to crush the ship, as it was oscillating and ready to fall. It was a most fearful sight; every one instinctively drew back, and several sailors, leaping on to the ice, abandoned the ship.

"Let no one move!" cried the commander in a severe voice. "Every one to his post!"

"How now, my friends? There's nothing to be frightened at!" said the doctor. "There's no danger! Look, commander, look ahead, Mr. Wall; it's only an effect of the mirage, nothing else."

"You are quite right, Mr. Clawbonny," answered Johnson; "those fools were frightened at a shadow."

After the doctor had spoken most of the sailors drew near, and their fear changed to admiration at the wonderful phenomenon, which shortly disappeared from sight.

"They call that a mirage?" said Clifton. "Well, you may believe me that the devil has something to do with it."

"That's certain!" replied Gripper.

But when the fog cleared away it disclosed to the eyes of the commander an immense free and unexpected passage; it seemed to run away from the coast, and he therefore determined to seize such a favourable hazard. Men were placed on each side of the creek, hawsers were lowered down to them, and they began to

tow the vessel in a northerly direction. During long hours this work was actively executed in silence. Shandon caused the steam to be got up, in order to take advantage of the fortunate discovery of this channel.

"This," said he to Johnson, "is a most providential hazard, and if we can only get a few miles ahead, we shall probably get to the end of our misfortunes."

"Brunton! stir up the fires, and as soon as there's enough pressure let me know. In the meantime our men will pluck up their courage--that will be so much gained. They are in a hurry to run away from the Devil's Thumb; we'll take advantage of their good inclinations!"

All at once the progress of the *Forward* was abruptly arrested.

"What's up?" cried Shandon. "I say, Wall! have we broken our tow-ropes?"

"Not at all, commander," answered Wall, looking over the side. "Hallo! Here are the men coming back again. They are climbing the ship's side as if the devil was at their heels."

"What the deuce can it be?" cried Shandon, rushing forward.

"On board! On board!" cried the terrified sailors.

Shandon looked in a northerly direction, and shuddered in spite of himself. A strange animal, with appalling movements, whose foaming tongue emerged from enormous jaws, was leaping about at a cable's length from the ship. In appearance he seemed to be about twenty feet high, with hair like bristles; he was following up the sailors, whilst his formidable tail, ten feet long, was sweeping the snow and throwing it up in thick whirlwinds. The sight of such a monster riveted the most daring to the spot.

"It's a bear!" said one.

"It's the Gevaudan beast!"

"It's the lion of the Apocalypse!"

Shandon ran to his cabin for a gun he always kept loaded. The doctor armed himself, and held himself in readiness to fire upon an animal which, by its

dimensions, recalled the antediluvian quadrupeds. He neared the ship in immense leaps; Shandon and the doctor fired at the same time, when, suddenly, the report of their firearms, shaking the atmospheric stratum, produced an unexpected effect. The doctor looked attentively, and burst out laughing.

"It's the refraction!" he exclaimed.

"Only the refraction!" repeated Shandon. But a fearful exclamation from the crew interrupted them.

"The dog!" said Clifton.

"The dog, captain!" repeated all his comrades.

"Himself!" cried Pen; "always that cursed brute."

They were not mistaken--it was the dog. Having got loose from his shackles, he had regained the surface by another crevice. At that instant the refraction, through a phenomenon common to these latitudes, caused him to appear under formidable dimensions, which the shaking of the air had dispersed; but the vexatious effect was none the less produced upon the minds of the sailors, who were very little disposed to admit an explanation of the fact by purely physical reasons. The adventure of the Devil's Thumb, the reappearance of the dog under such fantastic circumstances, gave the finishing touch to their mental faculties, and murmurs broke out on all sides.

CHAPTER XII

CAPTAIN HATTERAS

The *Forward*, under steam, rapidly made its way between the ice-mountains and the icebergs. Johnson was at the wheel. Shandon, with his snow spectacles, was examining the horizon, but his joy was of short duration, for he soon discovered that the passage ended in a circus of mountains. However, he preferred going on, in spite of the difficulty, to going back. The dog followed the brig at a long distance, running along the plain, but if he lagged too far behind a singular whistle could be distinguished, which he immediately obeyed. The first time this whistle was heard the sailors looked round about them; they were alone on deck all together, and no stranger was to be seen; and yet the whistle was again heard from time to time. Clifton was the first alarmed.

"Do you hear?" said he. "Just look how that animal answers when he hears the whistle."

"I can scarcely believe my eyes," answered Gripper.

"It's all over!" cried Pen. "I don't go any further."

"Pen's right!" replied Brunton; "it's tempting God!"

"Tempting the devil!" replied Clifton. "I'd sooner lose my bounty money than go a step further."

"We shall never get back!" said Bolton in despair.

The crew had arrived at the highest pitch of insubordination.

"Not a step further!" cried Wolsten. "Are you all of the same mind?"

"Ay! ay!" answered all the sailors.

"Come on, then," said Bolton; "let's go and find the commander; I'll undertake the talking."

The sailors in a tight group swayed away towards the poop. The *Forward* at the time was penetrating into a vast circus, which measured perhaps 800 feet in diameter, and with the exception of one entrance--that by which the vessel had come--was entirely closed up.

Shandon said that he had just imprisoned himself; but what was he to do? How were they to retrace their steps? He felt his responsibility, and his hand grasped the telescope. The doctor, with folded arms, kept silent; he was contemplating the walls of ice, the medium altitude of which was over 300 feet. A foggy dome remained suspended above the gulf. It was at this instant that Bolton addressed his speech to the commander.

"Commander!" said he in a trembling voice, "we can't go any further."

"What do you say?" replied Shandon, whose consciousness of disregarded authority made the blood rise to the roots of his hair.

"Commander," replied Bolton, "we say that we've done enough for that invisible captain, and we are decided to go no further ahead."

"You are decided?" cried Shandon. "You talk thus, Bolton? Take care!"

"Your threats are all the same to us," brutally replied Pen; "we won't go an inch further."

Shandon advanced towards the mutineers; at the same time the mate came up and said in a whisper: "Commander, if you wish to get out of here we haven't a minute to lose; there's an iceberg drifting up the pass, and it is very likely to cork up all issue and keep us prisoners."

Shandon examined the situation.

"You will give an account of your conduct later on, you fellows," said he. "Now heave aboard!"

The sailors rushed to their posts, and the *Forward* quickly veered round; the fires were stuffed with coals; the great question was to outrun the floating mountain. It was a struggle between the brig and the iceberg. The former, in order to get through, was running south; the latter was drifting north, ready to close up every passage.

"Steam up! steam up!" cried Shandon. "Do you hear, Brunton?"

The *Forward* glided like a bird amidst the struggling icebergs, which her prow sent to the right-about; the brig's hull shivered under the action of the screw, and the manometer indicated a prodigious tension of steam, for it whistled with a deafening noise.

"Load the valves!" cried Shandon, and the engineer obeyed at the risk of blowing up the ship; but his despairing efforts were in vain. The iceberg, caught up by an undercurrent, rapidly approached the pass. The brig was still about three cables' length from it, when the mountain, entering like a corner-stone into the open space, strongly adhered to its neighbours and closed up all issue.

"We are lost!" cried Shandon, who could not retain the imprudent words.

"Lost!" repeated the crew.

"Let them escape who can!" said some.

"Lower the shore boats!" said others.

"To the steward's room!" cried Pen and several of his band, "and if we are to be drowned, let's drown ourselves in gin!"

Disorder among the men was at its height. Shandon felt himself overcome; when he wished to command, he stammered and hesitated. His thought was unable to make way through his words. The doctor was walking about in agitation. Johnson stoically folded his arms and said nothing. All at once a strong, imperious, and energetic voice was heard to pronounce these words:

"Every man to his post and tack about!"

Johnson started, and, hardly knowing what he did, turned the wheel rapidly. He was just in time, for the brig, launched at full speed, was about to crush herself against her prison walls. But while Johnson was instinctively obeying, Shandon, Clawbonny, the crew, and all down to the stoker Warren, who had abandoned his fires, even black Strong, who had left his cooking, were all mustered on deck, and saw emerge from that cabin the only man who was in possession of the key, and that man was Garry, the sailor.

"Sir!" cried Shandon, becoming pale. "Garry--you--by what right do you command here?"

"Dick," called out Garry, reproducing that whistle which had so much surprised the crew. The dog, at the sound of his right name, jumped with one bound on to the poop and lay quietly down at his master's feet. The crew did not say a word. The key which the captain of the *Forward* alone possessed, the dog sent by him, and who came thus to verify his identity, that commanding accent which it was impossible to mistake--all this acted strongly on the minds of the sailors, and was sufficient to establish Garry's authority.

Besides, Garry was no longer recognisable; he had cut off the long whiskers which had covered his face, which made it look more energetic and imperious than ever; dressed in the clothes of his rank which had been deposited in the cabin, he appeared in the insignia of commander.

Then immediately, with that mobility which characterised them, the crew of the *Forward* cried out--"Three cheers for the captain!"

"Shandon!" said the latter to his second, "muster the crew; I am going to inspect it!"

Shandon obeyed and gave orders with an altered voice. The captain advanced to meet his officers and men, saying something suitable to each, and treating each according to his past conduct. When he had finished the inspection, he returned on to the poop, and with a calm voice pronounced the following words:

"Officers and sailors, like you, I am English, and my motto is that of Nelson, 'England expects that every man will do his duty.' As an Englishman I am resolved, we are resolved, that no bolder men shall go further than we have been. As an Englishman I will not allow, we will not allow, other people to have the glory of pushing further north themselves. If ever human foot can step upon the land of the North Pole, it shall be the foot of an Englishman. Here is our country's flag. I have equipped this vessel, and consecrated my fortune to this enterprise, and, if necessary, I shall consecrate to it my life and yours; for I am determined that these colours shall float on the North Pole. Take courage. From this day, for every degree we can gain northwards the sum of a thousand pounds will be awarded to you. There are ninety, for we are now in the seventy-second. Count them. Besides, my name is enough. It means energy and patriotism. I am

Captain Hatteras!"

"Captain Hatteras!" exclaimed Shandon, and that name, well known to English sailors, was whispered amongst the crew.

"Now," continued Hatteras, "anchor the brig to the ice, put out the fires, and each of you return to your usual work. Shandon, I wish to hold a council with you relative to affairs on board. Join me with the doctor, Wall, and the boatswain in my cabin. Johnson, disperse the men."

Hatteras, calm and haughty, quietly left the poop. In the meantime Shandon was anchoring the brig.

Who, then, was this Hatteras, and for what reason did his name make such a profound impression upon the crew? John Hatteras was the only son of a London brewer, who died in 1852 worth six millions of money. Still young, he embraced the maritime career in spite of the splendid fortune awaiting him. Not that he felt any vocation for commerce, but the instinct of geographical discoveries was dear to him. He had always dreamt of placing his foot where no mortal foot had yet soiled the ground.

At the age of twenty he was already in possession of the vigorous constitution of a thin and sanguine man; an energetic face, with lines geometrically traced; a high and perpendicular forehead; cold but handsome eyes; thin lips, which set off a mouth from which words rarely issued; a middle stature; solidly-jointed limbs, put in motion by iron muscles; the whole forming a man endowed with a temperament fit for anything. When you saw him you felt he was daring; when you heard him you knew he was coldly determined; his was a character that never drew back, ready to stake the lives of others as well as his own. It was well to think twice before following him in his expeditions.

John Hatteras was proud of being an Englishman. A Frenchman once said to him, with what he thought was refined politeness and amiability:

"If I were not a Frenchman I should like to be an Englishman."

"And if I were not an Englishman," answered Hatteras, "I should like to be an Englishman."

That answer revealed the character of the man. It was a great grief to him that

Englishmen had not the monopoly of geographical discoveries, and were, in fact, rather behind other nations in that field.

Christopher Columbus, the discoverer of America, was a Genoese; Vasco da Gama, a Portuguese, discovered India; another Portuguese, Fernando de Andrada, China; and a third, Magellan, the Terra del Fuego. Canada was discovered by Jacques Cartier, a Frenchman; Labrador, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, the Azores, Madeira, Newfoundland, Guinea, Congo, Mexico, Cape Blanco, Greenland, Iceland, the South Seas, California, Japan, Cambodia, Peru, Kamtchatka, the Philippines, Spitzbergen, Cape Horn, Behring's Straits, Tasmania, New Zealand, New Brittany, New Holland, Louisiana, Jean Mayen Island, were discovered by Icelanders, Scandinavians, French, Russians, Portuguese, Danes, Spaniards, Genoese, and Dutch, but not one by an Englishman. Captain Hatteras could not reconcile himself to the fact that Englishmen were excluded from the glorious list of navigators who made the great discoveries of the 15th and 16th centuries.

Hatteras consoled himself a little when he turned to more modern times. Then Englishmen had the best of it with Sturt, Burke, Wills, King, and Grey in Australia; with Palliser in America; with Cyril Graham, Wadington, and Cummingham in India; with Burton, Speke, Grant, and Livingstone in Africa.

But for a man like Hatteras this was not enough; from his point of view these bold travellers were *improvers* rather than *inventors*; and he was determined to do something better, and he would have invented a country if he could, only to have the honour of discovering it. Now he had noticed that, although Englishmen did not form a majority amongst ancient discoverers, and that he had to go back to Cook in 1774 to obtain New Caledonia and the Sandwich Isles, where the unfortunate captain perished in 1778, yet there existed, nevertheless, a corner of the globe where they seemed to have united all their efforts. This corner was precisely the boreal lands and seas of North America. The list of Polar discoveries may be thus written:

Nova Zembla, discovered by Willoughby, in 1553; Weigatz Island, by Barrough, in 1556; the West Coast of Greenland, by Davis, in 1585; Davis's Straits, by Davis, in 1587; Spitzbergen, by Willoughby, in 1596; Hudson's Bay, by Hudson, in 1610; Baffin's Bay, by Baffin, in 1616.

In more modern times, Hearne, Mackenzie, John Ross, Parry, Franklin,

Richardson, Beechey, James Ross, Back, Dease, Simpson, Rae, Inglefield, Belcher, Austin, Kellett, Moore, McClure, Kennedy, and McClintock have continually searched those unknown lands.

The limits of the northern coasts of America had been fixed, and the North-West passage almost discovered, but this was not enough; there was something better still to be done, and John Hatteras had twice attempted it by equipping two ships at his own expense. He wanted to reach the North Pole, and thus crown the series of English discoveries by one of the most illustrious attempts. To attain the Pole was the aim of his life.

After a few successful cruises in the Southern seas, Hatteras endeavoured for the first time, in 1846, to go north by Baffin's Sea; but he could not get beyond the seventy-fourth degree of latitude; he was then commanding the sloop *Halifax*. His crew suffered atrocious torments, and John Hatteras pushed his adventurous rashness so far, that, afterwards, sailors were little tempted to re-commence similar expeditions under such a chief.

However, in 1850 Hatteras succeeded in enrolling on the schooner *Farewell* about twenty determined men, tempted principally by the high prize offered for their audacity. It was upon that occasion that Dr. Clawbonny entered into correspondence with John Hatteras, whom he did not know, requesting to join the expedition, but happily for the doctor the post was already filled up. The *Farewell*, following the track taken in 1817 by the *Neptune* from Aberdeen, got up to the north of Spitzbergen as far as the seventy-sixth degree of latitude. There the expedition was compelled to winter. But the sufferings of the crew from the intense cold were so great that not a single man saw England again, with the exception of Hatteras himself, who was brought back to his own country by a Danish whaler after a walk of more than two hundred miles across the ice.

The sensation produced by the return of this one man was immense. Who in future would dare to follow Hatteras in his mad attempts? However, he did not despair of beginning again. His father, the brewer, died, and he became possessor of a nabob's fortune. Soon after a geographical fact bitterly stirred up John Hatteras. A brig, the *Advance*, manned by seventeen men, equipped by a merchant named Grinnell, under the command of Dr. Kane, and sent in search of Sir John Franklin, advanced in 1853 through Baffin's Sea and Smith's Strait, beyond the eighty-second degree of boreal latitude, much nearer the Pole than

any of his predecessors. Now, this vessel was American, Grinnell was American, and Kane was American. The Englishman's disdain for the Yankee will be easily understood; in the heart of Hatteras it changed to hatred; he was resolved to outdo his audacious competitor and reach the Pole itself.

For two years he had been living incognito in Liverpool, passing himself off as a sailor; he recognised in Richard Shandon the man he wanted; he sent him an offer by an anonymous letter, and one to Dr. Clawbonny at the same time. The *Forward* was built, armed, and equipped. Hatteras took great care to conceal his name, for had it been known he would not have found a single man to accompany him. He was determined not to take the command of the brig except in a moment of danger, and when his crew had gone too far to draw back. He had in reserve, as we have seen, such offers of money to make to the men that not one of them would refuse to follow him to the other end of the world; and, in fact, it was right to the other end of the world that he meant to go. Circumstances had become critical, and John Hatteras had made himself known. His dog, the faithful Dick, the companion of his voyages, was the first to recognise him. Luckily for the brave and unfortunately for the timid, it was well and duly established that John Hatteras was the captain of the *Forward*.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PROJECTS OF HATTERAS

The appearance of this bold personage was appreciated in different ways by the crew; part of them completely rallied round him, either from love of money or daring; others submitted because they could not help themselves, reserving their right to protest later on; besides, resistance to such a man seemed, for the present, difficult. Each man went back to his post. The 20th of May fell on a Sunday, and was consequently a day of rest for the crew. A council was held by the captain, composed of the officers, Shandon, Wall, Johnson, and the doctor.

"Gentlemen," said the captain in that voice at the same time soft and imperious which characterised him, "you are aware that I intend to go as far as the Pole. I wish to know your opinion about this enterprise. Shandon, what do you think about it?"

"It is not for me to think, captain," coldly replied Shandon; "I have only to obey."

Hatteras was not surprised at the answer.

"Richard Shandon," continued he, not less coldly, "I beg you will say what you think about our chance of success."

"Very well, captain," answered Shandon, "facts are there, and answer for me; attempts of the same kind up till now have always failed; I hope we shall be more fortunate."

"We shall be. What do you think, gentlemen?"

"As far as I am concerned," replied the doctor, "I consider your plan practicable, as it is certain that some day navigators will attain the boreal Pole. I don't see why the honour should not fall to our lot."

"There are many things in our favour," answered Hatteras; "our measures are taken in consequence, and we shall profit by the experience of those who have gone before us. And thereupon, Shandon, accept my thanks for the care you have taken in fitting out this ship; there are a few evil-disposed fellows amongst the

crew that I shall have to bring to reason, but on the whole I have only praises to give you."

Shandon bowed coldly. His position on the *Forward*, which he thought to command, was a false one. Hatteras understood this, and did not insist further.

"As to you, gentlemen," he continued, turning to Wall and Johnson, "I could not have secured officers more distinguished for courage and experience."

"Well, captain, I'm your man," answered Johnson, "and although your enterprise seems to me rather daring, you may rely upon me till the end."

"And on me too," said James Wall.

"As to you, doctor, I know what you are worth."

"You know more than I do, then," quickly replied the doctor.

"Now, gentlemen," continued Hatteras, "it is well you should learn upon what undeniable facts my pretension to arrive at the Pole is founded. In 1817 the *Neptune* got up to the north of Spitzbergen, as far as the eighty-second degree. In 1826 the celebrated Parry, after his third voyage to the Polar Seas, started also from Spitzbergen Point, and by the aid of sledge-boats went a hundred and fifty miles northward. In 1852 Captain Inglefield penetrated into Smith's Inlet as far as seventy-eight degrees thirty-five minutes latitude. All these vessels were English, and Englishmen, our countrymen, commanded them." Here Hatteras paused. "I ought to add," he continued, with a constrained look, and as though the words were unable to leave his lips--"I must add that, in 1854, Kane, the American, commanding the brig *Advance*, went still higher, and that his lieutenant, Morton, going across the ice-fields, hoisted the United States standard on the other side of the eighty-second degree. This said, I shall not return to the subject. Now what remains to be known is this, that the captains of the *Neptune*, the *Enterprise*, the *Isabel*, and the *Advance* ascertained that proceeding from the highest latitudes there existed a Polar basin entirely free from ice."

"Free from ice!" exclaimed Shandon, interrupting the captain, "that is impossible!"

"You will notice, Shandon," quietly replied Hatteras, whose eye shone for an

instant, "that I quote names and facts as a proof. I may even add that during Captain Parry's station on the border of Wellington Channel, in 1851, his lieutenant, Stewart, also found himself in the presence of open sea, and this peculiarity was confirmed during Sir Edward Beecher's wintering in 1853, in Northumberland Bay, in 76 degrees 52 minutes N. latitude, and 99 degrees 20 minutes longitude. The reports are incontestable, and it would be most unjust not to admit them."

"However, captain," continued Shandon, "those reports are so contradictory."

"You are mistaken, Shandon," cried Dr. Clawbonny. "These reports do not contradict any scientific assertion, the captain will allow me to tell you."

"Go on, doctor," answered Hatteras.

"Well, listen, Shandon; it evidently follows from geographical facts, and from the study of isotherm lines, that the coldest point of the globe is not at the Pole itself; like the magnetic point, it deviates several degrees from the Pole. The calculations of Brewster, Bergham, and several other natural philosophers show us that in our hemisphere there are two cold Poles; one is situated in Asia at 79 degrees 30 minutes N. latitude, and by 120 degrees E. longitude, and the other in America at 78 degrees N. latitude, and 97 degrees W. longitude. It is with the latter that we have to do, and you see, Shandon, we have met with it at more than twelve degrees below the Pole. Well, why should not the Polar Sea be as equally disengaged from ice as the sixty-sixth parallel is in summer--that is to say, the south of Baffin's Bay?"

"That's what I call well pleaded," replied Johnson. "Mr. Clawbonny speaks upon these matters like a professional man."

"It appears very probable," chimed in James Wall.

"All guess-work," answered Shandon obstinately.

"Well, Shandon," said Hatteras, "let us take into consideration either case; either the sea is free from ice or it is not so, and neither of these suppositions can hinder us from attaining the Pole. If the sea is free the *Forward* will take us there without trouble; if it is frozen we will attempt the adventure upon our sledges. This, you will allow, is not impracticable. When once our brig has attained the eighty-third degree we shall only have six hundred miles to traverse before

reaching the Pole."

"And what are six hundred miles?" quickly answered the doctor, "when it is known that a Cossack, Alexis Markoff, went over the ice sea along the northern coast of the Russian Empire, in sledges drawn by dogs, for the space of eight hundred miles in twenty-four days?"

"Do you hear that, Shandon?" said Hatteras; "can't Englishmen do as much as a Cossack?"

"Of course they can," cried the impetuous doctor.

"Of course," added the boatswain.

"Well, Shandon?" said the captain.

"I can only repeat what I said before, captain," said Shandon--"I will obey."

"Very good. And now," continued Hatteras, "let us consider our present situation. We are caught by the ice, and it seems to me impossible, for this year at least, to get into Smith's Strait. Well, here, then, this is what I propose."

Hatteras laid open upon the table one of the excellent maps published in 1859 by the order of the Admiralty.

"Be kind enough to follow me. If Smith's Strait is closed up from us, Lancaster Strait, on the west coast of Baffin's Sea, is not. I think we ought to ascend that strait as far as Barrow Strait, and from there sail to Beechey Island; the same track has been gone over a hundred times by sailing vessels; consequently with a screw we can do it easily. Once at Beechey Island we will go north as far as possible, by Wellington Channel, up to the outlet of the creek which joins Wellington's and Queen's Channels, at the very point where the open sea was perceived. It is now only the 20th of May; in a month, if circumstances favour us, we shall have attained that point, and from there we'll drive forward towards the Pole. What do you think about it, gentlemen?"

"It is evidently the only track to follow," replied Johnson.

"Very well, we will take it from to-morrow. I shall let them rest to-day as it is Sunday. Shandon, you will take care that religious service be attended to; it has a

beneficial effect on the minds of men, and a sailor above all needs to place confidence in the Almighty."

"It shall be attended to, captain," answered Shandon, who went out with the lieutenant and the boatswain.

"Doctor!" said Hatteras, pointing towards Shandon, "there's a man whose pride is wounded; I can no longer rely upon him."

Early the following day the captain caused the pirogue to be lowered in order to reconnoitre the icebergs in the vicinity, the breadth of which did not exceed 200 yards. He remarked that through a slow pressure of the ice the basin threatened to become narrower. It became urgent, therefore, to make an aperture to prevent the ship being crushed in a vice of the mountains. By the means employed by John Hatteras, it is easy to observe that he was an energetic man.

He first had steps cut out in the walls of ice, and by their means climbed to the summit of an iceberg. From that point he saw that it was easy for him to cut out a road towards the south-west. By his orders a blasting furnace was hollowed nearly in the heart of the mountain. This work, rapidly put into execution, was terminated by noon on Monday. Hatteras could not rely on his eight or ten pound blasting cylinders, which would have had no effect on such masses as those. They were only sufficient to shatter ice-fields. He therefore had a thousand pounds of powder placed in the blasting furnace, of which the diffusive direction was carefully calculated. This mine was provided with a long wick, bound in gutta-percha, the end of which was outside. The gallery conducting to the mine was filled up with snow and lumps of ice, which the cold of the following night made as hard as granite. The temperature, under the influence of an easterly wind, came down to twelve degrees.

At seven the next morning the *Forward* was held under steam, ready to profit by the smallest issue. Johnson was charged with setting fire to the wick, which, according to calculation, would burn for half an hour before setting fire to the mine. Johnson had, therefore, plenty of time to regain the brig; ten minutes after having executed Hatteras's order he was again at his post. The crew remained on deck, for the weather was dry and bright; it had left off snowing.

Hatteras was on the poop, chronometer in hand, counting the minutes; Shandon and the doctor were with him. At eight thirty-five a dull explosion was heard,

much less loud than any one would have supposed. The outline of the mountains was changed all at once as if by an earthquake; thick white smoke rose up to a considerable height in the sky, leaving long crevices in the iceberg, the top part of which fell in pieces all round the *Forward*. But the path was not yet free; large blocks of ice remained suspended above the pass on the adjacent mountains, and there was every reason to fear that they would fall and close up the passage. Hatteras took in the situation at one glance.

"Wolsten!" cried he.

The gunsmith hastened up.

"Yes, captain?" cried he.

"Load the gun in the bow with a triple charge," said Hatteras, "and wad it as hard as possible."

"Are we going to attack the mountain with cannon-balls?" asked the doctor.

"No," answered Hatteras, "that would be useless. No bullet, Wolsten, but a triple charge of powder. Look sharp!"

A few minutes after the gun was loaded.

"What does he mean to do without a bullet?" muttered Shandon between his teeth.

"We shall soon see," answered the doctor.

"Ready, captain!" called out Wolsten.

"All right!" replied Hatteras.

"Brunton!" he called out to the engineer, "a few turns ahead."

Brunton opened the sliders, and the screw being put in movement, the *Forward* neared the mined mountain.

"Aim at the pass!" cried the captain to the gunsmith. The latter obeyed, and when the brig was only half a cable's length from it, Hatteras called out:

"Fire!"

A formidable report followed his order, and the blocks, shaken by the atmospheric commotion, were suddenly precipitated into the sea; the disturbance amongst the strata of the air had been sufficient to accomplish this.

"All steam on, Brunton! Straight for the pass, Johnson!"

The latter was at the helm; the brig, driven along by her screw, which turned in the foaming waves, dashed into the middle of the then opened pass; it was time, for scarcely had the *Forward* cleared the opening than her prison closed up again behind her. It was a thrilling moment, and on board there was only one stout and undisturbed heart--that of the captain. The crew, astonished at the manoeuvre, cried out:

"Hurrah for the captain!"

CHAPTER XIV

EXPEDITION IN SEARCH OF FRANKLIN

On Wednesday, the 23rd of May, the *Forward* had again taken up her adventurous navigation, cleverly tacking amongst the packs and icebergs. Thanks to steam, that obedient force which so many of our Polar sea navigators have had to do without, she appeared to be playing in the midst of the moving rocks. She seemed to recognise the hand of an experienced master, and like a horse under an able rider, she obeyed the thought of her captain. The temperature rose. At six o'clock in the morning the thermometer marked twenty-six degrees, at six in the evening twenty-nine degrees, and at midnight twenty-five degrees; the wind was lightly blowing from the south-east.

On Thursday, towards three in the morning, the *Forward* was in sight of Possession Bay, on the coast of America. At the entrance to Lancaster Strait, shortly after, the crew caught a glimpse of Burney Cape. A few Esquimaux pulled off towards the vessel, but Hatteras did not take the trouble to wait for them. The Byam-Martin peaks, which overlook Cape Liverpool, were sighted to the left, and soon disappeared in the evening mists, which also prevented any observation being taken from Cape Hay. This cape is so low that it gets confounded with the ice on the coast, a circumstance which often renders the hydrographic determination of the Polar seas extremely difficult.

Puffins, ducks, and white sea-gulls showed up in very great numbers. The *Forward* was then in latitude 74 degrees 1 minute, and in longitude 77 degrees 15 minutes. The snowy hoods of the two mountains, Catherine and Elizabeth, rose up above the clouds.

On Friday, at six o'clock, Cape Warender was passed on the right side of the strait, and on the left Admiralty Inlet, a bay that has been little explored by navigators, who are generally in a hurry to sail away west. The sea became rather rough, and the waves often swept the deck of the brig, throwing up pieces of ice. The land on the north coast, with its high table lands almost level, and which reverberated the sun's rays, offered a very curious appearance.

Hatteras wanted to run along the north coast, in order to reach Beechey Island and the entrance to Wellington Channel sooner; but continual icebergs compelled

him, to his great annoyance, to follow the southern passes. That was why, on the 26th of May, the *Forward* was abreast of Cape York in a thick fog interspersed with snow; a very high mountain, almost perpendicular, caused it to be recognised. The weather cleared up a little, and the sun, towards noon, appeared for an instant, allowing a tolerably good observation to be taken; 74 degrees 4 minutes latitude and 84 degrees 23 minutes longitude. The *Forward* was then at the extremity of Lancaster Strait.

Hatteras pointed out to the doctor on his map the route already taken, and the one he meant to follow. The position of the brig at the time was very interesting.

"I should like to have been further north," said he, "but no one can do the impossible; see, this is our exact situation."

And the captain pricked his map at a short distance from Cape York.

"We are in the centre of this four-road way, open to every wind, fenced by the outlets of Lancaster Strait, Barrow Strait, Wellington Channel, and Regent's Passage; it is a point that all navigators in these seas have been obliged to come to."

"Well," replied the doctor, "it must have puzzled them greatly; four cross-roads with no sign-posts to tell them which to take. How did Parry, Ross, and Franklin manage?"

"They did not manage at all, they were managed; they had no choice, I can assure you; sometimes Barrow Strait was closed to one of them, and the next year another found it open; sometimes the vessel was irresistibly drawn towards Regent's Passage, so that we have ended by becoming acquainted with these inextricable seas."

"What a singular country!" said the doctor, examining the map. "It is all in pieces, and they seem to have no logical connection. It seems as if the land in the vicinity of the North Pole had been cut up like this on purpose to make access to it more difficult, whilst that in the other hemisphere quietly terminates in tapered-out points like those of Cape Horn, the Cape of Good Hope, and the Indian Peninsula. Is it the greater rapidity of the equator which has thus modified matters, whilst the land at the extremities, yet fluid from the creation, has not been able to get condensed or agglomerated together, for want of a sufficiently rapid rotation?"

"That must be the case, for everything on earth is logical, and 'nothing is that errs from law,' and God often allows men to discover His laws; make use of His permission, doctor."

"Unfortunately, I shall not be able to take much advantage of it," said the doctor, "but the wind here is something dreadful," added he, muffling himself up as well as he could.

"Yes, we are quite exposed to the north wind, and it is turning us out of our road."

"Anyhow it ought to drive the ice down south, and level a clear road."

"It ought to do so, doctor, but the wind does not always do what it ought. Look, that ice-bank seems impenetrable. Never mind, we will try to reach Griffith Island, sail round Cornwallis Island, and get into Queen's Channel without going by Wellington Channel. Nevertheless I positively desire to touch at Beechey Island in order to renew my coal provision."

"What do you mean?" asked the astonished doctor.

"I mean that, according to orders from the Admiralty, large provisions have been deposited on that island in order to provide for future expeditions, and although Captain McClintock took some in 1859, I assure you that there will be some left for us."

"By-the-bye," said the doctor, "these parts have been explored for the last fifteen years, and since the day when the proof of the loss of Franklin was acquired, the Admiralty has always kept five or six cruisers in these seas. If I am not mistaken, Griffith Island, which I see there on the map, almost in the middle of the cross-roads, has become a general meeting-place for navigators."

"It is so, doctor; and Franklin's unfortunate expedition resulted in making known these distant countries to us."

"That is true, captain, for since 1845 expeditions have been very numerous. It was not until 1848 that we began to be uneasy about the disappearance of the *Erebus* and the *Terror*, Franklin's two vessels. It was then that we saw the admiral's old friend, Dr. Richardson, at the age of seventy, go to Canada, and ascend Coppermine River as far as the Polar Sea; and James Ross, commanding

the *Enterprise* and *Investigation*, set out from Uppernawik in 1848 and arrived at Cape York, where we now are. Every day he threw a tub containing papers into the sea, for the purpose of making known his whereabouts. During the mists he caused the cannon to be fired, and had sky-rockets sent up at night along with Bengal lights, and kept under sail continually. He wintered in Port Leopold from 1848 to 1849, where he took possession of a great number of white foxes, and caused brass collars, upon which was engraved the indication of the whereabouts of ships and the store depots, to be riveted on their necks. Afterwards they were dispersed in all directions; in the following spring he began to search the coasts of North Somerset on sledges in the midst of dangers and privations from which almost all his men fell ill or lame. He built up cairns in which he inclosed brass cylinders with the necessary memoranda for rallying the lost expedition. While he was away his lieutenant McClure explored the northern coasts of Barrow Strait, but without result. James Ross had under his orders two officers who, later on, were destined to become celebrities--McClure, who cleared the North-West passage, and McClintock, who discovered the remains of Sir John Franklin."

"Yes; they are now two good and brave English captains. You know the history of these seas well, doctor, and you will benefit us by telling us about it. There is always something to be gained by hearing about such daring attempts."

"Well, to finish all I know about James Ross: he tried to reach Melville Island by a more westerly direction, but he nearly lost his two vessels, for he was caught by the ice and driven back into Baffin's Sea."

"Driven back?" repeated Hatteras, contracting his brows; "forced back in spite of himself?"

"Yes, and without having discovered anything," continued the doctor; "and ever since that year, 1850, English vessels have never ceased to plough these seas, and a reward of twenty thousand pounds was offered to any one who might find the crews of the *Erebus* and *Terror*. Captains Kellett and Moore had already, in 1848, attempted to get through Behring's Strait. In 1850 and 1851 Captain Austin wintered in Cornwallis Island; Captain Parry, on board the *Assistance* and the *Resolute*, explored Wellington Channel; John Ross, the venerable hero of the magnetic pole, set out again with his yacht, the *Felix*, in search of his friend; the brig *Prince Albert* went on a first cruise at the expense of Lady Franklin; and, lastly, two American ships, sent out by Grinnell with Captain Haven, were

drifted out of Wellington Channel and thrown back into Lancaster Strait. It was during this year that McClintock, who was then Austin's lieutenant, pushed on as far as Melville Island and Cape Dundas, the extreme points attained by Parry in 1819; it was then that he found traces of Franklin's wintering on Beechey Island in 1845."

"Yes," answered Hatteras, "three of his sailors had been buried there--three men more fortunate than the others!"

The doctor nodded in approval of Hatteras's remark, and continued:

"During 1851 and 1852 the *Prince Albert* went on a second voyage under the French lieutenant, Bellot; he wintered at Batty Bay, in Prince Regent Strait, explored the south-west of Somerset, and reconnoitred the coast as far as Cape Walker. During that time the *Enterprise* and the *Investigator* returned to England and passed under the command of Collinson and McClure for the purpose of rejoining Kellett and Moore in Behring's Straits; whilst Collinson came back to winter at Hong-Kong, McClure made the best of his way onward, and after being obliged to winter three times--from 1850 to '51; from 1851 to '52; and from 1852 to '53--he discovered the North-West passage without learning anything of Franklin's fate. During 1852 and '53 a new expedition composed of three sailing vessels, the *Resolute*, the *Assistance*, the *North Star*, and two steamers, the *Pioneer* and *Intrepid*, set sail under the command of Sir Edward Belcher, with Captain Kellett under him; Sir Edward visited Wellington Channel, wintered in Northumberland Bay, and went over the coast, whilst Kellett, pushing on to Bridport in Melville Island, explored, without success, that part of the boreal land. It was at this time that news was spread in England that two ships, abandoned in the midst of icebergs, had been descried near the coast of New Scotland. Lady Franklin immediately had prepared the little screw *Isabelle*, and Captain Inglefield, after having steamed up Baffin's Bay as far as Victoria Point on the eightieth parallel, came back to Beechey Island no more successful than his predecessors. At the beginning of 1855, Grinnell, an American, fitted up a fresh expedition, and Captain Kane tried to penetrate to the Pole----"

"But he didn't do it," cried Hatteras violently; "and what he didn't do we will, with God's help!"

"I know, captain," answered the doctor, "and I mention it because this expedition is of necessity connected with the search for Franklin. But it had no result. I was

almost forgetting to tell you that the Admiralty, considering Beechey Island as the general rendezvous of expeditions, charged Captain Inglefield, who then commanded the steamer *Phoenix*, to transport provisions there in 1853; Inglefield set out with Lieutenant Bellot, and lost the brave officer who for the second time had devoted his services to England; we can have more precise details upon this catastrophe, as our boatswain, Johnson, was witness to the misfortune."

"Lieutenant Bellot was a brave Frenchman," said Hatteras, "and his memory is honoured in England."

"By that time," continued the doctor, "Belcher's fleet began to come back little by little; not all of it, for Sir Edward had been obliged to abandon the *Assistance* in 1854, as McClure had done with the *Investigator* in 1853. In the meantime, Dr. Rae, in a letter dated the 29th of July, 1854, and addressed from Repulse Bay, which he had succeeded in reaching through America, sent word that the Esquimaux of King William's Land were in possession of different objects taken from the wrecks of the *Erebus* and *Terror*; there was then not the least doubt about the fate of the expedition; the *Phoenix*, the *North Star*, and Collinson's vessel then came back to England, leaving the Arctic Seas completely abandoned by English ships. But if the Government seemed to have lost all hope it was not so with Lady Franklin, and with the remnants of her fortune she fitted out the *Fox*, commanded by McClintock, who set sail in 1857, and wintered in the quarters where you made your apparition; he reached Beechey Island on the 11th of August, 1858, wintered a second time in Bellot's Strait, began his search again in February, 1859, and on the 6th of May found the document which cleared away all doubt about the fate of the *Erebus* and the *Terror*, and returned to England at the end of the year. That is all that has happened for fifteen years in these fateful countries, and since the return of the *Fox* not a single vessel has returned to attempt success in the midst of these dangerous seas."

"Well," replied Hatteras, "we will attempt it."

CHAPTER XV

THE "FORWARD" DRIVEN BACK SOUTH

The weather cleared up towards evening, and land was clearly distinguished between Cape Sepping and Cape Clarence, which runs east, then south, and is joined to the coast on the west by a rather low neck of land. The sea at the entrance to Regent Strait was free from ice, with the exception of an impenetrable ice-bank, a little further than Port Leopold, which threatened to stop the *Forward* in her north-westerly course. Hatteras was greatly vexed, but he did not show it; he was obliged to have recourse to petards in order to force an entrance to Port Leopold; he reached it on Sunday, the 27th of May; the brig was solidly anchored to the enormous icebergs, which were as upright, hard, and solid as rocks.

The captain, followed by the doctor, Johnson, and his dog Dick, immediately leaped upon the ice, and soon reached land. Dick leaped with joy, for since he had recognised the captain he had become more sociable, keeping his grudge against certain men of the crew for whom his master had no more friendship than he. The port was not then blocked up with ice that the east winds generally heaped up there; the earth, intersected with peaks, offered at their summits graceful undulations of snow. The house and lantern erected by James Ross were still in a tolerable state of preservation; but the provisions seemed to have been ransacked by foxes and bears, the recent traces of which were easily distinguished. Men, too, had had something to do with the devastation, for a few remains of Esquimaux huts remained upon the shores of the Bay. The six graves inclosing the remains of the six sailors of the *Enterprise* and the *Investigator* were recognisable by a slight swelling of the ground; they had been respected both by men and animals. In placing his foot for the first time on boreal land, the doctor experienced much emotion. It is impossible to imagine the feelings with which the heart is assailed at the sight of the remains of houses, tents, huts, and magazines that Nature so marvellously preserves in those cold countries.

"There is that residence," he said to his companions, "which James Ross himself called the Camp of Refuge; if Franklin's expedition had reached this spot, it would have been saved. There is the engine which was abandoned here, and the stove at which the crew of the *Prince Albert* warmed themselves in 1851. Things

have remained just as they were, and any one would think that Captain Kennedy had only left yesterday. Here is the long boat which sheltered him and his for a few days, for this Kennedy, separated from his ship, was in reality saved by Lieutenant Bellot, who braved the October temperature in order to go to his assistance."

"I knew that brave and worthy officer," said Johnson.

Whilst the doctor was examining with all an antiquarian's enthusiasm the vestiges of previous winterings, Hatteras was occupied in piling together the various provisions and articles of fuel, which were only to be found in very small quantities. The following day was employed in transporting them on board. The doctor, without going too far from the ship, surveyed the country, and took sketches of the most remarkable points of view. The temperature rose by degrees, and the heaped-up snow began to melt. The doctor made an almost complete collection of northern birds, such as gulls, divers, eider-down ducks, which are very much like common ducks, with white breasts and backs, blue bellies, the top of the head blue, and the remainder of the plumage white, shaded with green; several of them had already their breasts stripped of that beautiful down with which the male and female line their nests. The doctor also perceived large seals taking breath on the surface of the ice, but could not shoot one. In his excursions he discovered the high water mark, a stone upon which the following signs are engraved:

(E. I.) 1849,

and which indicate the passage of the *Enterprise* and *Investigator*; he pushed forward as far as Cape Clarence to the spot where John and James Ross, in 1833, waited with so much impatience for the breaking up of the ice. The land was strewn with skulls and bones of animals, and traces of Esquimaux habitations could be still distinguished.

The doctor wanted to raise up a cairn on Port Leopold, and deposit in it a note indicating the passage of the *Forward*, and the aim of the expedition. But Hatteras would not hear of it; he did not want to leave traces behind of which a competitor might take advantage. In spite of his good motives the doctor was forced to yield to the captain's will. Shandon blamed the captain's obstinacy, which prevented any ships following the trace of the *Forward* in case of accident. Hatteras would not give way. His lading was finished on Monday

night, and he attempted once more to gain the north by breaking open the ice-bank; but after dangerous efforts he was forced to resign himself, and to go down Regent's Channel again; he would not stop at Port Leopold, which, open to-day, might be closed again to-morrow by an unexpected displacement of ice-fields, a very frequent phenomenon in these seas, and which navigators ought particularly to take into consideration.

If Hatteras did not allow his uneasiness to be outwardly perceived, it did not prevent him feeling it inwardly. His desire was to push northward, whilst, on the contrary, he found himself constrained to put back southward. Where should he get to in that case? Should he be obliged to put back to Victoria Harbour, in Boothia Gulf, where Sir John Ross wintered in 1833? Would he find Bellot Strait open at that epoch, and could he ascend Peel Strait by rounding North Somerset? Or, again, should he, like his predecessors, find himself captured during several winters, and be compelled to exhaust his strength and provisions? These fears were fermenting in his brain; he must decide one way or other. He heaved about, and struck out south. The width of Prince Regent's Channel is about the same from Port Leopold to Adelaide Bay. The *Forward*, more favoured than the ships which had preceded her, and of which the greater number had required more than a month to descend the channel, even in a more favourable season, made her way rapidly amongst the icebergs; it is true that other ships, with the exception of the *Fox*, had no steam at their disposal, and had to endure the caprices of an uncertain and often foul wind.

In general the crew showed little wish to push on with the enterprising Hatteras; the men were only too glad to perceive that the vessel was taking a southerly direction. Hatteras would have liked to go on regardless of consequences.

The *Forward* rushed along under the pressure of her engines, the smoke from which twisted round the shining points of the icebergs; the weather was constantly changing from dry cold to snowy fogs. The brig, which drew little water, sailed along the west coast; Hatteras did not wish to miss the entrance to Bellot Strait, as the only outlet to the Gulf of Boothia on the south was the strait, only partially known to the *Fury* and the *Hecla*; if he missed the Bellot Strait, he might be shut up without possibility of egress.

In the evening the *Forward* was in sight of Elwin Bay, known by its high perpendicular rocks; on the Tuesday morning Batty Bay was sighted, where the *Prince Albert* anchored for its long wintering on the 10th of September, 1851.

The doctor swept the whole coast with his telescope. It was from this point that the expeditions radiated that established the geographical configuration of North Somerset. The weather was clear, and the profound ravines by which the bay is surrounded could be clearly distinguished.

The doctor and Johnson were perhaps the only beings on board who took any interest in these deserted countries. Hatteras was always intent upon his maps, and said little; his taciturnity increased as the brig got more and more south; he often mounted the poop, and there with folded arms, and eyes lost in vacancy, he stood for hours. His orders, when he gave any, were curt and rough. Shandon kept a cold silence, and kept himself so much aloof by degrees that at last he had no relations with Hatteras except those exacted by the service; James Wall remained devoted to Shandon, and regulated his conduct accordingly. The remainder of the crew waited for something to turn up, ready to take any advantage in their own interest. There was no longer that unity of thought and communion of ideas on board which are so necessary for the accomplishment of anything great, and this Hatteras knew to his sorrow.

During the day two whales were perceived rushing towards the south; a white bear was also seen, and was shot at without any apparent success. The captain knew the value of an hour under the circumstances, and would not allow the animal to be chased.

On Wednesday morning the extremity of Regent's Channel was passed; the angle on the west coast was followed by a deep curve in the land. By consulting his map the doctor recognised the point of Somerset House, or Fury Point.

"There," said he to his habitual companion--"there is the very spot where the first English ship, sent into these seas in 1815, was lost, during the third of Parry's voyages to the Pole; the *Fury* was so damaged by the ice on her second wintering, that her crew were obliged to desert her and return to England on board her companion ship the *Hecla*."

"That shows the advantage of having a second ship," answered Johnson. "It is a precaution that Polar navigators ought not to neglect, but Captain Hatteras wasn't the sort of man to trouble himself with another ship."

"Do you think he is imprudent, Johnson?" asked the doctor.

"I? I think nothing, Mr. Clawbonny. Do you see those stakes over there with

some rotten tent-rags still hanging to them?"

"Yes; that's where Parry disembarked his provisions from his ship, and, if I remember rightly, the roof of his tent was a topsail."

"Everything must be greatly changed since 1825!"

"Not so much as any one might think. John Ross owed the health and safety of his crew to that fragile habitation in 1829. When the *Prince Albert* sent an expedition there in 1851, it was still existing; Captain Kennedy had it repaired, nine years ago now. It would be interesting to visit it, but Hatteras isn't in the humour to stop!"

"I daresay he is right, Mr. Clawbonny; if time is money in England, here it is life, and a day's or even an hour's delay might make all the difference."

During the day of Thursday, the 1st of June, the *Forward* cut across Creswell Bay; from Fury Point the coast rose towards the north in perpendicular rocks three hundred feet high; it began to get lower towards the south; some snow summits looked like neatly-cut tables, whilst others were shaped like pyramids, and had other strange forms.

The weather grew milder during that day, but was not so clear; land was lost to sight, and the thermometer went up to thirty-two degrees; seafowl fluttered about, the flocks of wild ducks were seen flying north; the crew could divest themselves of some of their garments, and the influence of the Arctic summer began to be felt. Towards evening the *Forward* doubled Cape Garry at a quarter of a mile from the shore, where the soundings gave from ten to twelve fathoms; from thence she kept near the coast as far as Brentford Bay. It was under this latitude that Bellot Strait was to be met with; a strait the existence of which Sir John Ross did not even guess at during his expedition in 1828; his maps indicated an uninterrupted coast-line, whose irregularities he noted with the utmost care; the entrance to the strait must therefore have been blocked up by ice at the time. It was really discovered by Kennedy in April, 1852, and he gave it the name of his lieutenant, Bellot, as "a just tribute," he said, "to the important services rendered to our expedition by the French officer."

CHAPTER XVI

THE MAGNETIC POLE

Hatteras felt his anxiety increase as he neared the strait; the fate of his voyage depended upon it; up till now he had done more than his predecessors, the most fortunate of whom, McClintock, had taken fifteen months to reach this part of the Polar Seas; but it was little or nothing if he did not succeed in clearing Bellot Strait; he could not retrace his steps, and would be blocked up till the following year.

He trusted the care of examining the coast to no one but himself; he mounted the crow's nest and passed several hours there during the morning of Saturday. The crew perfectly understood the ship's position; profound silence reigned on board; the engine slackened steam, and the *Forward* kept as near land as possible; the coast bristled with icebergs, which the warmest summers do not melt; an experienced eye alone could distinguish an opening between them. Hatteras compared his maps with the land. As the sun showed himself for an instant towards noon, he caused Shandon and Wall to take a pretty exact observation, which was shouted to him. All the crew suffered the tortures of anxiety for half the day, but towards two o'clock these words were shouted from the top of the mizenmast:

"Veer to the west, all steam on."

The brig instantly obeyed; her prow was directed towards the point indicated; the sea foamed under the screws, and the *Forward*, with all speed on, entered between two ice-streams. The road was found, Hatteras descended upon deck, and the ice-master took his place.

"Well, captain," said the doctor, "we are in the famous strait at last."

"Yes," answered Hatteras, lowering his voice; "but getting in isn't everything; we must get out too," and so saying he regained his cabin.

"He's right," said the doctor; "we are here in a sort of mousetrap, with scarcely enough space for working the brig, and if we are forced to winter in the strait!... Well, we shan't be the first that have had to do it, and they got over it, and so

shall we."

The doctor was not mistaken. It was in that very place, in a little sheltered harbour called Kennedy Harbour by McClintock himself, that the *Fox* wintered in 1858. The high granite chain and the steep cliffs of the two banks were clearly discernible.

Bellot Strait is seventeen miles long and a mile wide, and about six or seven fathoms deep. It lies between mountains whose height is estimated at 1,600 feet. It separates North Somerset from Boothia Land.

It is easy to understand that there is not much elbow-room for vessels in such a strait. The *Forward* advanced slowly, but it did advance; tempests are frequent in the strait, and the brig did not escape them; by Hatteras's order all sails were furled; but, notwithstanding all precautions, the brig was much knocked about; the waves dashed over her, and her smoke fled towards the east with astonishing rapidity; her course was not certain amongst the moving ice; the barometer fell; it was difficult to stop on deck, and most of the men stayed below to avoid useless suffering.

Hatteras, Johnson, and Shandon remained on the poop in spite of the gales of snow and rain; as usual the doctor had asked himself what would be the most disagreeable thing he could do, and answered himself by going on deck at once; it was impossible to hear and difficult to see one another, so that he kept his reflections to himself. Hatteras tried to see through the fog; he calculated that they would be at the mouth of the strait at six o'clock, but when the time came all issue seemed closed up; he was obliged to wait and anchor the brig to an iceberg; but he stopped under pressure all night.

The weather was frightful. The *Forward* threatened to break her chains at every instant; it was feared that the iceberg to which they were anchored, torn away at its base under the violent west wind, would float away with the brig. The officers were constantly on the look-out and under extreme apprehension; along with the snow there fell a perfect hail of ice torn off from the surface of the icebergs by the strength of the wind; it was like a shower of arrows bristling in the atmosphere. The temperature rose singularly during this terrible night; the thermometer marked fifty-seven degrees, and the doctor, to his great astonishment, thought he saw flashes of lightning in the south, followed by the roar of far-off thunder that seemed to corroborate the testimony of the whaler

Scoresby, who observed a similar phenomenon above the sixty-fifth parallel. Captain Parry was also witness to a similar meteorological wonder in 1821.

Towards five o'clock in the morning the weather changed with astonishing rapidity; the temperature went down to freezing point, the wind turned north, and became calmer. The western opening to the strait was in sight, but entirely obstructed. Hatteras looked eagerly at the coast, asking himself if the passage really existed. However, the brig got under way, and glided slowly amongst the ice-streams, whilst the icebergs pressed noisily against her planks, the packs at that epoch were still from six to seven feet thick; they were obliged carefully to avoid their pressure, for if the brig had resisted them she would have run the risk of being lifted up and turned over on her side. At noon, for the first time, they could admire a magnificent solar phenomenon, a halo with two parhelia; the doctor observed it, and took its exact dimensions; the exterior bow was only visible over an extent of thirty degrees on each side of its horizontal diameter; the two images of the sun were remarkably clear; the colours of the luminous bows proceeded from inside to outside, and were red, yellow, green, and very light blue--in short, white light without any assignable exterior limit. The doctor remembered the ingenious theory of Thomas Young about these meteors; this natural philosopher supposed that certain clouds composed of prisms of ice are suspended in the atmosphere; the rays of the sun that fall on the prisms are decomposed at angles of sixty and ninety degrees. Halos cannot, therefore, exist in a calm atmosphere. The doctor thought this theory very probable. Sailors accustomed to the boreal seas generally consider this phenomenon as the precursor of abundant snow. If their observation was just, the position of the *Forward* became very difficult. Hatteras, therefore, resolved to go on fast; during the remainder of the day and following night he did not take a minute's rest, sweeping the horizon with his telescope, taking advantage of the least opening, and losing no occasion of getting out of the strait.

But in the morning he was obliged to stop before the insuperable ice-bank. The doctor joined him on the poop. Hatteras went with him apart where they could talk without fear of being overheard.

"We are in for it," began Hatteras; "it is impossible to go any further."

"Is there no means of getting out?" asked the doctor.

"None. All the powder in the *Forward* would not make us gain half a mile!"

"What shall we do, then?" said the doctor.

"I don't know. This cursed year has been unfavourable from the beginning."

"Well," answered the doctor, "if we must winter here, we must. One place is as good as another."

"But," said Hatteras, lowering his voice, "we must not winter here, especially in the month of June. Wintering is full of physical and moral danger. The crew would be unmanageable during a long inaction in the midst of real suffering. I thought I should be able to stop much nearer the Pole than this!"

"Luck would have it so, or Baffin's Bay wouldn't have been closed."

"It was open enough for that American!" cried Hatteras in a rage.

"Come, Hatteras," said the doctor, interrupting him on purpose, "to-day is only the 5th of June; don't despair; a passage may suddenly open up before us; you know that the ice has a tendency to break up into several blocks, even in the calmest weather, as if a force of repulsion acted upon the different parts of it; we may find the sea free at any minute."

"If that minute comes we shall take advantage of it. It is quite possible that, once out of Bellot Strait, we shall be able to go north by Peel Strait or McClintock Channel, and then----"

"Captain," said James Wall, who had come up while Hatteras was speaking, "the ice nearly carries off our rudder."

"Well," answered Hatteras, "we must risk it. We must be ready day and night. You must do all you can to protect it, Mr. Wall, but I can't have it removed."

"But----" added Wall.

"That is my business," said Hatteras severely, and Wall went back to his post.

"I would give five years of my life," said Hatteras, in a rage, "to be up north. I know no more dangerous passage. To add to the difficulty, the compass is no guide at this distance from the magnetic pole: the needle is constantly shifting its direction."

"I acknowledge," answered the doctor, "that navigation is difficult, but we knew what we had to expect when we began our enterprise, and we ought not to be surprised at it."

"Ah, doctor, my crew is no longer what it was; the officers are spoiling the men. I could make them do what I want by offering them a pecuniary reward, but I am not seconded by my officers, but they shall pay dearly for it!"

"You are exaggerating, Hatteras."

"No, I am not. Do you think the crew is sorry for the obstacles that I meet with? On the contrary, they hope they will make me abandon my projects. They do not complain now, and they won't as long as the *Forward* is making for the south. The fools! They think they are getting nearer England! But once let me go north and you'll see how they'll change! I swear, though, that no living being will make me deviate from my line of conduct. Only let me find a passage, that's all!"

One of the captain's wishes was fulfilled soon enough. There was a sudden change during the evening; under some influence of the wind, the current, or the temperature, the ice-fields were separated; the *Forward* went along boldly, breaking up the ice with her steel prow; she sailed along all night, and the next morning about six cleared Bellot Strait. But that was all; the northern passage was completely obstructed--to the great disgust of Hatteras. However, he had sufficient strength of character to hide his disappointment, and as if the only passage open was the one he preferred, he let the *Forward* sail down Franklin Strait again; not being able to get up Peel Strait, he resolved to go round Prince of Wales's Land to get into McClintock Channel. But he felt he could not deceive Shandon and Wall as to the extent of his disappointment. The day of the 6th of June was uneventful; the sky was full of snow, and the prognostics of the halo were fulfilled.

During thirty-six hours the *Forward* followed the windings of Boothia Land, unable to approach Prince of Wales's Land; the captain counted upon getting supplies at Beechey Island; he arrived on the Thursday at the extremity of Franklin Strait, where he again found the road to the north blocked up. It was enough to make him despair; he could not even retrace his steps; the icebergs pushed him onwards, and he saw the passages close up behind him as if there never had existed open sea where he had passed an hour before. The *Forward* was, therefore, not only prevented from going northwards, but could not stop

still an instant for fear of being caught, and she fled before the ice as a ship flies before a storm.

On Friday, the 8th of June, they arrived near the shore of Boothia, at the entrance to James Ross Strait, which they were obliged to avoid, as its only issue is on the west, near the American coasts.

Observations taken at noon from this point gave 70 degrees 5 minutes 17 seconds latitude, and 96 degrees 46 minutes 45 seconds longitude; when the doctor heard that he consulted his map, and saw they were at the magnetic pole, at the very place where James Ross, the nephew of Sir John, had fixed it. The land was low near the coast, and at about a mile's distance became slightly elevated, sixty feet only. The *Forward's* boiler wanted cleaning, and the captain caused the brig to be anchored to an ice-field, and allowed the doctor and the boatswain to land. He himself cared for nothing but his pet project, and stayed in his cabin, consulting his map of the Pole.

The doctor and his companion easily succeeded in reaching land; the doctor took a compass to make experiments with. He wished to try if James Ross's conclusions hold good. He easily discovered the limestone heap raised by Ross; he ran to it; an opening allowed him to see, in the interior, the tin case in which James Ross had placed the official report of his discoveries. No living being seemed to have visited this desolate coast for the last thirty years. In this spot a loadstone needle, suspended as delicately as possible, immediately moved into an almost vertical position under the magnetic influence; if the centre of attraction was not immediately under the needle, it could only be at a trifling distance. The doctor made the experiment carefully, and found that the imperfect instruments of James Ross had given his vertical needle an inclination of 89 degrees 59 minutes, making the real magnetic point at a minute's distance from the spot, but that his own at a little distance gave him an inclination of 90 degrees.

"Here is the exact spot of the world's magnetic pole," said the doctor, rapping the earth.

"Then," said the boatswain, "there's no loadstone mountain, after all."

"Of course not; that mountain was only a credulous hypothesis. As you see, there isn't the least mountain capable of attracting ships, of attracting their iron anchor

after anchor and nail after nail, and you see it respects your shoes as much as any other land on the globe."

"Then how do you explain----"

"Nothing is explained, Johnson; we don't know enough for that yet. But it is certain, exact, mathematical, that the magnetic pole is in this very spot!"

"Ah, Mr. Clawbonny! how happy the captain would be to say as much of the boreal pole!"

"He will some day, Johnson, you will see."

"I hope he will," answered the boatswain.

He and the doctor elevated a cairn on the exact spot where the experiment had been made, and returned on board at five o'clock in the evening.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FATE OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

The *Forward* succeeded in cutting straight across James Ross Strait, but not without difficulty; the crew were obliged to work the saws and use petards, and they were worn out with fatigue. Happily the temperature was bearable, and thirty degrees higher than that experienced by James Ross at the same epoch. The thermometer marked thirty-four degrees.

On Saturday they doubled Cape Felix at the northern extremity of King William's Land, one of the middle-sized isles of the northern seas. The crew there experienced a strong and painful sensation, and many a sad look was turned towards the island as they sailed by the coast. This island had been the theatre of the most terrible tragedy of modern times. Some miles to the west the *Erebus* and the *Terror* had been lost for ever. The sailors knew about the attempts made to find Admiral Franklin and the results, but they were ignorant of the affecting details of the catastrophe. While the doctor was following the progress of the ship on his map, several of them, Bell, Bolton, and Simpson, approached and entered into conversation with him. Their comrades, animated by curiosity, soon followed them; while the brig flew along with extreme rapidity, and the coast with its bays, capes, and promontories passed before their eyes like a gigantic panorama.

Hatteras was marching up and down the poop with quick steps. The doctor, on the deck, looked round, and saw himself surrounded by almost the whole crew. He saw how powerful a recital would be in such a situation, and he continued the conversation begun with Johnson as follows:--

"You know how Franklin began, my friends; he was a cabin-boy like Cook and Nelson; after having employed his youth in great maritime expeditions, he resolved in 1845 to launch out in search of the North-West passage; he commanded the *Erebus* and the *Terror*, two vessels, already famous, that had just made an Antarctic campaign under James Ross, in 1840. The *Erebus*, equipped by Franklin, carried a crew of seventy men, officers and sailors, with Fitz-James as captain; Gore and Le Vesconte, lieutenants; Des Voeux, Sargent, and Couch, boatswains; and Stanley as surgeon. The *Terror* had sixty-eight men, Captain

Crozier; Lieutenants Little, Hodgson, and Irving; Horesby and Thomas were the boatswains, and Peddie the surgeon. In the names on the map of the capes, straits, points, and channels, you may read those of these unfortunate men, not one of whom was destined ever again to see his native land. There were a hundred and thirty-eight men in all! We know that Franklin's last letters were addressed from Disko Island, and were dated July 12th, 1845. 'I hope,' he said, 'to get under way to-night for Lancaster Strait.' What happened after his departure from Disko Bay? The captains of two whalers, the *Prince of Wales* and the *Enterprise*, perceived the two ships in Melville Bay for the last time, and after that day nothing was heard of them. However, we can follow Franklin in his westerly course: he passed through Lancaster and Barrow Straits, and arrived at Beechey Island, where he passed the winter of 1845 and '46."

"But how do you know all this?" asked Bell, the carpenter.

"By three tombs which Austin discovered on that island in 1850. Three of Franklin's sailors were buried there, and by a document which was found by Lieutenant Hobson, of the *Fox*, which bears the date of April 25th, 1848, we know that after their wintering the *Erebus* and the *Terror* went up Wellington Strait as far as the seventy-seventh parallel; but instead of continuing their route northwards, which was, probably, not practicable, they returned south."

"And that was their ruin!" said a grave voice. "Safety lay to the north."

Every one turned round. Hatteras, leaning on the rail of the poop, had just uttered that terrible observation.

"There is not a doubt," continued the doctor, "that Franklin's intention was to get back to the American coast; but tempests stopped him, and on the 12th September, 1846, the two ships were seized by the ice, at a few miles from here, to the north-west of Cape Felix; they were dragged along N.N.W. to Victoria Point over there," said the doctor, pointing to a part of the sea. "Now," he continued, "the ships were not abandoned till the 22nd of April, 1848. What happened during these nineteen months? What did the poor unfortunate men do? They, doubtless, explored the surrounding land, attempting any chance of safety, for the admiral was an energetic man, and if he did not succeed----"

"Very likely his crew betrayed him," added Hatteras.

The sailors dared not raise their eyes; these words pricked their conscience.

"To end my tale, the fatal document informs us also that John Franklin succumbed to fatigue on the 11th of June, 1847. Honour to his memory!" said the doctor, taking off his hat. His audience imitated him in silence.

"What became of the poor fellows for the next ten months after they had lost their chief? They remained on board their vessels, and only resolved to abandon them in April, 1848; a hundred and five men out of a hundred and thirty-eight were still living; thirty-three were dead! Then Captain Crozier and Captain Fitz-James raised a cairn on Victory Point, and there deposited their last document. See, my friends, we are passing the point now! You can still see the remains of the cairn placed on the extreme point, reached by John Ross in 1831. There is Jane Franklin Cape. There is Franklin Point. There is Le Vesconte Point. There is Erebus Bay, where the boat made out of the *debris* of one of the vessels was found on a sledge. Silver spoons, provisions in abundance, chocolate, tea, and religious books were found there too. The hundred and five survivors, under Captain Crozier, started for Great Fish River. Where did they get to? Did they succeed in reaching Hudson's Bay? Did any survive? What became of them after this last departure?"

"I will tell you what became of them," said John Hatteras in a firm voice. "Yes, they did try to reach Hudson's Bay, and they split up into several parties! Yes, they did make for the south! A letter from Dr. Rae in 1854 contained the information that in 1850 the Esquimaux had met on King William's Land a detachment of forty men travelling on the ice, and dragging a boat, thin, emaciated, worn out by fatigue and suffering! Later on they discovered thirty corpses on the continent and five on a neighbouring island, some half-buried, some left without burial, some under a boat turned upside down, others under the remains of a tent; here an officer with his telescope on his shoulder and a loaded gun at his side, further on a boiler with the remnants of a horrible meal! When the Admiralty received these tidings it begged the Hudson's Bay Company to send its most experienced agents to the scene. They descended Back River to its mouth. They visited the islands of Montreal, Maconochie, and Ogle Point. But they discovered nothing. All the poor wretches had died from misery, suffering, and hunger, whilst trying to prolong their existence by the dreadful resource of cannibalism. That is what became of them on the southern route. Well! Do you still wish to march in their footsteps?"

His trembling voice, his passionate gestures and beaming face, produced an indescribable effect. The crew, excited by its emotion before this fatal land, cried

out with one voice: "To the north! To the north!"

"Yes, to the north! Safety and glory lie to the north. Heaven is for us! The wind is changing; the pass is free!"

So saying, Hatteras gave orders to turn the vessel; the sailors went to work with alacrity; the ice streams got clear little by little; the *Forward*, with all steam on, made for McClintock Channel. Hatteras was right when he counted upon a more open sea; he followed up the supposed route taken by Franklin, sailing along the western coast of Prince of Wales's Land, then pretty well known, whilst the opposite shore is still unknown. It was evident that the breaking up of the ice had taken place in the eastern locks, for this strait appeared entirely free; the *Forward* made up for lost time; she fled along so quickly that she passed Osborne Bay on the 14th of June, and the extreme points attained by the expeditions of 1851. Icebergs were still numerous, but the sea did not threaten to quit the keel of the *Forward*.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NORTHERN ROUTE

The crew seemed to have returned to its habits of discipline and obedience. There was little fatiguing work to do, and they had a good deal of leisure. The temperature kept above freezing point, and it seemed as if the thaw had removed the great obstacles to navigation.

Dick, now sociable and familiar, had made great friends with Dr. Clawbonny. But as in most friendships one friend has to give way to the other, it must be acknowledged it was not the dog. Dick did what he liked with the doctor, who obeyed him as if he were the dog. He was amiable with most of the sailors and officers on board, only by instinct, doubtless, he shunned Shandon's society; he also kept up a grudge against Pen and Foker; he vented his hatred of them by growling at their approach. But they dare not now attack the captain's dog--his "familiar," as Clifton called him. On the whole the crew had plucked up courage again and worked well.

"It seems to me," said James Wall one day to Richard Shandon, "that our men took the captain's speech seriously; they no longer seem to be doubtful of success."

"The more fools they!" answered Shandon. "If they reflected, if they examined the situation, they would see that we are going out of one imprudence into another."

"But," continued Wall, "the sea is open now, and we are getting back into well-known tracks; aren't you exaggerating a bit, Shandon?"

"No, I am not exaggerating; the dislike I feel to Hatteras is not blinding me. Have you seen the coal-holes lately?"

"No," answered Wall.

"Well, then, go and examine them: you will see how much there's left. He ought to have navigated under sail, and have kept the engine for currents and contrary winds; he ought only to have used his coal where he was obliged; who can tell

where we shall be kept, and for how many years? But Hatteras only thinks about getting north. Whether the wind is contrary or not, he goes along at full steam, and if things go on as they are doing now, we shall soon be in a pretty pickle."

"If what you say is true, it is very serious."

"Yes, it is, because of the wintering. What shall we do without coal in a country where even the thermometer freezes?"

"But, if I am not mistaken, the captain counts upon renewing his stock of coal at Beechey Island. It appears there is a large provision there."

"And suppose we can't reach Beechey Island, what will become of us then?"

"You are right, Shandon; Hatteras seems to me very imprudent; but why don't you expostulate with him on the subject?"

"No," said Shandon, with ill-concealed bitterness, "I won't say a word. It is nothing to do with me now. I shall wait to see what turns up; I shall obey orders, and not give my opinion where it isn't wanted."

"Allow me to tell you that you are in the wrong, Shandon; you have as much interest in setting yourself against the captain's imprudence as we have."

"He wouldn't listen to me if I were to speak; do you think he would?"

Wall dared not answer in the affirmative, and he added--

"But perhaps he would listen to the crew."

"The crew!" answered Shandon, shrugging his shoulders; "you don't know the crew. The men know they are nearing the 72nd parallel, and that they will earn a thousand pounds for every degree above that."

"The captain knew what he was doing when he offered them that."

"Of course he did, and for the present he can do what he likes with them."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that while they have nothing to do, and there is an open sea, they will go

on right enough; but wait till difficulty and danger come, and you will see how much they'll think about the money!"

"Then you don't think Hatteras will succeed?"

"No, he will not; to succeed in such an enterprise there must be a good understanding between him and his officers, and that does not exist. Hatteras is a madman; all his past career proves it. Well, we shall see; perhaps circumstances will force them to give the command to a less adventurous captain."

"Still," said Wall, shaking his head, "he will always have on his side----"

"Dr. Clawbonny, a man who only cares for science, and Johnson, a sailor who only cares to obey, and perhaps two more men like Bell, the carpenter; four at the most, and we are eighteen on board! No, Wall, Hatteras has not got the confidence of his men, and he knows it, so he bribes them; he profited cleverly by the Franklin affair, but that won't last, I tell you, and if he doesn't reach Beechey Island he's a lost man!"

"Suppose the crew should take it into its head----"

"Don't tell the crew what I think," answered Shandon quickly; "the men will soon see for themselves. Besides, just now we must go north. Who knows if Hatteras won't find that way will bring us back sooner? At the end of McClintock Channel lies Melville Bay, and from thence go the straits that lead to Baffin's Bay. Hatteras must take care! The way to the east is easier than the road to the north!"

Hatteras was not mistaken in his opinion that Shandon would betray him if he could. Besides, Shandon was right in attributing the contentment of the men to the hope of gain. Clifton had counted exactly how much each man would have. Without reckoning the captain and the doctor, who would not expect a share in the bounty-money, there remained sixteen men to divide it amongst. If ever they succeeded in reaching the Pole, each man would have 1,125 pounds--that is to say, a fortune. It would cost the captain 18,000 pounds, but he could afford it. The thoughts of the money inflamed the minds of the crew, and they were now as anxious to go north as before they had been eager to turn south. The *Forward* during the day of June 16th passed Cape Aworth. Mount Rawlinson raised its white peaks towards the sky; the snow and fog made it appear colossal, as they exaggerated its distance; the temperature still kept some degrees above freezing

point; improvised cascades and cataracts showed themselves on the sides of the mountains, and avalanches roared down with the noise of artillery discharges. The glaciers, spread out in long white sheets, projected an immense reverberation into space. Boreal nature, in its struggle with the frost, presented a splendid spectacle. The brig went very near the coast; on some sheltered rocks rare heaths were to be seen, the pink flowers lifting their heads timidly out of the snows, and some meagre lichens of a reddish colour and the shoots of a dwarf willow.

At last, on the 19th of June, at the famous seventy-third parallel, they doubled Cape Minto, which forms one of the extremities of Ommaney Bay; the brig entered Melville Bay, surnamed by Bolton Money Bay; the merry sailors joked about the name, and made Dr. Clawbonny laugh heartily. Notwithstanding a strong breeze from the northeast, the *Forward* made considerable progress, and on the 23rd of June she passed the 74th degree of latitude. She was in the midst of Melville Bay, one of the most considerable seas in these regions. This sea was crossed for the first time by Captain Parry in his great expedition of 1819, and it was then that his crew earned the prize of 5,000 pounds promised by Act of Parliament. Clifton remarked that there were two degrees from the 72nd to the 74th; that already placed 125 pounds to his credit. But they told him that a fortune was not worth much there, and that it was of no use being rich if he could not drink his riches, and he had better wait till he could roll under a Liverpool table before he rejoiced and rubbed his hands.

CHAPTER XIX

A WHALE IN SIGHT

Melville Bay, though easily navigable, was not free from ice; ice-fields lay as far as the utmost limits of the horizon; a few icebergs appeared here and there, but they were immovable, as if anchored in the midst of the frozen fields. The *Forward*, with all steam on, followed the wide passes where it was easy to work her. The wind changed frequently from one point of the compass to another. The variability of the wind in the Arctic Seas is a remarkable fact; sometimes a dead calm is followed in a few minutes by a violent tempest, as the *Forward* found to her cost on the 23rd of June in the midst of the immense bay. The more constant winds blow from off the ice-bank on to the open sea, and are intensely cold. On that day the thermometer fell several degrees; the wind veered round to the south, and violent gusts, sweeping over the ice-fields, brought a thick snow along with them. Hatteras immediately caused the sails that helped the screw to be furled, but not quickly enough to prevent his little foresail being carried away in the twinkling of an eye. Hatteras worked his ship with the greatest composure, and did not leave the deck during the tempest; he was obliged to fly before the weather and to turn westward. The wind raised up enormous waves, in the midst of which blocks of ice balanced themselves; these blocks were of all sizes and shapes, and had been struck off the surrounding ice-fields; the brig was tossed about like a child's plaything, and morsels of the packs were thrown over her hull; at one instant she was lying perpendicularly along the side of a liquid mountain; her steel prow concentrated the light, and shone like a melting metal bar; at another she was down an abyss, plunging her head into whirlwinds of snow, whilst her screws, out of the water, turned in space with a sinister noise, striking the air with their paddles. Rain mixed with the snow and fell in torrents.

The doctor could not miss such an occasion of getting wet to the skin; he remained on deck, a prey to that emotional admiration which a scientific man must necessarily feel during such a spectacle. His nearest neighbour could not have heard him speak, so he said nothing and watched; but whilst watching he was witness to an odd phenomenon, peculiar to hyperborean regions. The tempest was confined to a restricted area, and only extended for about three or four miles; the wind that passes over ice-fields loses much of its strength and cannot carry its violence far out; the doctor perceived from time to time, through

an opening in the tempest, a calm sky and a quiet sea beyond some ice-fields. The *Forward* would therefore only have to take advantage of some channels left by the ice to find a peaceful navigation again, but she ran the risk of being thrown on to one of the moving banks which followed the movement of the swell. However, in a few hours Hatteras succeeded in getting his ship into a calm sea, whilst the violence of the hurricane spent itself at a few cables' length from the *Forward*. Melville Bay no longer presented the same aspect; under the influence of the winds and the waves a great number of icebergs, detached from the coast, floated northward, running against one another in every direction. There were several hundreds of them, but the bay is very wide, and the brig easily avoided them. The spectacle of these floating masses was magnificent; they seemed to be having a grand race for it on the open sea. The doctor was getting quite excited with watching them, when the harpooner, Simpson, came up and made him look at the changing tints in the sea; they varied from a deep blue to olive green; long stripes stretched north and south in such decided lines that the eye could follow each shade out of sight. Sometimes a transparent sheet of water would follow a perfectly opaque sheet.

"Well, Mr. Clawbonny, what do you think of that?" said Simpson.

"I am of the same opinion as the whaler Scoresby on the nature of the different coloured waters; blue water has no animalculae, and green water is full of them. Scoresby has made several experiments on this subject, and I think he is right."

"Well, sir, I know something else about the colours in the sea, and if I were a whaler I should be precious glad to see them."

"But I don't see any whales," answered the doctor.

"You won't be long before you do, though, I can tell you. A whaler is lucky when he meets with those green stripes under this latitude."

"Why?" asked the doctor, who always liked to get information from anybody who understood what they were talking about.

"Because whales are always found in great quantities in green water."

"What's the reason of that?"

"Because they find plenty of food in them."

"Are you sure of that?"

"I've seen it a hundred times, at least, in Baffin Sea; why shouldn't it be the same in Melville Bay? Besides, look there, Mr. Clawbonny," added Simpson, leaning over the barricading.

"Why any one would think it was the wake of a ship!"

"It is an oily substance that the whale leaves behind. The animal can't be far off!"

The atmosphere was impregnated with a strong oily odour, and the doctor attentively watched the surface of the water. The prediction of the harpooner was soon accomplished. Foker called out from the masthead--

"A whale alee!"

All looks turned to the direction indicated. A small spout was perceived coming up out of the sea about a mile from the brig.

"There she spouts!" cried Simpson, who knew what that meant.

"She has disappeared!" answered the doctor.

"Oh, we could find her again easily enough if necessary!" said Simpson, with an accent of regret. To his great astonishment, and although no one dared ask for it, Hatteras gave orders to man the whaler. Johnson went aft to the stern, while Simpson, harpoon in hand, stood in the bow. They could not prevent the doctor joining the expedition. The sea was pretty calm. The whaler soon got off, and in ten minutes was a mile from the brig. The whale had taken in another provision of air, and had plunged again; but she soon returned to the surface and spouted out that mixture of gas and mucus that escapes from her air-holes.

"There! There!" said Simpson, pointing to a spot about eight hundred yards from the boat. It was soon alongside the animal, and as they had seen her from the brig too, she came nearer, keeping little steam on. The enormous cetacean disappeared and reappeared as the waves rose and fell, showing its black back like a rock in open sea. Whales do not swim quickly unless they are pursued, and this one only rocked itself in the waves. The boat silently approached along the green water; its opacity prevented the animal seeing the enemy. It is always an agitating spectacle when a fragile boat attacks one of these monsters; this one

was about 130 feet long, and it is not rare, between the 72nd and the 80th degree, to meet with whales more than 180 feet long. Ancient writers have described animals more than 700 feet long, but they drew upon their imagination for their facts. The boat soon neared the whale; on a sign from Simpson the men rested on their oars, and brandishing his harpoon, the experienced sailor threw it with all his strength; it went deep into the thick covering of fat. The wounded whale struck the sea with its tail and plunged. The four oars were immediately raised perpendicularly; the cord fastened to the harpoon, and attached to the bow, rolled rapidly out and dragged the boat along, steered cleverly by Johnson.

The whale got away from the brig and made for the moving icebergs; she kept on for more than half-an-hour; they were obliged to wet the cord fastened to the harpoon to prevent it catching fire by rubbing against the boat. When the whale seemed to be going along a little more slowly, the cord was pulled in little by little and rolled up; the whale soon reappeared on the surface of the sea, which she beat with her formidable tail: veritable waterspouts fell in a violent rain on to the boat. It was getting nearer. Simpson had seized a long lance, and was preparing to give close battle to the animal, when all at once the whale glided into a pass between two mountainous icebergs. The pursuit then became really dangerous.

"The devil!" said Johnson.

"Go ahead," cried Simpson; "we've got her!"

"But we can't follow her into the icebergs!" said Johnson, steering steadily.

"Yes we can!" cried Simpson.

"No, no!" cried some of the sailors.

"Yes, yes!" said others.

During the discussion the whale had got between two floating mountains which the swell was bringing close together. The boat was being dragged into this dangerous part when Johnson rushed to the fore, an axe in his hand, and cut the cord. He was just in time; the two mountains came together with a tremendous crash, crushing the unfortunate animal.

"The whale's lost!" cried Simpson.

"But we are saved!" answered Johnson.

"Well," said the doctor, who had not moved, "that was worth seeing!"

The crushing force of these ice-mountains is enormous. The whale was victim to an accident that often happens in these seas. Scoresby relates that in the course of a single summer thirty whales perished in the same way in Baffin's Sea; he saw a three-master flattened in a minute between two immense walls of ice. Other vessels were split through, as if with a lance, by pointed icicles a hundred feet long, meeting through the planks. A few minutes afterwards the boat hailed the brig, and was soon in its accustomed place on deck.

"It is a lesson for those who are imprudent enough to adventure into the channels amongst the ice!" said Shandon in a loud voice.

CHAPTER XX

BEECHEY ISLAND

On the 25th of June the *Forward* arrived in sight of Cape Dundas at the north-western extremity of Prince of Wales's Land. There the difficulty of navigating amongst the ice grew greater. The sea is narrower there, and the line made by Crozier, Young, Day, Lowther, and Garret Islands, like a chain of forts before a roadstead, forced the ice-streams to accumulate in this strait. The brig took from the 25th to the 30th of June to make as much way as she would have done in one day under any other circumstances; she stopped, retraced her steps, waiting for a favourable occasion so as not to miss Beechey Island, using a great deal of coal, as the fires were only moderated when she had to halt, but were never put out, so that she might be under pressure day and night. Hatteras knew the extent of his coal provision as well as Shandon, but as he was certain of getting his provision renewed at Beechey Island he would not lose a minute for the sake of economy; he had been much delayed by his forced march southward, and although he had taken the precaution of leaving England before the month of April, he did not find himself more advanced than preceding expeditions had been at the same epoch. On the 30th they sighted Cape Walker at the north-eastern extremity of Prince of Wales's Land; it was the extreme point that Kennedy and Bellot perceived on the 3rd of May, 1852, after an excursion across the whole of North Somerset. Before that, in 1851, Captain Ommaney, of the Austin expedition, had the good luck to revictual his detachments there. This cape is very high, and remarkable for its reddish-brown colour; from there, when the weather is clear, the view stretches as far as the entrance to Wellington Channel. Towards evening they saw Cape Bellot, separated from Cape Walker by McLeon Bay. Cape Bellot was so named in the presence of the young French officer, for whom the English expedition gave three cheers. At this spot the coast is made of yellowish limestone, presenting a very rugged outline; it is defended by enormous icebergs which the north winds pile up there in a most imposing way. It was soon lost to sight by the *Forward* as she opened a passage amongst the ice to get to Beechey Island through Barrow Strait. Hatteras resolved to go straight on, and, so as not to be drifted further than the island, scarcely quitted his post during the following days; he often went to the masthead to look out for the most advantageous channels. All that pluck, skill, and genius could do he did while they were crossing the strait. Fortune did not favour him, for the sea is generally

more open at this epoch. But at last, by dint of sparing neither his steam, his crew, nor himself, he attained his end.

On the 3rd of July, at 11 o'clock in the morning, the ice-master signalled land to the north. After taking an observation Hatteras recognised Beechey Island, that general meeting-place of Arctic navigators. Almost all ships that adventure in these seas stop there. Franklin wintered there for the first time before getting into Wellington Strait, and Creswell, with Lieutenant McClure, after having cleared 170 miles on the ice, rejoined the *Phoenix* and returned to England. The last ship which anchored at Beechey Island before the *Forward* was the *Fox*; McClintock revictualled there the 11th of August, 1858, and repaired the habitations and magazines; only two years had elapsed since then, and Hatteras knew all these details. The boatswain's heart beat with emotion at the sight of this island; when he had visited it he was quartermaster on board the *Phoenix*; Hatteras questioned him about the coast line, the facilities for anchoring, how far they could go inland, &c.; the weather was magnificent, and the temperature kept at 57 degrees.

"Well, Johnson," said the captain, "do you know where you are?"

"Yes, sir, that is Beechey Island; only you must let us get further north--the coast is more easy of access."

"But where are the habitations and the magazines?" said Hatteras.

"Oh, you can't see them till you land; they are sheltered behind those little hills you see yonder."

"And is that where you transported a considerable quantity of provisions?"

"Yes, sir; the Admiralty sent us here in 1853, under the command of Captain Inglefield, with the steamer *Phoenix* and a transport ship, the *Breadalbane*, loaded with provisions; we brought enough with us to revictual a whole expedition."

"But the commander of the *Fox* took a lot of them in 1858," said Hatteras.

"That doesn't matter, sir; there'll be plenty left for you; the cold preserves them wonderfully, and we shall find them as fresh and in as good a state of preservation as the first day."

"What I want is coal," said Hatteras; "I have enough provisions for several years."

"We left more than a thousand tons there, so you can make your mind easy."

"Are we getting near?" said Hatteras, who, telescope in hand, was watching the coast.

"You see that point?" continued Johnson. "When we have doubled it we shall be very near where we drop anchor. It was from that place that we started for England with Lieutenant Creswell and the twelve invalids from the *Investigator*. We were fortunate enough to bring back McClure's lieutenant, but the officer Bellot, who accompanied us on board the *Phoenix*, never saw his country again! It is a painful thing to think about. But, captain, I think we ought to drop anchor here."

"Very well," answered Hatteras, and he gave his orders in consequence. The *Forward* was in a little bay naturally sheltered on the north, east, and south, and at about a cable's length from the coast.

"Mr. Wall," said Hatteras, "have the long boat got ready to transport the coal on board. I shall land in the pirogue with the doctor and the boatswain. Will you accompany us, Mr. Shandon?"

"As you please," answered Shandon.

A few minutes later the doctor, armed as a sportsman and a *savant*, took his place in the pirogue along with his companions; in ten minutes they landed on a low and rocky coast.

"Lead the way, Johnson," said Hatteras. "You know it, I suppose?"

"Perfectly, sir; only there's a monument here that I did not expect to find!"

"That!" cried the doctor; "I know what it is; let us go up to it; the stone itself will tell us."

The four men advanced, and the doctor said, after taking off his hat--

"This, my friends, is a monument in memory of Franklin and his companions."

Lady Franklin had, in 1855, confided a black marble tablet to Doctor Kane, and in 1858 she gave a second to McClintock to be raised on Beechey Island. McClintock accomplished this duty religiously, and placed the stone near a funeral monument erected to the memory of Bellot by Sir John Barrow.

The tablet bore the following inscription:

"TO THE MEMORY OF FRANKLIN, CROZIER, FITZ-JAMES, AND ALL THEIR VALIANT BRETHREN OFFICERS AND FAITHFUL COMPANIONS who suffered for the cause of science and for their country's glory.

"This stone is erected near the place where they passed their first Arctic winter, and from whence they departed to conquer obstacles or to die.

"It perpetuates the regret of their countrymen and friends who admire them, and the anguish, conquered by Faith, of her who lost in the chief of the expedition the most devoted and most affectionate of husbands.

"It is thus that He led them to the supreme haven where all men take their rest.

"1855."

This stone, on a forlorn coast of these far-off regions, appealed mournfully to the heart; the doctor, in presence of these touching regrets, felt his eyes fill with tears. At the very same place which Franklin and his companions passed full of energy and hope, there only remained a block of marble in remembrance! And notwithstanding this sombre warning of destiny, the *Forward* was going to follow in the track of the *Erebus* and the *Terror*. Hatteras was the first to rouse himself from the perilous contemplation, and quickly climbed a rather steep hill, almost entirely bare of snow.

"Captain," said Johnson, following him, "we shall see the magazines from here."

Shandon and the doctor joined them on the summit. But from there the eye contemplated the vast plains, on which there remained no vestige of a habitation.

"That is singular!" cried the boatswain.

"Well, and where are the magazines?" said Hatteras quickly.

"I don't know--I don't see----" stammered Johnson.

"You have mistaken the way," said the doctor.

"It seemed to me that this was the very place," continued Johnson.

"Well," said Hatteras, impatiently "where are we to go now?"

"We had better go down, for I may be mistaken. I may have forgotten the exact locality in seven years!"

"Especially when the country is so uniformly monotonous!" added the doctor.

"And yet----" murmured Johnson.

Shandon had not spoken a word. After walking for a few minutes, Johnson stopped.

"But no," he cried, "I am not mistaken!"

"Well?" said Hatteras, looking round him.

"Do you see that swell of the ground?" asked the boatswain, pointing to a sort of mound with three distinct swells on it.

"What do you conclude from that?" asked the doctor.

"Those are the three graves of Franklin's sailors. I am sure now that I am not mistaken; the habitations ought to be about a hundred feet from here, and if they are not, they----"

He dared not finish his sentence; Hatteras had rushed forward, a prey to violent despair. There, where the wished-for stores on which he had counted ought to have been, there ruin, pillage and destruction had been before him. Who had done it? Animals would only have attacked the provisions, and there did not remain a single rag from the tent, a piece of wood or iron, and, more terrible still, not a fragment of coal! It was evident that the Esquimaux had learnt the value of these objects from their frequent relations with Europeans; since the departure of the *Fox* they had fetched everything away, and had not left a trace even of their passage. A slight coating of snow covered the ground. Hatteras was confounded.

The doctor looked and shook his head. Shandon still said nothing, but an attentive observer would have noticed his lips curl with a cruel smile. At this moment the men sent by Lieutenant Wall came up; they soon saw the state of affairs. Shandon advanced towards the captain, and said:

"Mr. Hatteras, we need not despair; happily we are near the entrance to Barrow Strait, which will take us back to Baffin's Sea!"

"Mr. Shandon," answered Hatteras, "happily we are near the entrance to Wellington Strait, and that will take us north!"

"But how shall we get along, captain?"

"With the sails, sir. We have two months' firing left, and that is enough for our wintering."

"But allow me to tell you----" added Shandon.

"I will allow you to follow me on board my ship, sir," answered Hatteras, and turning his back on his second, he returned to the brig and shut himself up in his cabin. For the next two days the wind was contrary, and the captain did not show up on deck. The doctor profited by the forced sojourn to go over Beechey Island; he gathered some plants, which the temperature, relatively high, allowed to grow here and there on the rocks that the snow had left, some heaths, a few lichens, a sort of yellow ranunculus, a sort of plant something like sorrel, with wider leaves and more veins, and some pretty vigorous saxifrages. He found the fauna of this country much richer than the flora; he perceived long flocks of geese and cranes going northward, partridges, eider ducks of a bluish black, sandpipers, a sort of wading bird of the scolopax class, northern divers, plungers with very long bodies, numerous ptarmites, a sort of bird very good to eat, dovekies with black bodies, wings spotted with white, feet and beak red as coral; noisy bands of kittywakes and fat loons with white breasts, represented the ornithology of the island. The doctor was fortunate enough to kill a few grey hares, which had not yet put on their white winter fur, and a blue fox which Dick ran down skilfully. Some bears, evidently accustomed to dread the presence of men, would not allow themselves to be got at, and the seals were extremely timid, doubtless for the same reason as their enemies the bears. The class of articulated animals was represented by a single mosquito, which the doctor caught to his great delight, though not till it had stung him. As a conchologist he was less favoured, and

only found a sort of mussel and some bivalve shells.

CHAPTER XXI

THE DEATH OF BELLOT

The temperature during the days of the 3rd and 4th of July kept up to 57 degrees; this was the highest thermometric point observed during the campaign. But on Thursday, the 5th, the wind turned to the south-east, and was accompanied by violent snow-storms. The thermometer fell during the preceding night to 23 degrees. Hatteras took no notice of the murmurs of the crew, and gave orders to get under way. For the last thirteen days, from Cape Dundas, the *Forward* had not been able to gain one more degree north, so the party represented by Clifton was no longer satisfied, but wished like Hatteras to get into Wellington Channel, and worked away with a will. The brig had some difficulty in getting under sail; but Hatteras having set his mizensail, his topsails, and his gallantsails during the night, advanced boldly in the midst of fields of ice which the current was drifting south. The crew were tired out with this winding navigation, which kept them constantly at work at the sails. Wellington Channel is not very wide; it is bounded by North Devon on the east and Cornwallis Island on the west; this island was long believed to be a peninsula. It was Sir John Franklin who first sailed round it in 1846, starting west, and coming back to the same point to the north of the channel. The exploration of Wellington Channel was made in 1851 by Captain Penny in the whalers *Lady Franklin* and *Sophia*; one of his lieutenants, Stewart, reached Cape Beecher in latitude 76 degrees 20 minutes, and discovered the open sea--that open sea which was Hatteras's dream!

"What Stewart found I shall find," said he to the doctor; "then I shall be able to set sail to the Pole."

"But aren't you afraid that your crew----"

"My crew!" said Hatteras severely. Then in a low tone--"Poor fellows!" murmured he, to the great astonishment of the doctor. It was the first expression of feeling he had heard the captain deliver.

"No," he repeated with energy, "they must follow me! They shall follow me!"

However, although the *Forward* had nothing to fear from the collision of the ice-streams, which were still pretty far apart, they made very little progress

northward, for contrary winds often forced them to stop. They passed Capes Spencer and Innis slowly, and on Tuesday, the 10th, cleared 75 degrees to the great delight of Clifton. The *Forward* was then at the very place where the American ships, the *Rescue* and the *Advance*, encountered such terrible dangers. Doctor Kane formed part of this expedition; towards the end of September, 1850, these ships got caught in an ice-bank, and were forcibly driven into Lancaster Strait. It was Shandon who related this catastrophe to James Wall before some of the brig's crew.

"The *Advance* and the *Rescue*," he said to them, "were so knocked about by the ice, that they were obliged to leave off fires on board; but that did not prevent the temperature sinking 18 degrees below zero. During the whole winter the unfortunate crews were kept prisoners in the ice-bank, ready to abandon their ships at any moment; for three weeks they did not even change their clothes. They floated along in that dreadful situation for more than a thousand miles, when at last they were thrown into the middle of Baffin's Sea."

The effect of this speech upon a crew already badly disposed can be well imagined. During this conversation Johnson was talking to the doctor about an event that had taken place in those very quarters; he asked the doctor to tell him when the brig was in latitude 75 degrees 30 minutes, and when they passed it he cried:

"Yes, it was just there!" in saying which tears filled his eyes.

"You mean that Lieutenant Bellot died there?" said the doctor.

"Yes, Mr. Clawbonny. He was as good and brave a fellow as ever lived! It was upon this very North Devon coast! It was to be, I suppose, but if Captain Pullen had returned on board sooner it would not have happened."

"What do you mean, Johnson?"

"Listen to me, Mr. Clawbonny, and you will see on what a slight thread existence often hangs. You know that Lieutenant Bellot went his first campaign in search of Franklin in 1850?"

"Yes, on the *Prince Albert*."

"Well, when he got back to France he obtained permission to embark on board

the *Phoenix* under Captain Inglefield; I was a sailor on board. We came with the *Breadalbane* to transport provisions to Beechey Island!"

"Those provisions we, unfortunately, did not find. Well?"

"We reached Beechey Island in the beginning of August; on the 10th Captain Inglefield left the *Phoenix* to rejoin Captain Pullen, who had been separated from his ship, the *North Star*, for a month. When he came back he thought of sending his Admiralty despatches to Sir Edward Belcher, who was wintering in Wellington Channel. A little while after the departure of our captain, Captain Pullen got back to his ship. Why did he not arrive before the departure of Captain Inglefield? Lieutenant Bellot, fearing that our captain would be long away, and knowing that the Admiralty despatches ought to be sent at once, offered to take them himself. He left the command of the two ships to Captain Pullen, and set out on the 12th of August with a sledge and an indiarubber boat. He took the boatswain of the *North Star* (Harvey) with him, and three sailors, Madden, David Hook, and me. We supposed that Sir Edward Belcher was to be found in the neighbourhood of Beecher Cape, to the north of the channel; we made for it with our sledge along the eastern coast. The first day we encamped about three miles from Cape Innis; the next day we stopped on a block of ice about three miles from Cape Bowden. As land lay at about three miles' distance, Lieutenant Bellot resolved to go and encamp there during the night, which was as light as the day; he tried to get to it in his indiarubber canoe; he was twice repulsed by a violent breeze from the south-east; Harvey and Madden attempted the passage in their turn, and were more fortunate; they took a cord with them, and established a communication between the coast and the sledge; three objects were transported by means of the cord, but at the fourth attempt we felt our block of ice move; Mr. Bellot called out to his companions to drop the cord, and we were dragged to a great distance from the coast. The wind blew from the south-east, and it was snowing; but we were not in much danger, and the lieutenant might have come back as we did."

Here Johnson stopped an instant to take a glance at the fatal coast, and continued:

"After our companions were lost to sight we tried to shelter ourselves under the tent of our sledge, but in vain; then, with our knives, we began to cut out a house in the ice. Mr. Bellot helped us for half an hour, and talked to us about the danger of our situation. I told him I was not afraid. 'By God's help,' he answered, 'we

shall not lose a hair of our heads.' I asked him what o'clock it was, and he answered, 'About a quarter-past six.' It was a quarter-past six in the morning of Thursday, August 18th. Then Mr. Bellot tied up his books, and said he would go and see how the ice floated; he had only been gone four minutes when I went round the block of ice to look for him; I saw his stick on the opposite side of a crevice, about five fathoms wide, where the ice was broken, but I could not see him anywhere. I called out, but no one answered. The wind was blowing great guns. I looked all round the block of ice, but found no trace of the poor lieutenant."

"What do you think had become of him?" said the doctor, much moved.

"I think that when Mr. Bellot got out of shelter the wind blew him into the crevice, and, as his greatcoat was buttoned up he could not swim. Oh! Mr. Clawbonny, I never was more grieved in my life! I could not believe it! He was a victim to duty, for it was in order to obey Captain Pullen's instructions that he tried to get to land. He was a good fellow, everybody liked him; even the Esquimaux, when they learnt his fate from Captain Inglefield on his return from Pound Bay, cried while they wept, as I am doing now, 'Poor Bellot! poor Bellot!'"

"But you and your companion, Johnson," said the doctor, "how did you manage to reach land?"

"Oh! we stayed twenty-four hours more on the block of ice, without food or firing; but at last we met with an ice-field; we jumped on to it, and with the help of an oar we fastened ourselves to an iceberg that we could guide like a raft, and we got to land, but without our brave officer."

By the time Johnson had finished his story the *Forward* had passed the fatal coast, and Johnson lost sight of the place of the painful catastrophe. The next day they left Griffin Bay to the starboard, and, two days after, Capes Grinnell and Helpmann; at last, on the 14th of July, they doubled Osborn Point, and on the 15th the brig anchored in Baring Bay, at the extremity of the channel. Navigation had not been very difficult; Hatteras met with a sea almost as free as that of which Belcher profited to go and winter with the *Pioneer* and the *Assistance* as far north as 77 degrees. It was in 1852 and 1853, during his first wintering, for he passed the winter of 1853 to 1854 in Baring Bay, where the *Forward* was now at anchor. He suffered so much that he was obliged to leave the *Assistance* in the

midst of the ice. Shandon told all these details to the already discontented sailors. Did Hatteras know how he was betrayed by his first officer? It is impossible to say; if he did, he said nothing about it.

At the top of Baring Bay there is a narrow channel which puts Wellington and Queen's Channel into communication with each other. There the rafts of ice lie closely packed. Hatteras tried, in vain, to clear the passes to the north of Hamilton Island; the wind was contrary; five precious days were lost in useless efforts. The temperature still lowered, and, on the 19th of July, fell to 26 degrees; it got higher the following day; but this foretaste of winter made Hatteras afraid of waiting any longer. The wind seemed to be going to keep in the west, and to stop the progress of the ship. However, he was in a hurry to gain the point where Stewart had met with the open sea. On the 19th he resolved to get into the Channel at any price; the wind blew right on the brig, which might, with her screw, have stood against it, had not Hatteras been obliged to economise his fuel; on the other hand, the Channel was too wide to allow the men to haul the brig along. Hatteras, not considering the men's fatigue, resolved to have recourse to means often employed by whalers under similar circumstances. The men took it in turns to row, so as to push the brig on against the wind. The *Forward* advanced slowly up the Channel. The men were worn out and murmured loudly. They went on in that manner till the 23rd of July, when they reached Baring Island in Queen's Channel. The wind was still against them. The doctor thought the health of the men much shaken, and perceived the first symptoms of scurvy amongst them; he did all he could to prevent the spread of the wretched malady, and distributed lime-juice to the men.

Hatteras saw that he could no longer count upon his crew; reasoning and kindness were ineffectual, so he resolved to employ severity for the future; he suspected Shandon and Wall, though they dare not speak out openly. Hatteras had the doctor, Johnson, Bell, and Simpson for him; they were devoted to him body and soul; amongst the undecided were Foker, Bolton, Wolsten the gunsmith, and Brunton the first engineer; and they might turn against the captain at any moment; as to Pen, Gripper, Clifton, and Warren, they were in open revolt; they wished to persuade their comrades to force the captain to return to England. Hatteras soon saw that he could not continue to work his ship with such a crew. He remained twenty-four hours at Baring Island without taking a step forward. The weather grew cooler still, for winter begins to be felt in July in these high latitudes. On the 24th the thermometer fell to 22 degrees. Young ice formed during the night, and if snow fell it would soon be thick enough to bear

the weight of a man. The sea began already to have that dirty colour which precedes the formation of the first crystals. Hatteras could not mistake these alarming symptoms; if the channels got blocked up, he should be obliged to winter there at a great distance from the point he had undertaken the voyage in order to reach, without having caught a glimpse of that open sea which his predecessors made out was so near. He resolved, then, to gain several degrees further north, at whatever cost; seeing that he could not employ oars without the rowers were willing, nor sail in a contrary wind, he gave orders to put steam on again.

CHAPTER XXII

BEGINNING OF REVOLT

At this unexpected command, the surprise was great on board the *Forward*.

"Light the fires!" exclaimed some.

"What with?" asked others.

"When we've only two months' coal in the hold!" said Pen.

"What shall we warm ourselves with in the winter?" asked Clifton.

"We shall be obliged to burn the brig down to her water-line," answered Gripper.

"And stuff the stove with the masts," added Warren. Shandon looked at Wall. The stupefied engineers hesitated to go down to the machine-room.

"Did you hear me?" cried the captain in an irritated tone.

Brunton made for the hatchway, but before going down he stopped.

"Don't go, Brunton!" called out a voice.

"Who spoke?" cried Hatteras.

"I did," said Pen, advancing towards the captain.

"And what did you say?" asked Hatteras.

"I say," answered Pen with an oath--"I say, we've had enough of it, and we won't go any further. You shan't kill us with hunger and work in the winter, and they shan't light the fires!"

"Mr. Shandon," answered Hatteras calmly, "have that man put in irons!"

"But, captain," replied Shandon, "what the man says----"

"If you repeat what the man says," answered Hatteras, "I'll have you shut up in your cabin and guarded! Seize that man! Do you hear?" Johnson, Bell, and Simpson advanced towards the sailor, who was in a terrible passion.

"The first who touches me----" he said, brandishing a handspike. Hatteras approached him.

"Pen," said he tranquilly, "if you move, I shall blow out your brains!" So speaking, he cocked a pistol and aimed it at the sailor. A murmur was heard.

"Not a word, men," said Hatteras, "or that man falls dead!" Johnson and Bell disarmed Pen, who no longer made any resistance, and placed him in the hold.

"Go, Brunton," said Hatteras. The engineer, followed by Plover and Warren, went down to his post. Hatteras returned to the poop.

"That Pen is a wretched fellow!" said the doctor.

"No man has ever been nearer death!" answered the captain, simply.

The steam was soon got up, the anchors were weighed, and the *Forward* veered away east, cutting the young ice with her steel prow. Between Baring Island and Beecher Point there are a considerable quantity of islands in the midst of ice-fields; the streams crowd together in the little channels which cut up this part of the sea; they had a tendency to agglomerate under the relatively low temperature; hummocks were formed here and there, and these masses, already more compact, denser, and closer together, would soon form an impenetrable mass. The *Forward* made its way with great difficulty amidst the snowstorms. However, with the mobility that characterises the climate of these regions, the sun appeared from time to time, the temperature went up several degrees, obstacles melted as if by magic, and a fine sheet of water lay where icebergs bristled all the passes. The horizon glowed with those magnificent orange shades which rest the eye, tired with the eternal white of the snow.

On the 26th of July the *Forward* passed Dundas Island, and veered afterwards more to the north; but there Hatteras found himself opposite an ice-bank eight or nine feet high, formed of little icebergs detached from the coast; he was obliged to turn west. The uninterrupted cracking of the ice, added to the noise of the steamer, was like sighs or groans. At last the brig found a channel, and advanced painfully along it; often an enormous iceberg hindered her course for hours; the

fog hindered the pilot's look-out; as long as he can see for a mile in front of him, he can easily avoid obstacles; but in the midst of the fog it was often impossible to see a cable's length, and the swell was very strong. Sometimes the clouds looked smooth and white as though they were reflections of the ice-banks; but there were entire days when the yellow rays of the sun could not pierce the tenacious fog. Birds were still very numerous, and their cries were deafening; seals, lying idle on the floating ice, raised their heads, very little frightened, and moved their long necks as the brig passed. Pieces from the ship's sheathing were often rubbed off in her contact with the ice. At last, after six days of slow navigation, Point Beecher was sighted to the north on the 1st of August. Hatteras passed the last few hours at his masthead; the open sea that Stewart had perceived on May 30th, 1851, about latitude 76 degrees 20 minutes, could not be far off; but as far as the eye could reach, Hatteras saw no indication of it. He came down without saying a word.

"Do you believe in an open sea?" asked Shandon of the lieutenant.

"I am beginning not to," answered Wall.

"Wasn't I right to say the pretended discovery was purely imagination? But they would not believe me, and even you were against me, Wall."

"We shall believe in you for the future, Shandon."

"Yes," said he, "when it's too late," and so saying he went back to his cabin, where he had stopped almost ever since his dispute with the captain. The wind veered round south towards evening; Hatteras ordered the brig to be put under sail and the fires to be put out; the crew had to work very hard for the next few days; they were more than a week getting to Barrow Point. The *Forward* had only made thirty miles in ten days. There the wind turned north again, and the screw was set to work. Hatteras still hoped to find an open sea beyond the 77th parallel, as Sir Edward Belcher had done. Ought he to treat these accounts as apocryphal? or had the winter come upon him earlier? On the 15th of August Mount Percy raised its peak, covered with eternal snow, through the mist. The next day the sun set for the first time, ending thus the long series of days with twenty-four hours in them. The men had ended by getting accustomed to the continual daylight, but it had never made any difference to the animals; the Greenland dogs went to their rest at their accustomed hour, and Dick slept as regularly every evening as though darkness had covered the sky. Still, during the

nights which followed the 15th of August, darkness was never profound; although the sun set, he still gave sufficient light by refraction. On the 19th of August, after a pretty good observation, they sighted Cape Franklin on the east coast and Cape Lady Franklin on the west coast; the gratitude of the English people had given these names to the two opposite points--probably the last reached by Franklin: the name of the devoted wife, opposite to that of her husband, is a touching emblem of the sympathy which always united them.

The doctor, by following Johnson's advice, accustomed himself to support the low temperature; he almost always stayed on deck braving the cold, the wind, and the snow. He got rather thinner, but his constitution did not suffer. Besides, he expected to be much worse off, and joyfully prepared for the approaching winter.

"Look at those birds," he said to Johnson one day; "they are emigrating south in flocks! They are shrieking out their good-byes!"

"Yes, Mr. Clawbonny, some instinct tells them they must go, and they set out."

"There's more than one amongst us who would like to imitate them, I think."

"They are cowards, Mr. Clawbonny; those animals have no provisions as we have, and are obliged to seek their food where it is to be found. But sailors, with a good ship under their feet, ought to go to the world's end."

"You hope that Hatteras will succeed, then?"

"He certainly will, Mr. Clawbonny."

"I am of the same opinion as you, Johnson, and if he only wanted one faithful companion----"

"He'll have two!"

"Yes, Johnson," answered the doctor, shaking hands with the brave sailor.

Prince Albert Land, which the *Forward* was then coasting, bears also the name of Grinnell Land, and though Hatteras, from his hatred to the Yankees, would never call it by its American name, it is the one it generally goes by. It owes its double appellation to the following circumstances: At the same time that Penny,

an Englishman, gave it the name of Prince Albert, Lieutenant Haven, commander of the *Rescue*, called it Grinnell Land in honour of the American merchant who had fitted out the expedition from New York at his own expense. Whilst the brig was coasting it, she experienced a series of unheard-of difficulties, navigating sometimes under sail, sometimes by steam. On the 18th of August they sighted Britannia Mountain, scarcely visible through the mist, and the *Forward* weighed anchor the next day in Northumberland Bay. She was hemmed in on all sides.

CHAPTER XXIII

ATTACKED BY ICEBERGS

Hatteras, after seeing to the anchoring of his ship, re-entered his cabin and examined his map attentively. He found himself in latitude 76 degrees 57 minutes and longitude 99 degrees 20 minutes--that is to say, at only three minutes from the 77th parallel. It was at this very spot that Sir Edward Belcher passed his first winter with the *Pioneer* and the *Assistance*. It was thence that he organised his sledge and boat excursions. He discovered Table Isle, North Cornwall, Victoria Archipelago, and Belcher Channel. He reached the 78th parallel, and saw that the coast was depressed on the south-east. It seemed to go down to Jones's Strait, the entrance to which lies in Baffin's Bay. But to the north-west, on the contrary, says his report, an open sea lay as far as the eye could reach.

Hatteras considered attentively the white part of the map, which represented the Polar basin free from ice.

"After such testimony as that of Stewart, Penny, and Belcher, I can't have a doubt about it," he said to himself. "They saw it with their own eyes. But if the winter has already frozen it! But no; they made their discoveries at intervals of several years. It exists, and I shall find it! I shall see it."

Hatteras went on to the poop. An intense fog enveloped the *Forward*; the masthead could scarcely be distinguished from the deck. However, Hatteras called down the ice-master from his crow's nest, and took his place. He wished to profit by the shortest clear interval to examine the north-western horizon. Shandon did not let the occasion slip for saying to the lieutenant:

"Well, Wall, where is the open sea?"

"You were right, Shandon, and we have only six weeks' coal in the hold."

"Perhaps the doctor will find us some scientific fuel to warm us in the place of coal," answered Shandon. "I have heard say you can turn fire to ice; perhaps he'll turn ice to fire." And he entered his cabin, shrugging his shoulders. The next day was the 20th of August, and the fog cleared away for several minutes. They saw

Hatteras look eagerly at the horizon, and then come down without speaking; but it was easy to see that his hopes had again been crushed. The *Forward* weighed anchor, and took up her uncertain march northward. As the *Forward* began to be weather-worn, the masts were unreeved, for they could no longer rely on the variable wind, and the sails were nearly useless in the winding channels. Large white marks appeared here and there on the sea like oil spots; they presaged an approaching frost; as soon as the breeze dropped the sea began to freeze immediately; but as soon as the wind got up again, the young ice was broken up and dispersed. Towards evening the thermometer went down to 17 degrees.

When the brig came to a closed-up pass she acted as a battering ram, and ran at full steam against the obstacle, which she sunk. Sometimes they thought she was stopped for good; but an unexpected movement of the streams opened her a new passage, and she took advantage of it boldly. When the brig stopped, the steam which escaped from the safety-pipes was condensed by the cold air and fell in snow on to the deck. Another impediment came in the way; the ice-blocks sometimes got entangled in the paddles, and they were so hard that all the strength of the machine was not sufficient to break them; it was then necessary to back the engine and send men to clear the screws with their handspikes. All this delayed the brig; it lasted thirteen days. The *Forward* dragged herself painfully along Penny Strait; the crew grumbled, but obeyed: the men saw now that it was impossible to go back. Keeping north was less dangerous than retreating south. They were obliged to think about wintering. The sailors talked together about their present position, and one day they mentioned it to Richard Shandon, who, they knew, was on their side. The second officer forgot his duty as an officer, and allowed them to discuss the authority of the captain before him.

"You say, then, Mr. Shandon, that we can't go back now?" said Gripper.

"No, it's too late now," answered Shandon.

"Then we must think about wintering," said another sailor.

"It's the only thing we can do. They wouldn't believe me."

"Another time," said Pen, who had been released, "we shall believe you."

"But as I am not the master----" replied Shandon.

"Who says you mayn't be?" answered Pen. "John Hatteras may go as far as he likes, but we aren't obliged to follow him."

"You all know what became of the crew that did follow him in his first cruise to Baffin's Sea?" said Gripper.

"And the cruise of the *Farewell* under him that got lost in the Spitzbergen seas!" said Clifton.

"He was the only man that came back," continued Gripper.

"He and his dog," answered Clifton.

"We won't die for his pleasure," added Pen.

"Nor lose the bounty we've been at so much trouble to earn," cried Clifton. "When we've passed the 78th degree--and we aren't far off it, I know--that will make just the 375 pounds each."

"But," answered Gripper, "shan't we lose it if we go back without the captain?"

"Not if we prove that we were obliged to," answered Clifton.

"But it's the captain----"

"You never mind, Gripper," answered Pen; "we'll have a captain and a good one--that Mr. Shandon knows. When one commander goes mad, folks have done with him, and they take another; don't they, Mr. Shandon?"

Shandon answered evasively that they could reckon upon him, but that they must wait to see what turned up. Difficulties were getting thick round Hatteras, but he was as firm, calm, energetic, and confident as ever. After all, he had done in five months what other navigators had taken two or three years to do! He should be obliged to winter now, but there was nothing to frighten brave sailors in that. Sir John Ross and McClure had passed three successive winters in the Arctic regions. What they had done he could do too!

"If I had only been able to get up Smith Strait at the north of Baffin's Sea, I should be at the Pole by now!" he said to the doctor regretfully.

"Never mind, captain!" answered the doctor, "we shall get at it by the 99th meridian instead of by the 75th; if all roads lead to Rome, it's more certain still that all meridians lead to the Pole."

On the 31st of August the thermometer marked 13 degrees. The end of the navigable season was approaching; the *Forward* left Exmouth Island to the starboard, and three days after passed Table Island in the middle of Belcher Channel. At an earlier period it would perhaps have been possible to regain Baffin's Sea by this channel, but it was not to be dreamt of then; this arm of the sea was entirely barricaded by ice; ice-fields extended as far as the eye could reach, and would do so for eight months longer. Happily they could still gain a few minutes further north on the condition of breaking up the ice with huge clubs and petards. Now the temperature was so low, any wind, even a contrary one, was welcome, for in a calm the sea froze in a single night. The *Forward* could not winter in her present situation, exposed to winds, icebergs, and the drift from the channel; a shelter was the first thing to find; Hatteras hoped to gain the coast of New Cornwall, and to find above Albert Point a bay of refuge sufficiently sheltered. He therefore pursued his course northward with perseverance. But on the 8th an impenetrable ice-bank lay in front of him, and the temperature was at 10 degrees. Hatteras did all he could to force a passage, continually risking his ship and getting out of danger by force of skill. He could be accused of imprudence, want of reflection, folly, blindness, but he was a good sailor, and one of the best! The situation of the *Forward* became really dangerous; the sea closed up behind her, and in a few hours the ice got so hard that the men could run along it and tow the ship in all security.

Hatteras found he could not get round the obstacle, so he resolved to attack it in front; he used his strongest blasting cylinders of eight to ten pounds of powder; they began by making a hole in the thick of the ice, and filled it with snow, taking care to place the cylinder in a horizontal position, so that a greater portion of the ice might be submitted to the explosion; lastly, they lighted the wick, which was protected by a gutta-percha tube. They worked at the blasting, as they could not saw, for the saws stuck immediately in the ice. Hatteras hoped to pass the next day. But during the night a violent wind raged, and the sea rose under her crust of ice as if shaken by some submarine commotion, and the terrified voice of the pilot was heard crying:

"Look out aft!"

Hatteras turned to the direction indicated, and what he saw by the dim twilight was frightful. A high iceberg, driven back north, was rushing on to the ship with the rapidity of an avalanche.

"All hands on deck!" cried the captain.

The rolling mountain was hardly half a mile off; the blocks of ice were driven about like so many huge grains of sand; the tempest raged with fury.

"There, Mr. Clawbonny," said Johnson to the doctor, "we are in something like danger now."

"Yes," answered the doctor tranquilly, "it looks frightful enough."

"It's an assault we shall have to repulse," replied the boatswain.

"It looks like a troop of antediluvian animals, those that were supposed to inhabit the Pole. They are trying which shall get here first!"

"Well," added Johnson, "I hope we shan't get one of their spikes into us!"

"It's a siege--let's run to the ramparts!"

And they made haste aft, where the crew, armed with poles, bars of iron, and handspikes, were getting ready to repulse the formidable enemy. The avalanche came nearer, and got bigger by the addition of the blocks of ice which it caught in its passage; Hatteras gave orders to fire the cannon in the bow to break the threatening line. But it arrived and rushed on to the brig; a great crackling noise was heard, and as it struck on the brig's starboard a part of her barricading was broken. Hatteras gave his men orders to keep steady and prepare for the ice. It came along in blocks; some of them weighing several hundredweight came over the ship's side; the smaller ones, thrown up as high as the topsails, fell in little spikes, breaking the shrouds and cutting the rigging. The ship was boarded by these innumerable enemies, which in a block would have crushed a hundred ships like the *Forward*. Some of the sailors were badly wounded whilst trying to keep off the ice, and Bolton had his left shoulder torn open. The noise was deafening. Dick barked with rage at this new kind of enemy. The obscurity of the night came to add to the horror of the situation, but did not hide the threatening blocks, their white surface reflected the last gleams of light. Hatteras's orders were heard in the midst of the crew's strange struggle with the icebergs. The ship

giving way to the tremendous pressure, bent to the larboard, and the extremity of her mainyard leaned like a buttress against the iceberg and threatened to break her mast.

Hatteras saw the danger; it was a terrible moment; the brig threatened to turn completely over, and the masting might be carried away. An enormous block, as big as the steamer itself, came up alongside her hull; it rose higher and higher on the waves; it was already above the poop; it fell over the *Forward*. All was lost; it was now upright, higher than the gallant yards, and it shook on its foundation. A cry of terror escaped the crew. Everyone fled to starboard. But at this moment the steamer was lifted completely up, and for a little while she seemed to be suspended in the air, and fell again on to the ice-blocks; then she rolled over till her planks cracked again. After a minute, which appeared a century, she found herself again in her natural element, having been turned over the ice-bank that blocked her passage by the rising of the sea.

"She's cleared the ice-bank!" shouted Johnson, who had rushed to the fore of the brig.

"Thank God!" answered Hatteras.

The brig was now in the midst of a pond of ice, which hemmed her in on every side, and though her keel was in the water, she could not move; she was immovable, but the ice-field moved for her.

"We are drifting, captain!" cried Johnson.

"We must drift," answered Hatteras; "we can't help ourselves."

When daylight came, it was seen that the brig was drifting rapidly northward, along with a submarine current. The floating mass carried the *Forward* along with it. In case of accident, when the brig might be thrown on her side, or crushed by the pressure of the ice, Hatteras had a quantity of provisions brought up on deck, along with materials for encamping, the clothes and blankets of the crew. Taking example from Captain McClure under similar circumstances, he caused the brig to be surrounded by a belt of hammocks, filled with air, so as to shield her from the thick of the damage; the ice soon accumulated under a temperature of 7 degrees, and the ship was surrounded by a wall of ice, above which her masts only were to be seen. They navigated thus for seven days; Point Albert, the western extremity of New Cornwall, was sighted on the 10th of

September, but soon disappeared; from thence the ice-field drifted east. Where would it take them to? Where should they stop? Who could tell? The crew waited, and the men folded their arms. At last, on the 15th of September, about three o'clock in the afternoon, the ice-field, stopped, probably, by collision with another field, gave a violent shake to the brig, and stood still. Hatteras found himself out of sight of land in latitude 78 degrees 15 minutes and longitude 95 degrees 35 minutes in the midst of the unknown sea, where geographers have placed the Frozen Pole.

CHAPTER XXIV

PREPARATIONS FOR WINTERING

The southern hemisphere is colder in parallel latitudes than the northern hemisphere; but the temperature of the new continent is still 15 degrees below that of the other parts of the world; and in America the countries known under the name of the Frozen Pole are the most formidable. The average temperature of the year is 2 degrees below zero. Scientific men, and Dr. Clawbonny amongst them, explain the fact in the following way. According to them, the prevailing winds of the northern regions of America blow from the south-west; they come from the Pacific Ocean with an equal and bearable temperature; but in order to reach the Arctic Seas they have to cross the immense American territory, covered with snow, they get cold by contact with it, and then cover the hyperborean regions with their frigid violence. Hatteras found himself at the Frozen Pole beyond the countries seen by his predecessors; he, therefore, expected a terrible winter on a ship lost in the midst of the ice with a crew nearly in revolt. He resolved to face these dangers with his accustomed energy. He began by taking, with the help of Johnson's experience, all the measures necessary for wintering. According to his calculations he had been dragged two hundred and fifty miles beyond New Cornwall, the last country discovered; he was clasped in an ice-field as securely as in a bed of granite, and no power on earth could extricate him.

There no longer existed a drop of water in the vast seas over which the Arctic winter reigned. Ice-fields extended as far as the eye could reach, bristling with icebergs, and the *Forward* was sheltered by three of the highest on three points of the compass; the south-east wind alone could reach her. If instead of icebergs there had been rocks, verdure instead of snow, and the sea in its liquid state again, the brig would have been safely anchored in a pretty bay sheltered from the worst winds. But in such a latitude it was a miserable state of things. They were obliged to fasten the brig by means of her anchors, notwithstanding her immovability; they were obliged to prepare for the submarine currents and the breaking up of the ice. When Johnson heard where they were, he took the greatest precautions in getting everything ready for wintering.

"It's the captain's usual luck," said he to the doctor; "we've got nipped in the

most disagreeable point of the whole glove! Never mind; we'll get out of it!"

As to the doctor, he was delighted at the situation. He would not have changed it for any other! A winter at the Frozen Pole seemed to him desirable. The crew were set to work at the sails, which were not taken down, and put into the hold, as the first people who wintered in these regions had thought prudent; they were folded up in their cases, and the ice soon made them an impervious envelope. The crow's nest, too, remained in its place, serving as a nautical observatory; the rigging alone was taken away. It became necessary to cut away the part of the field that surrounded the brig, which began to suffer from the pressure. It was a long and painful work. In a few days the keel was cleared, and on examination was found to have suffered little, thanks to the solidity of its construction, only its copper plating was almost all torn off. When the ship was once liberated she rose at least nine inches; the crew then bevelled the ice in the shape of the keel, and the field formed again under the brig, and offered sufficient opposition to pressure from without. The doctor helped in all this work; he used the ice-knife skilfully; he incited the sailors by his happy disposition. He instructed himself and others, and was delighted to find the ice under the ship.

"It's a very good precaution!" said he.

"We couldn't do without it, Mr. Clawbonny," said Johnson. "Now we can raise a snow-wall as high as the gunwale, and if we like we can make it ten feet thick, for we've plenty of materials."

"That's an excellent idea," answered the doctor. "Snow is a bad conductor of heat; it reflects it instead of absorbing it, and the heat of the interior does not escape."

"That's true," said Johnson. "We shall raise a fortification against the cold, and against animals too, if they take it into their heads to pay us a visit; when the work is done it will answer, I can tell you. We shall make two flights of steps in the snow, one from the ship and the other from outside; when once we've cut out the steps we shall pour water over them, and it will make them as hard as rock. We shall have a royal staircase."

"It's a good thing that cold makes ice and snow, and so gives us the means of protecting ourselves against it. I don't know what we should do if it did not."

A roofing of tarred cloth was spread over the deck and descended to the sides of

the brig. It was thus sheltered from all outside impression, and made a capital promenade; it was covered with two feet and a-half of snow, which was beaten down till it became very hard, and above that they put a layer of sand, completely macadamising it.

"With a few trees I should imagine myself in Hyde Park," said the doctor, "or in one of the hanging gardens of Babylon."

They made a hole at a short distance from the brig; it was round, like a well; they broke the ice every morning. This well was useful in case of fire or for the frequent baths ordered to keep the crew in health. In order to spare their fuel, they drew the water from a greater depth by means of an apparatus invented by a Frenchman, Francois Arago. Generally, when a ship is wintering, all the objects which encumber her are placed in magazines on the coast, but it was impossible to do this in the midst of an ice-field. Every precaution was taken against cold and damp; men have been known to resist the cold and succumb to damp; therefore both had to be guarded against. The *Forward* had been built expressly for these regions, and the common room was wisely arranged. They had made war on the corners, where damp takes refuge at first. If it had been quite circular it would have done better, but warmed by a vast stove and well ventilated, it was very comfortable; the walls were lined with buckskins and not with woollen materials, for wool condenses the vapours and impregnates the atmosphere with damp. The partitions were taken down in the poop, and the officers had a large comfortable room, warmed by a stove. Both this room and that of the crew had a sort of antechamber, which prevented all direct communication with the exterior, and prevented the heat going out; it also made the crew pass more gradually from one temperature to another. They left their snow-covered garments in these antechambers, and scraped their feet on scrapers put there on purpose to prevent any unhealthy element getting in.

Canvas hose let in the air necessary to make the stoves draw; other hose served for escape-pipes for the steam. Two condensers were fixed in the two rooms; they gathered the vapour instead of letting it escape, and were emptied twice a week; sometimes they contained several bushels of ice. By means of the air-pipes the fires could be easily regulated, and it was found that very little fuel was necessary to keep up a temperature of 50 degrees in the rooms. But Hatteras saw with grief that he had only enough coal left for two months' firing. A drying-room was prepared for the garments that were obliged to be washed, as they could not be hung in the air or they would have been frozen and spoiled. The

delicate parts of the machine were taken to pieces carefully, and the room where they were placed was closed up hermetically. The rules for life on board were drawn up by Hatteras and hung up in the common room. The men got up at six in the morning, and their hammocks were exposed to the air three times a week; the floors of the two rooms were rubbed with warm sand every morning; boiling tea was served out at every meal, and the food varied as much as possible, according to the different days of the week; it consisted of bread, flour, beef suet and raisins for puddings, sugar, cocoa, tea, rice, lemon-juice, preserved meat, salted beef and pork, pickled cabbage and other vegetables; the kitchen was outside the common rooms, and the men were thus deprived of its heat, but cooking is a constant source of evaporation and humidity.

The health of men depends a great deal on the food they eat; under these high latitudes it is of great importance to consume as much animal food as possible. The doctor presided at the drawing up of the bill of fare.

"We must take example from the Esquimaux," said he; "they have received their lessons from nature, and are our teachers here; although Arabians and Africans can live on a few dates and a handful of rice, it is very different here, where we must eat a great deal and often. The Esquimaux absorb as much as ten and fifteen pounds of oil in a day. If you do not like oil, you must have recourse to things rich in sugar and fat. In a word, you want carbon in the stove inside you as much as the stove there wants coal."

Every man was forced to take a bath in the half-frozen water condensed from the fire. The doctor set the example; he did it at first as we do all disagreeable things that we feel obliged to do, but he soon began to take extreme pleasure in it. When the men had to go out either to hunt or work they had to take great care not to get frost-bitten; and if by accident it happened, they made haste to rub the part attacked with snow to bring back the circulation of the blood. Besides being carefully clothed in wool from head to foot, the men wore hoods of buckskin and sealskin trousers, through which it is impossible for the wind to penetrate. All these preparations took about three weeks, and the 10th of October came round without anything remarkable happening.

CHAPTER XXV

AN OLD FOX

That day the thermometer went down to 3 degrees below zero. The weather was pretty calm, and the cold without breeze was bearable. Hatteras profited by the clearness of the atmosphere to reconnoitre the surrounding plains; he climbed one of the highest icebergs to the north, and could see nothing, as far as his telescope would let him, but ice-fields and icebergs. No land anywhere, but the image of chaos in its saddest aspect. He came back on board trying to calculate the probable duration of his captivity. The hunters, and amongst them the doctor, James Wall, Simpson, Johnson, and Bell, did not fail to supply the ship with fresh meat. Birds had disappeared; they were gone to less rigorous southern climates. The ptarmigans, a sort of partridge, alone stay the winter in these latitudes; they are easily killed, and their great number promised an abundant supply of game. There were plenty of hares, foxes, wolves, ermine, and bears; there were enough for any sportsman, English, French, or Norwegian; but they were difficult to get at, and difficult to distinguish on the white plains from the whiteness of their fur; when the intense cold comes their fur changes colour, and white is their winter colour. The doctor found that this change of fur is not caused by the change of temperature, for it takes place in the month of October, and is simply a precaution of Providence to guard them from the rigour of a boreal winter.

Seals were abundant in all their varieties, and were particularly sought after by the hunters for the sake, not only of their skins, but their fat, which is very warming; besides which, the liver of these animals makes excellent fuel: hundreds of them were to be seen, and two or three miles to the north of the brig the ice was literally perforated all over with the holes these enormous amphibians make; only they smelt the hunters from afar, and many were wounded that escaped by plunging under the ice. However, on the 19th, Simpson managed to catch one at about a hundred yards from the ship; he had taken the precaution to block up its hole of refuge so that it was at the mercy of the hunters. It took several bullets to kill the animal, which measured nine feet in length; its bulldog head, the sixteen teeth in its jaws, its large pectoral fins in the shape of pinions, and its little tail, furnished with another pair of fins, made it a good specimen of the family of dog-hound fish. The doctor, wishing to preserve

the head for his natural history collection, and its skin for his future use, had them prepared by a rapid and inexpensive process. He plunged the body of the animal into the hole in the ice, and thousands of little prawns soon ate off all the flesh; in half a day the work was accomplished, and the most skilful of the honourable corporation of Liverpool tanners could not have succeeded better.

As soon as the sun had passed the autumnal equinox--that is to say, on the 23rd of September--winter may be said to begin in the Arctic regions. The sun disappears entirely on the 23rd of October, lighting up with its oblique rays the summits of the frozen mountains. The doctor wished him a traveller's farewell; he was not going to see him again till February. But obscurity is not complete during this long absence of the sun; the moon comes each month to take its place as well as she can; starlight is very bright, and there is besides frequent aurora borealis, and a refraction peculiar to the snowy horizons; besides, the sun at the very moment of his greatest austral declination, the 21st of December, is still only 13 degrees from the Polar horizon, so that there is twilight for a few hours; only fogs, mists, and snowstorms often plunge these regions into complete obscurity. However, at this epoch the weather was pretty favourable; the partridges and the hares were the only animals that had a right to complain, for the sportsmen did not give them a moment's peace; they set several fox-traps, but the suspicious animals did not let themselves be caught so easily; they would often come and eat the snare by scratching out the snow from under the trap; the doctor wished them at the devil, as he could not get them himself. On the 25th of October the thermometer marked more than 4 degrees below zero. A violent tempest set in; the air was thick with snow, which prevented a ray of light reaching the *Forward*. During several hours they were very uneasy about Bell and Simpson, who had gone too far whilst hunting; they did not reach the ship till the next day, after having lain for a whole day in their buckskins, whilst the tempest swept the air about them, and buried them under five feet of snow. They were nearly frozen, and the doctor had some trouble to restore their circulation.

The tempest lasted a week without interruption. It was impossible to stir out. In a single day the temperature varied fifteen and twenty degrees. During their forced idleness each one lived to himself; some slept, others smoked, or talked in whispers, stopping when they saw the doctor or Johnson approach; there was no moral union between the men; they only met for evening prayers, and on Sunday for Divine service. Clifton had counted that once the 78th parallel cleared, his share in the bounty would amount to 375 pounds; he thought that enough, and his ambition did not go beyond. The others were of the same opinion, and only

thought of enjoying the fortune acquired at such a price. Hatteras was hardly ever seen. He neither took part in the hunting nor other excursions. He felt no interest in the meteorological phenomena which excited the doctor's admiration. He lived for one idea; it was comprehended in three words--the North Pole. He was constantly looking forward to the moment when the *Forward*, once more free, would begin her adventurous voyage again.

In short, it was a melancholy life; the brig, made for movement, seemed quite out of place as a stationary dwelling; her original form could not be distinguished amidst the ice and snow that covered her, and she was anything but a lively spectacle. During these unoccupied hours the doctor put his travelling notes in order--the notes from which this history is taken; he was never idle, and the evenness of his humour remained the same, only he was very glad to see the tempest clearing off so as to allow him to set off hunting once more. On the 3rd of November, at six in the morning, with a temperature at 5 degrees below zero, he started, accompanied by Johnson and Bell; the plains of ice were level; the snow, which covered the ground thickly, solidified by the frost, made the ground good for walking; a dry and keen cold lightened the atmosphere; the moon shone in all her splendour, and threw an astonishing light on all the asperities of the field; their footsteps left marks on the snow, and the moon lighted up their edges, so that they looked like a luminous track behind the hunters whose shadows fell on the ice with astonishing outlines.

The doctor had taken his friend Dick with him; he preferred him to the Greenland dogs to run down the game for a good reason; the latter do not seem to have the scent of their brethren of more temperate climates. Dick ran on and often pointed out the track of a bear, but in spite of his skill the hunters had not even killed a hare after two hours' walking.

"Do you think the game has gone south too?" asked the doctor, halting at the foot of a hummock.

"It looks like it, Mr. Clawbonny," answered the carpenter.

"I don't think so," answered Johnson; "hares, foxes, and bears are accustomed to the climate; I believe the late tempest is the cause of their disappearance; but with the south winds they'll soon come back. Ah! if you said reindeers or musk-oxen it would be a different thing."

"But it appears those, too, are found in troops in Melville Island," replied the doctor; "that is much further south, I grant you; when Parry wintered there he always had as much game as he wanted."

"We are not so well off," said Bell; "if we could only get plenty of bear's flesh I should not complain."

"Bears are very difficult to get at," answered the doctor; "it seems to me they want civilising."

"Bell talks about the bear's flesh, but we want its fat more than its flesh or its skin," said Johnson.

"You are right, Johnson; you are always thinking about the fuel."

"How can I help thinking about it? I know if we are ever so careful of it we've only enough left for three weeks."

"Yes," replied the doctor, "that is our greatest danger, for we are only at the beginning of November, and February is the coldest month of the year in the Frozen Zone; however, if we can't get bear's grease we can rely on that of the seals."

"Not for long, Mr. Clawbonny," answered Johnson. "They'll soon desert us too; either through cold or fright, they'll soon leave off coming on to the surface of the ice."

"Then we must get at the bears," said the doctor; "they are the most useful animals in these countries: they furnish food, clothes, light, and fuel. Do you hear, Dick?" continued he, caressing his friend; "we must have a bear, so look out."

Dick, who was smelling the ice as the doctor spoke, started off all at once, quick as an arrow. He barked loudly, and, notwithstanding his distance, the sportsmen heard him distinctly. The extreme distance to which sound is carried in these low temperatures is astonishing; it is only equalled by the brilliancy of the constellations in the boreal sky.

The sportsmen, guided by Dick's barking, rushed on his traces; they had to run about a mile, and arrived quite out of breath, for the lungs are rapidly suffocated

in such an atmosphere. Dick was pointing at about fifty paces from an enormous mass at the top of a mound of ice.

"We've got him," said the doctor, taking aim.

"And a fine one," added Bell, imitating the doctor.

"It's a queer bear," said Johnson, waiting to fire after his two companions.

Dick barked furiously. Bell advanced to within twenty feet and fired, but the animal did not seem to be touched. Johnson advanced in his turn, and after taking a careful aim, pulled the trigger.

"What," cried the doctor, "not touched yet? Why, it's that cursed refraction. The bear is at least a thousand paces off."

The three sportsmen ran rapidly towards the animal, whom the firing had not disturbed; he seemed to be enormous, and without calculating the dangers of the attack, they began to rejoice in their conquest. Arrived within reasonable distance they fired again; the bear, mortally wounded, gave a great jump and fell at the foot of the mound. Dick threw himself upon it.

"That bear wasn't difficult to kill," said the doctor.

"Only three shots," added Bell in a tone of disdain, "and he's down."

"It's very singular," said Johnson.

"Unless we arrived at the very moment when it was dying of old age," said the doctor, laughing.

So speaking, the sportsmen reached the foot of the mound, and, to their great stupefaction, they found Dick with his fangs in the body of a white fox.

"Well, I never!" cried Bell.

"We kill a bear and a fox falls," added the doctor.

Johnson did not know what to say.

"Why!" said the doctor, with a roar of laughter, "it's the refraction again!"

"What do you mean, Mr. Clawbonny?" asked the carpenter.

"Why, it deceived us about the size as it did about the distance. It made us see a bear in a fox's skin."

"Well," answered Johnson, "now we've got him, we'll eat him."

Johnson was going to lift the fox on to his shoulders, when he cried like Bell--"Well, I never!"

"What is it?" asked the doctor.

"Look, Mr. Clawbonny--look what the animal's got on its neck; it's a collar, sure enough."

"A collar?" echoed the doctor, leaning over the animal. A half worn-out collar encircled the fox's neck, and the doctor thought he saw something engraved on it; he took it off and examined it.

"That bear is more than twelve years old, my friends," said the doctor; "it's one of James Ross's foxes, and the collar has been round its neck ever since 1848."

"Is it possible?" cried Bell.

"There isn't a doubt about it, and I'm sorry we've shot the poor animal. During his wintering James Ross took a lot of white foxes in his traps, and had brass collars put round their necks on which were engraved the whereabouts of his ships, the *Enterprise* and the *Investigator*, and the store magazines. He hoped one of them might fall into the hands of some of the men belonging to Franklin's expedition. The poor animal might have saved the lives of the ship's crews, and it has fallen under our balls."

"Well, we won't eat him," said Johnson, "especially as he's twelve years old. Anyway, we'll keep his skin for curiosity sake." So saying he lifted the animal on his shoulders, and they made their way to the ship, guided by the stars; still their expedition was not quite fruitless: they bagged several brace of ptarmigans. An hour before they reached the *Forward,* a phenomenon occurred which excited the astonishment of the doctor; it was a very rain of shooting stars; they could be counted by thousands, like rockets in a display of fireworks. They paled the light of the moon, and the admirable spectacle lasted several hours. A like meteor was

observed at Greenland by the Moravian brothers in 1799. The doctor passed the whole night watching it, till it ceased, at seven in the morning, amidst the profound silence of the atmosphere.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE LAST LUMP OF COAL

It seemed certain that no bears were to be had; several seals were killed during the days of the 4th, 5th, and 6th of November; then the wind changed, and the thermometer went up several degrees; but the snow-drifts began again with great violence. It became impossible to leave the vessel, and the greatest precaution was needed to keep out the damp. At the end of the week there were several bushels of ice in the condensers. The weather changed again on the 15th of November, and the thermometer, under the influence of certain atmospherical conditions, went down to 24 degrees below zero. It was the lowest temperature observed up till then. This cold would have been bearable in a quiet atmosphere, but there was a strong wind which seemed to fill the atmosphere with sharp blades. The doctor was vexed at being kept prisoner, for the ground was covered with snow, made hard by the wind, and was easy to walk upon; he wanted to attempt some long excursion.

It is very difficult to work when it is so cold, because of the shortness of breath it causes. A man can only do a quarter of his accustomed work; iron implements become impossible to touch; if one is taken up without precaution, it causes a pain as bad as a burn, and pieces of skin are left on it. The crew, confined to the ship, were obliged to walk for two hours on the covered deck, where they were allowed to smoke, which was not allowed in the common room. There, directly the fire got low, the ice invaded the walls and the joins in the flooring; every bolt, nail, or metal plate became immediately covered with a layer of ice. The doctor was amazed at the instantaneity of the phenomenon. The breath of the men condensed in the air, and passing quickly from a fluid to a solid state, fell round them in snow. At a few feet only from the stoves the cold was intense, and the men stood near the fire in a compact group. The doctor advised them to accustom their skin to the temperature, which would certainly get worse, and he himself set the example; but most of them were too idle or too benumbed to follow his advice, and preferred remaining in the unhealthy heat. However, according to the doctor, there was no danger in the abrupt changes of temperature in going from the warm room into the cold. It is only dangerous for people in perspiration; but the doctor's lessons were thrown away on the greater part of the crew.

As to Hatteras, he did not seem to feel the influence of the temperature. He walked silently about at his ordinary pace. Had the cold no empire over his strong constitution, or did he possess in a supreme degree the natural heat he wished his sailors to have? Was he so armed in his one idea as to be insensible to exterior impressions? His men were profoundly astonished at seeing him facing the 24 degrees below zero; he left the ship for hours, and came back without his face betraying the slightest mark of cold.

"He is a strange man," said the doctor to Johnson; "he even astonishes me. He is one of the most powerful natures I have ever studied in my life."

"The fact is," answered Johnson, "that he comes and goes in the open air without clothing himself more warmly than in the month of June."

"Oh! the question of clothes is not of much consequence," replied the doctor; "it is of no use clothing people who do not produce heat naturally. It is the same as if we tried to warm a piece of ice by wrapping it up in a blanket! Hatteras does not want that; he is constituted so, and I should not be surprised if being by his side were as good as being beside a stove."

Johnson had the job of clearing the water-hole the next day, and remarked that the ice was more than ten feet thick. The doctor could observe magnificent aurora borealis almost every night; from four till eight p.m. the sky became slightly coloured in the north; then this colouring took the regular form of a pale yellow border, whose extremities seemed to buttress on to the ice-field. Little by little the brilliant zone rose in the sky, following the magnetic meridian, and appeared striated with blackish bands; jets of some luminous matter, augmenting and diminishing, shot out lengthways; the meteor, arrived at its zenith, was often composed of several bows, bathed in floods of red, yellow, or green light. It was a dazzling spectacle. Soon the different curves all joined in one point, and formed boreal crowns of a heavenly richness. At last the bows joined, the splendid aurora faded, the intense rays melted into pale, vague, undetermined shades, and the marvellous phenomenon, feeble, and almost extinguished, fainted insensibly into the dark southern clouds. Nothing can equal the wonders of such a spectacle under the high latitudes less than eight degrees from the Pole; the aurora borealis perceived in temperate regions gives no idea of them--not even a feeble one; it seems as if Providence wished to reserve its most astonishing marvels for these climates.

During the duration of the moon several images of her are seen in the sky, increasing her brilliancy; often simple lunar halos surround her, and she shines from the centre of her luminous circle with a splendid intensity.

On the 26th of November there was a high tide, and the water escaped with violence from the water-hole; the thick layer of ice was shaken by the rising of the sea, and sinister crackings announced the submarine struggle; happily the ship kept firm in her bed, and her chains only were disturbed. Hatteras had had them fastened in anticipation of the event. The following days were still colder; there was a penetrating fog, and the wind scattered the piled-up snow; it became difficult to see whether the whirlwinds began in the air or on the ice-fields; confusion reigned.

The crew were occupied in different works on board, the principal of which consisted in preparing the grease and oil produced by the seals; they had become blocks of ice, which had to be broken with axes into little bits, and ten barrels were thus preserved.

All sorts of vessels were useless, and the liquid they contained would only have broken them when the temperature changed. On the 28th the thermometer went down to 32 degrees below zero; there was only coal enough left for ten days, and everyone looked forward to its disappearance with dread. Hatteras had the poop stove put out for economy's sake, and from that time Shandon, the doctor, and he stayed in the common room. Hatteras was thus brought into closer contact with the men, who threw ferocious and stupefied looks at him. He heard their reproaches, their recriminations, and even their threats, and he could not punish them. But he seemed to be deaf to everything. He did not claim the place nearest the fire, but stopped in a corner, his arms folded, never speaking.

In spite of the doctor's recommendations, Pen and his friends refused to take the least exercise; they passed whole days leaning against the stove or lying under the blankets of their hammocks. Their health soon began to suffer; they could not bear up against the fatal influence of the climate, and the terrible scurvy made its appearance on board. The doctor had, however, begun, some time ago, to distribute limejuice and lime pastilles every morning; but these preservatives, generally so efficacious, had very little effect on the malady, which soon presented the most horrible symptoms. The sight of the poor fellows, whose nerves and muscles contracted with pain, was pitiable. Their legs swelled in an extraordinary fashion, and were covered with large blackish blue spots; their

bloody gums and ulcerated lips only gave passage to inarticulate sounds; the vitiated blood no longer went to the extremities.

Clifton was the first attacked; then Gripper, Brunton, and Strong took to their hammocks. Those that the malady still spared could not lose sight of their sufferings; they were obliged to stay there, and it was soon transformed into a hospital, for out of eighteen sailors of the *Forward*, thirteen were attacked in a few days. Pen seemed destined to escape contagion; his vigorous nature preserved him from it. Shandon felt the first symptoms, but they did not go further, and exercise kept the two in pretty good health.

The doctor nursed the invalids with the greatest care, and it made him miserable to see the sufferings he could not alleviate. He did all he could to keep his companions in good spirits; he talked to them, read to them, and told them tales, which his astonishing memory made it easy for him to do. He was often interrupted by the complaints and groans of the invalids, and he stopped his talk to become once more the attentive and devoted doctor. His health kept up well; he did not get thinner, and he used to say that it was a good thing for him that he was dressed like a seal or a whale, who, thanks to its thick layer of fat, easily supports the Arctic atmosphere. Hatteras felt nothing, either physically or morally. Even the sufferings of his crew did not seem to touch him. Perhaps it was because he would not let his face betray his emotions; but an attentive observer would have remarked that a man's heart beat beneath the iron envelope. The doctor analysed him, studied him, but did not succeed in classifying so strange an organisation, a temperament so supernatural. The thermometer lowered again; the walk on deck was deserted; the Esquimaux dogs alone frequented it, howling lamentably.

There was always one man on guard near the stove to keep up the fire; it was important not to let it go out. As soon as the fire got lower, the cold glided into the room; ice covered the walls, and the humidity, rapidly condensed, fell in snow on the unfortunate inhabitants of the brig. It was in the midst of these unutterable tortures that the 8th of December was reached. That morning the doctor went as usual to consult the exterior thermometer. He found the mercury completely frozen.

"Forty-four degrees below zero!" he cried with terror. And that day they threw the last lump of coal into the stove.

CHAPTER XXVII

CHRISTMAS

There was then a movement of despair. The thought of death, and death from cold, appeared in all its horror; the last piece of coal burnt away as quickly as the rest, and the temperature of the room lowered sensibly. But Johnson went to fetch some lumps of the new fuel which the marine animals had furnished him with, and he stuffed it into the stove; he added some oakum, impregnated with frozen oil, and soon obtained enough heat. The smell of the grease was abominable, but how could they get rid of it? They were obliged to get used to it. Johnson agreed that his expedient left much to wish for, and would have no success in a Liverpool house.

"However," added he, "the smell may have one good result."

"What's that?" asked the carpenter.

"It will attract the bears; they are very fond of the stink."

"And what do we want with bears?" added Bell.

"You know, Bell, we can't depend on the seals; they've disappeared for a good while to come; if the bears don't come to be turned into fuel too, I don't know what will become of us."

"There would be only one thing left; but I don't see how----"

"The captain would never consent; but perhaps we shall be obliged."

Johnson shook his head sadly, and fell into a silent reverie, which Bell did not interrupt. He knew that their stock of grease would not last more than a week with the strictest economy.

The boatswain was not mistaken. Several bears, attracted by the fetid exhalations, were signalled to the windward; the healthy men gave chase to them, but they are extraordinarily quick, and did not allow themselves to be approached, and the most skilful shots could not touch them. The ship's crew

was seriously menaced with death from cold; it was impossible to resist such a temperature more than forty-eight hours, and every one feared the end of the fuel. The dreaded moment arrived at three o'clock p.m. on the 20th of December. The fire went out; the sailors looked at each other with haggard eyes. Hatteras remained immovable in his corner. The doctor as usual marched up and down in agitation; he was at his wits' end. The temperature of the room fell suddenly to 7 degrees below zero. But if the doctor did not know what to do, some of the others did. Shandon, calm and resolute, and Pen with anger in his eyes, and two or three of their comrades, who could still walk, went up to Hatteras.

"Captain!" said Shandon.

Hatteras, absorbed in thought, did not hear him.

"Captain!" repeated Shandon, touching his hand.

Hatteras drew himself up.

"What is it?" he said.

"Our fire is out!"

"What then?" answered Hatteras.

"If you mean to kill us with cold, you had better say so," said Shandon ironically.

"I mean," said Hatteras gravely, "to require every man to do his duty to the end."

"There's something higher than duty, captain--there's the right to one's own preservation. I repeat that the fire is out, and if it is not relighted, not one of us will be alive in two days."

"I have no fuel," answered Hatteras, with a hollow voice.

"Very well," cried Pen violently, "if you have no fuel, we must take it where we can!"

Hatteras grew pale with anger.

"Where?" said he.

"On board," answered the sailor insolently.

"On board!" echoed the captain, his fists closed, his eyes sparkling.

He had seized an axe, and he now raised it over Pen's head.

"Wretch!" he cried.

The doctor rushed between the captain and Pen; the axe fell to the ground, its sharp edge sinking into the flooring. Johnson, Bell, and Simpson were grouped round Hatteras, and appeared determined to give him their support. But lamentable and plaintive voices came from the beds.

"Some fire! Give us some fire!" cried the poor fellows.

Hatteras made an effort, and said calmly:

"If we destroy the brig, how shall we get back to England?"

"We might burn some of the rigging and the gunwale, sir," said Johnson.

"Besides, we should still have the boats left," answered Shandon; "and we could build a smaller vessel with the remains of the old one!"

"Never!" answered Hatteras.

"But----" began several sailors, raising their voices.

"We have a great quantity of spirits of wine," answered Hatteras; "burn that to the last drop."

"Ah, we didn't think of that!" said Johnson, with affected cheerfulness, and by the help of large wicks steeped in spirits he succeeded in raising the temperature a few degrees.

During the days that followed this melancholy scene the wind went round to the south, and the thermometer went up. Some of the men could leave the vessel during the least damp part of the day; but ophthalmia and scurvy kept the greater number on board; besides, neither fishing nor hunting was practicable. But it was only a short respite from the dreadful cold, and on the 25th, after an unexpected

change in the wind, the mercury again froze; they were then obliged to have recourse to the spirits of wine thermometer, which never freezes. The doctor found, to his horror, that it marked 66 degrees below zero; men had never been able to support such a temperature. The ice spread itself in long tarnished mirrors on the floor; a thick fog invaded the common room; the damp fell in thick snow; they could no longer see one another; the extremities became blue as the heat of the body left them; a circle of iron seemed to be clasping their heads, and made them nearly delirious. A still more fearful symptom was that their tongues could no longer articulate a word.

From the day they had threatened to burn his ship, Hatteras paced the deck for hours. He was guarding his treasures; the wood of the ship was his own flesh, and whoever cut a piece off cut off one of his limbs. He was armed, and mounted guard, insensible to the cold, the snow, and the ice, which stiffened his garments and enveloped him in granite armour. His faithful Dick accompanied him, and seemed to understand why he was there.

However, on Christmas Day he went down to the common room. The doctor, taking advantage of what energy he had left, went straight to him, and said--

"Hatteras, we shall all die if we get no fuel."

"Never!" said Hatteras, knowing what was coming.

"We must," said the doctor gently.

"Never!" repeated Hatteras with more emphasis still. "I will never consent! They can disobey me if they like!"

Johnson and Bell took advantage of the half-permission, and rushed on deck. Hatteras heard the wood crack under the axe. He wept. What a Christmas Day for Englishmen was that on board the *Forward*! The thought of the great difference between their position and that of the happy English families who rejoiced in their roast beef, plum pudding, and mince pies added another pang to the miseries of the unfortunate crew. However, the fire put a little hope and confidence into the men; the boiling of coffee and tea did them good, and the next week passed less miserably, ending the dreadful year 1860; its early winter had defeated all Hatteras's plans.

On the 1st of January, 1861, the doctor made a discovery. It was not quite so

cold, and he had resumed his interrupted studies; he was reading Sir Edward Belcher's account of his expedition to the Polar Seas; all at once a passage struck him; he read it again and again. It was where Sir Edward Belcher relates that after reaching the extremity of Queen's Channel he had discovered important traces of the passage and residence of men. "They were," said he, "very superior habitations to those which might be attributed to the wandering Esquimaux. The walls had foundations, the floors of the interior had been covered with a thick layer of fine gravel, and were paved. Reindeer, seal, and walrus bones were seen in great quantities. *We found some coal*." At the last words the doctor was struck with an idea; he carried the book to Hatteras and showed him the passage.

"They could not have found coal on this deserted coast," said Hatteras; "it is not possible!"

"Why should we doubt what Belcher says? He would not have recorded such a fact unless he had been certain and had seen it with his own eyes."

"And what then, doctor?"

"We aren't a hundred miles from the coast where Belcher saw the coal, and what is a hundred miles' excursion? Nothing. Longer ones than that have often been made across the ice."

"We will go," said Hatteras.

Johnson was immediately told of their resolution, of which he strongly approved; he told his companions about it: some were glad, others indifferent.

"Coal on these coasts!" said Wall, stretched on his bed of pain.

"Let them go," answered Shandon mysteriously.

But before Hatteras began his preparations for the journey, he wished to be exactly certain of the *Forward's* position. He was obliged to be mathematically accurate as to her whereabouts, because of finding her again. His task was very difficult; he went upon deck and took at different moments several lunar distances and the meridian heights of the principal stars. These observations were hard to make, for the glass and mirrors of the instrument were covered with ice from Hatteras's breath; he burnt his eyelashes more than once by touching the brass of the glasses. However, he obtained exact bases for his calculations, and

came down to make them in the room. When his work was over, he raised his head in astonishment, took his map, pricked it, and looked at the doctor.

"What is it?" asked the latter.

"In what latitude were we at the beginning of our wintering?"

"We were in latitude 78 degrees 15 minutes, by longitude 95 degrees 35 minutes; exactly at the Frozen Pole."

"Well," said Hatteras, in a low tone, "our ice-field has been drifting! We are two degrees farther north and farther west, and three hundred miles at least from your store of coal!"

"And those poor fellows don't know," said the doctor.

"Hush!" said Hatteras, putting his finger on his lips.

CHAPTER XXVIII

PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE

Hatteras would not inform his crew of their situation, for if they had known that they had been dragged farther north they would very likely have given themselves up to the madness of despair. The captain had hidden his own emotions at his discovery. It was his first happy moment during the long months passed in struggling with the elements. He was a hundred and fifty miles farther north, scarcely eight degrees from the Pole! But he hid his delight so profoundly that even the doctor did not suspect it; he wondered at seeing an unwonted brilliancy in the captain's eyes; but that was all, and he never once thought of the reason.

The *Forward*, by getting nearer the Pole, had got farther away from the coal repository observed by Sir Edward Belcher; instead of one hundred, it lay at two hundred and fifty miles farther south. However, after a short discussion about it between Hatteras and Clawbonny, the journey was persisted in. If Belcher had written the truth--and there was no reason for doubting his veracity--they should find things exactly in the same state as he had left them, for no new expedition had gone to these extreme continents since 1853. There were few or no Esquimaux to be met with in that latitude. They could not be disappointed on the coast of New Cornwall as they had been on Beechey Island. The low temperature preserves the objects abandoned to its influence for any length of time. All probabilities were therefore in favour of this excursion across the ice. It was calculated that the expedition would take, at the most, forty days, and Johnson's preparations were made in consequence.

The sledge was his first care; it was in the Greenland style, thirty-five inches wide and twenty-four feet long. The Esquimaux often make them more than fifty feet long. This one was made of long planks, bent up front and back, and kept bent like a bow by two thick cords; the form thus given to it gave it increased resistance to shocks; it ran easily on the ice, but when the snow was soft on the ground it was put upon a frame; to make it glide more easily it was rubbed, Esquimaux fashion, with sulphur and snow. Six dogs drew it; notwithstanding their leanness these animals did not appear to suffer from the cold; their buckskin harness was in good condition, and they could draw a weight of two

thousand pounds without fatigue. The materials for encampment consisted of a tent, should the construction of a snow-house be impossible, a large piece of mackintosh to spread over the snow, to prevent it melting in contact with the human body, and lastly, several blankets and buffalo-skins. They took the halkett boat too.

The provisions consisted of five cases of pemmican, weighing about four hundred and fifty pounds; they counted one pound of pemmican for each man and each dog; there were seven dogs including Dick, and four men. They also took twelve gallons of spirits of wine--that is to say, about one hundred fifty pounds weight--a sufficient quantity of tea and biscuit, a portable kitchen with plenty of wicks, oakum, powder, ammunition, and two double-barrelled guns. They also used Captain Parry's invention of indiarubber belts, in which the warmth of the body and the movement of walking keeps coffee, tea, and water in a liquid state. Johnson was very careful about the snow-shoes; they are a sort of wooden patten, fastened on with leather straps; when the ground was quite hard and frozen they could be replaced by buckskin moccasins; each traveller had two pairs of both.

These preparations were important, for any detail omitted might occasion the loss of an expedition; they took four whole days. Each day at noon Hatteras took care to set the position of his ship; they had ceased to drift; he was obliged to be certain in order to get back. He next set about choosing the men he should take with him; some of them were not fit either to take or leave, but the captain decided to take none but sure companions, as the common safety depended upon the success of the excursion. Shandon was, therefore, excluded, which he did not seem to regret. James Wall was ill in bed. The state of the sick got no worse, however, and as the only thing to do for them was to rub them with lime-juice, and give them doses of it, the doctor was not obliged to stop, and he made one of the travellers. Johnson very much wished to accompany the captain in his perilous enterprise, but Hatteras took him aside, and said, in an affectionate tone:

"Johnson, I have confidence in you alone. You are the only officer in whose hands I can leave my ship. I must know that you are there to overlook Shandon and the others. They are kept prisoners here by the winter, but I believe them capable of anything. You will be furnished with my formal instructions, which, in case of need, will give you the command. You will take my place entirely. Our absence will last four or five weeks at the most. I shall not be anxious, knowing you are where I cannot be. You must have wood, Johnson, I know, but, as far as

possible, spare my poor ship. Do you understand me, Johnson?"

"Yes, sir," answered the old sailor, "I'll stop if you wish."

"Thank you," said Hatteras, shaking his boatswain's hand; "and if we don't come back, wait for the next breaking-up time, and try to push forward towards the Pole. But if the others won't go, don't mind us, and take the *Forward* back to England."

"Are those your last commands, captain?"

"Yes, my express commands," answered Hatteras.

"Very well, sir, they shall be carried out," said Johnson simply.

The doctor regretted his friend, but he thought Hatteras had acted wisely in leaving him. Their other two travelling companions were Bell the carpenter and Simpson. The former was in good health, brave and devoted, and was the right man to render service during the encampments on the snow; Simpson was not so sure, but he accepted a share in the expedition, and his hunting and fishing capabilities might be of the greatest use. The expedition consisted, therefore, of four men, Hatteras, Clawbonny, Bell, and Simpson, and seven dogs. The provisions had been calculated in consequence. During the first days of January the temperature kept at an average of 33 degrees below zero. Hatteras was very anxious for the weather to change; he often consulted the barometer, but it is of little use in such high latitudes. A clear sky in these regions does not always bring cold, and the snow does not make the temperature rise; the barometer is uncertain; it goes down with the north and east winds; low, it brought fine weather; high, snow or rain. Its indications could not, therefore, be relied upon.

At last, on January 5th, the mercury rose to 18 degrees below zero, and Hatteras resolved to start the next day; he could not bear to see his ship burnt piece by piece before his eyes; all the poop had gone into the stove. On the 6th, then, in the midst of whirlwinds of snow, the order for departure was given. The doctor gave his last orders about the sick; Bell and Simpson shook hands silently with their companions. Hatteras wished to say his good-byes aloud, but he saw himself surrounded by evil looks and thought he saw Shandon smile ironically. He was silent, and perhaps hesitated for an instant about leaving the *Forward*, but it was too late to turn back; the loaded sledge, with the dogs harnessed to it, awaited him on the ice-field. Bell started the first; the others followed.

Johnson accompanied the travellers for a quarter of a mile, then Hatteras begged him to return on board, and the old sailor went back after making a long farewell gesture. At that moment Hatteras turned a last look towards the brig, and saw the extremity of her masts disappear in the dark clouds of the sky.

CHAPTER XXIX

ACROSS THE ICE

The little troop descended towards the south-east. Simpson drove the sledge. Dick helped him with zeal, and did not seem astonished at the new occupation of his companions. Hatteras and the doctor walked behind, whilst Bell went on in front, sounding the ice with his iron-tipped stick. The rising of the thermometer indicated approaching snow; it soon fell in thick flakes, and made the journey difficult for the travellers; it made them deviate from the straight line, and obliged them to walk slower; but, on an average, they made three miles an hour. The surface of the ice was unequal, and the sledge was often in danger of being overturned, but by great care it was kept upright.

Hatteras and his companions were clothed in skins more useful than elegant. Their heads and faces were covered with hoods, their mouths, eyes, and noses alone coming into contact with the air. If they had not been exposed the breath would have frozen their coverings, and they would have been obliged to take them off with the help of an axe--an awkward way of undressing. The interminable plain kept on with fatiguing monotony; icebergs of uniform aspect and hummocks whose irregularity ended by seeming always the same; blocks cast in the same mould, and icebergs between which tortuous valleys wound. The travellers spoke little, and marched on, compass in hand. It is painful to open one's mouth in such an atmosphere; sharp icicles form immediately between one's lips, and the breath is not warm enough to melt them. Bell's steps were marked in the soft ground, and they followed them attentively, certain of being able to go where he had been before.

Numerous traces of bears and foxes crossed their path, but not an animal was seen that day. It would have been dangerous and useless to hunt them, as the sledge was sufficiently freighted. Generally in this sort of excursion travellers leave provision-stores along their route; they place them in hiding-places of snow, out of reach of animals; unload during the journey, and take up the provisions on their return. But Hatteras could not venture to do this on moveable ice-fields, and the uncertainty of the route made the return the same way exceedingly problematic. At noon Hatteras caused his little troop to halt under shelter of an ice-wall. Their breakfast consisted of pemmican and boiling tea; the

latter beverage comforted the cold wayfarers. They set out again after an hour's rest. The first day they walked about twenty miles, and in the evening both men and dogs were exhausted. However, notwithstanding their fatigue, they were obliged to construct a snow-house in which to pass the night. It took about an hour and a half to build. Bell showed himself very skilful. The ice-blocks were cut out and placed above one another in the form of a dome; a large block at the top made the vault. Snow served for mortar and filled up the chinks. It soon hardened and made a single block of the entire structure. It was reached by a narrow opening, through which the doctor squeezed himself painfully, and the others followed him. The supper was rapidly prepared with spirits of wine. The interior temperature of the snow-house was bearable, as the wind which raged outside could not penetrate. When their repast, which was always the same, was over, they began to think of sleep. A mackintosh was spread over the floor and kept them from the damp. Their stockings and shoes were dried by the portable grate, and then three of the travellers wrapped themselves up in their blankets, leaving the fourth to keep watch; he watched over the common safety, and prevented the opening getting blocked up, for if it did they would be buried alive.

Dick shared the snow-house; the other dogs remained outside, and after their supper they squatted down in the snow, which made them a blanket. The men were tired out with their day's walk, and soon slept. The doctor took his turn on guard at three o'clock in the morning. There was a tempest during the night, the gusts of which thickened the walls of the snow-house. The next day, at six o'clock, they set out again on their monotonous march. The temperature lowered several degrees, and hardened the ground so that walking was easier. They often met with mounds or cairns something like the Esquimaux hiding-places. The doctor had one demolished, and found nothing but a block of ice.

"What did you expect, Clawbonny?" said Hatteras. "Are we not the first men who have set foot here?"

"It's very likely we are, but who knows?" answered the doctor.

"I do not want to lose my time in useless search," continued the captain; "I want to be quick back to my ship, even if we don't find the fuel."

"I believe we are certain of doing that," said the doctor.

"I often wish I had not left the *Forward*," said Hatteras; "a captain's place is on board."

"Johnson is there."

"Yes; but--well, we must make haste, that's all."

The procession marched along rapidly; Simpson excited the dogs by calling to them; in consequence of a phosphorescent phenomenon they seemed to be running on a ground in flames, and the sledges seemed to raise a dust of sparks. The doctor went on in front to examine the state of the snow, but all at once he disappeared. Bell, who was nearest to him, ran up.

"Well, Mr. Clawbonny," he called out in anxiety, "where are you?"

"Doctor!" called the captain.

"Here, in a hole," answered a reassuring voice; "throw me a cord, and I shall soon be on the surface of the globe again."

They threw a cord to the doctor, who was at the bottom of a hole about ten feet deep; he fastened it round his waist, and his companions hauled him up with difficulty.

"Are you hurt?" asked Hatteras.

"Not a bit," answered the doctor, shaking his kind face, all covered with snow.

"But how did you tumble down there?"

"Oh, it was the refraction's fault," he answered laughing. "I thought I was stepping across about a foot's distance, and I fell into a hole ten feet deep! I never shall get used to it. It will teach us to sound every step before we advance. Ears hear and eyes see all topsy-turvy in this enchanted spot."

"Can you go on?" asked the captain.

"Oh, yes; the little fall has done me more good than harm."

In the evening the travellers had marched twenty-five miles; they were worn out,

but it did not prevent the doctor climbing up an iceberg while the snow-house was being built. The full moon shone with extraordinary brilliancy in the clearest sky; the stars were singularly bright; from the top of the iceberg the view stretched over an immense plain, bristling with icebergs; they were of all sizes and shapes, and made the field look like a vast cemetery, in which twenty generations slept the sleep of death. Notwithstanding the cold, the doctor remained a long time in contemplation of the spectacle, and his companions had much trouble to get him away; but they were obliged to think of rest; the snow-hut was ready; the four companions burrowed into it like moles, and soon slept the sleep of the just.

The next day and the following ones passed without any particular incident; the journey was easy or difficult according to the weather; when it was cold and clear they wore their moccasins and advanced rapidly, when damp and penetrating, their snow-shoes, and made little way. They reached thus the 15th of January; the moon was in her last quarter, and was only visible for a short time; the sun, though still hidden below the horizon, gave six hours of a sort of twilight, not sufficient to see the way by; they were obliged to stake it out according to the direction given by the compass. Bell led the way; Hatteras marched in a straight line behind him; then Simpson and the doctor, taking it in turns, so as only to see Hatteras, and keep in a straight line. But notwithstanding all their precautions, they deviated sometimes thirty or forty degrees; they were then obliged to stake it out again. On Sunday, the 15th of January, Hatteras considered he had made a hundred miles to the south; the morning was consecrated to the mending of different articles of clothing and encampment; divine service was not forgotten. They set out again at noon; the temperature was cold, the thermometer marked only 32 degrees below zero in a very clear atmosphere.

All at once, without warning of any kind, a vapour rose from the ground in a complete state of congelation, reaching a height of about ninety feet, and remaining stationary; they could not see a foot before them; it clung to their clothing, and bristled it with ice. Our travellers, surprised by the frost-rime, had all the same idea--that of getting near one another. They called out, "Bell!" "Simpson!" "This way, doctor!" "Where are you, captain?" But no answers were heard; the vapour did not conduct sound. They all fired as a sign of rallying. But if the sound of the voice appeared too weak, the detonation of the firearms was too strong, for it was echoed in all directions, and produced a confused rumble without appreciable direction. Each acted then according to his instincts.

Hatteras stopped, folded his arms, and waited. Simpson contented himself with stopping his sledge. Bell retraced his steps, feeling the traces with his hands. The doctor ran hither and thither, bumping against the icebergs, falling down, getting up, and losing himself more and more. At the end of five minutes he said:

"I can't go on like this! What a queer climate! It changes too suddenly, and the icicles are cutting my face. Captain! I say, captain!"

But he obtained no answer; he discharged his gun, and notwithstanding his thick gloves, burnt his hand with the trigger. During this operation he thought he saw a confused mass moving at a few steps from him.

"At last!" said he. "Hatteras! Bell! Simpson! Is it you? Answer, do!"

A hollow growl was the only answer.

"Whatever is that?" thought the doctor. The mass approached, and its outline was more distinctly seen. "Why, it's a bear!" thought the terrified doctor. It was a bear, lost too in the frost-rime, passing within a few steps of the men of whose existence it was ignorant. The doctor saw its enormous paws beating the air, and did not like the situation. He jumped back and the mass disappeared like a phantom. The doctor felt the ground rising under his feet; climbing on all-fours he got to the top of a block, then another, feeling the end with his stick. "It's an iceberg!" he said to himself: "if I get to the top I shall be saved." So saying he climbed to a height of about eighty feet; his head was higher than the frozen fog, of which he could clearly see the top. As he looked round he saw the heads of his three companions emerging from the dense fluid.

"Hatteras!"

"Doctor!"

"Bell!"

"Simpson!"

The four names were all shouted at the same time; the sky, lightened by a magnificent halo, threw pale rays which coloured the frost-rime like clouds, and the summits of the icebergs seemed to emerge from liquid silver. The travellers found themselves circumscribed by a circle less than a hundred feet in diameter.

Thanks to the purity of the upper layers of air, they could hear each other distinctly, and could talk from the top of their icebergs. After the first shots they had all thought the best thing they could do was to climb.

"The sledge!" cried the captain.

"It's eighty feet below us," answered Simpson.

"In what condition?"

"In good condition."

"What about the bear?" asked the doctor.

"What bear?" asked Bell.

"The bear that nearly broke my head," answered the doctor.

"If there is a bear we must go down," said Hatteras.

"If we do we shall get lost again," said the doctor.

"And our dogs?" said Hatteras.

At this moment Dick's bark was heard through the fog.

"That's Dick," said Hatteras; "there's something up; I shall go down."

Growls and barks were heard in a fearful chorus. In the fog it sounded like an immense humming in a wadded room. Some struggle was evidently going on.

"Dick! Dick!" cried the captain, re-entering the frost-rime.

"Wait a minute, Hatteras; I believe the fog is clearing off," called out the doctor. So it was, but lowering like the waters of a pond that is being emptied; it seemed to enter the ground from whence it sprang; the shining summits of the icebergs grew above it; others, submerged till then, came out like new islands; by an optical illusion the travellers seemed to be mounting with their icebergs above the fog. Soon the top of the sledge appeared, then the dogs, then about thirty other animals, then enormous moving masses, and Dick jumping about in and out of the fog.

"Foxes!" cried Bell.

"Bears!" shouted the doctor. "Five!"

"Our dogs! Our provisions!" cried Simpson. A band of foxes and bears had attacked the sledge, and were making havoc with the provisions. The instinct of pillage made them agree; the dogs barked furiously, but the herd took no notice, and the scene of destruction was lamentable.

"Fire!" cried the captain, discharging his gun. His companions imitated him. Upon hearing the quadruple detonation the bears raised their heads, and with a comical growl gave the signal for departure; they went faster than a horse could gallop, and, followed by the herd of foxes, soon disappeared amongst the northern icebergs.

CHAPTER XXX

THE CAIRN

The frost-rime had lasted about three-quarters of an hour; quite long enough for the bears and foxes to make away with a considerable quantity of provisions which they attacked all the more greedily, arriving, as they did, when the animals were perishing with hunger from the long winter. They had torn open the covering of the sledge with their enormous paws; the cases of pemmican were open, and half-empty; the biscuit-bags pillaged, the provisions of tea spilt over the snow, a barrel of spirits of wine broken up, and its precious contents run out; the camping materials lying all about. The wild animals had done their work.

"The devils have done for us!" said Bell.

"What shall we do now?" said Simpson.

"Let us first see how much we've lost," said the doctor; "we can talk after."

Hatteras said nothing, but began picking up the scattered objects. They picked up all the pemmican and biscuit that was still eatable. The loss of so much spirits of wine was deplorable, as without it it was impossible to get any hot drinks--no tea nor coffee.

The doctor made an inventory of the provisions that were left, and found that the animals had eaten two hundred pounds of pemmican and a hundred and fifty pounds of biscuit; if the travellers continued their journey they would be obliged to put themselves on half-rations. They deliberated about what was to be done under the circumstances. Should they return to the brig and begin their expedition again? But how could they resolve to lose the hundred and fifty miles already cleared? and coming back without the fuel, how would they be received by the crew? and which of them would begin the excursion again? It was evident that the best thing to do was to go on, even at the price of the worst privations. The doctor, Hatteras, and Bell were for going on, but Simpson wanted to go back; his health had severely suffered from the fatigues of the journey, and he grew visibly weaker; but at last, seeing he was alone in his opinion, he took his place at the head of the sledge, and the little caravan continued its route. During the three following days, from the 15th to the 17th of January, the monotonous

incidents of the journey took place again. They went on more slowly; the travellers were soon tired; their legs ached with fatigue, and the dogs drew with difficulty. Their insufficient food told upon them. The weather changed with its usual quickness, going suddenly from intense cold to damp and penetrating fogs.

On the 18th of January the aspect of the ice-field changed all at once. A great number of peaks, like pyramids, ending in a sharp point at a great elevation, showed themselves on the horizon. The soil in certain places was seen through the layer of snow; it seemed to consist of schist and quartz, with some appearance of calcareous rock. At last the travellers had reached *terra firma*, and, according to their estimation, the continent must be New Cornwall. The doctor was delighted to tread on solid ground once more; the travellers had only a hundred more miles to go before reaching Belcher Cape; but the trouble of walking increased on this rocky soil, full of inequalities, crevices, and precipices; they were obliged to plunge into the interior of the land and climb the high cliffs on the coast, across narrow gorges, in which the snow was piled up to a height of thirty or forty feet. The travellers soon had cause to regret the levels they had left, on which the sledge rolled so easily. Now they were obliged to drag it with all their strength. The dogs were worn out, and had to be helped; the men harnessed themselves along with them, and wore themselves out too. They were often obliged to unload the provisions in order to get over a steep hill, whose frozen surface gave no hold. Some passages ten feet long took hours to clear. During the first day they only made about five miles on that land, so well named Cornwall. The next day the sledge attained the upper part of the cliffs; the travellers were too exhausted to construct their snow-house, and were obliged to pass the night under the tent, enveloped in their buffalo-skins, and drying their stockings by placing them on their chests. The consequences of such a state of things may be readily imagined; during the night the thermometer went down to 44 degrees below zero, and the mercury froze.

The health of Simpson became alarming; an obstinate cold, violent rheumatism, and intolerable pain forced him to lie down on the sledge, which he could no longer guide. Bell took his place; he was not well, but was obliged not to give in. The doctor also felt the influence of his terrible winter excursion, but he did not utter a complaint; he marched on in front, leaning on his stick; he lighted the way; he helped in everything. Hatteras, impassive, impenetrable, insensible, in as good health as the first day, with his iron constitution, followed the sledge in silence. On the 20th of January the weather was so bad that the least effort caused immediate prostration; but the difficulties of the ground became so great

that Hatteras and Bell harnessed themselves along with the dogs; the front of the sledge was broken by an unexpected shock, and they were forced to stop and mend it. Such delays occurred several times a day. The travellers were journeying along a deep ravine up to their waists in snow, and perspiring, notwithstanding the violent cold. No one spoke. All at once Bell looked at the doctor in alarm, picked up a handful of snow, and began to rub his companion's face with all his might.

"What the deuce, Bell?" said the doctor, struggling.

But Bell went on rubbing.

"Are you mad? You've filled my eyes, nose, and mouth with snow. What is it?"

"Why," answered Bell, "if you've got a nose left, you owe it to me."

"A nose?" said the doctor, putting his hand to his face.

"Yes, Mr. Clawbonny, you were quite frostbitten; your nose was quite white when I looked at you, and without my bit of rubbing you would be minus nose."

"Thanks, Bell," said the doctor; "I'll do the same for you in case of need."

"I hope you will, Mr. Clawbonny, and I only wish we had nothing worse to look forward to!"

"You mean Simpson! Poor fellow, he is suffering dreadfully!"

"Do you fear for him?" asked Hatteras quickly.

"Yes, captain," answered the doctor.

"What do you fear?"

"A violent attack of scurvy. His legs swell already, and his gums are attacked; the poor fellow is lying under his blankets on the sledge, and every shock increases his pain. I pity him, but I can't do anything for him!"

"Poor Simpson!" said Bell.

"Perhaps we had better stop a day or two," said the doctor.

"Stop!" cried Hatteras, "when the lives of eighteen men depend upon our return! You know we have only enough provisions left for twenty days."

Neither the doctor nor Bell could answer that, and the sledge went on its way. In the evening they stopped at the foot of an ice-hill, out of which Bell soon cut a cavern; the travellers took refuge in it, and the doctor passed the night in nursing Simpson; he was a prey to the scurvy, and constant groans issued from his terrified lips.

"Ah, Mr. Clawbonny, I shall never get over it. I wish I was dead already."

"Take courage, my poor fellow!" answered the doctor, with pity in his tone, and he answered Simpson's complaints by incessant attention. Though half-dead with fatigue, he employed a part of the night in making the sick man a soothing draught, and rubbed him with lime-juice. Unfortunately it had little effect, and did not prevent the terrible malady spreading. The next day they were obliged to lift the poor fellow on to the sledge, although he begged and prayed them to leave him to die in peace, and begin their painful march again.

The freezing mists wet the three men to the skin; the snow and sleet beat in their faces; they did the work of beasts of burden, and had not even sufficient food. Dick ran hither and thither, discovering by instinct the best route to follow. During the morning of the 23rd of January, when it was nearly dark, for the new moon had not yet made her appearance, Dick ran on first; he was lost to sight for several hours. Hatteras became anxious, as there were many bear-marks on the ground; he was considering what had better be done, when a loud barking was heard in front. The little procession moved on quicker, and soon came upon the faithful animal in the depth of a ravine. Dick was set as if he had been petrified in front of a sort of cairn, made of limestone, and covered with a cement of ice.

"This time," said the doctor, disengaging himself from the traces, "it's really a cairn; we can't be mistaken."

"What does it matter to us?" said Hatteras.

"Why, if it is a cairn, it may inclose something that would be useful to us--some provisions perhaps."

"As if Europeans had ever been here!" said Hatteras, shrugging his shoulders.

"But if not Europeans, it may be that the Esquimaux have hidden some product of their hunting here. They are accustomed to doing it, I think."

"Well, look if you like, Clawbonny, but I don't think it is worth your while."

Clawbonny and Bell, armed with their pickaxes made for the cairn. Dick kept on barking furiously. The cairn was soon demolished, and the doctor took out a damp paper. Hatteras took the document and read:

"Altam..., *Porpoise*, Dec... 13th, 1860, 12.. degrees long... 8.. degrees 35 minutes lat..."

"The *Porpoise*!" said the doctor.

"I don't know any ship of that name frequenting these seas," said Hatteras.

"It is evident," continued the doctor, "that some sailors, or perhaps some shipwrecked fellows, have passed here within the last two months."

"That's certain," said Bell.

"What shall we do?" asked the doctor.

"Continue our route," said Hatteras coldly. "I don't know anything about the *Porpoise*, but I do know that the *Forward* is waiting for our return."

CHAPTER XXXI

THE DEATH OF SIMPSON

The travellers went on their weary way, each thinking of the discovery they had just made. Hatteras frowned with uneasiness.

"What can the *Porpoise* be?" he asked himself. "Is it a ship? and if so, what was it doing so near the Pole?"

At this thought he shivered, but not from the cold. The doctor and Bell only thought of the result their discovery might have for others or for themselves. But the difficulties and obstacles in their way soon made them oblivious to everything but their own preservation.

Simpson's condition grew worse; the doctor saw that death was near. He could do nothing, and was suffering cruelly on his own account from a painful ophthalmia which might bring on blindness if neglected. The twilight gave them enough light to hurt the eyes when reflected by the snow; it was difficult to guard against the reflection, for the spectacle-glasses got covered with a layer of opaque ice which obstructed the view, and when so much care was necessary for the dangers of the route, it was important to see clearly; however, the doctor and Bell took it in turns to cover their eyes or to guide the sledge. The soil was volcanic, and by its inequalities made it very difficult to draw the sledge, the frame of which was getting worn out. Another difficulty was the effect of the uniform brilliancy of the snow; the ground seemed to fall beneath the feet of the travellers, and they experienced the same sensation as that of the rolling of a ship; they could not get accustomed to it, and it made them sleepy, and they often walked on half in a dream. Then some unexpected shock, fall, or obstacle would wake them up from their inertia, which afterwards took possession of them again.

On the 25th of January they began to descend, and their dangers increased. The least slip might send them down a precipice, and there they would have been infallibly lost. Towards evening an extremely violent tempest swept the snow-clad summits; they were obliged to lie down on the ground, and the temperature was so low that they were in danger of being frozen to death. Bell, with the help of Hatteras, built a snow-house, in which the poor fellows took shelter; there

they partook of a little pemmican and warm tea; there were only a few gallons of spirits of wine left, and they were obliged to use them to quench their thirst, as they could not take snow in its natural state; it must be melted. In temperate countries, where the temperature scarcely falls below freezing point, it is not injurious; but above the Polar circle it gets so cold that it cannot be touched more than a red-hot iron; there is such a difference of temperature that its absorption produces suffocation. The Esquimaux would rather suffer the greatest torments than slake their thirst with snow.

The doctor took his turn to watch at three o'clock in the morning, when the tempest was at its height; he was leaning in a corner of the snow-house, when a lamentable groan from Simpson drew his attention; he rose to go to him, and struck his head against the roof; without thinking of the accident he began to rub Simpson's swollen limbs; after about a quarter of an hour he got up again, and bumped his head again, although he was kneeling then.

"That's very queer," he said to himself.

He lifted his hand above his head, and felt that the roof was lowering.

"Good God!" he cried; "Hatteras! Bell!"

His cries awoke his companions, who got up quickly, and bumped themselves too; the darkness was thick.

"The roof is falling in!" cried the doctor.

They all rushed out, dragging Simpson with them; they had no sooner left their dangerous retreat, than it fell in with a great noise. The poor fellows were obliged to take refuge under the tent covering, which was soon covered with a thick layer of snow, which, as a bad conductor, prevented the travellers being frozen alive. The tempest continued all through the night. When Bell harnessed the dogs the next morning he found that some of them had begun to eat their leather harness, and that two of them were very ill, and could not go much further. However, the caravan set out again; there only remained sixty miles to go. On the 26th, Bell, who went on in front, called out suddenly to his companions. They ran up to him, and he pointed to a gun leaning against an iceberg.

"A gun!" cried the doctor.

Hatteras took it; it was loaded and in good condition.

"The men from the *Porpoise* can't be far off," said the doctor.

Hatteras remarked that the gun was of American manufacture, and his hands crisped the frozen barrel. He gave orders to continue the march, and they kept on down the mountain slope. Simpson seemed deprived of all feeling; he had no longer the strength to complain. The tempest kept on, and the sledge proceeded more and more slowly; they scarcely made a few miles in twenty-four hours, and in spite of the strictest economy, the provisions rapidly diminished; but as long as they had enough for the return journey, Hatteras kept on.

On the 27th they found a sextant half-buried in the snow, then a leather bottle; the latter contained brandy, or rather a lump of ice, with a ball of snow in the middle, which represented the spirit; it could not be used. It was evident that they were following in the steps of some poor shipwrecked fellows who, like them, had taken the only practicable route. The doctor looked carefully round for other cairns, but in vain. Sad thoughts came into his mind; he could not help thinking that it would be a good thing not to meet with their predecessors; what could he and his companions do for them? They wanted help themselves; their clothes were in rags, and they had not enough to eat. If their predecessors were numerous they would all die of hunger. Hatteras seemed to wish to avoid them, and could he be blamed? But these men might be their fellow-countrymen, and, however slight might be the chance of saving them, ought they not to try it? He asked Bell what he thought about it, but the poor fellow's heart was hardened by his own suffering, and he did not answer. Clawbonny dared not question Hatteras, so he left it to Providence.

In the evening of the 27th, Simpson appeared to be at the last extremity; his limbs were already stiff and frozen; his difficult breathing formed a sort of mist round his head, and convulsive movements announced that his last hour was come. The expression of his face was terrible, desperate, and he threw looks of powerless anger towards the captain. He accused him silently, and Hatteras avoided him and became more taciturn and wrapped up in himself than ever. The following night was frightful; the tempest redoubled in violence; the tent was thrown down three times, and the snowdrifts buried the poor fellows, blinded them, froze them, and wounded them with the sharp icicles struck off the surrounding icebergs. The dogs howled lamentably. Simpson lay exposed to the cruel atmosphere. Bell succeeded in getting up the tent again, which, though it

did not protect them from the cold, kept out the snow. But a more violent gust blew it down a fourth time, and dragged it along in its fury.

"Oh, we can't bear it any longer!" cried Bell.

"Courage, man, courage!" answered the doctor, clinging to him in order to prevent themselves rolling down a ravine. Simpson's death-rattle was heard. All at once, with a last effort, he raised himself up and shook his fist at Hatteras, who was looking at him fixedly, then gave a fearful cry, and fell back dead in the midst of his unfinished threat.

"He is dead!" cried the doctor.

"Dead!" repeated Bell.

Hatteras advanced towards the corpse, but was driven back by a gust of wind.

Poor Simpson was the first victim to the murderous climate, the first to pay with his life the unreasonable obstinacy of the captain. The dead man had called Hatteras an assassin, but he did not bend beneath the accusation. A single tear escaped from his eyes and froze on his pale cheek. The doctor and Bell looked at him with a sort of terror. Leaning on his stick, he looked like the genius of the North, upright in the midst of the whirlwind, and frightful in his immobility.

He remained standing thus till the first dawn of twilight, bold, tenacious, indomitable, and seemed to defy the tempest that roared round him.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE RETURN

The wind went down about six in the morning, and turning suddenly north cleared the clouds from the sky; the thermometer marked 33 degrees below zero. The first rays of the sun reached the horizon which they would gild a few days later. Hatteras came up to his two dejected companions, and said to them, in a low, sad voice:

"We are still more than sixty miles from the spot indicated by Sir Edward Belcher. We have just enough provisions to allow us to get back to the brig. If we go on any further we shall meet with certain death, and that will do good to no one. We had better retrace our steps."

"That is a sensible resolution, Hatteras," answered the doctor; "I would have followed you as far as you led us, but our health gets daily weaker; we can scarcely put one foot before the other; we ought to go back."

"Is that your opinion too, Bell?" asked Hatteras.

"Yes, captain," answered the carpenter.

"Very well," said Hatteras; "we will take two days' rest. We want it. The sledge wants mending. I think we had better build ourselves a snow-house, and try to regain a little strength."

After this was settled, our three men set to work with vigour. Bell took the necessary precautions to assure the solidity of the construction, and they soon had a good shelter at the bottom of the ravine where the last halt had taken place. It had cost Hatteras a great effort to interrupt his journey. All their trouble and pain lost! A useless excursion, which one man had paid for with his life. What would become of the crew now that all hope of coal was over? What would Shandon think? Notwithstanding all these painful thoughts, he felt it impossible to go on any further. They began their preparations for the return journey at once. The sledge was mended; it had now only two hundred pounds weight to carry. They mended their clothes, worn-out, torn, soaked with snow, and hardened by the frost; new moccasins and snow-shoes replaced those that were

worn out. This work took the whole day of the 29th and the morning of the 30th; the three travellers rested and comforted themselves as well as they could.

During the thirty-six hours passed in the snow-house and on the icebergs of the ravine, the doctor had noticed that Dick's conduct was very strange; he crept smelling about a sort of rising in the ground made by several layers of ice; he kept wagging his tail with impatience, and trying to draw the attention of his master to the spot. The doctor thought that the dog's uneasiness might be caused by the presence of Simpson's body, which he and his companions had not yet had time to bury. He resolved to put it off no longer, especially as they intended starting early the next morning. Bell and the doctor took their pickaxes and directed their steps towards the lowest part of the ravine; the mound indicated by Dick seemed to be a good spot to place the corpse in; they were obliged to bury it deep to keep it from the bears. They began by removing the layer of soft snow, and then attacked the ice. At the third blow of his pickaxe the doctor broke some hard obstacle; he took out the pieces and saw that it was a glass bottle; Bell discovered a small biscuit-sack with a few crumbs at the bottom.

"Whatever does this mean?" said the doctor.

"I can't think," answered Bell, suspending his work.

They called Hatteras, who came immediately. Dick barked loudly, and began scratching at the ice.

"Perhaps we have found a provision-store," said the doctor.

"It is possible," said Bell.

"Go on," said Hatteras.

Some remains of food were drawn out, and a case a quarter full of pemmican.

"If it is a hiding-place," said Hatteras, "the bears have been before us. See, the provisions are not intact."

"I am afraid so," answered the doctor; "for----"

He was interrupted by a cry from Bell, who had come upon a man's leg, stiffened and frozen.

"A corpse," cried the doctor.

"It is a tomb," answered Hatteras.

When the corpse was disinterred it turned out to be that of a sailor, about thirty years old, perfectly preserved. He wore the clothes of an Arctic navigator. The doctor could not tell how long he had been dead. But after this corpse, Bell discovered a second, that of a man of fifty, bearing the mark of the suffering that had killed him on his face.

"These are not buried bodies," cried the doctor, "the poor fellows were surprised by death just as we find them."

"You are right, Mr. Clawbonny," answered Bell.

"Go on! go on!" said Hatteras.

Bell obeyed tremblingly; for who knew how many human bodies the mound contained?

"These men have been the victims of the same accident that almost happened to us," said the doctor. "Their snow-house tumbled in. Let us see if any one of them is still alive."

The place was soon cleared, and Bell dug out a third body, that of a man of forty, who had not the cadaverous look of the others. The doctor examined him and thought he recognised some symptoms of existence.

"He is alive!" he cried.

Bell and he carried the body into the snow-house whilst Hatteras, unmoved, contemplated their late habitation. The doctor stripped the resuscitated man and found no trace of a wound on him. He and Bell rubbed him vigorously with oakum steeped in spirits of wine, and they saw signs of returning consciousness; but the unfortunate man was in a state of complete prostration, and could not speak a word. His tongue stuck to his palate as if frozen. The doctor searched his pockets, but they were empty. He left Bell to continue the friction, and rejoined Hatteras. The captain had been down into the depths of the snow-house, and had searched about carefully. He came up holding a half-burnt fragment of a letter. These words were on it:

... tamont ... orpoise ... w York.

"Altamont!" cried the doctor, of the ship *Porpoise*, of New York."

"An American," said Hatteras.

"I'll save him," said the doctor, "and then we shall know all about it."

He went back to Altamont whilst Hatteras remained pensive. Thanks to his attentions, the doctor succeeded in recalling the unfortunate man to life, but not to feeling; he neither saw, heard, nor spoke, but he lived. The next day Hatteras said to the doctor:

"We must start at once."

"Yes. The sledge is not loaded; we'll put the poor fellow on it and take him to the brig."

"Very well; but we must bury these bodies first."

The two unknown sailors were placed under the ruins of the snow-house again, and Simpson's corpse took Altamont's place. The three travellers buried their companion, and at seven o'clock in the morning they set out again. Two of the Greenland dogs were dead, and Dick offered himself in their place. He pulled with energy.

During the next twenty days the travellers experienced the same incidents as before. But as it was in the month of February they did not meet with the same difficulty from the ice. It was horribly cold, but there was not much wind. The sun reappeared for the first time on the 31st of January, and every day he stopped longer above the horizon. Bell and the doctor were almost blinded and half-lame; the carpenter was obliged to walk upon crutches. Altamont still lived, but he was in a state of complete insensibility. The doctor took great care of him, although he wanted attention himself; he was getting ill with fatigue. Hatteras thought of nothing but his ship. What state should he find it in?

On the 24th of February he stopped all of a sudden. A red light appeared about 300 paces in front, and a column of black smoke went up to the sky.

"Look at that smoke! my ship is burning," said he with a beating heart.

"We are three miles off yet," said Bell; "it can't be the *Forward*."

"Yes it is," said the doctor; "the mirage makes it seem nearer."

The three men, leaving the sledge to the care of Dick, ran on, and in an hour's time were in sight of the ship. She was burning in the midst of the ice, which melted around her. A hundred steps farther a man met them, wringing his hands before the *Forward* in flames. It was Johnson. Hatteras ran to him.

"My ship! My ship!" cried he.

"Is that you, captain? Oh, don't come any nearer," said Johnson.

"What is it?" said Hatteras.

"The wretches left forty-eight hours ago, after setting fire to the ship."

"Curse them!" cried Hatteras.

A loud explosion was then heard; the ground trembled; the icebergs fell upon the ice-field; a column of smoke went up into the clouds, and the *Forward* blew up. The doctor and Bell reached Hatteras, who out of the depths of despair cried:

"The cowards have fled! The strong will succeed! Johnson and Bell, you are courageous. Doctor, you have science. I have faith. To the North Pole! To the North Pole!"

His companions heard these energetic words, and they did them good; but it was a terrible situation for these four men, alone, under the 80th degree of latitude, in the midst of the Polar Regions!

END OF PART I OF THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN HATTERAS

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