Verne Jules

The Voyages and Adventures of Captain Hatteras

Жюль Верн

The Voyages and Adventures of Captain Hatteras

Верн Ж. Г.

The Voyages and Adventures of Captain Hatteras / Ж. Г. Верн — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

Verne Jules
The Voyages and Adventures of Captain Hatteras

PART I
THE ENGLISH AT THE NORTH POLE

CHAPTER I
THE FORWARD

"To-morrow, at the turn of the tide, the brig *Forward*, K. Z., captain, Richard Shandon, mate, will clear from New Prince's Docks; destination unknown."

This announcement appeared in the *Liverpool Herald* of April 5, 1860.

The sailing of a brig is not a matter of great importance for the chief commercial city of England. Who would take notice of it in so great a throng of ships of all sizes and of every country, that dry-docks covering two leagues scarcely contain them?

Nevertheless, from early morning on the 6th of April, a large crowd collected on the quays of the New Prince's Docks; all the sailors of the place seemed to have assembled there. The workingmen of the neighboring wharves had abandoned their tasks, tradesmen had left their gloomy shops, and the merchants their empty warehouses. The many-colored omnibuses which pass outside of the docks were discharging, every minute, their load of sight-seers; the whole city seemed to care for nothing except watching the departure of the *Forward*.

The *Forward* was a vessel of one hundred and seventy tons, rigged as a brig, and carrying a screw and a steam-engine of one hundred and twenty horse-power. One would have very easily confounded it with the other brigs in the harbor. But if it presented no especial difference to the eye of the public, yet those who were familiar with ships noticed certain peculiarities which could not escape a sailor's keen glance.

Thus, on the *Nautilus*, which was lying at anchor near her, a group of sailors were trying to make out the probable destination of the *Forward*.

"What do you say to her masts?" said one; "steamers don't usually carry so much sail."

"It must be," answered a red-faced quartermaster, "that she relies more on her sails than on her engine; and if her topsails are of that size, it's probably because the lower sails are to be laid back. So I'm sure the *Forward* is going either to the Arctic or Antarctic Ocean, where the icebergs stop the wind more than suits a solid ship."

"You must be right, Mr. Cornhill," said a third sailor. "Do you notice how straight her stem is?"

"Besides," said Mr. Cornhill, "she carries a steel ram forward, as sharp as a razor; if the *Forward*, going at full speed, should run into a three-decker, she would cut her in two."

"That's true," answered a Mersey pilot, "for that brig can easily run fourteen knots under steam. She was a sight to see on her trial trip. On my word, she's a swift boat."

"And she goes well, too, under sail," continued the quartermaster; "close to the wind, and she's easily steered. Now that ship is going to the polar seas, or my name is not Cornhill. And then, see there! Do you notice that large helm-port over the head of her rudder?"

"That's so," said some of the sailors; "but what does that prove?"

"That proves, my men," replied the quartermaster with a scornful smile, "that you can neither see nor think; it proves that they wanted to leave the head of the rudder free, so that it might be unshipped and shipped again easily. Don't you know that's what they have to do very often in the ice?"

"You are right," answered the sailors of the *Nautilus*.

"And besides," said one, "the lading of the brig goes to prove what Mr. Cornhill has said. I heard it from Clifton, who has shipped on her. The *Forward* carries provisions for five or six years, and coal in proportion. Coal and provisions are all she carries, and a quantity of woollen and sealskin clothing."

"Well," said Mr. Cornhill, "there's no doubt about it. But, my friend, since you know Clifton, hasn't he told you where she's bound?"

"He couldn't tell me, for he didn't know; the whole crew was shipped in that way. Where is he going? He won't know till he gets there."

"Nor yet if they are going to Davy Jones's locker," said one scoffer, "as it seems to me they are."

"But then, their pay," continued the friend of Clifton enthusiastically, – "their pay! it's five times what a sailor usually gets. If it had not been for that, Richard Shandon would not have got a man. A strangely shaped boat, going no one knows where, and as if it never intended coming back! As for me, I should not have cared to ship in her."

"Whether you would or not," answered Mr. Cornhill, "you could never have shipped in the *Forward*."

"Why not?"

"Because you would not have answered the conditions. I heard that married men were not taken. Now you belong to that class. So you need not say what you would or would not do, since it's all breath thrown away."

The sailor who was thus snubbed burst out laughing, as did his companions, showing in this way that Mr. Cornhill's remarks were true.

"There's nothing but boldness about the ship," continued Cornhill, well pleased with himself. "The *Forward*, – forward to what? Without saying that nobody knows who her captain is."

"O, yes, they do!" said a young sailor, evidently a green-hand.

"What! They do know?"

"Of course."

"My young friend," said Cornhill, "do you think Shandon is the captain of the *Forward?*"

"Why – " answered the boy.

"Shandon is only the mate, nothing else; he's a good and brave sailor, an old whaler, a good fellow, able to take command, but he's not the captain; he's no more captain than you or I. And who, under God, is going to have charge of the ship, he does not know in the least. At the proper time the captain will come aboard, I don't know how, and I don't know where; for Richard Shandon didn't tell me, nor has he leave to tell me in what direction he was first to sail."

"Still, Mr. Cornhill," said the young sailor, "I can tell you that there's some one on board, some one who was spoken of in the letter in which Mr. Shandon was offered the place of mate."

"What!" answered Cornhill, "do you mean to tell me that the *Forward* has a captain on board?"

"Yes, Mr. Cornhill."

"You tell me that?"

"Certainly, for I heard it from Johnson, the boatswain."

"Boatswain Johnson?"

"Yes, he told me himself."

"Johnson told you?"

"Not only did he tell me, but he showed him to me."

"He showed him to you!" answered Cornhill in amazement.

"He showed him to me."

"And you saw him?"

"I saw him with my own eyes."

"And who is it?"

"It's a dog."

"A dog?"

"A four-footed dog?"

"Yes."

The surprise of the sailors of the *Nautilus* was great. Under any other circumstances they would have burst out laughing. A dog captain of a one hundred and seventy ton brig! It was certainly amusing enough. But the *Forward* was such an extraordinary ship, that one thought twice before laughing, and before contradicting it. Besides, Quartermaster Cornhill showed no signs of laughing.

"And Johnson showed you that new sort of captain, a dog?" he said to the young sailor. "And you saw him?"

"As plainly as I see you, with all respect."

"Well, what do you think of that?" asked the sailors, turning to Cornhill.

"I don't think anything," he answered curtly, "except that the *Forward* is a ship of the Devil, or of fools fit for Bedlam."

Without saying more, the sailors continued to gaze at the *Forward*, which was now almost ready to depart; and there was no one of them who presumed to say that Johnson, the boatswain, had been making fun of the young sailor.

This story of the dog had already spread through the city, and in the crowd of sight-seers there were many looking for the captain-dog, who were inclined to believe that he was some supernatural animal.

Besides, for many months the *Forward* had been attracting the public attention; the singularity of its build, the mystery which enshrouded it, the incognito maintained by the captain, the manner in which Richard Shandon received the proposition of superintending its outfit, the careful selection of the crew, its unknown destination, scarcely conjectured by any, – all combined to give this brig a reputation of something more than strangeness.

For a thoughtful, dreamy mind, for a philosopher, there is hardly anything more touching than the departure of a ship; the imagination is ready to follow her in her struggles with the waves, her contests with the winds, in her perilous course, which does not always end in port; and if only there is something unusual about her, the ship appears like something fantastic, even to the least imaginative minds.

So it was with the *Forward*. And if most of the spectators were unable to make the ingenious remarks of Quartermaster Cornhill, the rumors which had been prevailing for three months were enough to keep all the tongues of Liverpool busy.

The brig had been built at Birkenhead, a suburb of the city on the left bank of the Mersey, and connected with it by numerous ferry-boats.

The builders, Scott & Co., as skilful as any in England, had received from Richard Shandon careful plans and drawings, in which the tonnage, dimensions, and model of the brig were given with the utmost exactness. They bore proof of the work of an experienced sailor. Since Shandon had ample means at his command, the work began, and, in accordance with the orders of the unknown owner, proceeded rapidly.

Every care was taken to have the brig made exceedingly strong; it was evidently intended to withstand enormous pressure, for its ribs of teak, an East Indian wood remarkable for its solidity, were further strengthened by thick iron braces. The sailors used to ask why the hull of a ship, which was intended to be so strong, was not made of iron like other steamers. But they were told that the mysterious designer had his own reasons for having it built in that way.

Gradually the shape of the brig on the stocks could be clearly made out, and the strength and beauty of her model were clear to the eye of all competent judges. As the sailors of the *Nautilus* had

said, her stem formed a right angle with the keel, and she carried, not a ram, but a steel cutter from the foundry of R. Hawthorn, of Newcastle. This metallic prow, glistening in the sun, gave a singular appearance to the brig, although there was nothing warlike about it. However, a sixteen-pound gun was placed on her forecastle; its carriage was so arranged that it could be pointed in any direction. The same thing can be said of the cannon as of her bows, neither were positively warlike.

On the 5th of February, 1860, this strange vessel was successfully launched in the sight of an immense number of spectators.

But if the brig was not a man-of-war, nor a merchant-vessel, nor a pleasure-yacht, for no one takes a pleasure trip with provisions for six years in the hold, what could she be?

A ship intended for the search of the *Erebus* and the *Terror*, and of Sir John Franklin? No; for in 1859, the previous year, Captain MacClintock had returned from the Arctic Ocean, with convincing proof of the loss of that ill-fated expedition.

Did the *Forward* want to try again the famous Northwest Passage? What for? Captain MacClure had discovered it in 1853, and his lieutenant, Cresswell, had the honor of first skirting the American continent from Behring Strait to Davis Strait.

It was nevertheless absolutely certain to all competent observers that the *Forward* was preparing for a voyage to icy regions. Was it going to push towards the South Pole, farther than the whaler Wedell, farther than Captain James Ross? But what was the use, and with what intention?

It is easy to see that, although the field for conjecture was very limited, the imagination could easily lose itself.

The day after the launching of the brig her machinery arrived from the foundry of R. Hawthorn at Newcastle.

The engine, of one hundred and twenty horse-power, with oscillating cylinders, took up but little space; its force was large for a vessel of one hundred and seventy tons, which carried a great deal of sail, and was, besides, remarkably swift. Of her speed the trial trips left no doubt, and even the boatswain, Johnson, had seen fit to express his opinion to the friend of Clifton in these terms, —

"When the *Forward* is under both steam and sail, she gets the most speed from her sails."

Clifton's friend had not understood this proposition, but he considered anything possible in a ship commanded by a dog.

After the engines had been placed on board, the stowage of provisions began; and that was no light task, for she carried enough for six years. They consisted of salted and dried meats, smoked fish, biscuit, and flour; mountains of coffee and tea were deposited in the store-room. Richard Shandon superintended the arrangement of this precious cargo with the air of a man who perfectly understood his business; everything was put in its place, labelled, and numbered with perfect precision; at the same time there was stowed away a large quantity of pemmican, an Indian preparation, which contains a great deal of nutriment in a small compass.

This sort of supply left no doubt as to the length of the cruise; but an experienced observer would have known at once that the *Forward* was to sail in polar waters, from the barrels of lime-juice, of lime lozenges, of bundles of mustard, sorrel, and of cochlearia, – in a word, from the abundance of powerful antiscorbutics, which are so necessary in journeys in the regions of the far north and south. Shandon had doubtless received word to take particular care about this part of the cargo, for he gave to it especial attention, as well as to the ship's medicine-chest.

If the armament of the vessel was small enough to calm the timid souls, on the other hand, the magazine was filled with enough powder to inspire some uneasiness. The single gun on the forecastle could not pretend to require so large a supply. This excited curiosity. There were, besides, enormous saws and strong machinery, such as levers, masses of lead, hand-saws, huge axes, etc., without counting a respectable number of blasting-cylinders, which might have blown up the Liverpool custom-house. All this was strange, if not alarming, not to mention the rockets, signals, lights, and lanterns of every sort.

Then, too, the numerous spectators on the quays of the New Prince's Docks gazed with admiration at a long mahogany whale-boat, a tin canoe covered with gutta-percha, and a number of halkett-boats, which are a sort of india-rubber cloaks, which can be inflated and thereby turned into canoes. Every one felt more and more puzzled, and even excited, for with the turn of the tide the *Forward* was to set sail for its unknown destination.

CHAPTER II
AN UNEXPECTED LETTER

This is a copy of the letter received by Richard Shandon eight months previously: —

ABERDEEN, August 2, 1859.

MR. RICHARD SHANDON, *Liverpool.*

SIR, – This letter is to advise you of a remittance of £16,000, deposited with Messrs. Marcuart & Co., bankers, at Liverpool. Enclosed you will find a series of drafts, signed by me, which will enable you to draw upon Messrs. Marcuart & Co. to the amount mentioned above.

You do not know me. No matter; I know you, and that is enough. I offer you the position of mate on board of the brig *Forward*, for a voyage which may be long and perilous.

If you decline, well and good. If you accept, five hundred pounds will be assigned you as salary, and at the end of each year of the voyage your pay will be increased one tenth.

The brig *Forward* does not exist. You will be obliged to have it built so that it will be possible to set to sea in the beginning of April, 1860, at the latest. Enclosed is a drawing with estimates. You will follow them exactly. The ship will be built in the stocks of Scott & Co., who will arrange everything with you.

I beg of you to be specially cautious in selecting the crew of the *Forward;* it will consist of a captain (myself), a mate (you), a second mate, a boatswain, two engineers, an ice-master, eight sailors, two stokers, in all eighteen men, including Dr. Clawbonny of this city, who will join you at the proper time.

Those who are shipped on board of the *Forward* must be Englishmen, independent, with no family ties, single and temperate; for the use of spirits, and even of beer, will be strictly forbidden on shipboard: the men must be ready to undertake and endure everything.

In your selection you will prefer those of a sanguine temperament, and so inclined to maintain a higher degree of animal heat.

You will offer the crew five times their usual pay, to be increased one tenth at the end of each year. At the end of the voyage each one shall receive five hundred pounds, and you yourself two thousand. The requisite sum shall be deposited with the above-named Messrs. Marcuart & Co.

The voyage will be long and difficult, but one sure to bring renown. You need not hesitate, then, Mr. Shandon.

Send your answer to the initials K. Z., at Gottenburg, Sweden, *poste restante.*

P. S. On the 15th of February[1] next you will receive a large Danish dog, with hanging lips, of a dark tawny color, with black stripes running crosswise. You will find place for him on board, and you will feed him on barley bread mixed with a broth of lard. You will acknowledge the receipt of this dog by a letter to the same initials at Leghorn, Italy.

[1] The letter says the large Danish dog will arrive on the 15th of February. In chapter 3 the dog arrives on the 15th of March "as the captain's letter had said." Other versions have the same inconsistency.

The captain of the *Forward* will appear and make himself known at the proper time. As you are about setting sail you will receive new instructions.
K. Z.,
Captain of the Forward.

CHAPTER III
DR. CLAWBONNY

Richard Shandon was a good sailor; for a long time he had commanded whalers in the Arctic seas, with a well-deserved reputation throughout all Lancaster. Such a letter was well calculated to astonish him; he was astonished, it is true, but with the calmness of a man who is accustomed to surprises.

He suited all the required conditions; no wife, child, nor relatives. He was as independent as man could be. There being no one whose opinion he needed to consult, he betook himself to Messrs. Marcuart & Co.

"If the money is there," he said to himself, "the rest is all right."

At the banking-house he was received with the respect due to a man who has sixteen thousand pounds deposited to his credit; having made that point sure, Shandon asked for a sheet of white paper, and in his large sailor's handwriting he sent his acceptance of the plan to the address given above.

That very day he made the necessary arrangements with the builders at Birkenhead, and within twenty-four hours the keel of the *Forward* was laid on the stocks.

Richard Shandon was a man about forty years old, strong, energetic, and fearless, three qualities most necessary for a sailor, for they give him confidence, vigor, and coolness. He was known to be severe and very hard to please; hence he was more feared than loved by his men. But this reputation was not calculated to interfere with his selection of a crew, for he was known to be skilful in avoiding trouble.

Shandon feared that the mysterious nature of the expedition might stand in his way.

"In that case," he said, "it's best not to say anything about it; there will always be plenty of men who will want to know the why and the wherefore of the whole matter, and, since I don't know anything about it myself, I should find it hard to answer them. This K. Z. is certainly an odd stick; but, after all, he knows me, he depends on me, and that is enough. As for his ship, it will be a good one, and if it's not going to the Arctic Ocean, my name is not Richard Shandon. But I shall keep that fact for myself and my officers."

Thereupon Shandon began to choose his crew, bearing in mind the captain's wishes about the independence and health of the men.

He knew a very capital fellow, and a good sailor, James Wall by name. Wall might have been about thirty years old, and had already made some voyages in the northern seas. Shandon offered him the place of second mate, and Wall accepted it at once; all he cared for was to be at sea. Shandon confided all the details of the affair to him and to a certain Johnson, whom he took as boatswain.

"All right," answered James Wall, "that's as good as anything. Even if it's to seek the Northwest Passage, some have come back from that."

"Not all," said Johnson, "but that's no reason that we should not try it."

"Besides, if our guesses are right," said Shandon, "it must be said that we start with a fair chance of success. The *Forward* will be a stanch ship and she will carry good engines. She can go a great distance. We want a crew of only eighteen men."

"Eighteen men," answered Johnson; "that's the number the American, Kane, took with him on his famous voyage towards the North Pole."

"It's strange," said Wall, "that a private person should try to make his way from Davis Strait to Behring Strait. The expeditions in search of Sir John Franklin have already cost England more than seven hundred and sixty thousand pounds, without producing any practical good. Who in the world wants to throw away his money for such a purpose?"

"In the first place, James," answered Shandon, "we are in the dark about it all. I don't know whether we are going to the northern or the southern seas. Perhaps there's some new discovery to be

tried. At any rate, some day or other a Dr. Clawbonny is to come aboard who will probably know more about it and will be able to tell us. We shall see."

"Let us wait, then," said Johnson; "as for me, I'm going to look after some good men, and I'll answer now for their animal heat, as the captain calls it. You can depend on me."

Johnson was an invaluable man; he was familiar with high latitudes. He had been quartermaster aboard of the *Phoenix*, which belonged to one of the expeditions sent out in 1853 in search of Franklin; he had been an eye-witness of the death of the French lieutenant Bellot, whom he had accompanied in his expedition across the ice. Johnson knew all the sailors in Liverpool, and immediately set about engaging a crew.

Shandon, Wall, and he succeeded in filling the number by the middle of December, but they met with considerable difficulty; many who were attracted by the high pay were alarmed by the danger, and more than one who had boldly enlisted came later to say that he had changed his mind on account of the dissuasion of his friends. They all tried to pierce the mystery, and pursued Shandon with their questions. He used to refer them to Johnson.

"What can I say, my man?" the boatswain used to answer; "I don't know any more about it than you do. At any rate you will be in good company, with men who won't shirk their work; that's something! So don't be thinking about it all day: take it or leave it!" And the greater number took it.

"You understand," added Johnson, sometimes, "my only trouble is in making my choice. High pay, such as no sailor ever had before, with the certainty of finding a round sum when we get back. That's very tempting."

"The fact is," answered the sailors, "that it is hard to refuse. It will support a man all the rest of his life."

"I won't hide from you," continued Johnson, "that the voyage will be long, difficult, and dangerous; that's all stated in our instructions; it's well to know beforehand what one undertakes to do; probably it's to try all that men can possibly do, and perhaps even more. So, if you haven't got a bold heart and a strong body, if you can't say you have more than twenty chances to one of staying there, if, in short, you are particular about leaving your body in one place more than another, here rather than there, get away from here and let some bolder man have your place!"

"But, at least," said the confused sailor, – "at least, you know the captain?"

"The captain is Richard Shandon, my friend, until we receive another."

Now it must be said that was what the commander thought; he allowed himself to think that at the last moment he would receive definite instructions as to the object of the voyage, and that he would remain in command of the *Forward*. He was fond of spreading this opinion about, either in conversation with his officers or in superintending the building of the brig, of which the timbers were now rising in the Birkenhead ship-yard like the sides of a huge whale.

Shandon and Johnson conformed strictly with the recommendation about the health of the crew; they all looked hardy and possessed enough animal heat to run the engines of the *Forward;* their elastic limbs, their clear and ruddy skin, showed that they were fit to encounter intense cold. They were bold, determined men, energetic and stoutly built; they were not all equally vigorous. Shandon had even hesitated about accepting some of them; for instance, the sailors Gripper and Garry, and the harpooner Simpson, who seemed to him too thin; but, on the other hand, they were well built, they were earnest about it, and they were shipped.

All the crew were members of the same church; in their long voyage their prayers and the reading of the Bible would call them together and console them in the hours of depression; so that it was advisable that there should be no diversity on this score. Shandon knew from experience the usefulness of this practice and its good influence on the men, so valuable that it is never neglected on board of ships which winter in the polar seas.

When all the crew had been engaged, Shandon and his two officers busied themselves with the provisions; they followed closely the captain's instructions, which were definite, precise, and detailed,

in which the quality and quantity of the smallest articles were clearly set down. Thanks to the drafts placed at the commander's order, every article was paid for, cash down, with a discount of eight per cent, which Richard carefully placed to the credit of K. Z.

Crew, provisions, and outfit were all ready in January, 1860; the *Forward* was approaching completion. Shandon never let a day pass without visiting Birkenhead.

On the morning of the 23d of January he was, as usual, on one of the double-ended ferry-boats which ply between the two shores of the Mersey; everything was enveloped in one of the ordinary fogs of that region, which compel the pilot to steer by compass, although the trip is one of but ten minutes.

However, the thickness of the fog could not prevent Shandon from noticing a short, rather stout man, with a refined, agreeable face and pleasant expression, who came towards him, seized both his hands, and pressed them with a warmth and familiarity which a Frenchman would have said was "very southern."

But if this stranger was not from the South, he had escaped it narrowly; he spoke and gesticulated freely; his thoughts seemed determined to find expression, even if they had to burst out. His eyes, small like the eyes of witty men, his large and mobile mouth, were safety-valves which enabled him to rid himself of too strong a pressure on his feelings; he talked; and he talked so much and joyously, that, it must be said, Shandon could not make out what he was saying.

Still the mate of the *Forward* was not slow in recognizing this short man whom he had never seen; it flashed into his mind, and the moment that the other stopped to take breath, Shandon uttered these words, —

"Dr. Clawbonny?"

"The same, in person, Commander! For nearly a quarter of an hour I have been looking after you, asking for you of every one and everywhere. Imagine my impatience. Five minutes more and I should have lost my head! So this is you, officer Shandon? You really exist? You are not a myth? Your hand, your hand! Let me press it again in mine! Yes, that is indeed the hand of Richard Shandon. Now, if there is a commander Richard, there is a brig *Forward* which he commands; and if he commands it, it will sail; and if it sails, it will take Dr. Clawbonny on board."

"Well, yes, Doctor, I am Richard Shandon, there is a brig *Forward*, and it will sail."

"There's logic," answered the doctor, taking a long breath, – "there's logic. So I am delighted, enchanted! For a long time I've been waiting for something of this sort to turn up, and I've been wanting to try a voyage of this sort. Now, with you – "

"Excuse me – " said Shandon.

"With you," continued Clawbonny, paying him no attention, "we are sure of going far without turning round."

"But – " began Shandon.

"For you have shown what stuff you are made of, and I know all you've done. Ah, you are a good sailor!"

"If you please – "

"No, I sha'n't let your courage and skill be doubted for a moment, even by yourself. The captain who chose you for mate is a man who knew what he was about; I can tell you that."

"But that is not the question," said Shandon, impatiently.

"What is it, then? Don't keep me anxious any longer."

"But you won't let me say a word. Tell me, Doctor, if you please, how you came to join this expedition of the *Forward?*"

"By a letter, a capital letter; here it is, – the letter of a brave captain, very short, but very full."

With these words he handed Shandon a letter running as follows: —

INVERNESS, January 22, 1860.

To DR. CLAWBONNY, *Liverpool.*

If Dr. Clawbonny wishes to sail on the *Forward* for a long voyage, he can present himself to the mate, Richard Shandon, who has been advised concerning him.
K. Z.,
Captain of the Forward.

"The letter reached me this morning, and I'm now ready to go on board of the *Forward*."

"But," continued Shandon, "I suppose you know whither we are bound."

"Not the least idea in the world; but what difference does it make, provided I go somewhere? They say I'm a learned man; they are wrong; I don't know anything, and if I have published some books which have had a good sale, I was wrong; it was very kind of the public to buy them! I don't know anything, I tell you, except that I am very ignorant. Now I have a chance offered me to complete, or, rather, to make over my knowledge of medicine, surgery, history, geography, botany, mineralogy, conchology, geodesy, chemistry, physics, mechanics, hydrography; well, I accept it, and I assure you, I didn't have to be asked twice."

"Then," said Shandon in a tone of disappointment, "you don't know where the *Forward* is going."

"O, but I do, commander; it's going where there is something to be learned, discovered; where one can instruct himself, make comparisons, see other customs, other countries, study the ways of other people; in a word, it's going where I have never been."

"But more precisely?" cried Shandon.

"More precisely," answered the doctor, "I have understood that it was bound for the Northern Ocean. Well, good for the North!"

"At any rate," said Shandon, "you know the captain?"

"Not at all! But he's a good fellow, you may depend on it."

The mate and the doctor stepped ashore at Birkenhead; Shandon gave his companion all the information he had, and the mystery which lay about it all excited highly the doctor's imagination. The sight of the *Forward* enchanted him. From that time he was always with Shandon, and he came every morning to inspect the hull of the *Forward*.

In addition he was specially intrusted with the providing of the ship's medicine-chest.

For Clawbonny was a physician, and a good one, although he had never practised much. At twenty-five he was an ordinary young doctor, at forty he was a learned man; being known throughout the whole city, he became a leading member of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool. His moderate fortune allowed him to give some advice which was no less valuable for being without charge; loved as a thoroughly kind-hearted man must be, he did no harm to any one else nor to himself; quick and garrulous, if you please, but with his heart in his hand, and his hand in that of all the world.

When the news of his intended journey on board the *Forward* became known in the city, all his friends endeavored to dissuade him, but they only made him cling more obstinately to his intention; and when the doctor had absolutely determined on anything, he was a skilful man who could make him change.

From that day the rumors, conjectures, and apprehensions steadily increased; but that did not interfere with the launching of the *Forward* on the 5th of February, 1860. Two months later she was ready for sea.

On the 15th of March, as the captain's letter had said[2], a Danish dog was sent by rail from Edinburgh to Liverpool, to the address of Richard Shandon. He seemed morose, timid, and almost wicked; his expression was very strange. The name of the *Forward* was engraved on his collar.

[2] The letter says the large Danish dog will arrive on the 15th of February. In chapter 3 the dog arrives on the 15th of March "as the captain's letter had said." Other versions have the same inconsistency.

The commander gave him quarters on board, and sent a letter, with the news of his arrival, to Leghorn.

Hence, with the exception of the captain, the crew of the *Forward* was complete. It was composed as follows: —

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

CHAPTER IV
THE DOG-CAPTAIN

The 5th of April, the day of departure, came. The fact that the doctor had joined the expedition gave some comfort to those on board. Wherever he could go they could follow. Still, most of the sailors were very uneasy, and Shandon, fearing that their number might be diminished by desertion, was very anxious to get to sea. The land once out of sight, the men would soon be resigned.

Dr. Clawbonny's cabin was situated on the poop, occupying the extreme after-part of the ship. The cabins of the captain and mate opened on the deck. That of the captain was kept tightly closed, after it had been provided with various instruments, furniture, clothing, books, and utensils, all of which had been set down in detail in a letter. As he had asked, the key was sent to the captain at Lübeck; so he alone had admission into the cabin.

This fact annoyed Shandon, and diminished his chances of having chief command. As for his own cabin, he had arranged it suitably for the presumed voyage, for he knew very well what was necessary for a polar expedition.

The second mate's cabin was on the lower deck, where the sailors were domiciled; the crew had very comfortable quarters; they would hardly have had such accommodations in any other ship. They were treated as if they were a valuable cargo; a huge stove stood in the middle of their sleeping-room.

Dr. Clawbonny was very enthusiastic about it; he took possession of his cabin on the 6th of February, the day after the ship was launched.

"The happiest animal in the world," he used to say, "would be a snail who could make himself just such a shell as he wanted; I shall try to be an intelligent snail."

And, in fact, for a shell which he was not going to leave for some time, his cabin presented a very comfortable appearance; the doctor took a scientific or childlike pleasure in arranging his scientific paraphernalia. His books, his specimens, his cases, his instruments, his physical apparatus, his thermometers, barometers, field-glasses, compasses, sextants, charts, drawings, phials, powder, and medicine-bottles, all were classified in a way which would have done honor to the British Museum. This space of six feet square contained incalculable wealth; the doctor needed only to stretch out his hand without rising, to become at once a physician, a mathematician, an astronomer, a geographer, a botanist, or a conchologist.

To tell the truth, he was proud of his arrangements, and very contented in his floating sanctum, which three of his thinnest friends would have completely filled. They used to crowd there in great numbers, so that even so good-natured a man as the doctor was occasionally put out; and, like Socrates, he came at last to say, —

"My house is small, but may Heaven grant that it never be filled with friends!"

To complete our account of the *Forward*, it is only necessary to add that a kennel for the huge Danish dog was built just beneath the window of the closed cabin; but he preferred to keep himself between decks and in the hold; it seemed impossible to tame him; no one ever conquered his shyness; he could be heard, at night especially, howling dismally in the ship's hold.

Was it because he missed his master? Had he an instinctive dread of the dangers of the voyage? Had he a presentiment of the coming perils? The sailors were sure that he had, and more than one said the same in jest, who in his heart regarded the dog as a sort of diabolic animal.

Pen, a very brutal man, one day, while trying to kick him, slipped, and fell on the corner of the capstan in such a way that he cut his head badly. It is easy to see how the sailors put all the blame upon the dog.

Clifton, who was the most superstitious man in the crew, made, one day, the strange observation that the dog, when on the poop, would always walk on the windward side; and afterwards, when the

brig was at sea and under sail, this singular animal would shift his position to the other side after every tack, so as to be windward, as the captain of the *Forward* would have done.

Dr. Clawbonny, who by his gentleness and caresses would have almost tamed the heart of a tiger, tried in vain to make friends with the dog; he met with no success.

The dog, too, did not answer to any of the usual names of his kind. So the men used to call him "Captain," for he seemed perfectly familiar with all the ways on shipboard. He had evidently been to sea before.

It is hence easy to understand the boatswain's answer to Clifton's friend, and how this idea found but few sceptics; more than one would repeat it jestingly, who was fully prepared to see the dog, some fine day, take human shape, and with a loud voice assume command.

If Richard Shandon did not share such apprehensions, he was far from being undisturbed, and on the eve of departing, on the night of April 5th, he was talking on this subject with the doctor, Wall, and Johnson, in the mess-room.

These four persons were sipping their tenth grog, which was probably their last, too; for, in accordance with the letter from Aberdeen, all the crew, from the captain to the stoker, were teetotalers, never touching beer, wine, nor spirits, except in case of sickness, and by the advice of the doctor.

For an hour past they had been talking about their departure. If the captain's instructions were to be completely carried out, Shandon would the next day receive a letter containing his last orders.

"If that letter," said the mate, "doesn't tell me the captain's name, it must at least tell us whither we are bound. If not, in what direction shall we sail?"

"Upon my word," answered the impatient doctor, "if I were in your place, Shandon, I should set sail even without getting a letter; one will come after us, you may be sure."

"You have a great deal of faith, Doctor. But, if you please, to what part of the world would you sail?"

"Towards the North Pole, of course; there can be no doubt about that."

"No doubt indeed!" said Wall. "Why not towards the South Pole?"

"The South Pole! Never!" cried the doctor. "Would the captain ever have thought of sending a brig across the whole Atlantic Ocean? Just think for a moment, my dear Wall."

"The doctor has an answer for everything," was his only reply.

"Granted it's northward," resumed Shandon. "But tell me, Doctor, is it to Spitzbergen, Greenland, or Labrador that we have to sail, or to Hudson's Bay? If all these routes come to the same end at last, – the impassable ice, – there is still a great number of them, and I should find it very hard to choose between them. Have any definite answer to that, Doctor?"

"No," answered the doctor, annoyed that he had nothing to say; "but if you get no letter, what shall you do?"

"I shall do nothing; I shall wait."

"You won't set sail!" cried Clawbonny, twirling his glass in his despair.

"No, certainly not."

"That's the best course," said Johnson, mildly; while the doctor walked around the table, being unable to sit quiet any longer. "Yes, that's the best course; and still, too long a delay might have very disastrous consequences. In the first place, the season is a good one, and if it's north we are going, we ought to take advantage of the mild weather to get through Davis Straits; besides, the crew will get more and more impatient; the friends and companions of the men are urging them to leave the *Forward*, and they might succeed in playing us a very bad turn."

"And then, too," said James Wall, "if any panic should arise among the men, every one would desert us; and I don't know, Commander, how you could get together another crew."

"But what is to be done?" cried Shandon.

"What you said," answered the doctor: "wait; but wait till to-morrow before you despair. The captain's promises have all been fulfilled so far with such regularity that we may have the best hopes for the future; there's no reason to think that we shall not be told of our destination at the proper time. As for me, I don't doubt in the least that to-morrow we shall be sailing in the Irish Sea. So, my friends, I propose one last drink to a happy voyage; it begins in a mysterious way, but, with such sailors as you, there are a thousand chances of its ending well."

And they all touched their glasses for the last time.

"Now, Commander," resumed Johnson, "I have one piece of advice to give you, and that is, to make everything ready for sailing. Let the crew think you are certain of what you are about. To-morrow, whether a letter comes or not, set sail; don't start your fires; the wind promises to hold; nothing will be easier than to get off; take a pilot on board; at the ebb of the tide leave the docks; then anchor beyond Birkenhead Point; the crew will have no more communication with the land; and if this devilish letter does come at last, it can find us there as well as anywhere."

"Well said, Johnson!" exclaimed the doctor, reaching out his hand to the old sailor.

"That's what we shall do," answered Shandon.

Each one then withdrew to his cabin, and took what sleep he could get till morning.

The next day the first distribution of letters took place in the city, but there was none for Commander Richard Shandon.

Nevertheless he made his preparations for departure; the news spread immediately throughout the city, and, as we have seen, a great concourse of spectators thronged the piers of the New Prince's Docks.

A great many people came on board the brig, – some to bid a friend good by, or to urge him to leave the ship, or to gaze at this strange vessel; others to ascertain the object of the voyage; and there were many murmurs at the unusual silence of the commander.

For that he had his reasons.

Ten o'clock struck. Eleven. The tide was to turn at half past twelve. Shandon, from the upper deck, gazed with anxious eyes at the crowd, trying in vain to read on some one's face the secret of his fate. But in vain. The sailors of the *Forward* obeyed his orders in silence, keeping their eyes fixed upon him, ever awaiting some information which he did not give.

Johnson was finishing the preparations for setting sail. The day was overcast, and the sea, outside of the docks, rather high; a stiff southwest breeze was blowing, but they could easily leave the Mersey.

At twelve o'clock still nothing. Dr. Clawbonny walked up and down uneasily, looking about, gesticulating, and "impatient for the sea," as he said. In spite of all he could do, he felt excited. Shandon bit his lips till the blood came.

At this moment Johnson came up to him and said, —

"Commander, if we are going to take this tide, we must lose no time; it will be a good hour before we can get off from the docks."

Shandon cast one last glance about him, and looked at his watch. It was after the time of the midday distribution of letters.

"Cast off!" he said to his boatswain.

"All ashore who are going!" cried the latter, ordering the spectators to leave the deck of the *Forward*.

Thereupon the crowd, began to move toward the gangway and make its way on to the quay, while the crew began to cast off the last moorings.

At once the inevitable confusion of the crowd, which was pushed about without much ceremony by the sailors, was increased by the barking of the dog. He suddenly sprang from the forecastle right through the mass of visitors, barking sullenly.

All made way for him. He sprang on the poop-deck, and, incredible as it may seem, yet, as a thousand witnesses can testify, this dog-captain carried a letter in his mouth.

"A letter!" cried Shandon; "but is *he* on board?"

"*He* was, without doubt, but he's not now," answered Johnson, showing the deck cleared of the crowd.

"Here, Captain! Captain!" shouted the doctor, trying to take the letter from the dog, who kept springing away from him. He seemed to want to give the letter to Shandon himself.

"Here, Captain!" he said.

The dog went up to him; Shandon took the letter without difficulty, and then Captain barked sharply three times, amid the profound silence which prevailed on board the ship and along the quay.

Shandon held the letter in his hand, without opening it.

"Read it, read it!" cried the doctor. Shandon looked at it. The address, without date or place, ran simply, – "Commander Richard Shandon, on board the brig *Forward*."

Shandon opened the letter and read: —

> You will sail towards Cape Farewell. You will reach it April 20. If the captain does not appear on board, you will pass through Davis Strait and go up Baffin's Bay as far as Melville Sound.
> *K. Z.,*
> *Captain of the Forward.*

Shandon folded carefully this brief letter, put it in his pocket, and gave the order to cast off. His voice, which arose alone above the roaring of the wind, sounded very solemn.

Soon the *Forward* had left the docks, and under the care of a pilot, whose boat followed at a distance, put out into the stream. The crowd hastened to the outer quay by the Victoria Docks to get a last look at the strange vessel. The two topsails, the foresail, and staysail were soon set, and under this canvas the *Forward*, which well deserved its name, after rounding Birkenhead Point, sailed away into the Irish Sea.

CHAPTER V
AT SEA

The wind, which was uncertain, although in general favorable, was blowing in genuine April squalls. The *Forward* sailed rapidly, and its screw, as yet unused, did not delay its progress. Towards three o'clock they met the steamer which plies between Liverpool and the Isle of Man, and which carries the three legs of Sicily on its paddle-boxes. Her captain hailed them, and this was the last good-by to the crew of the *Forward*.

At five o'clock the pilot resigned the charge of the ship to Richard Shandon, and sailed away in his boat, which soon disappeared from sight in the southwest.

Towards evening the brig doubled the Calf of Man, at the southern extremity of the island of that name. During the night the sea was very high; the *Forward* rode the waves very well, however, and leaving the Point of Ayr on the northwest, she ran towards the North Channel.

Johnson was right; once at sea the sailors readily adapted themselves instinctively to the situation. They saw the excellence of their vessel and forgot the strangeness of their situation. The ship's routine was soon regularly established.

The doctor inhaled with pleasure the sea-air; he paced up and down the deck in spite of the fresh wind, and showed that for a student he had very good sea-legs.

"The sea is a fine thing," he said to Johnson, as he went upon the bridge after breakfast; "I am a little late in making its acquaintance, but I shall make up for my delay."

"You are right, Dr. Clawbonny; I would give all the land in the world for a bit of ocean. People say that sailors soon get tired of their business; but I've been sailing for forty years, and I like it as well as I did the first day."

"What a pleasure it is to feel a stanch ship under one's feet! and, if I'm not mistaken, the *Forward* is a capital sea-boat."

"You are right, Doctor," answered Shandon, who had joined the two speakers; "she's a good ship, and I must say that there was never a ship so well equipped for a voyage in the polar regions. That reminds me that, thirty years ago, Captain James Ross, going to seek the Northwest Passage – "

"Commanded the *Victory*," said the doctor, quickly, "a brig of about the tonnage of this one, and also carrying machinery."

"What! did you know that?"

"Say for yourself," retorted the doctor. "Steamers were then new inventions, and the machinery of the *Victory* was continually delaying him. Captain Ross, after in vain trying to patch up every piece, at last took it all out and left it at the first place he wintered at."

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

"More or less," answered the doctor. "In my reading I have come across the works of Parry, Ross, Franklin; the reports of MacClure, Kennedy, Kane, MacClintock; and some of it has stuck in my memory. I might add that MacClintock, on board of the *Fox*, a propeller like ours, succeeded in making his way more easily and more directly than all his successors."[3]

"That's perfectly true," answered Shandon; "that MacClintock is a good sailor; I have seen him at sea. You might also say that we shall be, like him, in Davis Strait in the month of April; and if we can get through the ice our voyage will be very much advanced."

"Unless," said the doctor, "we should be as unlucky as the *Fox* in 1857, and should be caught the first year by the ice in the north of Baffin's Bay, and we should have to winter among the icebergs."

---

[3] In the discussion of steamers, the doctor observes of the Fox that MacClintock "succeeded in making his way more easily and more directly than all his successors." Other translations say "predecessors" which makes more sense.

"We must hope to be luckier, Mr. Shandon," said Johnson; "and if, with a ship like the *Forward*, we can't go where we please, the attempt must be given up forever."

"Besides," continued the doctor, "if the captain is on board he will know better than we what is to be done, and so much the better because we are perfectly ignorant; for his singularly brief letter gives us no clew to the probable aim of the voyage."

"It's a great deal," answered Shandon, with some warmth, "to know what route we have to take; and now for a good month, I fancy, we shall be able to get along without his supernatural intervention and orders. Besides, you know what I think about him."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the doctor; "I used to think as you did, that he was going to leave the command of the ship in your hands, and that he would never come on board; but – "

"But what?" asked Shandon, with some ill-humor.

"But since the arrival of the second letter, I have altered my views somewhat."

"And why so, doctor?"

"Because, although this letter does tell you in which direction to go, it still does not inform you of the final aim of the voyage; and we have yet to know whither we are to go. I ask you how can a third letter reach us now that we are on the open sea. The postal service on the shore of Greenland is very defective. You see, Shandon, I fancy that he is waiting for us at some Danish settlement up there, – at Holsteinborg or Upernavik. We shall find that he has been completing the supply of seal-skins, buying sledges and dogs, – in a word, providing all the equipment for a journey in the arctic seas. So I shall not be in the least surprised to see him coming out of his cabin some fine morning and taking command in the least supernatural way in the world."

"Possibly," answered Shandon, dryly; "but meanwhile the wind's freshening, and there's no use risking our topsails in such weather."

Shandon left the doctor, and ordered the topsails furled.

"He still clings to that idea," said the doctor to the boatswain.

"Yes," was the answer, "and it's a pity; for you may very well be right, Dr. Clawbonny."

Towards the evening of Saturday the *Forward* rounded the Mull of Galloway, on which the light could be seen in the northeast. During the night they left the Mull of Cantire to the north, and on the east Fair Head, on the Irish coast. Towards three o'clock in the morning, the brig, passing Rathlin Island on its starboard quarter, came out from the North Channel into the ocean.

That was Sunday, April 8. The English, and especially sailors, are very observant of that day; hence the reading of the Bible, of which the doctor gladly took charge, occupied a good part of the morning.

The wind rose to a gale, and threatened to drive the ship back upon the Irish coast. The waves ran very high; the vessel rolled a great deal. If the doctor was not sea-sick, it was because he was determined not to be, for nothing would have been easier. At midday Malin Head disappeared from their view in the south; it was the last sight these bold sailors were to have of Europe, and more than one gazed at it for a long time who was doubtless fated never to set eyes on it again.

By observation the latitude then was 55° 57', and the longitude, according to the chronometer, 7° 40'.[4]

The gale abated towards nine o'clock of the evening; the *Forward*, a good sailer, kept on its route to the northwest. That day gave them all a good opportunity to judge of her sea-going qualities; as good judges had already said at Liverpool, she was well adapted for carrying sail.

During the following days, the *Forward* made very good progress; the wind veered to the south, and the sea ran high. The brig set every sail. A few petrels and puffins flew about the poop-deck; the doctor succeeded in shooting one of the latter, which fortunately fell on board.

Simpson, the harpooner, seized it and carried it to the doctor.

[4] Meridian of Greenwich.

"It's an ugly bird, Dr. Clawbonny," he said.

"But then it will make a good meal, my friend."

"What, are you going to eat it?"

"And you shall have a taste of it," said the doctor, laughing.

"Never!" answered Simpson; "it's strong and oily, like all sea-birds."

"True," said the doctor; "but I have a way of dressing such game, and if you recognize it to be a sea-bird, I'll promise never to kill another in all my life."

"So you are a cook, too, Dr. Clawbonny?" asked Johnson.

"A learned man ought to know a little of everything."

"Then take care, Simpson," said the boatswain; "the doctor is a clever man, and he'll make us take this puffin for a delicious grouse."

In fact, the doctor was in the right about this bird; he removed skilfully the fat which lies beneath the whole surface of the skin, principally on its thighs, and with it disappeared all the rancid, fishy odor with which this bird can be justly charged. Thus prepared, the bird was called delicious, even by Simpson.

During the recent storm, Richard Shandon had made up his mind about the qualities of his crew; he had tested his men one by one, as every officer should do who wishes to be prepared for future dangers; he knew on whom he could rely.

James Wall, who was warmly attached to Richard, was intelligent and efficient, but he had very little originality; as second officer he was exactly in his place.

Johnson, who was accustomed to the dangers of the sea, and an old sailor in arctic regions, lacked neither coolness nor courage.

Simpson, the harpooner, and Bell, the carpenter, were steady men, obedient and well disciplined. The ice-master, Foker, an experienced sailor, who had sailed in northern waters, promised to be of the greatest service.

Of the other men, Garry and Bolton seemed to be the best; Bolton was a jolly fellow, always laughing and joking; Garry, a man about thirty-five years old, had an energetic, but rather pale and sad face.

The three sailors, Clifton, Gripper, and Pen, seemed to be the least enthusiastic and determined; they were inclined to grumbling. Gripper had even wished to break his engagement when the time came for sailing, and only a feeling of shame prevented him. If things went well, if they encountered no excessive dangers, and their toil was not too severe, these three men could be counted on; but they were hard to please with their food, for they were inclined to gluttony. In spite of their having been forewarned, they were by no means pleased with being teetotalers, and at their meals they used to miss their brandy or gin; but they made up for it with the tea and coffee which were distributed with a lavish hand.

As for the two engineers, Brunton and Plover, and the stoker, Warren, they had been so far well satisfied with having nothing to do.

Shandon knew therefore what to expect from each man.

On the 14th of April, the *Forward* crossed the Gulf Stream, which, after following the eastern coast of America as far as Newfoundland, turns to the northeast and moves towards the shore of Norway. They were then in latitude 51° 37', and longitude 22° 37',[5] two hundred miles from the end of Greenland. The weather grew colder; the thermometer fell to 32°, the freezing-point.

[5] On April 14 the longitude given is 22 degrees 37 minutes. Other versions give 22 degrees 58 minutes. Other versions agree that the latitude is 51 degrees – which hardly seems possible for a ship leaving Ireland at nearly 56 degrees latitude and sailing northwest. 57 degrees seems more likely. A few days later the latitude is further confused during the discussion of iceberg sightings. The doctor states that they are two degrees further north than a sighting of icebergs occurring at 42 degrees latitude, apparently confusing the Forward's latitude with that of the Ann Poole

The doctor, without yet putting on his arctic winter dress, was wearing a suit of sea-clothes, like all the officers and sailors; he was an amusing sight in his high boots, in which he could not bend his legs, his huge tarpaulin hat, his trousers and coat of the same material; in heavy rain, or when the brig was shipping seas, the doctor used to look like a sort of sea-monster, a comparison which always flattered him.

For two days the sea was very rough; the wind veered to the northwest, and delayed the *Forward*. From the 14th to the 16th of April there was still a high sea running; but on Monday there fell a heavy shower which almost immediately had the effect of calming the sea. Shandon called the doctor's attention to it.

"Well," said the doctor, "that confirms the curious observations of the whaler Scoresby, who was a member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, of which I have the honor to be a corresponding member. You see that while the rain is falling the waves are hardly to be noticed, even when the wind is strong. On the other hand, in dry weather the sea would be rougher even with a gentler wind."

"But what is the explanation of it, Doctor?"

"It's very simple; there is no explanation."

At that moment the ice-master, who was on watch in the topmast cross-trees, cried out that there was a floating mass on the starboard quarter, about fifteen miles to windward.

"An iceberg in these latitudes!" cried the doctor.

Shandon turned his glass in that direction, and corroborated the lookout's words.

"That's strange," said the doctor.

"Are you surprised?" asked the commander, laughing. "What! are we lucky enough to find anything that will surprise you?"

"I am surprised without being surprised," answered the doctor, smiling, "since the brig *Ann Poole*, of Greenspond, was caught in the ice in the year 1813, in the forty-fourth degree of north latitude, and Dayement, her captain, saw hundreds of icebergs."

"Good," said Shandon; "you can still teach us a great deal about them."

"O, not so very much!" answered Clawbonny, modestly, "except that ice has been seen in very much lower latitudes."

"That I know, my dear Doctor, for when I was a cabin-boy on the sloop-of-war, *Fly*– "

"In 1818," continued the doctor, "at the end of March, or it might have been the beginning of April, you passed between two large fields of floating ice, in latitude forty-two."

"That is too much!" exclaimed Shandon.

"But it's true; so I have no need to be surprised, now that we are two degrees farther north, at our sighting an iceberg."

"You are bottled full of information, Doctor," answered the commander; "one needs only draw the cork."

"Very well, I shall be exhausted sooner than you think; and now, Shandon, if we can get a nearer view of this phenomenon, I should be the gladdest of doctors."

"Exactly, Johnson," said Shandon, summoning the boatswain; "I think the wind is freshening."

"Yes, Commander," answered Johnson, "we are making very little headway, and soon we shall feel the currents from Davis Strait."

"You are right, Johnson, and if we mean to make Cape Farewell by the 20th of April, we must go under steam, or we shall be cast on the coast of Labrador. – Mr. Wall, give the order to light the fires."

The mate's orders were obeyed; an hour later the engines were in motion; the sails were furled; and the screw, turning through the waves, was driving the *Forward* rapidly in the teeth of the northwest wind.

CHAPTER VI
THE GREAT POLAR CURRENT

Soon more numerous flocks of birds, petrels, puffins, and others which inhabit those barren shores, gave token of their approach to Greenland. The *Forward* was moving rapidly northward, leaving behind her a long line of dark smoke.

Tuesday, the 17th of April, the ice-master caught the first sight of the *blink*[6] of the ice. It was visible at least twenty miles off to the north-northwest. In spite of some tolerably thick clouds it lighted up brilliantly all the air near the horizon. No one of those on board who had ever seen this phenomenon before could fail to recognize it, and they felt assured from its whiteness that this blink was due to a vast field of ice lying about thirty miles farther than they could see, and that it came from the reflection of its luminous rays.

Towards evening the wind shifted to the south, and became favorable; Shandon was able to carry sail, and as a measure of economy they extinguished the furnace fires. The *Forward* under her topsails, jib, and foresail, sailed on towards Cape Farewell.

At three o'clock on the 18th they made out an ice-stream, which, like a narrow but brilliant band, divided the lines of the water and sky. It was evidently descending rather from the coast of Greenland than from Davis Strait, for the ice tended to keep on the western side of Baffin's Bay. An hour later, and the *Forward* was passing through the detached fragments of the ice-stream, and in the thickest part the pieces of ice, although closely welded together, were rising and falling with the waves.

At daybreak the next morning the watch saw a sail; it was the *Valkyria*, a Danish corvette, sailing towards the *Forward*, bound to Newfoundland. The current from the strait became perceptible, and Shandon had to set more sail to overcome it.

At that moment the commander, the doctor, James Wall, and Johnson were all together on the poop-deck, observing the force and direction of the current. The doctor asked if it were proved that this current was felt throughout Baffin's Bay.

"There's no doubt of it," answered Shandon; "and sailing-vessels have hard work in making headway against it."

"And it's so much the harder," added James Wall, "because it's met on the eastern coast of America, as well as on the western coast of Greenland."

"Well," said the doctor, "that serves to confirm those who seek a Northwest Passage. The current moves at the rate of about five miles an hour, and it is hard to imagine that it rises at the bottom of a gulf."

"That is very likely, Doctor," answered Shandon, "because, while this current flows from north to south, there is a contrary current in Behring Strait, which flows from south to north, and which must be the cause of this one."

"Hence," said the doctor, "you must admit that America is completely separated from the polar regions, and that the water from the Pacific skirts its whole northern coast, until it reaches the Atlantic. Besides, the greater elevation of the water of the Pacific is another reason for its flowing towards the European seas."

"But," said Shandon, "there must be some facts which support this theory; and if there are," he added with gentle irony, "our learned friend must be familiar with them."

"Well," answered the latter, complacently, "if it interests you at all I can tell you that whales, wounded in Davis Strait, have been found afterwards on the coast of Tartary, still carrying a European harpoon in their side."

---

[6] A peculiar and brilliant color of the air above a large expanse of ice.

"And unless they doubled Cape Horn, or the Cape of Good Hope," answered Shandon, "they must have gone around the northern coast of America. There can be no doubt of that, Doctor."

"And if you were not convinced, my dear Shandon," said the doctor, smiling, "I could produce still other evidence, such as the floating wood with which Davis Strait is filled, larch, aspen, and other southern kinds. Now we know that the Gulf Stream could not carry them into the strait; and if they come out from it they must have got in through Behring Strait."

"I am perfectly convinced, Doctor, and I must say it would be hard to maintain the other side against you."

"See there," said Johnson, "there's something that will throw light on this discussion. It's a large piece of wood floating on the water; if the commander will give us leave, we can put a rope about it, hoist it on board, and ask it the name of its country."

"That's the way!" said the doctor; "after the rule we have the example."

Shandon gave the necessary orders; the brig was turned towards the piece of wood, and soon the crew were hoisting it aboard, although not without considerable trouble.

It was the trunk of a mahogany-tree, eaten to its centre by worms, which fact alone made it light enough to float.

"This is a real triumph," exclaimed the doctor, enthusiastically, "for, since the Atlantic currents could not have brought it into Davis Strait, since it could not have reached the polar waters from the rivers of North America, as the tree grows under the equator, it is evident that it must have come direct from Behring Strait. And besides, see those sea-worms which have eaten it; they belong to warm latitudes."

"It certainly gives the lie to those who deny the existence of a Northwest Passage."

"It fairly kills them," answered the doctor. "See here, I'll give you the route of this mahogany-tree: it was carried to the Pacific Ocean by some river of the Isthmus of Panama or of Guatemala; thence the current carried it along the coast of America as far as Behring Strait, and so it was forced into the polar waters; it is neither so old nor so completely water-logged that we cannot set its departure at some recent date; it escaped all the obstacles of the many straits coming into Baffin's Bay, and being quickly seized by the arctic current it came through Davis Strait to be hoisted on board the *Forward* for the great joy of Dr. Clawbonny, who asks the commander's permission to keep a piece as a memorial."

"Of course," answered Shandon; "but let me tell you in my turn that you will not be the only possessor of such a waif. The Danish governor of the island of Disco – "

"On the coast of Greenland," continued the doctor, "has a mahogany table, made from a tree found in the same way; I know it, my dear Shandon. Very well; I don't grudge him his table, for if there were room enough on board, I could easily make a sleeping-room out of this."

On the night of Wednesday the wind blew with extreme violence; drift-wood was frequently seen; the approach to the coast became more dangerous at a time when icebergs are numerous; hence the commander ordered sail to be shortened, and the *Forward* went on under merely her foresail and forestay-sail.

The thermometer fell below the freezing-point. Shandon distributed among the crew suitable clothing, woollen trousers and jackets, flannel shirts, and thick woollen stockings, such as are worn by Norwegian peasants. Every man received in addition a pair of water-proof boots.

As for Captain, he seemed contented with his fur; he appeared indifferent to the changes of temperature, as if he were thoroughly accustomed to such a life; and besides, a Danish dog was unlikely to be very tender. The men seldom laid eyes on him, for he generally kept himself concealed in the darkest parts of the vessel.

Towards evening, through a rift in the fog, the coast of Greenland could be seen in longitude 37° 2' 7". Through his glass the doctor was able to distinguish mountains separated by huge glaciers; but the fog soon cut out this view, like the curtain of a theatre falling at the most interesting part of a play.

On the morning of the 20th of April, the *Forward* found itself in sight of an iceberg one hundred and fifty feet high, aground in this place from time immemorial; the thaws have had no effect upon it, and leave its strange shape unaltered. Snow saw it; in 1829 James Ross took an exact drawing of it; and in 1851 the French lieutenant, Bellot, on board of the *Prince Albert*, observed it. Naturally the doctor wanted to preserve a memorial of the famous mountain, and he made a very successful sketch of it.

It is not strange that such masses should run aground, and in consequence become immovably fixed to the spot; as for every foot above the surface of the water they have nearly two beneath, which would give to this one a total height of about four hundred feet.

At last with a temperature at noon as low as 12°, under a snowy, misty sky, they sighted Cape Farewell. The *Forward* arrived at the appointed day; the unknown captain, if he cared to assume his place in such gloomy weather, would have no need to complain.

"Then," said the doctor to himself, "there is this famous cape, with its appropriate name! Many have passed it, as we do, who were destined never to see it again! Is it an eternal farewell to one's friends in Europe? You have all passed it, Frobisher, Knight, Barlow, Vaughan, Scroggs, Barentz, Hudson, Blosseville, Franklin, Crozier, Bellot, destined never to return home; and for you this cape was well named Cape Farewell!"

It was towards the year 970 that voyagers, setting out from Iceland, discovered Greenland. Sebastian Cabot, in 1498, went as high as latitude 56°; Gaspard and Michel Cotréal, from 1500 to 1502, reached latitude 60°; and in 1576 Martin Frobisher reached the inlet which bears his name.

To John Davis belongs the honor of having discovered the strait, in 1585; and two years later in a third voyage this hardy sailor, this 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 the large bay which runs so far back into the continent of America, James Poole in 1611, went more or less far into the straits, seeking the Northwest Passage, the discovery of which would have greatly shortened the route between the two worlds.

Baffin, in 1616, found in the bay of that name Lancaster Sound; he was followed in 1619 by James Monk, and in 1719 by Knight, Barlow, Vaughan, and Scroggs, who were never heard of again.

In 1776, Lieutenant Pickersgill, sent to meet Captain Cook, who tried to make his way through Behring Strait, reached latitude 68°; the next year, Young, on the same errand, went as far as Woman's Island.

Then came James Ross, who in 1818 sailed all around the shores of Baffin's Bay, and corrected the errors on the charts of his predecessors.

Finally, in 1819 and 1820, the famous Parry made his way into Lancaster Sound. In spite of numberless difficulties he reached Melville Island, and won the prize of five thousand pounds offered by act of Parliament to the English sailors who should cross the meridian at a latitude higher than the seventy-seventh parallel[7].

In 1826, Beechey touched at Chamisso Island; James Ross wintered, from 1829 to 1833, in Prince Regent's Inlet, and, among other important services, discovered the magnetic pole.

During this time Franklin, by a land-journey, defined the northern coast of America, from Mackenzie River to Turnagain Point; Captain Back followed the same route from 1823 to 1835; and these explorations were completed in 1839 by Dease, Simpson, and Dr. Rae.

At last, Sir John Franklin, anxious to discover the Northwest Passage, left England in 1845, with the *Erebus* and the *Terror;* he entered Baffin's Bay, and since his leaving Disco Island there has been no news of his expedition.

---

[7] In the remembrance of Parry's expedition into Lancaster Sound, mention is made of the prize for crossing a meridian at higher than the seventy-seventh parallel. Here the specific meridian is left out, which is not very informative. In the French version, it is the 170th meridian, which is clearly wrong. The Ward and Lock translation changes it to the 117th meridian. Historically, the prize was for the 110th meridian

His disappearance started numerous search-expeditions, which have effected the discovery of the passage, and given the world definite information about the rugged coasts of the polar lands. The boldest sailors of England, France, and the United States hastened to these terrible latitudes; and, thanks to their exertions, the tortuous, complicated map of these regions has at last been placed in the archives of the Royal Geographical Society of London.

The strange history of these lands crowded on the imagination of the doctor, as he stood leaning on the rail, and gazing on the long track of the brig. The names of those bold sailors thronged into his memory, and it seemed to him that beneath the frozen arches of the ice he could see the pale ghosts of those who never returned.

CHAPTER VII
THE ENTRANCE OF DAVIS STRAIT

During that day the *Forward* made easy progress through the loose ice; the breeze was in a good quarter, but the temperature was very low; the wind coming across the ice-fields was thoroughly chilled.

At night the strictest care was necessary; the icebergs crowded together in this narrow passage; often they could be counted by the hundred on the horizon; they had been loosened from the lofty coasts by the incessant beating of the waves and the warmth of the spring month, and they were floating down to melt away in the depths of the ocean. Often, too, they came across large masses of floating wood, which they were obliged to avoid, so that the crow's-nest was placed in position on the top of the foremast; it consisted of a sort of tub, in which the ice-master, partly sheltered from the wind, scanned the sea, giving notice of the ice in sight, and even, if necessary, directing the ship's course.

The nights were short; since the 31st of January the sun had reappeared in refraction, and was every day rising higher and higher above the horizon. But it was hid by the snow, which, if it did not produce utter darkness, rendered navigation difficult.

April 21st, Cape Desolation appeared through the mist; hard work was wearying the crew; since the brig had entered the ice, the sailors had had no rest; it was now necessary to have recourse to steam to force a way through the accumulated masses.

The doctor and Johnson were talking together on the after-deck, while Shandon was snatching a few hours of sleep in his cabin. Clawbonny was very fond of talking with the old sailor, whose numerous voyages had given him a valuable education. The two had made great friends of one another.

"You see, Dr. Clawbonny," said Johnson, "this country is not like any other; its name is Greenland, but there are very few weeks of the year in which it deserves this name."

"But, Johnson," answered the doctor, "who can say whether in the tenth century this name did not suit it? More than one change of this sort has taken place on the globe, and I should astonish you much more by saying that, according to Icelandic chroniclers, two hundred villages flourished on this continent eight or nine hundred years ago."

"You astonish me so much, Dr. Clawbonny, that I can't believe you; for it's a sterile country."

"Well, sterile as it is, it supports a good many inhabitants, and among them are some civilized Europeans."

"Without doubt; at Disco and at Upernavik we shall find men who are willing to live in such a climate; but I always supposed they stayed there from necessity, and not because they liked it."

"I think you are right; still, men get accustomed to everything, and these Greenlanders appear to me better off than the workingmen of our large cities; they may be unfortunate, but they are not miserable. I say unfortunate, but that is not exactly what I mean; in fact, if they are not quite as comfortable as those who live in temperate regions, they, nevertheless, are accustomed to the severity of the climate, and find in it an enjoyment which we should never imagine."

"We have to think so, Dr. Clawbonny, because Heaven is just; but I have often visited these coasts, and I am always saddened at the sight of its gloomy loneliness; the capes, promontories, and bays ought to have more attractive names, for Cape Farewell and Cape Desolation are not of a sort to cheer sailors."

"I have often made the same remark," answered the doctor; "but these names have a geographical value which is not to be forgotten; they describe the adventures of those who gave them; along with the names of Davis, Baffin, Hudson, Ross, Parry, Franklin, Bellot, if I find Cape Desolation, I also find soon Mercy Bay; Cape Providence makes up for Port Anxiety, Repulse Bay brings me to Cape Eden, and after leaving Point Turnagain I rest in Refuge Bay; in that way I have

under my eyes the whole succession of dangers, checks, obstacles, successes, despairs, and victories connected with the great names of my country; and, like a series of antique medals, this nomenclature gives me the whole history of these seas."

"Well reasoned, Doctor; and may we find more bays of Success in our journey than capes of Despair!"

"I hope so, Johnson; but, tell me, have the crew got over their fears?"

"Somewhat, sir; and yet, to tell the truth, since we entered these straits, they have begun to be very uneasy about the unknown captain; more than one expected to see him appear at the end of Greenland; and so far no news of him. Between ourselves, Doctor, don't you think that is a little strange!"

"Yes, Johnson, I do."

"Do you believe the captain exists?"

"Without any doubt."

"But what reason can he have had for acting in this way?"

"To speak frankly, Johnson, I imagine that he wants to get the crew so far away that it will be impossible for them to turn back. Now, if he had appeared on board when we set sail, and every one had known where we were going, he might have been embarrassed."

"How so?"

"Why, if he wants to try any superhuman enterprise, if he wants to go where so many have failed, do you think he would have succeeded in shipping a crew? But, once on the way, it is easy to go so far that to go farther becomes an absolute necessity."

"Possibly, Doctor; I have known more than one bold explorer, whose name alone would have frightened every one, and who would have found no one to accompany him on his perilous expeditions _ "

"Except me," said the doctor.

"And me," continued Johnson. "I tell you our captain is probably one of those men. At any rate, we shall know sooner or later; I suppose that at Upernavik or Melville Bay he will come quietly on board, and let us know whither he intends to take the ship."

"Very likely, Johnson; but the difficulty will be to get to Melville Bay; see how thick the ice is about us! The *Forward* can hardly make her way through it. See there, that huge expanse!"

"We whalers call that an ice-field, that is to say, an unbroken surface of ice, the limits of which cannot be seen."

"And what do you call this broken field of long pieces more or less closely connected?"

"That is a pack; if it's round we call it a patch, and a stream if it is long."

"And that floating ice?"

"That is drift-ice; if a little higher it would be icebergs; they are very dangerous to ships, and they have to be carefully avoided. See, down there on the ice-field, that protuberance caused by the pressure of the ice; we call that a hummock; if the base were under water, we should call it a cake; we have to give names to them all to distinguish them."

"Ah, it is a strange sight," exclaimed the doctor, as he gazed at the wonders of the northern seas; "one's imagination is touched by all these different shapes!"

"True," answered Johnson, "the ice takes sometimes such curious shapes; and we men never fail to explain them in our own way."

"See there, Johnson; see that singular collection of blocks of ice! Would one not say it was a foreign city, an Eastern city, with minarets and mosques in the moonlight? Farther off is a long row of Gothic arches, which remind us of the chapel of Henry VII., or the Houses of Parliament."

"Everything can be found there; but those cities or churches are very dangerous, and we must not go too near them. Some of those minarets are tottering, and the smallest of them would crush a ship like the *Forward*."

"And yet men have dared to come into these seas under sail alone! How could a ship be trusted in such perils without the aid of steam?"

"Still it has been done; when the wind is unfavorable, and I have known that happen more than once, it is usual to anchor to one of these blocks of ice; we should float more or less around with them, but we would wait for a fair wind; it is true that, travelling in that way, months would be sometimes wasted where we shall need only a few days."

"It seems to me," said the doctor, "that the temperature is falling."

"That would be a pity," answered Johnson, "for there will have to be a thaw before these masses separate, and float away into the Atlantic; besides, they are more numerous in Davis Strait, because the two stretches of land approach one another between Cape Walsingham and Holsteinborg; but above latitude 67° we shall find in May and June more navigable seas."

"Yes; but we must get through this first."

"We must get through, Doctor; in June and July we should have found the passage free, as do the whalers; but our orders were strict; we had to be here in April. If I'm not very much mistaken, our captain is a sound fellow with an idea firm in his head; his only reason for leaving so early was to go far. Whoever survives will see."

The doctor was right about the falling of the temperature; at noon the thermometer stood at 6°, and a breeze was blowing from the northwest, which, while it cleared the sky, aided the current in accumulating the floating ice in the path of the *Forward*. It did not all follow the same course; often some pieces, and very high ones, too, floated in the opposite direction under the influence of a submarine current.

The difficulties of this navigation may be readily understood; the engineers had no repose; the engines were controlled from the bridge by means of levers, which started, stopped, and reversed them instantly, at the orders of the officer in command. Sometimes it was necessary to hasten forward to enter an opening in the ice, again to race with a mass of ice which threatened to block up their only egress, or some piece, suddenly upsetting, obliged the brig to back quickly, in order to escape destruction. This mass of ice, carried and accumulated by the great polar current, was hurried through the strait, and if the frost should unite it, it would present an impassable barrier to the *Forward*.

In these latitudes numberless birds were to be found; petrels and contremaitres were flying here and there, with deafening cries; there were also many gulls, with their large heads, short necks, and small beaks, which were extending their long wings and braving the snow which the storm was whirling about. This profusion of winged beings enlivened the scene.

Numerous pieces of wood were drifting along, clashing continually into one another; a few whales with large heads approached the ship; but they could not think of chasing them, although Simpson, the harpooner, earnestly desired it. Towards evening several seals were seen, which, with their noses just above the water, were swimming among the great pieces of ice.

On the 22d the temperature was still falling; the *Forward* carried a great deal of steam to reach an easier sailing-place; the wind blew steadily from the northwest; the sails were furled.

During Sunday the sailors had little to do. After divine service, which was read by Shandon, the crew betook themselves to chasing wild birds, of which they caught a great many. These birds, prepared according to Dr. Clawbonny's method, were an agreeable addition to the messes of the officers and crew.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the *Forward* sighted the Kin of Sael, which lay east one quarter northeast, and the Mount Sukkertop, southeast one quarter east half-east; the sea was very high; from time to time a dense fog descended suddenly from the gray sky. Notwithstanding, at noon they were able to take an observation. The ship was found to be in latitude 65° 20' and longitude 54° 22'. They would have to go two degrees farther north before they would find clearer sailing.

During the three following days, the 24th, 25th, and 26th of April, they had uninterruptedly to fight with the ice; the management of the engines became very tedious; every minute steam was shut off or reversed, and escaped from the safety-valve.

In the dense mist their approach to the icebergs could be known only by the dull roar of the avalanches; then the vessel would shift its course at once; then there was the danger of running into the masses of frozen fresh water, which were as clear as crystal and as hard as stone. Richard Shandon used to take aboard a quantity of this ice every day to supply the ship with fresh water.

The doctor could not accustom himself to the optical illusions produced by refraction; indeed, an iceberg ten or twelve miles distant used to seem to him to be a small piece of ice close by; he tried to get used to this strange phenomenon, in order to be able by and by to overcome the mistakes of his eyesight.

At last, both by towing the brig along the fields of ice and by pushing off threatening blocks with poles, the crew was thoroughly exhausted; and yet, on the 27th of April, the *Forward* was still detained on the impassable Polar Circle.

CHAPTER VIII
THE TALK OF THE CREW

Nevertheless, by taking advantages of such openings as there were, the *Forward* succeeded in getting a few minutes farther north; but, instead of escaping the enemy, it would soon be necessary to attack it; ice-fields of many miles in extent were drawing together, and as these moving masses often represent a pressure of ten millions of tons, they were obliged to take every precaution against being crushed by them. Ice-saws were placed outside the vessel, where they could be used without delay.

Some of the crew endured their hard toil without a murmur, but others complained or even refused to obey orders. While they were putting the saws in place, Garry, Bolton, Pen, and Gripper exchanged their diverse opinions as follows.

"Deuce take it," said Bolton, cheerfully; "I don't know why it just occurs to me that in Water Street there's a comfortable tavern, where one might be very well off between a glass of gin and a bottle of porter. Can you see it from here, Gripper?"

"To tell the truth," answered the sailor who had been addressed, and who generally pretended to be very sullen, "I must say I can't see it from here."

"That's merely your way of talking, Gripper; it is evident that, in those snow towns which Dr. Clawbonny is always admiring, there's no tavern where a poor sailor can moisten his throat with a drink or two of brandy."

"You may be sure of that, Bolton; and you might add that on board of this ship there's no way of getting properly refreshed. A strange idea, sending people into the northern seas, and giving them nothing to drink!"

"Well," answered Garry, "have you forgotten, Gripper, what the doctor said? One must go without spirits if he expects to escape the scurvy, remain in good health, and sail far."

"I don't care to sail far, Garry; and I think it's enough to have come as far as this, and to try to get through here where the Devil doesn't mean to let us through."

"Well, we sha'n't get through," retorted Pen. "O, when I think I have already forgotten how gin tastes!"

"But," said Bolton, "remember what the doctor said."

"O," answered Pen, with his rough voice, "that's all very well to say! I fancy that they are economizing it under the pretext of saving our health."

"Perhaps that devil Pen is right," said Gripper.

"Come, come!" replied Bolton, "his nose is too red for that; and if a little abstinence should make it a trifle paler, Pen won't need to be pitied."

"Don't trouble yourself about my nose," was the answer, for Pen was rather vexed. "My nose doesn't need your advice; it doesn't ask for it; you'd better mind your own business."

"Come, don't be angry, Pen; I didn't think your nose was so tender. I should be as glad as any one else to have a glass of whiskey, especially on such a cold day; but if in the long run it does more harm than good, why, I'm very willing to get along without it."

"You may get along without it," said Warren, the stoker, who had joined them, "but it's not everybody on board who gets along without it."

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

"I mean that for one purpose or another there is liquor aboard, and I fancy that aft they don't get on without it."

"What do you know about it?" asked Garry.

Warren could not answer; he spoke for the sake of speaking.

"You see, Garry," continued Bolton, "that Warren knows nothing about it."

"Well," said Pen, "we'll ask the commander for a ration of gin; we deserve it, and we'll see what he'll say."

"I advise you not to," said Garry.

"Why not?" cried Pen and Gripper.

"Because the commander will refuse it. You knew what the conditions were when you shipped; you ought to think of that now."

"Besides," said Bolton, who was not averse to taking Garry's side, for he liked him, "Richard Shandon is not master; he's under orders like the rest of us."

"Whose orders?" asked Pen.

"The captain's."

"Ah, that ridiculous captain's!" cried Pen. "Don't you know there's no more captain than there is tavern on the ice? That's a mean way of refusing politely what we ask for."

"But there is a captain," persisted Bolton; "and I'll wager two months' pay that we shall see him before long."

"All right!" said Pen; "I should like to give him a piece of my mind."

"Who's talking about the captain?" said a new speaker.

It was Clifton, who was inclined to be superstitious and envious at the same time.

"Is there any news about the captain?" he asked.

"No," a single voice answered.

"Well, I expect to find him settled in his cabin some fine morning, and without any one's knowing how or whence he came aboard."

"Nonsense!" answered Bolton; "you imagine, Clifton, that he's an imp, a hobgoblin such as are seen in the Scotch Highlands."

"Laugh if you want to, Bolton; that won't alter my opinion. Every day as I pass the cabin I peep in through the keyhole, and one of these days I'll tell you what he looks like, and how he's made."

"O, the devil!" said Pen; "he'll look like everybody else. And if he wants to lead us where we don't want to go, we'll let him know what we think about it."

"All right," said Bolton; "Pen doesn't know him, and wants to quarrel with him already."

"Who doesn't know all about him?" asked Clifton, with the air of a man who has the whole story at his tongue's end; "I should like to know who doesn't."

"What do you mean?" asked Gripper.

"I know very well what I mean."

"But we don't."

"Well, Pen has already had trouble with him."

"With the captain?"

"Yes, the dog-captain; for it's the same thing precisely."

The sailors gazed at one another, incapable of replying.

"Dog or man," muttered Pen, between his teeth, "I'll bet he'll get his account settled one of these days."

"Why, Clifton," asked Bolton, seriously, "do you imagine, as Johnson said in joke, that that dog is the real captain?"

"Certainly, I do," answered Clifton, with some warmth; "and if you had watched him as carefully as I have, you'd have noticed his strange ways."

"What ways? Tell us."

"Haven't you noticed the way he walks up and down the poop-deck as if he commanded the ship, keeping his eye on the sails as if he were on watch?"

"That's so," said Gripper; "and one evening I found him with his paws on the wheel."

"Impossible!" said Bolton.

"And then," continued Clifton, "doesn't he run out at night on the ice-fields without caring for the bears or the cold?"

"That's true," said Bolton.

"Did you ever see him making up to the men like an honest dog, or hanging around the kitchen, and following the cook when he's carrying a savory dish to the officers? Haven't you all heard him at night, when he's run two or three miles away from the vessel, howling so that he makes your blood run cold, and that's not easy in weather like this? Did you ever seen him eat anything? He never takes a morsel from any one; he never touches the food that's given him, and, unless some one on board feeds him secretly, I can say he lives without eating. Now, if that's not strange, I'm no better than a beast myself."

"Upon my word," answered Bell, the carpenter, who had heard all of Clifton's speech, "it may be so."

But all the other sailors were silent.

"Well, as for me," continued Clifton, "I can say that if you don't believe, there are wiser people on board who don't seem so sure."

"Do you mean the mate?" asked Bolton.

"Yes, the mate and the doctor."

"Do you think they fancy the same thing?"

"I have heard them talking about it, and they could make no more out of it than we can; they imagined a thousand things which did not satisfy them in the least."

"Did they say the same things about the dog that you did, Clifton?" asked the carpenter.

"If they were not talking about the dog," answered Clifton, who was fairly cornered, "they were talking about the captain; it's exactly the same thing, and they confessed it was all very strange."

"Well, my friends," said Bell, "do you want to hear my opinion?"

"What is it!" they all cried.

"It is that there is not, and there will not be, any other captain than Richard Shandon."

"And the letter?" said Clifton.

"The letter was genuine," answered Bell; "it is perfectly true that some unknown person has equipped the *Forward* for an expedition in the ice; but the ship once off, no one will come on board."

"Well," asked Bolton, "where is the ship going to?"

"I don't know; at the right time, Richard Shandon will get the rest of the instructions."

"But from whom?"

"From whom?"

"Yes, in what way?" asked Bolton, who was becoming persistent.

"Come, Bell, an answer," said the other sailors.

"From whom? in what way? O, I'm sure I don't know!"

"Well, from the dog!" cried Clifton. "He has already written once, and he can again. O, if I only knew half as much as he does, I might be First Lord of the Admiralty!"

"So," added Bolton, in conclusion, "you persist in saying that dog is the captain?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well," said Pen, gruffly, "if that beast doesn't want to die in a dog's skin, he'd better hurry and turn into a man; for, on my word, I'll finish him."

"Why so?" asked Garry.

"Because I want to," answered Pen, brutally; "and I don't care what any one says."

"You have been talking long enough, men," shouted the boatswain, advancing at the moment when the conversation threatened to become dangerous; "to work, and have the saws put in quicker! We must get through the ice."

"Good! on Friday too," answered Clifton, shrugging his shoulders. "You won't find it so easy to cross the Polar Circle."

Whatever the reason may have been, the exertions of the crew on that day were nearly fruitless. The *Forward*, plunging, under a full head of steam, against the floes, could not separate them; they were obliged to lie at anchor that night.

On Saturday, the temperature fell still lower under the influence of an east-wind; the sky cleared up, and they all had a wide view over the white expense, which shone brilliantly beneath the bright rays of the sun. At seven o'clock in the morning, the thermometer stood at 8° above zero.[8]

The doctor was tempted to remain quietly in his cabin, or read over the accounts of arctic journeys; but he asked himself, following his usual habit, what would be the most disagreeable thing he could do at that moment. He thought that to go on deck on such a cold day and help the men would not be attractive. So, faithful to his line of conduct, he left his well-warmed cabin, and went out to help tow the ship. He looked strange with his green glasses, which he wore to protect his eyes against the brilliancy of the sun, and after that he always took good care to wear snow-spectacles as a security against the inflammation of the eyes, which is so common in these latitudes.

By evening the *Forward* had got several miles farther north, thanks to the energy of the men and the intelligence of Shandon, who was quick at utilizing every favorable circumstance; at midnight they crossed the sixty-sixth parallel, and the lead announcing a depth of twenty-three fathoms, Shandon knew that he was in the neighborhood of the shoal on which her Majesty's ship *Victory* grounded. Land lay thirty miles to the east.

But then the mass of ice, which had hitherto been stationary, separated, and began to move; icebergs seemed to rise in all points of the horizon; the brig was caught in a number of whirlpools of irresistible force; controlling her became so hard, that Garry, the best steersman, took the helm; the masses began to close behind the brig, hence it was necessary to cut through the ice; both prudence and duty commanded them to go forward. The difficulties were enhanced by the impossibility of Shandon's fixing the direction of the brig among all the changing points, which were continually shifting and presenting no definite point to be aimed at.

The crew were divided into two forces, and one stationed on the starboard, the other on the larboard side; every man was given a long iron-headed pole, with which to ward off threatening pieces of ice. Soon the *Forward* entered such a narrow passage between two lofty pieces, that the ends of the yards touched its solid walls; gradually it penetrated farther into a winding valley filled with a whirlwind of snow, while the floating ice was crashing ominously all about.

But soon it was evident that there was no outlet to this gorge; a huge block, caught in the channel, was floating swiftly down to the *Forward;* it seemed impossible to escape it, and equally impossible to return through an already closed path.

Shandon and Johnson, standing on the forward deck, were viewing their position. Shandon with his right hand signalled to the man at the wheel what direction he was to take, and with his left hand he indicated to James Wall the orders for the engines.

"What will be the end of this?" asked the doctor of Johnson.

"What pleases God," answered the boatswain.

The block of ice, eight hundred feet high[9], was hardly more than a cable's length from the *Forward*, and threatened to crush it.

Pen broke out with a fearful oath.

"Silence!" cried a voice which it was impossible to recognize in the roar of the hurricane.

The mass appeared to be falling upon the brig, and there was an indefinable moment of terror; the men, dropping their poles, ran aft in spite of Shandon's orders.

---

[8] On Saturday, the temperature is stated to have fallen to 8 degrees above zero. The French and Routledge translation state 8 degrees below zero. This makes more sense since the previous temperature cited, from which it had fallen, was 6 degrees above zero.

[9] The block of ice which turns upside down is stated to be 800 feet high. This appears to be a mistranslation of the French; other translations have it as at least a hundred feet high

Suddenly, a terrible noise was heard; a real water-spout fell on the deck of the brig, which was lifted in the air by a huge wave. The crew uttered a cry of terror, while Garry, still firm at the wheel, kept the course of the *Forward* steady, in spite of the fearful lurch.

And when they looked for the mountain of ice, it had disappeared; the passage was free, and beyond, a long channel, lit up by the sun, allowed the brig to continue her advance.

"Well, Dr. Clawbonny," said Johnson, "can you explain that?"

"It's very simple, my friend," answered the doctor. "It happens very often; when these floating masses get detached in a thaw, they float away in perfect equilibrium; but as they get towards the south, where the water is relatively warmer, their base, eaten away by running into other pieces, begins to melt, and be undermined; then comes a moment when the centre of gravity is displaced, and they turn upside down. Only, if this had happened two minutes later, it would have fallen on the brig and crushed us beneath it."

CHAPTER IX
ANOTHER LETTER

The Polar Circle was crossed at last; on the 30th of April, at midday, the *Forward* passed by Holsteinborg; picturesque mountains arose in the east. The sea appeared almost free of ice, or, more exactly, the ice could be avoided. The wind was from the southeast, and the brig, under foresail, staysail, and topsails, sailed up Baffin's Bay.

That day was exceptionally calm and the crew was able to get some rest; numerous birds were swimming and flying about the ship; among others, the doctor noticed some wild birds which were very like teal, with black neck, wings, and back, and a white breast; they were continually diving, and often remained more than forty seconds under water.

This day would not have been marked by any new incident, if the following extraordinary fact had not taken place.

At six o'clock in the morning, on returning to his cabin after his watch was over, Richard Shandon found on his table a letter, addressed as follows: —

***To* COMMANDER RICHARD SHANDON,**

On board the *Forward*,

BAFFIN'S BAY

Shandon could not believe his eyes; but before reading it, he summoned the doctor, James Wall, and the boatswain, and showed them the letter.

"It's getting interesting," said Johnson.

"It's delightful," thought the doctor.

"Well," cried Shandon, "at last we shall know his secret."

He tore open the envelope rapidly, and read the following: —

> COMMANDER: The captain of the *Forward* is satisfied with the coolness, skill, and courage which the crew, officers, and you, yourself, have shown of late; he begs of you to express his thanks to the crew.
>
> Be good enough to sail due north towards Melville Bay, and thence try to penetrate into Smith's Sound.
>
> *K. Z.,*
>
> *Captain of the Forward.*
>
> *Monday, April 30, OFF CAPE WALSINGHAM.*

"And is that all?" cried the doctor.

"That's all," answered Shandon.

The letter fell from his hands.

"Well," said Wall, "this imaginary captain says nothing about coming on board. I don't believe he ever will."

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

Shandon was silent.

"Mr. Wall is right," answered the doctor, who had picked up the letter, and who was turning it over with hands as well as in his mind. "The captain won't come on board, and for an excellent reason."

"What is it?" asked Shandon, quickly.

"Because he's on board now," answered the doctor, simply.

"Now!" exclaimed Shandon, "what do you mean?"

"How else can you explain the arrival of this letter?"

Johnson nodded approvingly.

"Impossible!" said Shandon, warmly. "I know all the men in the crew; can he have smuggled himself into their number since we left? It's impossible, I tell you. For more than two years I've seen every one of them more than a hundred times in Liverpool; so your conjecture, Doctor, is untenable."

"Well, what do you admit, Shandon?"

"Everything, except that. I admit that the captain or some tool of his, for all I know, may have taken advantage of the darkness, the mist, or whatever you please, to slip on board; we are not far from shore; there are the kayaks of the Esquimaux which could get through the ice without our seeing them; so some one may have come on board the ship, left the letter, – the fog was thick enough to make this possible."

"And to prevent them from seeing the brig," answered the doctor; "if we didn't see the intruder slip aboard the *Forward*, how could he see the *Forward* in the fog?"

"That's true," said Johnson.

"So I return to my explanation," said the doctor; "what do you think of it, Shandon?"

"Whatever you please," answered Shandon, hotly, "except that the man is on board."

"Perhaps," added Wall, "there is some man in the crew who is acting under his instructions."

"Perhaps," said the doctor.

"But who can it be?" asked Shandon. "I've known all my men for a long time."

"At any rate," resumed Johnson, "if this captain presents himself, whether as man or devil, we shall receive him; but there's something else to be drawn from this letter."

"What is that?" asked Shandon.

"It is that we must go not only into Melville Bay, but also into Smith's Sound."

"You are right," said the doctor.

"Smith's Sound," repeated Shandon, mechanically.

"So it's very plain," continued Johnson, "that the *Forward* is not intended to seek the Northwest Passage, since we leave to the left, the only way towards it, that is to say, Lancaster Sound. This would seem to promise a difficult journey in unknown seas."

"Yes, Smith's Sound," replied Shandon; "that's the route Kane, the American, took in 1853, and it was full of dangers. For a long time he was given up for lost. Well, if we must go, we'll go. But how far? To the Pole?"

"And why not?" cried the doctor.

The mention of such a foolhardy attempt made the boatswain shrug his shoulders.

"Well," said James Wall, "to come back to the captain, if he exists. I don't see that there are any places on the coast of Greenland except Disco and Upernavik, where he can be waiting for us; in a few days that question will be settled."

"But," asked the doctor of Shandon, "are you not going to tell the crew about this letter?"

"With the commander's permission," answered Johnson, "I should not do so."

"And why not?" asked Shandon.

"Because everything mysterious and extraordinary tends to discourage the men; they are already very much troubled, as it is, about the nature of the journey. Now, if any supernatural circumstances should become known, it might be harmful, and perhaps at a critical moment we should not be able to count on them. What do you think, Commander?"

"And what do you think, Doctor?" asked Shandon.

"Boatswain Johnson seems to me to reason well," answered the doctor.

"And you, James?"

"Having no better opinion, I agree with these gentlemen."

Shandon reflected for a few minutes; he reread the letter attentively.

"Gentlemen," said he, "your opinion is certainly worthy of respect, but I cannot adopt it."

"Why not, Shandon?" asked the doctor.

"Because the instructions in this letter are formal; it tells me to give the captain's thanks to the crew; now, hitherto I have strictly obeyed his orders, in whatever way they have been given to me, and I cannot – "

"Still – " interposed Johnson, who had a warrantable dread of the effect of such communications on the men's spirits.

"My dear Johnson," said Shandon, "I understand your objection; your reasons are very good, but read that: —

"He begs of you to express his thanks to the crew."

"Do as he bids," replied Johnson, who was always a strict disciplinarian. "Shall I assemble the crew on deck?"

"Yes," answered Shandon.

The news of a message from the captain was immediately whispered throughout the ship. The sailors took their station without delay, and the commander read aloud the mysterious letter.

It was received with dead silence; the crew separated under the influence of a thousand suppositions; Clifton had plenty of material for any superstitious vagaries; a great deal was ascribed by him to the dog-captain, and he never failed to salute him every time he met him.

"Didn't I tell you," he used to say to the sailors, "that he knew how to write?"

No one made any answer, and even Bell, the carpenter, would have found it hard to reply.

Nevertheless, it was plain to every one, that if the captain was not on board, his shade or spirit was watching them; henceforth, the wisest kept their opinions to themselves.

At midday of May 1st, their observation showed them that they were in latitude 68° and longitude 56° 32'. The temperature had risen, the thermometer standing at 25° above zero.

The doctor amused himself with watching the gambols of a she-bear and two cubs on some pack-ice near the shore. Accompanied by Wall and Simpson, he tried to chase them in a canoe; but she was in a very peaceful mood, and ran away with her young, so that the doctor had to give up his attempt.

During the night a favorable breeze carried them well to the north, and soon the lofty mountains of Disco were peering above the horizon; Godharn Bay, where the governor of the Danish settlements lived, was left on the right. Shandon did not consider it necessary to land, and he soon passed by the canoes of the Esquimaux, who had put out to meet him.

The island of Disco is also called Whale Island; it is from here that, on the 12th of July, 1845, Sir John Franklin wrote to the Admiralty for the last time, and it was also here that Captain MacClintock stopped on his way back, bringing too sure proofs of the loss of that expedition.

This coincidence was not unknown to the doctor; the place was one of sad memories, but soon the heights of Disco were lost to view.

There were many icebergs on its shores, which no thaws ever melt away; this gives the island a singular appearance from the sea.

The next day, at about three o'clock, Sanderson's Hope appeared in the northeast; land lay about fifteen miles to starboard; the mountains appeared of a dusky red hue. During the evening many fin-backs were seen playing in the ice, and occasionally blowing.

It was in the night of May 3d, that the doctor for the first time saw the sun touch the horizon without setting; since January 31st its orbit had been getting longer every day, and now there was unbroken daylight.

For those who were unaccustomed to it, this continuance of the day is a cause of perpetual surprise, and even of weariness; it is difficult to believe how necessary the darkness of the night is for the eyes; the doctor actually suffered from the continual brilliancy, which was increased by the reflection from the ice.

May 5th the *Forward* passed the sixty-second parallel.[10] Two months later they would have met numerous whalers in these latitudes; but the straits were not yet free enough to allow easy ingress into Baffin's Bay.

The next day, the brig, after passing Woman's Island, came in sight of Upernavik, the northernmost station of Denmark in these lands.

[10] According to this translation, the Forward crosses the 62nd parallel on May 5. This is clearly incorrect since the ship is north of its May 1 latitude of 68 degrees. Other versions have this as the 72nd parallel. This agrees with the accompanying map.

CHAPTER X
DANGEROUS SAILING

Shandon, Dr. Clawbonny, Johnson, Foker, and Strong, the cook, got into one of the boats and made their way to shore.

The Governor, his wife and five children, all Esquimaux, received their visitors kindly. The doctor, who was the philologist of the party, knew enough Danish to establish friendly relations; moreover, Foker, the interpreter of the party as well as ice-master, knew a dozen or two words of the language of the Greenlanders, and with that number of words one can express a great deal, if he is not too ambitious.

The Governor was born on the island of Disco, and he has never left the place;[11] he did the honors of his capital, which consisted of three wooden houses, for himself and the Lutheran minister, of a school, and shops which were supplied by what was cast upon the shore from wrecked ships. The rest of the town consisted of snow huts, into which the Esquimaux crawl through a single opening.

A great part of the population came out to meet the *Forward*, and more than one of them went as far as the middle of the bay in his kayak, fifteen feet long and two broad at the widest part.

The doctor knew that the word Esquimaux meant "eater of raw fish"; but he knew too that this name is considered an insult in this country, so he forbore giving it to the inhabitants of Greenland.

And yet, from the oily sealskin clothes and boots, from their squat, fat figures, which make it hard to distinguish the men from the women, it was easy to declare the nature of their food; besides, like all fish-eating people, they were somewhat troubled by leprosy, but their general health was not impaired by it.

The Lutheran minister and his wife, with whom the doctor had promised himself an interesting talk, happened to be away on the shore of Proven, south of Upernavik; hence he was compelled to seek the company of the Governor. The chief magistrate did not appear to be very well informed: a little less, he would have been a fool; a little more, and he would have known how to read.

In spite of that, the doctor questioned him about the commerce, habits, and manners of the Esquimaux; and he learned, by means of gestures, that the seals were worth about forty pounds when delivered at Copenhagen; a bear-skin brought forty Danish dollars, the skin of a blue fox four, and of a white fox two or three dollars.

In order to make his knowledge complete, the doctor wanted to visit an Esquimaux hut; a man who seeks information is capable of enduring anything; fortunately the opening of these huts was too small, and the enthusiastic doctor could not get through. It was fortunate for him, for there is nothing more repulsive than the sight of that crowd of living and dead objects, of seal's bodies and Esquimaux-flesh, decayed fish and unclean clothing, which fill a Greenland hut; there is no window to renew that suffocating air; there is only a hole at the top of the cabin which lets the smoke out, but gives no relief to the stench.

Foker gave all these details to the doctor, but he none the less bewailed his portliness. He wanted to judge for himself these emanations *sui generis*.

"I am sure," said he, "that one could get used to it in time." *In time* shows clearly the doctor's character.

During these ethnographic studies on his part, Shandon was busying himself, according to his instructions, with procuring means of travel on the ice; he was obliged to pay four pounds for a sledge and six dogs, and the natives were reluctant to sell even at this price.

---

[11] Although "the Governor was born on the island of Disco, and he has never left the place," the landing party meets him at Upernavik which is well north of the island of Disco

Shandon would have liked to engage Hans Christian, the skilful driver of the dogs, who accompanied Captain MacClintock, but Hans was then in Southern Greenland.

Then came up the great question of the day; was there at Upernavik a European awaiting the arrival of the *Forward?* Did the Governor know of any stranger, probably an Englishman, who had come into these latitudes? How recently had they seen any whalers or other ships?

To these questions the Governor answered that no stranger had landed on that part of the coast for more than ten months.

Shandon asked the names of the whalers which had last arrived; he recognized none. He was in despair.

"You must confess, Doctor, that it passes all comprehension," he said to his companion. "Nothing at Cape Farewell! nothing at Disco! nothing at Upernavik!"

"Tell me in a few days from now, nothing at Melville Bay, my dear Shandon, and I will salute you as sole captain of the *Forward*."

The boat returned to the brig towards evening, bringing back the visitors to the shore; Strong had bought several dozen eider-duck's eggs, which were twice as large as hen's eggs, and of a greenish color. It was not much, but it was very refreshing for a crew accustomed to little but salt meat.

The next day the wind was fair, but yet Shandon did not set sail; he wanted to wait another day, and, to satisfy his conscience, to give time for any member of the human race to rejoin the *Forward;* he even fired off, every hour, the ship's gun, which re-echoed among the icebergs; but he only succeeded in frightening the flocks of molly-mokes[12] and rotches.[13] During the night many rockets were set off; but in vain. He had to give the order to set sail.

The 8th of May, at six o'clock in the morning, the *Forward*, under her topsails, foresail, and main-top-gallant-sail, soon lost sight of the station of Upernavik, and hideous long poles on which were hanging along the shore the seals' entrails and deers' stomachs.

The wind was southeast, the thermometer stood at 32°. The sun pierced through the fog and the ice melted a little.

The reflection, however, injured the sight of many of the crew. Wolston, the armorer, Gripper, Clifton, and Bell were attacked by snow-blindness, which is very common in the spring, and which totally blinds many of the Esquimaux. The doctor advised all, the unharmed as well as the suffering, to cover their faces with a green veil, and he was the first to follow his own recommendation.

The dogs bought by Shandon at Upernavik were rather wild; but they soon got used to their new quarters, and Captain showed no dislike of his new companions; he seemed to know their ways. Clifton was not the last to remark that Captain seemed to be familiar with the dogs of Greenland. And they, always half starved on shore, only thought of making up for it when at sea.

The 9th of May the *Forward* passed within a few cable-lengths of the westernmost of the Baffin Islands. The doctor noticed many rocks between the islands and the mainland which were what are called crimson cliffs; they were covered with snow as red as carmine, which Dr. Kane says is of purely vegetable origin; Clawbonny wanted to examine this singular phenomenon, but the ice forbade their approaching them; although the temperature was rising, it was easy to see that the icebergs and ice-streams were accumulating toward the north of Baffin's Bay.

After leaving Upernavik the land presented a different appearance, and huge glaciers were sharply defined against the gray horizon. On the 10th the *Forward* left on its right Kingston Bay, near the seventy-fourth degree of latitude; Lancaster Sound opened into the sea many hundred miles to the west.

But then this vast expanse of water was hidden beneath enormous fields of ice, in which arose the hummocks, uniform as a homogeneous crystallization. Shandon had the furnace-fires lighted, and

[12] Sea-birds common in these latitudes.

[13] Sea-birds common in these latitudes.

until the 11th of May the *Forward* advanced by a tortuous course, tracing with her smoke against the sky the path she was following through the water.

But new obstacles soon presented themselves; the passages were closing in consequence of the incessant crowding of the floating masses; every moment threatened to close up the clear water before the *Forward*, and if she were nipped, it would be hard to get her out. Every one knew it and was thinking about it.

Hence, on board of this ship without any definite aim, any known destination, which was blindly pushing on northward, some symptoms of hesitation began to appear; among these men accustomed to dangers, many, forgetting the advantages which were promised them, regretted having ventured so far. A certain demoralization became common, which was further increased by the fears of Clifton and the talk of two or three ringleaders, such as Pen, Gripper, Warren, and Wolston.

Exhausting fatigue was added to the moral disquiet of the crew, for, on the 12th of May, the brig was caught fast; the steam was of no avail. A path had to be cut through the ice. It was no easy task to manage the saws in the floes which were six or seven feet thick; when two parallel grooves had divided the ice for a hundred feet, it was necessary to break the part that lay between with axes and bars; next they had to fasten anchors in a hole made by a huge auger; then the crew would turn the capstan and haul the ship along by the force of their arms; the greatest difficulty consisted in driving the detached pieces beneath the floes, so as to give space for the vessel, and they had to be pushed under by means of long iron-headed poles.

Moreover, this continued toil with saws, capstan, and poles, all of which was persistent, compulsory, and dangerous, amid the dense fog or snow, while the air was so cold, and their eyes so exposed, their doubt so great, did much to weaken the crew of the *Forward* and to act on their imagination.

When sailors have to deal with a man who is energetic, bold, and determined, who knows what he wants, whither he is going, what aim he has in view, confidence animates them all in spite of themselves; they are firmly united to their leader, strong with his force and calm with his calmness. But on board of the brig they were aware of the commander's uncertainty, they knew that he hesitated before the unknown aim and destination. In spite of the energy of his character, his uncertainty was clearly to be seen by his uncertain orders, incomplete manoeuvres, his sudden outbursts, and a thousand petty details which could not escape the sharp eyes of the crew.

And then, Shandon was not the captain of the ship, the master under God, which was enough to encourage the discussion of his orders; and from discussion to disobedience is but a short step.

The malcontents soon brought over to their number the first engineer, who, hitherto, had been a slave to his duty.

The 16th of May, six days after the *Forward* had reached the ice, Shandon had not made two miles to northward. They were threatened with being detained in the ice until the next season. Matters had a serious look.

Towards eight o'clock of the evening, Shandon and the doctor, accompanied by Garry, went out to reconnoitre the vast plains; they took care not to go too far from the ship, for it was hard to find any fixed points in this white solitude, which was ever changing in appearance. Refraction kept producing strange effects, much to the doctor's astonishment; at one place, where he thought he had but an easy jump before him, he had to leap some five or six feet; or else the contrary happened, and in either case the result was a tumble, which if not dangerous was at any rate painful, for the ice was as hard and slippery as glass.

Shandon and his two companions went out to seek a possible passage; three miles from the ship, they succeeded with some difficulty in ascending an iceberg about three hundred feet high. From that point nothing met their eyes but a confused mass, like the ruins of a vast city, with shattered monuments, overthrown towers, and prostrate palaces, – a real chaos. The sun was just peering

above the jagged horizon, and sent forth long, oblique rays of light, but not of heat, as if something impassable for heat lay between it and this wild country.

The sea appeared perfectly covered as far as eye could reach.

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

"I don't know," answered Shandon; "but we shall get through, if we have to blow our way through with powder. I certainly sha'n't stay in the ice till next spring."

"But that happened to the *Fox*, and not far from here. Bah!" said the doctor; "we shall get through with a little philosophy. You will see that is worth all the machinery in the world."

"I must say," answered Shandon, "this year does not begin very well."

"True, Shandon, and I notice also that Baffin's Bay seems to be returning to the state it was in before 1817."

"Don't you think, Doctor, it has always been as it is now?"

"No, my dear Shandon, from time to time there have been great breakings of the ice which no one can explain; so, up to 1817 this sea was continually full, when an enormous sort of inundation took place, which cast the icebergs into the ocean, most of which reached the banks of Newfoundland. From that day Baffin's Bay was nearly free, and was visited by whalers."

"So," asked Shandon, "from that time voyages to the North became easier?"

"Incomparably; but for some years it has been noticed that the bay seems to be resuming its old ways and threatens to become closed, possibly for a long time, to sailors. An additional reason, by the way, for pushing on as far as possible. And yet it must be said, we look like people who are pushing on in unknown ways, with the doors forever closing behind us."

"Would you advise me to go back?" asked Shandon, trying to read into the depths of the doctor's eyes.

"I! I have never retreated yet, and, even if we should never get back, I say go on. Still, I want to make it clear that if we act imprudently, we do it with our eyes open."

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

"I, Commander, should go straight on; I agree with Dr. Clawbonny; but do as you please; command, we shall obey."

"They don't all talk as you do, Garry," resumed Shandon; "they are not all ready to obey. And if they refuse to obey my orders?"

"I have given you my opinion, Commander," answered Garry, coldly, "because you asked for it; but you are not obliged to follow it."

Shandon did not answer; he scanned the horizon closely, and then descended with his companions to the ice-fields.

CHAPTER XI
THE DEVIL'S THUMB

During the commander's absence the men had been variously busied in attempts to relieve the ship from the pressure of the ice. Pen, Clifton, Bolton, Gripper, and Simpson had this in charge; the fireman and the two engineers came to the aid of their comrades, for, as soon as the engines did not require their attention, they became sailors, and as such could be employed in all that was going on aboard the ship.

But there was a great deal of discontent among them.

"I declare I've had enough," said Pen; "and if we are not free in three days, I swear I sha'n't stir a finger to get the ship out."

"Not stir a finger!" answered Plover; "you'd better use them in getting back. Do you think we want to stay here till next year?"

"It certainly would be a hard winter," said Pen, "for we are exposed on all sides."

"And who knows," said Brunton, "whether next spring the sea will be any freer than it is now?"

"Never mind about next spring," answered Pen; "to-day is Thursday; if the way is not clear Sunday morning, we shall turn back to the south."

"Good!" cried Clifton.

"Don't you agree with me?" asked Pen.

"We do," cried his companions.

"That's so," said Warren; "for if we have to work in this way and haul the ship along with our own arms, I think it would be as well to haul her backwards."

"We shall do that on Sunday," said Wolston.

"Only give me the order," resumed Brunton, "and my fires shall be lighted."

"Well," remarked Clifton, "we shall light them ourselves."

"If any officer," said Pen, "is anxious to spend the winter here, he can; we can leave him here contentedly; he'll find it easy to build a hut like the Esquimaux."

"Not at all, Pen," retorted Brunton, quickly; "we sha'n't abandon any one here; do you understand that, all of you? I think it won't be hard to persuade the commander; he seems to me to be very much discouraged, and if we propose it to him gently – "

"But," interrupted Plover, "Richard Shandon is often very obstinate; we shall have to sound him cautiously."

"When I think," said Bolton, with a sigh of longing, "that in a month we might be back in Liverpool! We can easily pass the line of ice at the south! Davis Strait will be open by the beginning of June, and then we shall have nothing but the free Atlantic before us."

"Besides," said the cautious Clifton, "if we take the commander back with us, and act under his commands, we shall have earned our pay; but if we go back without him, it's not so sure."

"True," said Plover; "Clifton talks sense. Let's try not to get into any trouble with the Admiralty, that's safer, and don't let us leave any one behind."

"But if they refuse to come with us?" continued Pen, who wished to compel his companions to stand by him.

They found it hard to answer the question thus squarely put them.

"We shall see about that when the time comes," replied Bolton; "it will be enough to bring Richard Shandon over to our side, and I fancy that won't be hard."

"There's one I shall leave here," exclaimed Pen with fierce oaths, "even if he should bite my arm off."

"O, the dog!" said Plover.

"Yes, that dog! I shall soon settle accounts with him."

"So much the better," retorted Clifton, returning to his favorite theory; "he is the cause of all our troubles."

"He has thrown an evil spell upon us," said Plover.

"He led us into the ice," remarked Gripper.

"He brought more ice in our way," said Wolston, "than was ever seen at this season."

"He made my eyes sore," said Brunton.

"He shut off the gin and brandy," cried Pen.

"He's the cause of everything," they all exclaimed excitedly.

"And then," added Clifton, "he's the captain."

"Well, you unlucky Captain," cried Pen, whose unreasonable fury grew with the sound of his own words, "you wanted to come here, and here you shall stay!"

"But how shall we get hold of him?" said Plover.

"Well, now is a good time," answered Clifton. "The commander is away; the second mate is asleep in his cabin; the fog is so thick that Johnson can't see us – "

"But the dog?" said Pen.

"He's asleep in the coal," answered Clifton, "and if any one wants – "

"I'll see to it," replied Pen, angrily.

"Take care, Pen; his teeth would go through a bar of iron."

"If he stirs, I'll rip him open," answered Pen, drawing his knife.

And he ran down between decks, followed by Warren, who was anxious to help him.

Soon they both returned, carrying the dog in their arms; his mouth and paws were securely tied; they had caught him asleep, and the poor dog could not escape them.

"Hurrah for Pen!" cried Plover.

"And what are you going to do with him now?" asked Clifton.

"Drown him, and if he ever comes back – " answered Pen with a smile of satisfaction.

Two hundred feet from the vessel there was a hole in the ice, a sort of circular crevasse, made by the seals with their teeth, and always dug out from the inside to the outside; it was there that the seals used to come to breathe on the surface of the ice; but they were compelled to take care to prevent the aperture from closing, for the shape of their jaws did not permit them to make the hole from the outside, and in any danger they would not be able to escape from their enemies.

Pen and Warren hastened to this crevasse, and then, in spite of his obstinate struggles, the dog was pitilessly cast into the sea; a huge cake of ice they then rolled over the aperture, closing all means of escape for the poor dog, thus locked in a watery prison.

"A pleasant journey, Captain!" cried the brutal sailor.

Soon they returned on board; Johnson had seen nothing of it all; the fog was growing thick about the ship, and the snow was beginning to fall with violence.

An hour later, Richard Shandon, the doctor, and Garry regained the *Forward*.

Shandon had observed in the northeast a passage, which he determined to try. He gave his orders to that effect; the crew obeyed with a certain activity; they wanted to convince Shandon of the impossibility of a farther advance, and besides, they had before them three days of obedience.

During a part of the following night and day the sawing and towing went on busily; the *Forward* made about two miles of progress. On the 18th they were in sight of land, five or six cable-lengths from a strange peak, to which its singular shape had given the name of the Devil's Thumb.

At this very place the *Prince Albert*, in 1851, the *Advance*, with Kane, in 1853, had been caught in the ice for many weeks.

The odd shape of the Devil's Thumb, the barren and desolate surroundings, which consisted of huge icebergs often more than three hundred feet high, the cracking of the ice, repeated indefinitely by the echo, made the position of the *Forward* a very gloomy one. Shandon saw that it was necessary to get away from there; within twenty-four hours, he calculated he would be able to get two miles from

the spot. But that was not enough. Shandon felt himself embarrassed by fear, and the false position in which he was placed benumbed his energy; to obey his instructions in order to advance, he had brought his ship into a dangerous position; the towing wore out his men; more than three hours were necessary to cut a canal twenty feet in length through ice which was generally four or five feet thick; the health of the crew gave signs of failing. Shandon was astonished at the silence of the men, and their unaccustomed obedience; but he feared it was only the calm that foreboded a storm.

We can, then, easily judge of the painful surprise, disappointment, and even despair which seized upon him, when he noticed that by means of an imperceptible movement in the ice, the *Forward* lost in the night of the 18th all that had been gained by such toilsome efforts; on Saturday morning he was opposite the Devil's Thumb, in a still more critical position; the icebergs increased in number and passed by in the mist like phantoms.

Shandon was thoroughly demoralized; it must be said that fear seized both this bold man and all his crew. Shandon had heard of the disappearance of the dog; but he did not dare to punish the guilty persons; he feared exciting a mutiny.

The weather during that day was horrible; the snow, caught up in dense whirls, covered the brig with an impenetrable veil; at times, under the influence of the hurricane, the fog would rise, and their terror-stricken eyes beheld the Devil's Thumb rising on the shore like a spectre.

The *Forward* was anchored to a large piece of ice; there was nothing to be done, nothing to be tried; darkness was spreading about them, and the man at the helm could not see James Wall, who was on watch forward.

Shandon withdrew to his cabin, a prey to perpetual disquiet; the doctor was arranging his notes of the expedition; some of the crew were on the deck, others in the common room.

At a moment when the violence of the storm was redoubling, the Devil's Thumb seemed to rise immoderately from the mist.

"Great God!" exclaimed Simpson, recoiling with terror.

"What's the matter?" asked Foker.

Soon shouts were heard on all sides.

"It's going to crush us!"

"We are lost!"

"Mr. Wall, Mr. Wall!"

"It's all over!"

"Commander, Commander!"

All these cries were uttered by the men on watch.

Wall hastened to the after-deck; Shandon, followed by the doctor, flew to the deck and looked out.

Through a rift in the mist, the Devil's Thumb appeared to have suddenly come near the brig; it seemed to have grown enormously in size; on its summit was balanced a second cone, upside down, and revolving on its point; it threatened to crush the ship with its enormous mass; it wavered, ready to fall down. It was an alarming sight. Every one drew back instinctively, and many of the men, jumping upon the ice, abandoned the ship.

"Let no one move!" cried the commander with a loud voice; "every one to his place!"

"My friends, don't be frightened," said the doctor, "there is no danger! See, Commander, see, Mr. Wall, that's the mirage and nothing else."

"You are right, Dr. Clawbonny," replied Johnson; "they've all been frightened by a shadow."

When they had heard what the doctor said, most of the sailors drew near him, and from terror they turned to admiration of this wonderful phenomenon, which soon passed from their view.

"They call that a mirage," said Clifton; "the Devil's at the bottom of it, I'm sure."

"That's true," growled Gripper.

But the break in the fog had given the commander a glimpse of a broad passage which he had not expected to find; it promised to lead him away from the shore; he resolved to make use of it at once; men were sent out on each side of the canal; hawsers were given them, and they began to tow the ship northward.

During long hours this work was prosecuted busily but silently; Shandon had the furnace-fires lighted to help him through this passage so providentially discovered.

"That's great luck," he said to Johnson, "and if we can only get on a few miles, we may be free. Make a hot fire, Mr. Brunton, and let me know as soon as you get steam on. Meanwhile, men, the farther on we get, the more gained! You want to get away from the Devil's Thumb; well, now is your chance!"

Suddenly the brig stopped. "What's the matter?" shouted Shandon. "Wall, have the tow-ropes broken?"

"No," answered Wall, leaning over the railing. "See, there are the men running back; they are climbing on board; they seem very much frightened."

"What's happened?" cried Shandon, running forward.

"On board, on board!" cried the sailors, evidently exceedingly terrified.

Shandon looked towards the north, and shuddered in spite of himself.

A strange animal, with alarming motions, whose steaming tongue hung from huge jaws, was bounding along within a cable's length from the ship; it seemed more than twenty feet high; its hair stood on end; it was chasing the sailors as if about to seize them, while its tail, which was at least ten feet long, lashed the snow and tossed it about in dense gusts. The sight of the monster froze the blood in the veins of the boldest.

"It's an enormous bear," said one.

"It's the beast of Gévaudan!"

"It's the lion of the Apocalypse!"

Shandon ran to his cabin to get a gun which he kept always loaded; the doctor seized his arms, and made ready to fire at the beast, which by its size, recalled antediluvian monsters.

It drew near with long leaps; Shandon and the doctor fired at the same time, and suddenly the report of the pieces agitated the air and produced an unlooked-for effect.

The doctor gazed attentively, and could not help bursting out laughing. "It's refraction!" said he.

"Refraction!" cried Shandon.

But a terrible cry from the crew interrupted them.

"The dog!" shouted Clifton.

"The dog-captain!" repeated his companions.

"It's he!" cried Pen.

In fact, it was the dog who had burst his bonds and had made his way to the surface of the ice through another hole. At that moment the refraction, by a phenomenon common in these latitudes, exaggerated his size, and this had only been broken by the report of the guns; but, notwithstanding, a disastrous impression had been produced upon the minds of the sailors, who were not very much inclined to admit any explanation of the fact from physical causes. The adventure of the Devil's Thumb, the reappearance of the dog under such peculiar circumstances, completely upset them, and murmurs arose on all sides.

CHAPTER XII
CAPTAIN HATTERAS

The *Forward* was advancing rapidly under steam between the ice-fields and the mountains of ice. Johnson was at the helm. Shandon was examining the horizon with his snow-spectacles; but his joy was brief, for he soon saw that the passage was blocked up by a circle of mountains.

Nevertheless, he preferred to take his chances with pushing on, to returning.

The dog followed the brig on the ice, but he kept at a respectful distance. Only, if he lagged too far, there was to be heard a singular whistle which at once brought him on.

The first time that this whistle was heard, the sailors looked around; they were alone on the deck, talking together; there was no unknown person there; and yet this whistle was often repeated.

Clifton was the first to take alarm.

"Do you hear that?" he said; "and do you see how the dog starts as soon as he hears it?"

"It's past belief," said Gripper.

"Very well!" cried Pen; "I'm not going any farther."

"Pen is right," said Brunton; "it's tempting Providence."

"Tempting the Devil," answered Clifton. "I should rather give up all my share of the pay than go on."

"We shall never get back," said Bolton, dejectedly.

The crew was exceedingly demoralized.

"Not a foot farther!" cried Wolston; "is that your opinion?"

"Yes, yes!" answered the sailors.

"Well," said Bolton, "let's go find the commander; I'll undertake to tell him."

The sailors in a dense group made their way to the quarter-deck.

The *Forward* was then advancing into a large arena, which had a diameter of about eight hundred feet; it was completely closed, with the exception of one place through which the ship entered.

Shandon saw that he was locking himself in. But what was to be done? How could he retreat? He felt all the responsibility, and his hand nervously grasped his glass.

The doctor looked on in silence, with folded arms; he gazed at the walls of ice, the average height of which was about three hundred feet. A cloud of fog lay like a dome above the gulf.

Then it was that Bolton spoke to the commander.

"Commander," said he in a broken voice, "we can't go any farther."

"What's that you are saying?" said Shandon, who felt enraged at the slight given to his authority.

"We have come to say, Commander," resumed Bolton, "that we have done enough for this invisible captain, and that we have made up our minds not to go on any farther."

"Made up your minds?" cried Shandon. "Is that the way you talk to me, Bolton? Take care."

"You need not threaten," retorted Pen, brutally, "we are not going any farther."

Shandon stepped towards the mutinous sailors, when the boatswain said to him in a low voice, —

"Commander, if we want to get out of this place, we have not a moment to lose. There's an iceberg crowding towards the entrance; it may prevent our getting out and imprison us here."

Shandon returned to look at the state of affairs.

"You will account for this afterwards," he said to the mutineers. "Now, go about!"

The sailors hastened to their places. The *Forward* went about rapidly; coal was heaped on the fires; it was necessary to beat the iceberg. There was a race between them; the brig stood towards the south, the berg was drifting northward, threatening to bar the way.

"Put on all the steam, Brunton, do you hear?" said Shandon.

The *Forward* glided like a bird through the broken ice, which her prow cut through easily; the ship shook with the motion of the screw, and the gauge indicated a full pressure of steam, the deafening roar of which resounded above everything.

"Load the safety-valve!" cried Shandon.

The engineer obeyed at the risk of bursting the boilers.

But these desperate efforts were vain; the iceberg, driven by a submarine current, moved rapidly towards the exit; the brig was still three cable-lengths distant, when the mountain, entering the vacant space like a wedge, joined itself to its companions, and closed the means of escape.

"We are lost!" cried Shandon, who was unable to restrain that unwise speech.

"Lost!" repeated the crew.

"Lower the boats!" cried many.

"To the steward's pantry!" cried Pen and some of his set; "if we must drown, let us drown in gin!"

The wildest confusion raged among these half-wild men. Shandon felt unable to assert his authority; he wanted to give some orders; he hesitated, he stammered; his thoughts could find no words. The doctor walked up and down nervously. Johnson folded his arms stoically, and said not a word.

Suddenly a strong, energetic, commanding voice was heard above the din, uttering these words: —

"Every man to his place! Prepare to go about!"

Johnson shuddered, and, without knowing what he did, turned the wheel rapidly.

It was time; the brig, going under full steam, was about crashing against the walls of its prison.

But while Johnson instinctively obeyed, Shandon, Clawbonny, the crew, all, even down to Warren the fireman, who had abandoned his fires, and Strong the cook, who had fled from his galley, were collected on the deck, and all saw issuing from the cabin, the key of which he alone possessed, a man.

This man was the sailor Garry.

"Sir!" cried Shandon, turning pale, "Garry – by what right do you give orders here?"

"Duke!" said Garry, repeating the whistle which had so surprised the crew.

The dog, on hearing his real name, sprang on the quarter-deck, and lay down quietly at his master's feet.

The crew did not utter a word. The key which the captain alone should possess, the dog which he had sent and which had identified him, so to speak, the tone of command which it was impossible to mistake, – all this had a strong influence on the minds of the sailors, and was enough to establish firmly Garry's authority.

Besides, Garry was hardly to be recognized; he had removed the thick whiskers which had surrounded his face, thereby giving it a more impassible, energetic, and commanding expression; he stood before them clothed in a captain's uniform, which he had had placed in his cabin.

So the crew of the *Forward*, animated in spite of themselves, shouted, —

"Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah for the captain!"

"Shandon," he said to his first officer, "have the crew put in line; I want to inspect them."

Shandon obeyed, and gave the requisite orders with an agitated voice.

The captain walked in front of the officers and men, saying a word to each, and treating him according to his past conduct.

When he had finished his inspection, he went back to the quarter-deck, and calmly uttered these words: —

"Officers and sailors, I am an Englishman like you all, and my motto is that of Lord Nelson, – 'England expects every man to do his duty.'

"As Englishmen, I am unwilling, we are unwilling, that others should go where we have not been. As Englishmen, I shall not endure, we shall not endure, that others should have the glory of going farther north than we. If human foot is ever to reach the Pole, it must be the foot of an Englishman! Here is the flag of our country. I have equipped this ship, I have devoted my fortune to this undertaking, I shall devote to it my life and yours, but this flag shall float over the North Pole. Fear not. You shall receive a thousand pounds sterling for every degree that we get farther north after this day. Now we are at the seventy-second,[14] and there are ninety in all. Figure it out. My name will be proof enough. It means energy and patriotism. I am Captain Hatteras."

"Captain Hatteras!" cried Shandon. And this name, familiar to them all, soon spread among all the crew.

"Now," resumed Hatteras, "let us anchor the brig to the ice; let the fires be put out, and every one return to his usual occupation. Shandon, I want to speak with you about the ship. You will join me in my cabin with the doctor, Wall, and the boatswain. Johnson, dismiss the men."

Hatteras, calm and cold, quietly left the poop-deck, while Shandon had the brig made fast to the ice.

Who was this Hatteras, and why did his name make so deep an impression upon the crew?

John Hatteras, the only son of a London brewer, who died in 1852, worth six million pounds, took to the sea at an early age, unmindful of the large fortune which was to come to him. Not that he had any commercial designs, but a longing for geographical discovery possessed him; he was continually dreaming of setting foot on some spot untrodden of man.

When twenty years old, he had the vigorous constitution of thin, sanguine men; an energetic face, with well-marked lines, a high forehead, rising straight from the eyes, which were handsome but cold, thin lips, indicating a mouth chary of words, medium height, well-knit muscular limbs, indicated a man ready for any experience. Any one who saw him would have called him bold, and any one who heard him would have called him coldly passionate; he was a man who would never retreat, and who would risk the lives of others as coldly as his own. One would hence think twice before following him in his expeditions.

John Hatteras had a great deal of English pride, and it was he who once made this haughty reply to a Frenchman.

The Frenchman said with what he considered politeness, and even kindness, —

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

"If I were not an Englishman, I should like to be an Englishman!"

That retort points the nature of the man.

He would have liked to reserve for his fellow-countrymen the monopoly of geographical discovery; but much to his chagrin, during previous centuries, they had done but little in the way of discovery.

America was discovered by the Genoese, Christopher Columbus; the East Indies by the Portuguese, Vasco de Gama; China by the Portuguese, Fernao d'Andrada; Terra del Fuego by the Portuguese, Magellan; Canada by the Frenchman, Jacques Cartier; the islands of Sumatra, Java, etc., Labrador, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, the Azores, Madeira, Newfoundland, Guinea, Congo, Mexico, White Cape, Greenland, Iceland, the South Pacific Ocean, California, Japan, Cambodia, Peru, Kamschatka, the Philippine Islands, Spitzbergen, Cape Horn, Behring Strait, New Zealand, Van Diemen's Land, New Britain, New Holland, the Louisiana, Island of Jan-Mayen, by Icelanders, Scandinavians, Frenchmen, Russians, Portuguese, Danes, Spaniards, Genoese, and Dutchmen; but no Englishmen figured among them, and it was a constant source of grief to Hatteras to see his

[14] The captain declares their latitude to be at 72 degrees when they are actually at 74 degrees. The promise of 1000 pounds for each degree beyond 72 is continued throughout the book

fellow-countrymen excluded from the glorious band of sailors who made the great discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Hatteras consoled himself somewhat when he considered modern times: the English took their revenge with Stuart, McDougall Stuart, Burke, Wells, King, Gray, in Australia; with Palliser in America; with Havnoan in Syria; with Cyril Graham, Waddington, Cunningham, in India; and with Barth, Burton, Speke, Grant, and Livingstone in Africa.[15]

But this was not enough; for Hatteras these men were rather finishers than discoverers; something better was to be done, so he invented a country in order to have the honor of discovering it.

Now he had noticed that if the English were in a minority with regard to the early discoveries, that if it was necessary to go back to Cook to make sure of New Caledonia in 1774, and of the Sandwich Islands where he was killed in 1778, there was nevertheless one corner of the globe on which they had centred all their efforts.

This was the northern seas and lands of North America.

In fact, the list of polar discoveries runs as follows: —

Nova Zembla, discovered by Willoughby in 1553.
Island of Wiegehts, discovered by Barrow in 1556.
West Coast of Greenland, discovered by Davis in 1585.
Davis Strait, discovered by Davis in 1587.
Spitzbergen, discovered by Willoughby in 1596.
Hudson's Bay, discovered by Hudson in 1610.
Baffin's Bay, discovered by Baffin in 1616.

During recent years Hearne, Mackenzie, John Ross, Parry, Franklin, Richardson, Beechey, James Ross, Back, Dease, Simpson, Rae, Inglefield, Belcher, Austin, Kellet, Moore, MacClure, Kennedy, MacClintock, were incessantly exploring these unknown regions.

The northern coast of America had been accurately made out, the Northwest Passage nearly discovered, but that was not enough; there was something greater to be done, and this John Hatteras had twice tried, fitting out ships at his own expense; he wanted to reach the Pole itself, and thus to crown the list of English discoveries by a glorious success.

To reach the Pole itself was the aim of his life.

After many successful voyages in the southern seas, Hatteras tried for the first time in 1846 to reach the North through Baffin's Bay, but he could get no farther than latitude 74°; he sailed in the sloop *Halifax*; his crew suffered terribly, and John Hatteras carried his temerity so far that henceforth sailors were averse to undertaking a similar expedition under such a leader.

Notwithstanding, in 1850, Hatteras succeeded in obtaining for the schooner *Farewell* about twenty determined men, but who were persuaded especially by the high pay offered their boldness. It was then that Dr. Clawbonny began to correspond with John Hatteras, whom he did not know, about accompanying him; but the post of surgeon was filled, fortunately for the doctor.

The *Farewell*, following the route taken by the *Neptune* of Aberdeen in 1817, went to the north of Spitzbergen, as far as latitude 76°. There they were obliged to winter; but their sufferings were such, and the cold so intense, that of all on board, Hatteras alone returned to England. He was picked up by a Danish whaler after he had walked more than two hundred miles across the ice.

The excitement produced by the return of this man alone was intense; who, after this, would accompany Hatteras in his bold attempts? Still he did not abandon the hope of trying again. His father, the brewer, died, and he came into possession of an enormous fortune.

Meanwhile something had happened which cut John Hatteras to the heart.

[15] Names of several English explorers have been garbled in this translation:"Stuart" = Charles Sturt"McDougall Stuart" = John McDouall Stuart"Wells" = William John Wills"Havnoan" = ?? – Haouran (French version) is a place in Syria

A brig, the *Advance*, carrying seventeen men, equipped by Mr. Grinnell, a merchant, commanded by Dr. Kane, and sent out in search of Franklin, went as far north, through Baffin's Bay and Smith's Sound, as latitude 82°, nearer to the Pole than any of his predecessors had gone.

Now this was an American ship. Grinnell was an American, Kane was an American!

It is easy to understand how the customary disdain of the Englishman for the Yankee turned to hatred in the heart of Hatteras; he made up his mind, at any price, to beat his bold rival, and to reach the Pole itself.

For two years he lived at Liverpool incognito. He was taken for a sailor. He saw in Richard Shandon the man he wanted; he presented his plans by an anonymous letter to him and to Dr. Clawbonny. The *Forward* was built and equipped. Hatteras kept his name a secret; otherwise no one would have gone with him. He resolved only to take command of the brig at some critical juncture, and when his crew had gone too far to be able to retreat; he kept in reserve, as we have seen, the power of making generous offers to the men, so that they would follow him to the end of the world.

In fact, it was to the end of the world that he wanted to go.

Now matters looked very serious, and John Hatteras made himself known.

His dog, the faithful Duke, the companion of his expeditions, was the first to recognize him, and fortunately for the bold, and unfortunately for the timid, it was firmly established that the captain of the *Forward* was John Hatteras.

CHAPTER XIII
THE CAPTAIN'S PLANS

The appearance of this famous person was variously received by the different members of the crew: some allied themselves strongly with him, moved both by boldness and by avarice; others took renewed interest in the expedition, but they reserved to themselves the right of protesting later; besides, at that time, it was hard to make any resistance to such a man. Hence every man went back to his place. The 20th of May was Sunday, and consequently a day of rest for the crew.

The officers took counsel together in the doctor's cabin; there were present Hatteras, Shandon, Wall, Johnson, and the doctor.

"Gentlemen," said the captain, with his peculiarly gentle but impressive voice, "you know my project of going to the Pole; I want to get your opinion of the undertaking. What do you think about it, Shandon?"

"I have not to think, Captain," answered Shandon, coldly; "I have only to obey."

Hatteras was not surprised at this answer.

"Richard Shandon," he resumed with equal coldness, "I ask your opinion about our probable chance of success."

"Well, Captain," answered Shandon, "facts must answer for me; all attempts hitherto have failed; I hope we may be more fortunate."

"We shall be. And, gentlemen, what do you think?"

"As for me," replied the doctor, "I consider your design practicable, Captain; and since there is no doubt but that at some time or other explorers will reach the Pole, I don't see why we should not do it."

"There are very good reasons why we should," answered Hatteras, "for we have taken measures to make it possible, and we shall profit by the experience of others. And, Shandon, you must accept my thanks for the care you have given to the equipment of the brig; there are some ill-disposed men in the crew, whom I shall soon bring to reason; but on the whole, I can give nothing but praise."

Shandon bowed coldly. His position on the *Forward*, of which he had thought himself commander, was a false one. Hatteras understood this, and said nothing more about it.

"As for you, gentlemen," he resumed, addressing Wall and Johnson, "I could not myself have chosen officers more skilled and intrepid."

"On my word, Captain, I am your man," answered Johnson; "and although I think your plan a very bold one, you can count on me to the end."

"And on me too," said Wall.

"As for you, Doctor, I know your worth – "

"Well, you know then a great deal more than I do," answered the doctor, quickly.

"Now, gentlemen," said Hatteras, "it is well that you should know on what good grounds I have made up my mind about the accessibility of the Pole. In 1817 the *Neptune*, of Aberdeen, went to the north of Spitzbergen, as far as latitude 82°. In 1826 the celebrated Parry, after his third voyage in polar seas, started also from the extremity of Spitzbergen, and on sledges went one hundred and fifty miles farther north. In 1852, Captain Inglefield reached, through Smith's Sound, latitude 78° 35'. All these were English ships, and were commanded by Englishmen, our fellow-countrymen."

Here Hatteras paused.

"I ought to add," he resumed with some formality, and as if he could hardly bring himself to utter the words, – "I ought to add that in 1854 the American, Captain Kane, in the brig *Advance*, went still farther north, and that his lieutenant, Morton, journeying over the ice, hoisted the United States flag beyond the eighty-second degree. Having once said this, I shall not return to it. Now the

main point is that the captains of the *Neptune*, the *Enterprise*, the *Isabella*, and the *Advance* agree in the statement that beyond these high latitudes there is an open polar sea, entirely free from ice."

"Free from ice!" cried Shandon, interrupting the captain, "it's impossible!"

"You will notice, Shandon," observed Hatteras, quietly, while his eye lighted up for an instant, "that I quote both facts and authorities. I must add that in 1851, when Penny was stationed by the side of Wellington Channel, his lieutenant, Stewart, found himself in the presence of an open sea, and that his report was confirmed when, in 1853, Sir Edward Belcher wintered in Northumberland Bay, in latitude 76° 52', and longitude 99° 20'; these reports are indisputable, and one must be very incredulous not to admit them."

"Still, Captain," persisted Shandon, "facts are as contradictory – "

"You're wrong, Shandon, you're wrong!" cried Dr. Clawbonny; "facts never contradict a scientific statement; the captain will, I trust, excuse me."

"Go on, Doctor!" said Hatteras.

"Well, listen to this, Shandon; it results very clearly from geographical facts, and from the study of isothermal lines, that the coldest spot on the globe is not on the Pole itself; like the magnetic pole, it lies a few degrees distant. So the calculations of Brewster, Berghaus, and other physicists prove that in our hemisphere there are two poles of extreme cold: one in Asia in latitude 79° 30' N., and longitude 120° E.; the other is in America, in latitude 78° N., and longitude 97° W. This last alone concerns us, and you see, Shandon, that it is more than twelve degrees below the Pole. Well, I ask you why, then, the sea should not be as free from ice as it often is in summer in latitude 66°, that is to say, at the southern end of Baffin's Bay?"

"Well put," answered Johnson; "Dr. Clawbonny talks of those things like a man who understands them."

"It seems possible," said James Wall.

"Mere conjectures! nothing but hypotheses!" answered Shandon, obstinately.

"Well, Shandon," said Hatteras, "let us consider the two cases; either the sea is free from ice, or it is not, and in neither case will it be impossible to reach the Pole. If it is free, the *Forward* will take us there without difficulty; if it is frozen, we must try to reach it over the ice by our sledges. You will confess that it is not impracticable; having once come with our brig to latitude 83°, we shall have only about six hundred miles between us and the Pole."

"And what are six hundred miles," said the doctor, briskly, "when it is proved that a Cossack, Alexis Markoff, went along the frozen sea, north of Russia, on sledges drawn by dogs, for a distance of eight hundred miles, in twenty-four days?"

"You hear him, Shandon," answered Hatteras, "and will you say that an Englishman cannot do as much as a Cossack?"

"Never!" cried the enthusiastic doctor.

"Never!" repeated the boatswain.

"Well, Shandon?" asked the captain.

"Captain," answered Shandon, coldly, "I can only repeat what I have said, – I shall obey you."

"Well. Now," continued Hatteras, "let us consider our present situation; we are caught in the ice, and it seems to me impossible for us to reach Smith's Sound this year. This is what we must do."

Hatteras unfolded on the table one of the excellent charts published in 1859 by the order of the Admiralty.

"Be good enough to look here. If Smith's Sound is closed, Lancaster Sound is not, to the west of Baffin's Bay; in my opinion, we ought to go up this sound as far as Barrow Strait, and thence to Beechey Island. This has been done a hundred times by sailing-vessels; we shall have no difficulty, going under steam. Once at Beechey Island, we shall follow Wellington Sound as far northward as possible, to where it meets the channel, connecting it with Queen's Sound, at the place where the

open sea was seen. It is now only the 20th of May; if nothing happens, we shall be there in a month, and from there we shall start for the Pole. What do you say to that, gentlemen?"

"Evidently," said Johnson, "it's the only way open to us."

"Well, we shall take it, and to-morrow. Let Sunday be a day of rest; you will see, Shandon, that the Bible is read as usual; the religious exercises do the men good, and a sailor more than any one ought to put his trust in God."

"Very well, Captain," answered Shandon, who went away with the second officer and the boatswain.

"Doctor," said Hatteras, pointing at Shandon, "there's an offended man, whose pride has ruined him; I can no longer depend upon him."

Early the next day the captain had the launch lowered; he went to reconnoitre the icebergs about the basin, of which the diameter was hardly more than two hundred yards. He noticed that by the gradual pressure of the ice, this space threatened to grow smaller; hence it became necessary to make a breach somewhere, to save the ship from being crushed; by the means he employed, it was easy to see that John Hatteras was an energetic man.

In the first place he had steps cut, by which he climbed to the top of an iceberg; from that point he saw it would be easy to open a path to the southwest; by his orders an opening was made in the middle of an iceberg, a task which was completed by Monday evening.

Hatteras could not depend on his blasting-cylinders of eight or ten pounds of powder, whose action would have been insignificant against such large masses; they were only of use to break the field-ice; hence he placed in the opening a thousand pounds of powder, carefully laying it where it should be of the utmost service. This chamber, to which ran a long fuse, surrounded by gutta-percha, opened on the outside. The gallery, leading thereto, was filled with snow and lumps of ice, to which the cold of the next night gave the consistency of granite. In fact, the temperature, under the influence of the east-wind, fell to 12°.

The next day at seven o'clock the *Forward* was under steam, ready to seize any chance of escape. Johnson was charged with lighting the mine; the fuse was calculated to burn half an hour before exploding the powder. Hence Johnson had plenty of time to get back to the ship; indeed, within ten minutes he was at his post.

The crew were all on deck; the day was dry and tolerably clear; the snow was no longer falling; Hatteras, standing on the deck with Shandon and the doctor, counted the minutes on his watch.

At thirty-five minutes after eight a dull explosion was heard, much less deafening than had been anticipated. The outline of the mountains was suddenly changed, as by an earthquake; a dense white smoke rose high in the air, and long cracks appeared in the side of the iceberg, of which the upper part was hurled to a great distance, and fell in fragments about the *Forward*.

But the way was by no means free yet; huge lumps of ice were suspended upon the neighboring icebergs, and their fall threatened to close the exit.

Hatteras saw their situation in a flash of the eye.

"Wolston!" he shouted.

The gunner hastened to him.

"Captain!" he said.

"Put a triple charge in the forward gun, and ram it in as hard as possible!"

"Are we going to batter the iceberg down with cannon-balls?" asked the doctor.

"No," answered Hatteras. "That would do no good. No balls, Wolston, but a triple charge of powder. Be quick!"

In a few moments the gun was loaded.

"What is he going to do without a ball?" muttered Shandon between his teeth.

"We'll soon see," answered the doctor.

"We are all ready, Captain," cried Wolston.

"Well," answered Hatteras. "Brunton!" he shouted to the engineer, "make ready! Forward a little!"

Brunton opened the valves, and the screw began to move; the *Forward* drew near the blown-up iceberg.

"Aim carefully at the passage!" cried the captain to the gunner.

He obeyed; when the brig was only half a cable-length distant, Hatteras gave the order, —

"Fire!"

A loud report followed, and the fragments of ice, detached by the commotion of the air, fell suddenly into the sea. The simple concussion had been enough.

"Put on full steam, Brunton!" shouted Hatteras. "Straight for the passage, Johnson!"

Johnson was at the helm; the brig, driven by the screw, which tossed the water freely, entered easily the open passage. It was time. The *Forward* had hardly passed through the opening, before it closed behind it.

It was an exciting moment, and the only calm and collected man on board was the captain. So the crew, amazed at the success of this device, could not help shouting, —

"Hurrah for John Hatteras!"

CHAPTER XIV
THE EXPEDITIONS IN SEARCH OF FRANKLIN

Wednesday, the 21st of May, the *Forward* resumed her perilous voyage, making her way dexterously through the packs and icebergs, thanks to steam, which is seldom used by explorers in polar seas; she seemed to sport among the moving masses; one would have said she felt the hand of a skilled master, and that, like a horse under a skilful rider, she obeyed the thought of her captain.

The weather grew warmer. At six o'clock in the morning the thermometer stood at 26°, at six in the evening at 29°, and at midnight at 25°; the wind was light from the southeast.

Thursday, at about three o'clock in the morning, the *Forward* arrived in sight of Possession Bay, on the American shore, at the entrance of Lancaster Sound; soon Cape Burney came into sight. A few Esquimaux came out to the ship; but Hatteras could not stop to speak with them.

The peaks of Byam Martin, which rise above Cape Liverpool, were passed on the left, and they soon disappeared in the evening mist; this hid from them Cape Hay, which has a very slight elevation, and so is frequently confounded with ice about the shore, a circumstance which very often renders the determination of the coast-line in polar regions very difficult.

Puffins, ducks, and white gulls appeared in great numbers. By observation the latitude was 74° 1', and the longitude, according to the chronometer, 77° 15'.

The two mountains, Catherine and Elizabeth, raised their snowy heads above the clouds.

At ten o'clock on Friday Cape Warrender was passed on the right side of the sound, and on the left Admiralty Inlet, a bay which has never been fully explored by navigators, who are always hastening westward. The sea ran rather high, and the waves often broke over the bows, covering the deck with small fragments of ice. The land on the north coast presented a strange appearance with its high, flat table-lands sparkling beneath the sun's rays.

Hatteras would have liked to skirt these northern lands, in order to reach the sooner Beechey Island and the entrance of Wellington Channel; but, much to his chagrin, the bank-ice obliged him to take only the passes to the south.

Hence, on the 26th of May, in the midst of a fog and a snow-storm, the *Forward* found herself off Cape York; a lofty, steep mountain was soon recognized; the weather got a little clearer, and at midday the sun appeared long enough to permit an observation to be taken: latitude 74° 4', and longitude 84° 23'. The *Forward* was at the end of Lancaster Sound.

Hatteras showed the doctor on the chart the route he had taken and that which he was to follow. At that time the position of the brig was interesting.

"I should have liked to be farther north," he said, "but it was impossible; see, here is our exact position."

The captain pointed to a spot near Cape York.

"We are in the middle of this open space, exposed to every wind; into it open Lancaster Sound, Barrow Strait, Wellington Channel, and Regent's Inlet; here, of necessity, come all northern explorers."

"Well," answered the doctor, "so much the worse for them; it is indeed an open space, where four roads meet, and I don't see any sign-post to point out the right way! What did Parry, Ross, and Franklin do?"

"They didn't do anything in particular; they let themselves be governed by circumstances; they had no choice, I can assure you; at one time Barrow Strait would be closed against one, and the next year it would be open for another; again the ship would be irresistibly driven towards Regent's Inlet. In this way we have at last been able to learn the geography of these confused seas."

"What a strange region!" said the doctor, gazing at the chart. "How everything is divided and cut up, without order or reason! It seems as if all the land near the Pole were divided in this way in

order to make the approach harder, while in the other hemisphere it ends in smooth, regular points, like Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope, and the Indian peninsula! Is it the greater rapidity at the equator which has thus modified things, while the land lying at the extremity, which was fluid at the beginning of the world, could not condense and unite as elsewhere, on account of slower rotation?"

"That may be, for there is a reason for everything, and nothing happens without a cause, which God sometimes lets students find out; so, Doctor, find it out if you can."

"I shall not waste too much time over it, Captain. But what is this fierce wind?" added the doctor, wrapping himself up well.

"The north-wind is the common one, and delays our progress."

"Still it ought to blow the ice toward the south, and leave our way free."

"It ought to, Doctor, but the wind doesn't always do what it ought to. See, that ice looks impenetrable. We shall try to reach Griffith Island, then to get around Cornwallis Island to reach Queen's Channel, without going through Wellington Channel. And yet I am anxious to touch at Beechey Island to get some more coal."

"How will you do that?" asked the astonished doctor.

"Easily; by order of the Admiralty, a great amount has been placed on this island, to supply future expeditions, and although Captain MacClintock took some in 1859, I can assure you there is still some left for us."

"In fact, these regions have been explored for fifteen years, and until certain proof of Franklin's death was received, the Admiralty always kept five or six ships cruising in these waters. If I'm not mistaken, Griffith Island, which I see in the middle of the open space, has become a general rendezvous for explorers."

"True, Doctor, and Franklin's ill-fated expedition has been the means of our learning so much about these parts."

"Exactly; for there have been a great many expeditions since 1845. It was not till 1848 that there was any alarm about the continued non-appearance of the *Erebus* and the *Terror*, Franklin's two ships. Then the admiral's old friend, Dr. Richardson, seventy years of age, went through Canada, and descended Coppermine River to the Polar Sea; on the other side, James Ross, in command of the *Enterprise* and the *Investigator*, sailed from Upernavik in 1848, and reached Cape York, where we are now. Every day he threw overboard a cask containing papers telling where he was; during fogs he fired cannon; at night he burned signal-fires and sent off rockets, carrying always but little sail; finally, he wintered at Leopold's Harbor in 1848-49; there he caught a large number of white foxes; he had put on their necks copper collars on which was engraved a statement of the position of the ship and where supplies had been left, and he drove them away in every direction; then, in the spring, he explored the coast of North Somerset on sledges, amid dangers and privations which disabled nearly all his men. He built cairns, enclosing copper cylinders with instructions to the absent expedition; during his absence, Lieutenant MacClure explored fruitlessly the northern coast of Barrow Strait. It is noteworthy, Captain, that James Ross had among his officers two men who afterwards became celebrated, – MacClure, who found the Northwest Passage, and MacClintock, who found the last remains of the Franklin expedition."

"Two good and brave captains, two brave Englishmen; go on, Doctor, with this account which you know so well; there is always something to be learned from the account of bold adventurers."

"Well, to conclude with James Ross, I have only to add that he tried to go farther west from Melville Island; but he nearly lost his ships, and being caught in the ice he was carried, against his will, to Baffin's Bay."

"Carried," said Hatteras, frowning, – "carried against his will!"

"He had discovered nothing," resumed the doctor; "it was only after 1850 that English ships were always exploring there, when a reward of twenty thousand pounds was offered to any one who should discover the crews of the *Erebus* and *Terror*. Already, in 1848, Captains Kellet and Moore, in

command of the *Herald* and the *Plover*, tried to make their way through by Behring Strait. I ought to say that the winter of 1850-51, Captain Austin passed at Cornwallis Island; Captain Penny, with the *Assistance* and *Resolute*, explored Wellington Channel; old John Ross, who discovered the magnetic pole, started in his yacht, the *Felix*, in search of his friend; the brig *Prince Albert* made her first voyage at the expense of Lady Franklin; and, finally, two American ships, sent out by Grinnell, under Captain Haven, carried beyond Wellington Channel, were cast into Lancaster Sound. It was during this year that MacClintock, Austin's lieutenant, pushed on to Melville Island and to Cape Dundas, the extreme points reached by Parry in 1819, and on Beechey Island were found traces of Franklin's wintering there in 1845."

"Yes," answered Hatteras, "three of his sailors were buried there, three fortunate men!"

"From 1851 to 1852," continued the doctor, with a gesture of agreement, "we find the *Prince Albert* making a second attempt with the French lieutenant, Bellot; he winters at Batty Bay in Prince Regent's Sound, explores the southwest of Somerset, and reconnoitres the coast as far as Cape Walker. Meanwhile, the *Enterprise* and *Investigator*, having returned to England, came under the command of Collinson and MacClure, and they rejoined Kellet and Moore at Behring Strait; while Collinson returned to winter at Hong-Kong, MacClure went on, and after three winters, 1850-51, 1851-52, and 1852-53, he discovered the Northwest Passage without finding any traces of Franklin. From 1852 to 1853, a new expedition, consisting of three sailing-vessels, the *Assistance*, the *Resolute*, the *North Star*, and two steam-vessels, the *Pioneer* and the *Intrepid*, started out under the orders of Sir Edward Belcher, with Captain Kellet second in command; Sir Edward visited Wellington Channel, wintered in Northumberland Bay, and explored the coast, while Kellet, pushing on as far as Brideport on Melville Island, explored that region without success. But then it was rumored in England that two ships, abandoned in the ice, had been seen not far from New Caledonia. At once Lady Franklin fitted out the little screw-steamer *Isabella*, and Captain Inglefield, after ascending Baffin's Bay to Victoria Point, at the eightieth parallel, returned to Beechey Island with equal unsuccess. At the beginning of 1855 the American Grinnell defrays the expense of a new expedition, and Dr. Kane, trying to reach the Pole – "

"But he did not succeed," cried Hatteras with violence, "and thank God he did not! What he did not do, we shall!"

"I know it, Captain," answered the doctor, "and I only speak of it on account of its connection with the search for Franklin. Besides, it accomplished nothing. I nearly forgot to say that the Admiralty, regarding Beechey Island as a general rendezvous, ordered the steamer *Phoenix*, Captain Inglefield, in 1853, to carry provisions there; he sailed with Lieutenant Bellot, who for the second, and last, time offered his services to England; we can get full details about the catastrophe, for Johnson, our boatswain, was eye-witness of this sad affair."

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

"Then," resumed the doctor, "the ships of Belcher's squadron began to return one by one; not all, for Sir Edward had to abandon the *Assistance* in 1854, as McClure had the *Investigator* in 1853. Meanwhile Dr. Rae, in a letter dated July 29, 1854, written from Repulse Bay, gave information that the Esquimaux of King William's Land had in their possession different objects belonging to the *Erebus* and *Terror;* then there was no doubt possible about the fate of the expedition; the *Phoenix*, the *North Star*, and the ship of Collinson returned to England; there was then no English ship in these waters. But if the government seemed to have lost all hope, Lady Franklin did not despair, and with what was left of her fortune she fitted out the *Fox*, commanded by MacClintock; he set sail in 1857, wintered about where you made yourself known to us, Captain; he came to Beechey Island, August 11, 1858; the next winter he passed at Bellot Sound; in February, 1859, he began his explorations anew; on the 6th of May he found the document which left no further doubt as to the fate of the *Erebus* and *Terror*, and returned to England at the end of the same year. That is a complete account

of all that has been done in these regions during the last fifteen years; and since the return of the *Fox*, no ship has ventured among these dangerous waters!"

"Well, we shall try it!" said Hatteras.

CHAPTER XV
THE FORWARD DRIVEN SOUTHWARD

Towards evening the weather cleared up, and land was clearly to be seen between Cape Sepping and Cape Clarence, which juts out to the east, then to the south, and is connected to the mainland on the west by a low tongue of land. There was no ice at the entrance of Regent's Sound; but it was densely massed beyond Leopold Harbor, as if to form an impassable barrier to the northward progress of the *Forward*.

Hatteras, who, although he carefully concealed his feelings, was exceedingly annoyed, had to blow out a way with powder in order to enter Leopold Harbor; he reached it at midday, on Sunday, May 27th; the brig was securely anchored to the large icebergs, which were as firm, solid, and hard as rock.

At once the captain, followed by the doctor, Johnson, and his dog Duke, leaped out upon the ice and soon reached the land. Duke leaped about with joy; besides, since the captain had made himself known, he had become very sociable and very gentle, preserving his ill-temper for some of the crew, whom his master disliked as much as he did.

The harbor was free from the ice which is generally forced there by the east-wind; the sharp peaks, covered with snow, looked like a number of white waves. The house and lantern, built by James Ross, were still in a tolerable state of preservation; but the provisions appeared to have been eaten by foxes, and even by bears, of which fresh traces were to be seen; part of the devastation was probably due to the hand of man, for some ruins of Esquimaux huts were to be seen on the shores of the bay.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.