

**ROBERT
MICHAEL
BALLANTYNE**

THE WORLD OF ICE

Robert Michael Ballantyne

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Robert Michael Ballantyne

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PREFACE

Dear Reader, most people prefer a short to a long preface. Permit me, therefore, to cut this one short, by simply expressing an earnest hope that my book may afford you much profit and amusement.

R.M. BALLANTYNE.

CHAPTER I

Some of the "dramatis personæ" introduced—Retrospective glances—Causes of future effects—Our hero's early life at sea—A pirate—A terrible fight and its consequences—Buzzby's helm lashed amidships—A whaling-cruise begun.

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

John Buzzby was an old salt—a regular true-blue Jack tar of the old school, who had been born and bred at sea; had visited foreign ports innumerable; had weathered more storms than he could count, and had witnessed more strange sights than he could remember. He was tough, and sturdy, and grizzled, and broad, and square, and massive—a first-rate specimen of a John Bull, and according to himself, "always kept his weather-eye open." This remark of his was apt to create confusion in the minds of his hearers; for John meant the expression to be understood figuratively, while, in point of fact, he almost always kept one of his literal eyes open and the other partially closed, but as he reversed the order of arrangement frequently, he might have been said to keep his lee-eye as much open as the weather one. This peculiarity gave to his countenance an expression of earnest thoughtfulness mingled with humour. Buzzby was fond of being thought old, and he looked much older than he really was. Men guessed his age at fifty-five, but they were ten years out in their reckoning; for John had numbered only forty-five summers, and was as tough and muscular as ever he had been—although not quite so elastic.

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

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

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

"Ah! Master Fred, you're a chip of the old block—neck or nothing—carry on all sail till you tear the masts out of her! Reef the t'gallant sails of your temper, boy, and don't run foul of an old man who has been all but a wet-nurse to ye—taught ye to walk, and swim, and pull an oar, and build ships, and has hauled ye out o' the sea when ye fell in—from the time ye could barely stump along on two legs, lookin' like as if ye was more nor half-seas-over."

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

"Hallo! youngster," shouted a voice from the deck of the vessel in question, "run up and tell your father we're all ready, and if he don't make haste he'll lose the tide, so he will, and that'll make

us have to start on a Friday, it will, an' that'll not do for me, nohow it won't; so make sail and look sharp about it, do—won't you?"

"What a tongue he's got!" remarked Buzzby. "Before I'd go to sea with a first mate who jawed like that I'd be a landsman. Don't ever you git to talk too much, Master Fred, wotever ye do. My maxim is—and it has served me through life, uncommon—'Keep your weather-eye open and your tongue housed 'xcept when you've got occasion to use it.' If that fellow'd use his eyes more and his tongue less, he'd see your father comin' down the road there, right before the wind, with his old sister in tow."

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

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

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

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

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

Mrs. Ellice was a loving, gentle, seriously-minded woman. She devoted herself, heart and soul to the training of her boy, and spent many a pleasant hour in that little, unsteady cabin in endeavouring to instil into his infant mind the blessed truths of Christianity, and in making the name of Jesus familiar to his ear. As Fred grew older his mother encouraged him to hold occasional intercourse with the sailors—for her husband's example taught her the value of a bold, manly spirit, and she knew that it was impossible for her to instil *that* into him—but she was careful to guard him from the evil that he might chance to learn from the men, by committing him to the tender care of Buzzby. To do the men justice, however, this was almost unnecessary, for they felt that a mother's watchful eye was on the child, and no unguarded word fell from their lips while he was romping about the forecastle.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Are you quite sure, Frederick?"

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

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

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

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

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

"I will go for your sword, father," cried Fred, who had just come on deck.

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

"But, father, you know that I'm not *afraid*."

"I know that, boy—I know it well; but you're too young to fight—you're not strong enough. Besides, you must comfort and cheer your mother; she may want you."

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

A momentary gleam of pride lit up the countenance of the captain as he said hastily, "You may stay, then," and turned towards the men, who now stood assembled on the quarter-deck.

Addressing the crew in his own blunt, vigorous style, he said, "Lads, yon rascally schooner is a pirate, as you all know well enough. I need not ask you if you are ready to fight; I see by your looks you are. But that's not enough—you must make up your minds to fight *well*. You know that pirates give no quarter. I see the decks are swarming with men. If you don't go at them like bull-dogs, you'll walk the plank before sunset every man of you. Now, go forward, and double-shot your muskets and pistols, and stick as many of the latter into your belts as they will hold. Mr. Thompson, let the gunner double-shot the four big guns, and load the little carronade with musket-balls to the muzzle. If they do try to board us, they'll get a warm reception."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Ay, ay, sir!"

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

"They're a-gittin' out the boats, sir," remarked John Buzzby, who, unable to restrain himself any longer, had crept upon deck at the risk of another reprimand; "and, if my eyes be'n't deceiving me, there's a sail on the horizon to wind'ard—leastways, the direction which *was* wind'ard afore it fell calm."

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

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

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

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

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

"Help, father!" cried Fred, pushing through the struggling crowd, "here's the carronade ready loaded."

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

In a moment the little cannon was pointed to the centre of the mass of men, and fired. One awful shriek of agony rose above the din of the fight, as a wide gap was cut through the crowd; but this only seemed to render the survivors more furious. With a savage yell they charged the quarter-deck, but were hurled back again and again by the captain and a few chosen men who stood around him. At length one of the pirates, who had been all along conspicuous for his strength and daring, stepped deliberately up, and pointing a pistol at the captain's breast, fired. Captain Ellice fell, and at the same moment a ball laid the pirate low; another charge was made; Fred rushed forward to protect his father, but was thrown down and trodden under foot in the rush, and in two minutes more the ship was in possession of the pirates.

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

"Where is my husband? my boy?" screamed Mrs. Ellice wildly.

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

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

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

Months passed away. Captain Ellice was conveyed to the residence of his sister in Grayton, and, under her care, and the nursing of his little niece Isobel, he recovered his wonted health and strength. To the eyes of men Captain Ellice and his son were themselves again; but those who judge of men's hearts by their outward appearance and expressions, in nine cases out of ten judge very wide of the mark indeed. Both had undergone a great change. The brilliancy and glitter of this world had been completely and rudely dispelled, and both had been led to inquire whether there was not something better to live for than mere present advantage and happiness—something that would stand by them in those hours of sickness and sorrow which must inevitably, sooner or later, come upon all men. Both sought, and discovered what they sought, in the *Bible*, the only book in all the world where the jewel of great price is to be found.

But Captain Ellice could not be induced to resume the command of his old ship, or voyage again to the West Indies. He determined to change the scene of his future labours and sail to the Frozen Seas, where the aspect of every object, even the ocean itself, would be very unlikely to recall the circumstances of his loss.

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

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

CHAPTER II

Departure of the "Pole Star" for the Frozen Seas—Sage reflections of Mrs. Bright, and sagacious remarks of Buzzby—Anxieties, fears, surmises, and resolutions—Isabel—A search proposed—Departure of the "Dolphin" for the Far North.

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

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

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

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

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

"Ah! yes," resumed Mrs. Bright, with another burst, "I *know* they will never come back, and your silence shows that you think so too. And to think of their taking two years' provisions with them *in case of accidents!*—doesn't that prove that there are going *to be* accidents? And didn't I hear one of the sailors say that she was a crack ship, A number one? I don't know what he meant by A number one, but if she's a cracked ship I *know* she will never come back; and although I told my dear brother of it, and advised him not to go, he only laughed at me, which was very unkind, I'm sure."

Here Mrs. Bright's feelings overcame her again.

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

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

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

Buzzby delivered himself of this oration with the left eye shut and screwed up, and the right one open. Having concluded, he shut and screwed up the right eye, and opened the left—he reversed

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

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

To make a long story short, three years passed away, but the *Pole Star* did not return, and no news of her could be got from the various whale-ships that visited the port of Grayton. Towards the end of the second year Buzzby began to shake his head despondingly; and as the third drew to a close, the expression of gloom never left his honest, weather-beaten face. Mrs. Bright, too, whose anxiety at first was only half genuine, now became seriously alarmed, and the fate of the missing brig began to be the talk of the neighbourhood. Meanwhile, Fred Ellice and Isobel grew and improved in mind and body; but anxiety as to his father's fate rendered the former quite unable to pursue his studies, and he determined at last to procure a passage in a whale-ship, and go out in search of the brig.

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

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

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

Once again a whale-ship prepared to sail from the port of Grayton, and once again Mrs. Bright and Isobel stood on the pier to see her depart. Isobel was about thirteen now, and as pretty a girl, according to Buzzby, as you could meet with in any part of Britain. Her eyes were blue and her hair nut-brown, and her charms of face and figure were enhanced immeasurably by an air of modesty and earnestness that went straight home to your heart, and caused you to adore her at once. Buzzby doated on her as if she were his only child, and felt a secret pride in being in some indefinable way her protector. Buzzby philosophized about her, too, after a strange fashion. "You see," he would say to Fred, "it's not that her figurehead is cut altogether after a perfect pattern—by no means, for I've seen pictur's and statues that wos better—but she carries her head a little down, d'ye see, Master Fred? and there's where it is; that's the way I gauges the worth o' young women, jist accordin' as they carry their chins up or down. If their brows come well for'ard, and they seems to be lookin' at the ground they

walk on, I knows their brains is firm stuff, and in good workin' order; but when I sees them carryin' their noses high out o' the water, as if they was afeard o' catchin' sight o' their own feet, and their chins elewated, so that a little boy standin' in front o' them couldn't see their faces nohow, I make pretty sure that t'other end is filled with a sort o' *mush* that's fit only to think o' dress and dancing."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER III

The voyage—The "Dolphin" and her crew—Ice ahead—Polar scenes—
Masthead observations—The first whale—Great excitement.

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

"The sea! the sea! the open sea;
The blue, the fresh, the ever free."

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

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

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

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

"No, sir—never; but I've got a half-brother wot has bin in the Greenland whale-fishery, and I've bin in the South Sea line myself."

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

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

"I could give ye many a long yarn about the South Seas," said Buzzby, gazing abstractedly down into the deep. "One time when I was about fifty miles to the sou'-west o' Cape Horn, I—"

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

"We must talk over that some other time, Buzzby. The captain loves punctuality." So saying, the young surgeon sprang down the companion ladder, leaving the old salt to smoke his pipe in solitude. And here we may pause a few seconds to describe our ship and her crew.

The *Dolphin* was a tight, new, barque-rigged vessel of about three hundred tons burden, built expressly for the northern whale-fishery, and carried a crew of forty-five men. Ships that have to battle with the ice require to be much more powerfully built than those that sail in unencumbered seas. The *Dolphin* united strength with capacity and buoyancy. The under part of her hull and sides were strengthened with double timbers, and fortified externally with plates of iron, while, internally, stanchions and crossbeams were so arranged as to cause pressure on any part to be supported by the whole structure; and on her bows, where shocks from the ice might be expected to be most frequent and severe, extra planking, of immense strength and thickness, was secured. In other respects, the vessel was fitted up much in the same manner as ordinary merchantmen. The only other peculiarity about her worthy of notice was the crow's-nest, a sort of barrel-shaped structure fastened to the fore-

mast-head, in which, when at the whaling-ground, a man is stationed to look out for whales. The chief men in the ship were Captain Guy, a vigorous, earnest, practical American; Mr. Bolton, the first mate, a stout, burly, off-hand Englishman; and Mr. Saunders, the second mate, a sedate, broad-shouldered, raw-boned Scot, whose opinion of himself was unbounded, whose power of argument was extraordinary, not to say exasperating, and who stood six feet three in his stockings. Mivins, the steward, was, as we have already remarked, a tall, thin, active young man, of a brisk, lively disposition, and was somewhat of a butt among the men, but being in a position of power and trust, he was respected. The young surgeon, Tom Singleton, whom we have yet scarcely introduced to the reader, was a tall, slim, but firmly-knit youth, with a kind, gentle disposition. He was always open, straightforward, and polite. He never indulged in broad humour, though he enjoyed it much, seldom ventured on a witticism, was rather shy in the company of his companions, and spoke little; but for a quiet, pleasant *tête-à-tête* there was not a man in the ship equal to Tom Singleton. His countenance was Spanish-looking and handsome, his hair black, short, and curling, and his budding moustache was soft and dark as the eyebrow of an Andalusian belle.

It would be unpardonable, in this catalogue, to omit the cook, David Mizzle. He was round, and fat, and oily, as one of his own "duff" puddings. To look at him you could not help suspecting that he purloined and ate at least half of the salt pork he cooked, and his sly, dimpling laugh, in which every feature participated, from the point of his broad chin to the top of his bald head, rather tended to favour this supposition. Mizzle was prematurely bald—being quite a young man—and when questioned on the subject, he usually attributed it to the fact of his having been so long employed about the cooking coppers, that the excessive heat to which he was exposed had stewed all the hair off his head! The crew was made up of stout, active men in the prime of life, nearly all of whom had been more or less accustomed to the whale-fishing, and some of the harpooners were giants in muscular development and breadth of shoulder, if not in height.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"How's her head, Mr. Bolton?"

"Nor'-west and by north, sir."

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

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

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

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

Those who have never stood at the mast-head of a ship at sea in a dead calm cannot comprehend the feeling of intense solitude that fills the mind in such a position. There is nothing analogous to it on land. To stand on the summit of a tower and look down on the busy multitude below is not the same, for there the sounds are quite different in *tone*, and signs of life are visible all over the distant country, while cries from afar reach the ear, as well as those from below. But from the mast-head you hear only the few subdued sounds under your feet—all beyond is silence; you behold only the small, oval-shaped platform that is your *world*—beyond lies the calm desolate ocean. On deck you cannot realize this feeling, for there sails and yards tower above you, and masts, and boats, and cordage intercept your view; but from above you *take in* the intense minuteness of your home at a single glance—you stand aside, as it were, and in some measure comprehend the insignificance of the *thing* to which you have committed your life.

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

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

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

"It's a curious fancy, Fred, but not unnatural."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Where away?" shouted the captain.

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

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

"There she blows!" sang out the man at the masthead again.

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

"Keep her away a bit; steady!" replied the lookout.

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

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

"All hands ahoy!" shouted the mate in a tempestuous voice, while the men rushed to their respective stations.

"Boat-steerers, get your boats ready."

"Ay, ay, sir."

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

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

In another moment three boats struck the water, and their respective crews tumbled tumultuously into them. Fred and Singleton sprang into the stern-sheets of the captain's boat just as it pushed off, and, in less than five minutes, the three boats were bounding over the sea in the direction of the whale like race-horses. Every man did his best, and the tough oars bent like hoops as each boat's crew strove to outstrip the others.

CHAPTER IV

The chase and the battle—The chances and dangers of whaling war—Buzzby dives for his life and saves it—So does the whale and loses it—An anxious night, which terminates happily, though with a heavy loss.

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

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

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

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

"Now, boys," cried the captain, in a hoarse whisper, "spring hard—lay back hard, I say—*stand up!*"

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

"Stern all!" The men backed their oars with all their might, in order to avoid the flukes of the wounded monster of the deep, as it plunged down headlong into the sea, taking the line out perpendicularly like lightning. This was a moment of great danger. The friction of the line as it passed the loggerhead was so great that Parr had to keep constantly pouring water on it to prevent its catching fire. A hitch in the line at that time, as it flew out of the tub, or any accidental entanglement, would have dragged the boat and crew right down: many such fatal accidents occur to whalers, and many a poor fellow has had a foot or an arm torn off, or been dragged overboard and drowned, in consequence of getting entangled. One of the men stood ready with a small hatchet to cut the line in a moment, if necessary; for whales sometimes run out all that is in a boat at the first plunge, and should none of the other boats be at hand to lend a second line to attach to the one nearly expended, there is nothing for it but to cut. On the present occasion, however, none of these accidents befell the men of the captain's boat. The line ran all clear, and long before it was exhausted the whale ceased to descend, and the *slack* was hauled rapidly in.

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

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

A few seconds after, the white foam of the sea was dotted with black heads as the men rose one by one to the surface, and struck out for floating oars and pieces of the wrecked boat.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Hoist an oar!" cried Amos Parr, as he saw the coil diminishing. Grim observed the signal of distress, and encouraged his men to use their utmost exertions. "Another oar!—another!" shouted Parr, as the whale continued its headlong descent.

"Stand by to cut the line," said Captain Guy with compressed lips. "No! hold on, hold on!"

At this moment, having drawn down more than a thousand fathoms of rope, the whale slackened its speed, and Parr, taking another coil round the loggerhead, held on until the boat was almost dragged under water. Then the line became loose, and the slack was hauled in rapidly. Meanwhile Grim's boat had reached the spot, and the men now lay on their oars at some distance ahead, ready to pull the instant the whale should show itself. Up it came, not twenty yards ahead. One short, energetic pull, and the second boat sent a harpoon deep into it, while Grim sprang to the bow and thrust a lance with deadly force deep into the carcass. The monster sent up a stream of mingled blood, oil, and water, and whirled its huge tail so violently that the sound could be heard a mile off. Before it dived again, the captain's boat came up, and succeeded in making fast another harpoon, while several additional lance-thrusts were given with effect, and it seemed as if the battle were about to terminate, when

suddenly the whale struck the sea with a clap like thunder, and darted away once more like a rocket to windward, tearing the two boats after it as if they had been egg-shells.

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

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

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

"How's her head?"

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

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

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

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

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

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Stiddy!"

"Steady it is, sir."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Well, well," said one of the men, wringing the water out of his wet clothes as he walked forward, "we got a good laugh at Peter Grim, if we got nothin' else by our trip."

"How was that, Jack?"

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

"Ow did you lose the fish, sir?" inquired Mivins, as our hero sprang up the side, followed by Singleton.

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

CHAPTER V

Miscellaneous reflections—The coast of Greenland—Upernavik—News of the "Pole Star"—Midnight-day—Scientific facts and fairy-like scenes—Tom Singleton's opinion of poor old women—In danger of a squeeze—Escape.

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

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

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

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

"Yes, sir!"

"Bring me the chart."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Every one knows that, in consequence of the axis of the earth not being perpendicular to the plane of its orbit round the sun, the poles are alternately directed more or less *towards* that great luminary during one part of the year, and *away* from it during another part. So that far north the days during the one season grow longer and longer until at last there is *one long day* of many weeks' duration, in which the sun does not set at all; and during the other season there is *one long night*, in which the sun is never seen. It was approaching the height of the summer season when the *Dolphin* entered the Arctic Regions, and, although the sun descended below the horizon for a short time each night, there was scarcely any diminution of the light at all, and, as far as one's sensations were concerned, there was but one long continuous day, which grew brighter and brighter at midnight as they advanced.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Tom," said Fred, breaking another long silence, "you're very tiresome and stupid to-night, why don't you talk to me?"

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

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

"Inclined to talk too much and think too little—eh, Fred?"

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

"Why, what put *them*, into your head?" inquired Tom laughing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"That's it—that's just it; people don't *think*, otherwise this dreadful state of things would not continue. Just listen *now*, for a moment, to what I have to say. But don't imagine that I'm standing up for the poor in general. I don't feel—perhaps I'm wrong," continued Tom thoughtfully—"perhaps I'm wrong—I hope not—but it's a fact, I don't feel much for the young and the sturdy poor, and I make it a rule *never* to give a farthing to *young* beggars, not even to little children, for I know full well that they are sent out to beg by idle, good-for-nothing parents. I stand up only for the *aged* poor,

because, be they good or wicked, they *cannot* help themselves. If a man fell down in the street, struck with some dire disease that shrunk his muscles, unstrung his nerves, made his heart tremble, and his skin shrivel up, would you look upon him and then pass him by *without thinking?*"

"No," cried Fred in an emphatic tone, "I would not! I would stop and help him."

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

Tom paused and pressed his hand upon his flushed forehead.

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

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

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

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

"Hallo! what's wrong?" said Fred, starting up.

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

"Well—yes, I will."

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

"I will," answered Fred; "but I don't know that I'll ever be rich, or influential, or able to help them much."

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

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

"That's right; thank you, my boy," said the young surgeon, as they descended the shrouds and leaped on deck.

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

"Set the stun'-sails, Mr. Bolton. The breeze will be up in a little, I think. Let the men pull with a will."

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER VI

The gale—Anchored to a berg which proves to be a treacherous one—Dangers of the "pack"—Beset in the ice—Mivins shows an inquiring mind—Walruses—Gale freshens—Chains and cables—Holding on for life—An unexpected discovery—A "nip" and its terrible consequences—Yoked to an iceberg.

The narrow escape related in the last chapter was but the prelude to a night of troubles. Fortunately, as we have before mentioned, *night* did not now add darkness to their difficulties. Soon after passing the bergs, a stiff breeze sprang up off shore, between which and the *Dolphin* there was a thick belt of loose ice, or sludge, while outside, the pack was in motion, and presented a terrible scene of crashing and grinding masses under the influence of the breeze, which soon freshened to a gale.

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

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

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

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

"Get out the warps and ice-anchors there!" cried the captain.

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

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

"Stand by to let go the anchor!" shouted the captain.

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Down your helm! Let go!"

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

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

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

The anchor was fixed, and the men strained at the capstan with a will, but, notwithstanding their utmost efforts, they could not penetrate the shore ice. Meanwhile the wind increased, and snow

began to fall in large flakes. The tide, too, as it receded, brought a stream of ice round the point ahead of them, which bore right down on their bows. At first the concussions were slight, and the bow of the ship turned the floes aside; but heavier masses soon came down, and at last one fixed itself on the cable, and caused the anchor to drag with a harsh, grating sound.

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

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

"Perhaps we'll turn bottom up, sir," suggested the fat cook as he passed at the moment with a tray of meat. Mizzle could not resist a joke—no matter how unsuitable the time or dreadful the consequences.

"Hold your tongue, sir!" exclaimed Saunders indignantly. "Attend to your business, and speak only when you're spoken to."

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

Ice now came rolling down in great quantities and with irresistible force, and at last the ship was whirled into the much-dreaded pack, where she became firmly embedded, and drifted along with it before the gale into the unknown regions of the North all that night. To add to their distress and danger a thick fog overspread the sea, so that they could not tell whither the ice was carrying them, and to warp out of it was impossible. There was nothing for it therefore but to drive before the gale, and take advantage of the first opening in the ice that should afford them a chance of escape.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"What is a water-sky, captain?" inquired Fred.

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

"We'll have open water soon," remarked the second mate authoritatively.

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

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

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

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

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

"No, sir, I don't."

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

"You don't say so, sir!" said Mivins in surprise. "And don't they *never* melt?"

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

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

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

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

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

Numerous walrus rolled about in the bays here, and they approached much nearer to the vessel than they had yet done, affording those on board a good view of their huge, uncouth visages, as they shook their shaggy fronts and ploughed up the waves with their tusks. These enormous creatures are the elephants of the Arctic Ocean. Their aspect is particularly grim and fierce, and being nearly equal to elephants in bulk they are not less terrible than they appear. In form they somewhat resemble

seals, having barrel-shaped bodies, with round, or rather square, blunt heads and shaggy bristling moustaches, and two long ivory tusks which curve downwards instead of upwards, serving the purpose frequently of hooks, by means of which and their fore-flippers they can pull themselves up on the rocks and icebergs. Indeed, they are sometimes found at a considerable height up the sides of steep cliffs, basking in the sun.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"What's that ahead of us?" exclaimed the first mate suddenly.

"Ship on the starboard bow, right in-shore!" roared the look-out.

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

"Can you make her out, Mr. Bolton?"

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

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

"Let go!" shouted the captain.

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

"Hold on!"

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

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

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

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

As he spoke, the two masses of ice closed, and the brig was nipped between them. For a few seconds she seemed to tremble like a living creature, and every timber creaked. Then she was turned slowly on one side, until the crew of the *Dolphin* could see down into her hold, where the beams were giving way and cracking up as matches might be crushed in the grasp of a strong hand. Then the larboard bow was observed to yield as if it were made of soft clay, the starboard bow was pressed out, and the ice was forced into the forecabin. Scarcely three minutes had passed since the nip commenced; in one minute more the brig went down, and the ice was rolling wildly, as if in triumph, over the spot where she had disappeared.

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

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

"Look alive, men, with your poles," cried the captain, "and shove with a will!"

The "Ay, ay, sir," of the men was uttered with a heartiness that showed how powerfully this gleam of hope acted on their spirits; but a new damp was cast over them when, on gaining the open passage, they discovered that the bergs were not at rest, but were bearing down on the floe-ice with slow but awful momentum, and threatening to crush the ship between the two. Just then a low berg

came driving up from the southward, dashing the spray over its sides, and with its forehead ploughing up the smaller ice as if in scorn. A happy thought flashed across the captain's mind.

"Down the quarter boat," he cried.

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

"Cast an ice-anchor on that berg."

Peter Grim obeyed the order, and, with a swing that Hercules would have envied, planted it securely. In another moment the ship was following in the wake of this novel tug! It was a moment of great danger, for the bergs encroached on their narrow canal as they advanced, obliging them to brace the yards to clear the impending ice-walls, and they shaved the large berg so closely that the port quarter-boat would have been crushed if it had not been taken from the davits. Five minutes of such travelling brought them abreast of a grounded berg, to which they resolved to make fast. The order was given to cast off the rope. Away went their white tug on his race to the far north, and the ship swung round in safety under the lee of the berg, where the crew acknowledged with gratitude their merciful deliverance from imminent danger.

CHAPTER VII

New characters introduced—An old game under novel circumstances—
Remarkable appearances in the sky—O'Riley meets with a mishap.

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

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

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

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