

Wrecked, Not Lost

Or The Pilot and His Companions

Written in 1872

By Hon. Mrs. Dundas

[Chapter 1](#)

Archangel

Those who look at the map of Europe will perceive that the province of Archangel forms a large part of European Russia and that its shores are washed by the White Sea and the Arctic, or Frozen Ocean, whose waters remain frozen from September to June, thus forming an icy boundary to a country, the climate of which is consequently, for the greater part of the year, cold and rigorous in the extreme.

The season of spring is unknown in those dreary regions and the long and dark winter is succeeded only by a short and cheerless summer. It may, therefore, be imagined that vegetable productions are but scanty and that were it not for the animals which Providence has bestowed as it were in compensation, the inhabitants of such countries would lack every means of subsistence. Their short summer is passed in fishing and providing for the wants of the winter by the sale of the furs of the animals killed in hunting, which traffic forms the great resource of the inhabitants of the frozen and Polar Regions. The animals in such climates are generally covered with the rich fur, which not only protects them from the extreme cold, but adds greatly to their value. The reindeer is the chief treasure of the natives of those countries and the source of most of their scanty comforts. So numerous and important are the uses of these animals that there are few in those regions who do not possess them, they are in fact substitutes for the horse, the cow, and the sheep. Harnessed to a sledge, the reindeer bounds over frozen lakes and rivers and pursues his course, by night as well as by day "o'er trackless paths of snow." Of their milk, cheese is made. Their flesh supplies food, whilst their skin furnishes clothes and bedding and even covering for tents.

Considering the unfavorable position of this part of Russia, it is not surprising that it is but thinly peopled and this would be still more the case were it not that many Laplanders and Samoyeds from time to time settle there.

The town of Archangel is the capital of the province and was at one time the only seaport of Russia, and remained so till the formation of the docks at Kronstadt and the foundation of St. Petersburg in 1703. The passage to it was discovered by the English in 1553. It is situated on a low and marshy spot on the Dvina, which river empties itself into the White Sea. The town is built entirely of wood and contains about 15,000 inhabitants. Its harbor is the great depot of the trade with Siberia and is also frequented by a vast number of Dutch, English, and German vessels, drawn there to trade in furs, metals, and timber for ship building, chiefly larch, as this wood by constant immersion in water becomes almost as hard as stone. Buildings constructed of larch timber are said to have remained sound 200 years. Of such are some of the beams of the old palaces in Venice, still as sound as when first laid for the foundation of that "city of the sea." The harbor of Archangel is also the resort of ships engaged in the whale fishery on the coasts of Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla. There is also a considerable dockyard for the construction and fitting out of vessels of war as well as trade. And thus in spite of the severity of the climate and the sterility of the soil, the people of Archangel find not only the means of subsistence, but even of wealth and obtain from those who visit their shores, not only money, but the produce of more favored countries in exchange for the few but valuable productions of their dreary land.

Chapter 2

Ozaroff and His Son Alexis

About forty years ago, amongst the wealthy merchants of this Russian seaport, the name of George Ozaroff stood highest. His prudence and integrity had not only secured him a considerable fortune, but the respect and esteem of all with whom he had to do.

Ozaroff had one son, the object of all his cares and hopes. Tall, strong, and well-built, the young Alexis had been early hardened to the difficulties of his native climate, and gave promise not only of health and strength, but of a disposition calculated to form a character such as his father desired in his son. Considerable care had been bestowed on his education and though destined to succeed to his father's business, he had been instructed in other branches of learning besides those connected with it, as Ozaroff rightly judged that no learning or information comes amiss to those who occupy positions of wealth or trust, and that a cultivated mind exalts even more than riches. In addition to this, Alexis had been early taught to fear God, to love his neighbor, and to respect the laws of his country.

Hitherto, Alexis had pursued his studies alone and had been the sole object of the tender care and consideration of his parents, but about this period, Ozaroff lost a brother, who died leaving an only child, a son nearly Alexis' age, and who having some time before been deprived of his mother, was

now an orphan. The good merchant hesitated not to receive the fatherless boy into his house, but at once determined to supply to him the place of the father he had lost and to let him share the advantages he was able to bestow on his own son. Ivan, therefore, became an inmate of his uncle's house and shared in all his cousin's studies and pursuits. The boy's disposition was good and affectionate and in natural abilities, he was superior to Alexis, added to which, he applied with diligence to his tasks.

When not engaged in study, he was thoughtless and easily influenced by the attraction of the moment. Few things made any lasting impression on him and though unhappy if he gave pain to those he loved, he was continually doing so from want of thought and from his habit of yielding to present temptation, regardless of consequences. As is common with such characters, his temper was kind and amiable, and the charm of his good humor and gaiety unfortunately procured for him a degree of indulgence that served only to encourage his natural instability of character and recklessness of all but the gratification of the moment. Alexis yielded but too easily to his new companion, who generally sought his own gratification, rather than the wishes of those to whom he owed obedience and submission.

The following tale will show into what unforeseen dangers and troubles such conduct may lead those who pursue it.

Chapter 3

Predilection for the Sea

Ozaroff, as we have seen, destined his son for the career which he had himself pursued with credit and success, and had conducted his education with the view to qualify him for it. Ivan shared in the instructions given to his cousin, but it was soon evident that when at liberty to follow his inclinations, his taste led him to the harbor rather than to his uncle's warehouses. He took delight in conversing with the sailors on board the different vessels lying in the harbor, became familiar with their various purposes and destinations, and acquired some knowledge of the duties of sailors, pilot, and captain. With his usual inconsideration, he sought to engage Alexis in the same pursuit and to make him share his taste for a sea life, though he well knew it would defeat his uncle's intentions were he to succeed.

By degrees, Alexis yielded to his cousin's persuasions and example, and ere long lost all interest in anything connected with his father's business. Ozaroff soon perceived the change, though for a time he remained ignorant of the cause, but Alexis had no secrets with his father, and in answer to his inquiries readily confessed his wish to acquire such information as might fit him for a sea life and the

desire he felt for visiting other countries. Ozaroff was too prudent to betray the vexation he felt at this avowal or to offer any decided opposition. He contented himself with representing to his son the hardships and dangers of a sailor's life, and contrasted it with the comforts and advantages of the one he himself occupied.

Unfortunately, Alexis had lost his mother a short time after Ivan had become an inmate of his father's house, or possibly her persuasions, joined to Ozaroff's representations, might have counteracted his cousin's influence. As it was, Alexis persisted in his desire to enter the navy with his cousin and his father determined in consequence on placing the willful youths in the Naval College at St. Petersburg. He knew that in that establishment they would not only be instructed in nautical science, but in every other branch of a sound and practical education, so that if eventually his son relinquished his present project and complied with his wishes, he would still have gained by a residence at one of the best colleges in the capital of the great Russian empire. The good merchant was besides the more inclined to adopt this course, from the idea that his son's character might be benefited by mixing with others of his own age and by being subjected to the control and discipline of a public college instead of following uncontrolled his own pleasures and pursuits at home.

Chapter 4

St. Petersburg

Ozaroff's decision was received with unmixed satisfaction by Alexis and his cousin, and they prepared with delight for their journey to St. Petersburg. They were accompanied by Ozaroff, who spent some days in showing them the wonders of the Russian capital ere he placed them in their future residence.

The imperial city of Petersburg rose from small beginnings. In the year 1703, Peter the Great began it. He built a small hut for himself and a few wretched hovels upon a low marshy spot of ground near the river Neva. In 1711, the emperor, with his own hand, laid the foundation of a brick house and in less than nine years from the time the wooden hovels had been erected, the seat of empire was transferred from Moscow to this place. This city now ranks among the foremost of the capitals of Europe on account of the number, size, solidity, and elegance of its public buildings, most of which are built of marble or of masses of white granite. One of the most striking of these is the Admiralty. It is one-third of a mile in length, and is the gigantic center where meet the three principal streets of St. Petersburg. Ozaroff with his two young companions visited in succession the imperial, or winter palace, the Kazan church, built on the plan of St. Peter's at Rome, the church of St. Isaac, with its vast porticos and columns fifty-six feet in height—formed each of one solid piece of granite—and the cathedral, where, amongst the tombs of the mighty czars, is the superb mausoleum of Peter the

Great himself and of Catherine.

Lastly, they visited the little wooden hut occupied by Peter whilst engaged in constructing his future capital. It consists only of three apartments. Near this humble dwelling there still remains a tree to which, at about the height of ten feet, is nailed a small image of the virgin. When the great founder of St. Petersburg inquired to what height the floods with which the locality was yearly visited reached, the image was pointed out to him and it was believed that for a moment he contemplated the abandonment of his gigantic undertaking. It, however, went on and in a few years, Peter held his court where once had been a low marshy island—in summer covered with mud and in winter a frozen pool.

It was not wonderful that Alexis and Ivan forgot all they had left behind in the interest of so much that was new and wonderful, or that they rejoiced over the decision which had led to so much pleasure and which so far increased their desire to visit other countries.

Chapter 5

The Naval College

Having seen all that the time permitted, Ozaroff hastened to place the youths where they were to pass the next three years and then took his leave of them with an earnest injunction to attend diligently to their studies, and to continue in the fear of God and in the path of piety and virtue. Alexis and Ivan listened with respect and attention to the good merchant's parting words, and tears stood in their eyes as he solemnly committed them to the protection of God.

Henceforward, time passed pleasantly enough, and the two cousins made good progress in their studies. The closest friendship continued to subsist between them. The few scrapes which Alexis got into were wholly to be attributed to the unhappy frailty with which he adopted his cousin's views and opinions, and allowed Ivan's will to gain the ascendancy over him.

At the termination of the three years, the young men returned to their native town, taking with them more than one certificate of good conduct and general improvement.

Ozaroff rejoiced at his solitary home being once more enlivened by the presence of his son and his nephew, and it was settled they should take some rest and relaxation after the long period of diligent study in which they had been unremittingly engaged.

Alexis and Ivan passed a great part of the leisure time afforded them in visiting the various ships lying in the harbor or at anchor off Archangel, and where they found constant interest owing to the

difference to be found amongst vessels coming from different countries, each of which had their peculiar build, freight, crews, and cargo.

The English ships were, however, those which chiefly attracted their attention. The superiority of their construction, the order observed on board, and the dexterity of the sailors, all combined to excite their admiration and gave rise to a desire to make their first voyage on board an English ship.

Ivan had a prospect of beginning his career in a Russian vessel, which was preparing for sea, but would not be completed for some time. No decided step had been taken respecting Alexis, his father still hoping he might be induced to relinquish his desire of going to sea. At times, the young man seemed to hesitate and to be inclined to yield to his father's wishes, then again Ivan's influence prevailed.

Well would it have been for him had he listened to the advice of a father, rather than to that of a thoughtless and willful companion.

Chapter 6

The Rash Decision

Things were in this state when the two young men became acquainted with an English captain, whose ship was lying at anchor off Archangel. He had spent his life on the sea and had been engaged in several voyages of discovery. His companionship and conversation were, therefore, exactly suited to the taste of Ivan and his cousin. They were constantly in his company and on board his ship, which was built and fitted with everything requisite for a voyage in the polar seas.

The project of finding a northwest passage to Asia had at different times occupied the attention of the maritime nations of Europe. England had as usual ever been foremost in any scheme likely either to advance knowledge or to benefit mankind. The reports of the captains of the ships employed in the northern whale fishery, who all concurred in representing that at certain seasons the seas of the Arctic regions were sufficiently free from ice to be open and accessible to those bent on passing the icy barrier which for ages had obstructed those gloomy latitudes, had lately given rise to many adventurous schemes and renewed the hope of finding a passage between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, or a navigable route by the north of Asia.

Accordingly, in the year 1818, England fitted out two expeditions. One destined for the discovery of the northwest passage. The other to attempt a passage across the Pole. Besides these public expeditions, many were the private adventurers who from time to time started on the same bold and perilous course, influenced either by ambition or by the hope of securing the rewards offered by the

English government for any discovery of importance.

Amongst the latter was the captain of the *Juno*, with whom the two cousins had formed an intimacy. His knowledge and experience gained their admiration, whilst his conduct and manners won their esteem. In an evil hour, they determined on proposing to accompany him on the voyage he was about to undertake. It was not surprising that the captain received the proposal with pleasure. The absence of Ozaroff appeared, however, likely to interfere with the project. He had left home on business connected with his commerce. The captain waited only for a reasonable wind, and should that arise, every hour would be of consequence. He was anxious to take the young men with him, especially Ivan, whose bold and enterprising character, added to his natural abilities and superior education, promised to make him a valuable addition to the crew of the *Juno*.

Losing sight, therefore, of everything but his own interest, the captain used every persuasion to induce Ivan and Alexis to decide on accompanying him without waiting the merchant's return. Blinded by selfishness, he hesitated not to urge the young men to take so rash and unworthy a course, telling them the voyage would be but for three months and that the joy at their return would more than repay Ozaroff for any anxiety he might suffer during their absence.

Ivan readily yielded to the evil counsels of his new friend. Alexis hesitated for awhile. His conscience told him that he would be committing an act of disobedience and ingratitude to one of the best of fathers. But finally, the persuasions of Ivan and the captain triumphed over his scruples—as usual he suffered himself to be led by his cousin. The fatal step was taken and the young men, forgetful of every duty, resolved on following their own inclinations and the advice of a comparative stranger.

A letter explaining their conduct was left for Ozaroff, pleading all that had been urged by the captain of the *Juno*, expressing their hope of a speedy return and their sorrow at having to depart without the permission and blessing they would so gladly have obtained had it been possible.

Was it not the culpable indulgence of their own wills that alone made it so? And could they look for the blessing of God when they willfully deprived themselves of that of an earthly parent and in direct opposition to the commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

[Chapter 7](#)

The Voyage

The anchor was raised, a fresh wind filled the sails, and the *Juno* glided rapidly through the water. It was not long before the town of Archangel appeared but as a speck in the distance. A little longer

and only the faint line of the Russian coast could be distinguished, and at last, nothing could be discerned but the boundless ocean and the cloudless sky in the horizon. It was not without emotion that our young adventurers found that they were fast leaving all that they had hitherto cared for, and that every hour was taking them further from their home and country, and the protection which unhappily is seldom valued till it is lost. For a time, however, the novelty of their position, the various objects of interest on board, and the bustle and excitement of the first days of a voyage, prevented serious reflection or apprehension as to the consequences of their rash conduct.

The most perfect order and regularity prevailed on board. Every order was obeyed with promptitude and exactness. The captain knew how to combine strictness with kindness, and the sailors looked up to him with confidence and respect.

The good ship being fairly on her way, there was necessarily more leisure than during the first days of the voyage. The captain rightly thought that it was not expedient to allow his two young friends to have any time unoccupied. He therefore took every opportunity of giving them the information he had himself acquired by long experience and interesting them by detailed accounts of his different voyages and escapes from many dangers.

Alexis could not, however, stifle the voice of conscience. He tenderly loved his good father and the thought of all he would feel on finding that his son had abandoned him, constantly rose before him and caused him many a bitter pang. These reflections came, alas! too late, but they are the sure results of any deviation from the path of duty.

Ivan, on his part, was not altogether without feelings of remorse, and the thought of the ungrateful return he had made for all his uncle's kindness, would bring the tears into his eyes, but with him every serious thought vanished as rapidly as it came. As the faintest breeze dissipates the light clouds, which for an instant only obscure the sun, so did every good impression disappear from his heart ere it had time to bring forth fruit.

We will now for a time leave the young adventurers and return to Archangel.

On the receipt of a letter from Alexis, expressing their strong desire to sail with the captain of the *Juno*, the merchant hastened his return, hoping by his remonstrances and advice to dissuade his son from a project which would defeat all his views respecting him. As regarded Ivan, his uncle had no intention of opposing his wishes. He was only anxious to commit him to the care and guidance of one who would conscientiously discharge the trust. Alas! on reaching his home the good merchant found only the letter informing him of the young men's departure. His surprise and distress may be more easily imagined than described. Every plan was defeated and every hope crushed. He at once guessed that his son had yielded to the persuasions of others and he formed no favorable opinion of the captain, and rightly blamed him for being a party to so culpable a step.

The evil was, however, without a remedy and the unhappy father found comfort only in imploring pardon and protection for his erring children, and in the hope that no evil might befall them in consequence of their misconduct.

Chapter 8

Nova Zembla

Whilst Ozaroff was left to mourn in solitude over the disobedience of his son and nephew, the ship which had borne them from their home pursued its course with every advantage of wind and weather, and reached in safety the coast of Nova Zembla. The two large islands of which Nova Zembla consists are situated in the Frozen Ocean, and are separated from the continent of Europe by the Straits of Waygatz, and from each other by the Straits of Matotchkin. Our voyagers viewed with no slight curiosity this desolate and almost uninhabited spot, which during the long winter is almost surrounded by icebergs and where the snow lies six feet deep on the ground.

The southern part appeared low and flat, but higher up they discerned a chain of somewhat lofty mountains, the summits of which were covered with eternal snow. On its shores they could perceive numerous herds of the walrus or sea-horse, and in the rocky bays an immense number of birds. These dreary and uninhabited isles are only visited during the short summer of three months by the Russians, for the purpose of hunting the beautiful white fox, the white bear, the walrus, and the wild swan and goose, both of which are much valued on account of their rich and ample plumage and a lining of soft down beneath, which forms a valuable article of traffic. These islands are almost always covered with snow, under which nothing grows but a little moss and lichen.

During three months of the year, the sun never rises upon the dreary land and the continued gloom is only from time to time dissipated by the appearance of the aurora borealis. This splendid phenomenon, so seldom seen in the middle of Europe, is of frequent occurrence in the arctic and Antarctic regions, dispelling by the bright and matchless luster of its rays the gloom in which the northern world would otherwise be wrapped during the long and dreary winter. It is in these latitudes only that the beautiful meteor is seen in all its wondrous grandeur, and often its varied streams of light of every shade of the richest red, blue, yellow, green, and violet, keep up an almost incessant illumination. It has been stated that at times the brilliancy of the aurora is sufficient to dim the luster of the stars, if not altogether eclipse them.

Leaving the shores of these islands, the *Juno* continued her course towards the bleak confines of the Northern Pole, advancing nearer and nearer to it through the stormy waters of the Frozen Ocean, which, however, in the months of June and July scarcely merits that name, for as the sun at that period continues 24 hours above the horizon, the heat is excessive. Alexis and his cousin were well aware that during the summer solstice, the sun never sets to the regions surrounding the North Pole. They were equally aware that during the winter months, the bright orb never rises on these dark and ice-bound territories, but they had no wish to experience this in their own persons.

Before leaving Archangel on his perilous voyage, the captain had taken care to secure the services of a Russian pilot, an old and experienced sailor, well used to those northern seas and to the peculiar and dangerous changes to which those who navigate them are exposed.

Alexis and Ivan beguiled many an hour by conversing with their countryman and gleaning much valuable information from the experience he had gained in his hazardous calling.

Time passed on and the captain perceived that the sun now began to shorten his visits, thus giving signs of his approaching departure. His full orb was still seen each day, but the captain knew that it would ere long rest only on the horizon and that the time was not far distant when for those regions it would neither rise nor set.

He at once relinquished every idea of continuing his voyage and thought only of returning to Archangel or of finding some harbor where they might safely pass the winter.

On communicating his determination to the pilot, he found he was about to urge the same course, and that moreover he was somewhat anxious that no time should be lost, dreading lest the winter should overtake them where they would be exposed to the terrific storms which sweep those seas at that season.

Chapter 9

The Tempest

The pilot's fears were not groundless. A heavy gale sprang up from the south-east, driving the vessel in the very direction the captain and pilot wished to avoid. It presently increased to a tempest and ere the crew had time to execute the captain's orders, the sails were torn to shreds by the fierce blast, and the masts and rigging bent and cracked as it swept over the ship—tossed as she was, at one moment high on the surging waves, and the next sunk in their deep and foaming trough. The crew vainly endeavored to make head against the storm. Their utmost efforts were useless and the unhappy ship was a prey to the wild fury of the winds and waves, and threatened with destruction either by being driven on some rock or dashed in pieces by the icy masses which were now tossing around her. Dark clouds overspread the sky and not even a star gave its faint light to guide the unhappy mariners. The wind, too, suddenly changed, which not only increased the danger by bringing down huge masses of ice upon the ship, but caused also such intense cold that most of the crew were driven to seek a temporary refuge in the cabins, there to await the issue of the tempest.

And where were Alexis and Ivan during these long hours of danger and terror? Side by side in one of the cabins they awaited their fate in silent dismay! In vain they watched the captain's countenance

in the hope of discovering whether there was yet a chance, but neither by word or look did he betray the hopes or fears which agitated him. For three days the storm raged with desperate fury and every hour their position became more perilous.

How greatly were the horrors of it augmented to our two young men by the bitter self-reproach which now assailed them. They looked upon it as the just punishment of their disobedience.

“Oh!” exclaimed Alexis, “why did we disregard my father’s wishes and so cruelly desert him? God will surely punish us by leaving us to perish, and if we perish here, my poor father will be forever ignorant of our fate, as well as of our sorrow and repentance.”

Ivan felt even more acutely, and accused himself not only of ingratitude towards his uncle, but also of having been the cause of his cousin’s misconduct and of having led him, as it were, to destruction.

The captain guessed what must be the feelings of the two unhappy young men and in all probability shared their remorse. Late on the third day, these gloomy thoughts were suddenly interrupted by a shock so violent that all believed the ship would never resist it.

“May God have mercy upon us!” exclaimed the captain, “for without His help, we must perish.”

Paralyzed with terror, Alexis and Ivan felt as if they scarcely dared invoke the mercy of the Most High. This feeling, however, lasted but for a moment, the next they sank upon their knees and prayed for pardon and for deliverance from the terrible danger which threatened them.

Chapter 10

Icebergs

The state of all on board was indeed dreadful. Wrapped in profound darkness, the crew listened in despair to the howling of the storm, the roar of the wild waves, and the blows of the icy masses knocking violently against the vessel, each and all menacing it with destruction.

One shock, more violent than the first, shook the vessel from stem to stern, throwing most of the crew off their legs. The ship then rose as if lifted by some mighty power, and in another second seemed to sink with a cracking noise deep into some abyss, where for the moment she rocked to and fro, and then all was still and motionless. All now believed that the ship had struck and that nothing but instant destruction awaited them.

In this terrible crisis, the captain lost neither courage nor presence of mind. Accompanied by the

pilot, he made his way to the hold to ascertain what injury the ship had sustained. To their great relief, they found that all was safe in that quarter. They remarked also that the extreme violence of the storm had in some measure abated. They hastened to the deck and ere long, they could discern a few stars appearing as the dark and heavy clouds rolled away. It was soon apparent to the captain and his companion that the vessel had not struck upon a rock, but upon icebergs, which seemed to form, as it were, the boundary of a vast mass of ice, whilst on one side there still appeared the open sea, but upon which they judged by the noise against the ship large masses of ice were tossing about.

The captain hastened to inform the crew of the hazardous position of the vessel. Her masts and rigging destroyed, and her sails rent in fragments, they saw at once the impossibility of regaining the open sea, added to which it was apparent that the vessel was hourly becoming hemmed in by the ice, thus precluding every hope of deliverance. It seemed as if they had escaped a sudden and violent death, only to perish by a slow and lingering one. Some even ventured to murmur that they had escaped and that their sufferings were thus prolonged.

The captain felt keenly the responsibility which had devolved upon him, especially as regarded Alexis and Ivan, and deeply did he repent of the wrong he had done by persuading them to act in opposition to the will of Ozaroff.

It now became necessary to attend to the immediate wants of the crew, who were exhausted by fatigue, hunger, and thirst. All immediate danger being past, the captain, assisted by his two young friends, distributed such refreshment as could be easily prepared, and then enjoyed that repose of which all stood in need, resolving meanwhile, himself to consider what course it would be best to pursue to secure the safety of the ship and her crew.

Chapter 11

The Consultation

The pilot knew that they could be at no great distance from Spitzbergen, and as day began to dawn, the captain endeavored by the help of a telescope to discover any signs of their being near land. The ship was not seriously damaged and might therefore afford them shelter and protection, not only from the inclemencies of the climate, but also from the attacks of the polar bear, the most formidable of the inhabitants of the Arctic regions and which, during the long winter, roams about in search of prey along the frozen shores, or on mountains of ice at a considerable distance from land.

The ship was also well-stocked with provisions.

As day more fully dawned, the captain thought he distinguished what appeared more like

mountain peaks than icebergs. Should it prove so, he felt they would have reason to rejoice that, instead of being in the wide and ice-bound ocean, they were near some land, however desolate and barren. He hastened to impart his hopes to the pilot, whose previous reckoning as to their position made him readily concur in the captain's opinion that they were not far from some island or continent. They at once determined to dispatch some of the crew on an expedition, in order to ascertain if their ideas were correct, and if there was any prospect of their being able to effect a landing and obtain shelter should the ship be injured by the masses of ice which were now floating around her, and by which she might at any moment be crushed and rendered wholly useless.

The sailors, having been refreshed by food and rest, the captain summoned them around him and thus addressed them:

"It is not needful for me to explain to you the difficulties and perils of our position. It may not, however, be desperate, but separated as we are from the world, we can only look for help from God and our own endeavors. Let us not give way to discouragement or despair, but rather let us exert ourselves. I have reason to believe that we are not far from land and if we could reach it, we might pass the winter in safety, hoping that the return of spring and summer would bring us deliverance. I intend to employ some of you in the endeavor to discover if we really are near any land and shall expect that those who remain behind will await the result in patience and with an endeavor to reconcile themselves to what God has seen fit to appoint."

Somewhat cheered and encouraged by this speech, the poor sailors readily promised all that their captain required. The pilot was the first to offer himself for the proposed expedition. Alexis and Ivan entreated to be allowed to accompany him. The pilot seconded their request. He knew they were young, strong, and courageous, and that they would, moreover, be readily guided by his advice and experience. He was therefore glad to have them as his companions.

Chapter 12

Search for Land

The captain was satisfied with this arrangement and set to work at once to get all ready for the pilot and his two young friends. Especial care was taken to provide them with such clothing as would protect them from the severe cold, should they find no shelter for the night. Each was to carry a long coat lined with fur, a stick pointed with iron, a gun, and a strong knife and hatchet suspended to their belts, with a good supply of powder and balls. They carried in addition, provisions enough to last three days, consisting of salt meat, biscuits, and a bottle of brandy. When a telescope and some rosin torches were added, their equipment was complete.

It was agreed that should they reach land, they were to light a fire on some high point and that the signal should be answered from the ship. Should they discover any place at all likely to afford them a residence for the winter, they were to send up rockets which they were to take for that purpose, and which would be a signal for the captain to dispatch some of the crew to join them and prepare for the removal of the remainder, together with the provisions and cargo of the vessel.

When all was ready, the little party started, five hours before daylight. The night was calm and bright, and stars shone with the brilliancy peculiar to those latitudes, reflecting their rays on the frozen masses around, thus affording a sufficient light for the travellers.

The cold was intense and their progress slow and laborious—the ice being here and there thrown up in large and rugged masses, whilst in other parts, their way was obstructed by ponds or pools not yet frozen over.

After some hours' walking, our travellers perceived a dark line, as of mountain ridges, and pressing forward with renewed vigor, they ere long reached the object of their pursuit. It was indeed land and the poor wanderers, forgetful of their own distant land, of all that they had left and lost, thought only of this temporary refuge. For the moment, their hearts were filled with hope and they saw not the evils which awaited them in that desolate and dreary country.

Chapter 13

Spitzbergen

What was the land upon which they were thus cast? All around seemed but a picture of nature in her most gloomy and dismal aspect. No sound reached their ears but the occasional crash caused by the collision of huge masses of ice. No trace of man, save fragments of vessels thrown by the rough waves on the desolate and uninhabited coast, where no human eye could look with sympathy on these proofs that some had found a grave in the cold waters of the frozen sea. And yet the pilot and his companions were thankful to find themselves there, rather than on board their ship, exposed as it was to hourly peril. They advanced some little way in order to seek a spot where they might light a fire and prepare some refreshment after their toilsome walk.

The pilot was correct in his conjecture that the land thus discovered was a part of Spitzbergen, and as our voyagers were thus thrown on its shores, it may not be uninteresting to give some account of it before proceeding with our narrative. This insular territory, which consists of one large island and several smaller ones, is the most remote of all known islands of the icy sea. It was discovered by Sir Hugh Willoughby in the year 1533, who supposed it to be a part of the western continent. It owes the name of Spitzbergen, or sharp mountains, to the many sharp pointed and rocky mountains with which

it abounds. For ten months of the year, the ground is frozen several feet deep and in some parts it appears to consist of ice which never melts. The winter is not only most severe, but extremely boisterous. During the short summer, the heat is unbearable.

The animals found in these regions are necessarily few, but wherever animal life can exist is to be found the reindeer, who can subsist upon the moss and lichen which he digs from under the snow in winter and the short grass found in the valleys in summer. The abundance of fish attracts various amphibious animals to the neighborhood of the seas round Spitzbergen. Amongst these, one of the most remarkable is the walrus or morse, which is supposed to feed on shell-fish and marine vegetables which adhere to the bottom of the sea, and which it digs up by means of the two teeth or tusks which project from the upper jaw and which are nearly two feet in length. These tusks are of beautiful white bone, almost equal to ivory. These singular creatures abound in the icy seas, where they lie sleeping on the shores or on the floating ice. Their peculiar appearance is supposed to have given rise to the report of mermaids being seen in the northern seas.

Seals, which are found in most quarters of the globe, exist in vast numbers in these frigid regions, and of various species. And last, though not least, the common Greenland whale, which though met with in other parts of the world, abounds chiefly in the seas of the northern Arctic circle, and in pursuit of which these coasts are yearly frequented by ships from Russia, as well as other countries, during the summer months.

Discouraging as was the aspect of the country on which they found themselves, the knowledge that it was occasionally visited by their countrymen afforded some ray of hope to Alexis and his cousin. They endeavored to trust to the pilot's assurance that no year passed without vessels from Archangel anchoring off these coasts. Could they therefore but secure food and shelter for the winter, they felt they could resign themselves to their lot and await with patience their deliverance from their cold and dreary prison.

[Chapter 14](#)

The Cavern

The pilot and his young companions, having succeeded in finding a spot where they could light a fire, quickly prepared the food they so much needed. Their repast ended, they determined on pursuing their expedition in the hope of finding some place from whence a signal could be seen by the captain and the crew. Providing themselves, therefore, with a few pieces of driftwood which were lying about, they resumed their search and soon found themselves in a sort of ravine, through which the pilot conjectured a stream ran, as the frozen surface beneath their feet sounded crisp and hollow,

as though water ran below. Were his conjectures right, he thought it possible they might discover some traces of their fellow-creatures. He knew that the whale-fishers are glad to land where they can find running water, as it enables them to cut up and clean the fish they have caught. And indeed it is by such visitors only that the dismal solitude of Spitzbergen is now disturbed. As the path they were pursuing through the ravine seemed gradually to ascend, they hoped to reach some spot sufficiently elevated from whence to give the appointed signal.

The pilot and Alexis were presently startled by an exclamation from Ivan, who was a little in advance, which was caused by his having discovered what was apparently the entrance of a cavern at some little height above them. They were not long in reaching the part of rock which formed as it were a platform in front of the mouth of the cave. Ivan would at once have rushed into it, but was withheld by the pilot, who suggested that it might possibly be the retreat of the white bear or some other equally dangerous occupant. He therefore discharged his gun into the cavern. No sound was heard in reply save the echo as it reverberated through the darkness. Then all was silent and on venturing into the opening, they found it large and spacious, and apparently capable of affording a shelter for themselves and those who yet remained in the ship.

It seemed, as far as they could judge by the dim and uncertain light, to extend back into the rock farther than the eye could penetrate. The walls were dry and smooth and the ground appeared covered with a fine grey sand.

[Chapter 15](#)

The Signal

“God be praised!” exclaimed Alexis, “We have found what we sought and here we and all our companions may be able to pass the winter. There will be room enough here to stow away all that we can bring from the ship.”

“And now,” said the pilot, “let us lose no time in communicating our fortunate discovery to our poor companions in the ship. We must try to reach the top of this rock, which promises to afford us a safe retreat.” With infinite labor and toil, they succeeded in gaining the summit and found it was of some extent. There was still daylight enough to enable them to distinguish the features of the scene now presented to their view. It was not calculated to raise their spirits. Nothing met the eye but a dreary extent of snow and ice, here and there broken by mountain peaks clad in the same monotonous covering. Towards the sea, all was one dazzling mass of ice. The only object that met their gaze and helped to raise their drooping spirits was the ship, which with the help of the telescope they could distinctly discern from the spot where they now stood, and which they hailed as they would have done

the sight of home. They at once proceeded to pile up the wood which they had dragged along with them and with beating hearts set fire to the pile. It soon blazed bright and high and ere long a bright flame close to the vessel answered their signal fire, which the two young men welcomed with a shout of delight.

The pilot then discharged the three rockets, which were to announce that they had found a place of refuge. Three shots from the ship replied and they had the satisfaction of knowing they had given hope and encouragement to their companions in misfortune.

They then hastily retraced their steps towards the cavern, preparatory to that rest they had so well earned.

Chapter 16

The First Night in Spitzbergen

By the light of their torches, the pilot and his two young companions retraced their steps to the cavern, where they proposed to pass the night and where they hoped to find some degree of protection from the intense cold.

As night set in, a thick fog obscured the horizon and the temperature became damp and comparatively mild. The snow yielded under their feet, as though a thaw was about to take place. Before they reached the cavern, a distant rumbling noise caught their ear, which was plainly distinguished amidst the extreme stillness which reigned around. The pilot expressed some uneasiness, as he foresaw in these signs an approaching change in the weather. He knew from long experience how sudden and violent are the storms with which these regions are occasionally visited at the close of the short summer and ere winter has assumed his full sway.

A thaw is frequently a forerunner of such tempests. On entering the cavern, their first care was to light a large fire at the mouth of it. They knew this would protect them not only against cold, but from the approach of the white bear. They had again recourse to their salt meat and biscuits for their evening meal ere they retired to rest. Alexis and Ivan were soon asleep, but anxious thoughts and fears kept the pilot from following their example. He had not communicated his apprehensions to his companions, but he dreaded what might be the issue of the impending storm, both for those left in the ship and any who might have left it on seeing the signal.

From time to time, the same low, rumbling noise which had been heard the preceding evening reached his ears—the sure herald of a storm. Presently, gusts of wind drove the smoke of the fire full into the cavern, almost threatening its occupants with suffocation. He quickly aroused the two

cousins. All three advanced toward the entrance, not only to avoid the stifling smoke, which filled their place of refuge, but to contemplate the now raging tempest. Dark clouds obscured the heavens, the wind howled around, and drove torrents of rain and snow against the mouth of the cave. Whilst in the distance, they could distinguish, even amidst the roar of the wild storm, the terrible crashing of icebergs and the hollow sound of the mighty waves as they beat on the frozen shore.

It was a scene to strike terror and dismay into the strongest heart.

“Thank God, we have found shelter!” exclaimed Alexis. “What would have become of us had we been exposed to its fury?”

“It is true that we are comparatively safe here,” replied Ivan, “but what will become of our poor friends in the ship or of those who may have left it to join us?”

“We can only pray that God will protect them,” said the pilot, but it was evident that his fears outweighed his hopes. The night passed between hope and fear, till at length, exhausted with anxiety and watching, they again retired into their gloomy abode, and wrapping their fur cloaks around them, went to sleep whilst the storm yet raged without.

Chapter 17

The Next Day

On awaking from a short and uneasy sleep, the three unhappy mariners found that the violence of the storm was past. Little more was to be heard but the distant murmur of the still angry waves or the moaning of the blast as it died away in the distance. The moon and stars now shone bright and clear. Their first anxiety was to visit the spot where they had lit the signal fire and from whence they could obtain a more extensive view. They were, however, forced to await the return of day.

Gladly did they hail the bright tints in the horizon which announced that the orb of day was about to dispel the darkness of the long and weary night.

Had their thoughts been less painfully occupied, they might have paused to contemplate the effect of the red arch as it gradually increased and tinged with its glowing hues the icy peaks of the surrounding mountains or the crystalized point of icebergs nearly on a level with the highest hills. Regardless of the peculiarity of the scene, they passed forward to reach the summit of the rock. It was no easy task. A sharp frost had rapidly followed on the rain and snow, and all was a sheet of ice.

When at last they stood where they had been the previous night, what was the scene that met

their anxious gaze! The waste of ice they had traversed between the ship and land had in a great measure disappeared. Large flakes of ice were now floating on the stormy waves, which here and there were dashing furiously against huge icebergs and driving them upon the desolate coast.

The pilot raised the telescope towards the spot where they had beheld the ship encircled with ice, but no object now met his eye. In an agony of terror, he gave the telescope to Alexis, desiring him to see if he could discern any object in the distance.

Alas! no ship was there!

Heavy waves were rolling over the place where she had been seen the previous evening, imprisoned by the frozen waters. The unhappy men gazed in mute despair, whilst briny tears burst from their eyes.

“What has become of them?” exclaimed Alexis. “If the ship has perished in the storm, they must be lost too. Is it possible they may have been driven on toward some other land where they may perhaps find a refuge?”

“Our poor companions!” said Ivan, “Shall we ever behold them again? If any left the ship after seeing our signal, they will surely have perished in that fearful storm.”

“Let us hope,” said the pilot, “that the captain may have delayed sending off the crew till morning and that none left the ship last night. It is possible too that the vessel, on being released from the ice, may have been driven against some part of the very land on which we now are and that we may yet meet again.”

“And if we do not,” replied Alexis, “what will become of us during the long and terrible winter? We had better have perished with them, than die here alone of cold and hunger.”

“My young friends,” said the pilot, “we must not despair. We have health and strength, and with the blessing of God we may hope to obtain all that is necessary to support us through the winter. We are used to cold and fatigue, and instead of murmuring, let us endeavor to bear with courage and patience what God has seen fit to appoint for us.”

The young men heard these words in silence, but mentally resolved to follow the advice thus given them.

[Chapter 18](#)

The Ravine

Anxious as they were to economize the little stock of fuel they possessed, they yet determined on lighting a fire on the summit of the rock for the chance of its serving as a guide to any of their companions who might have left the ship previous to the tempest, or to such as might have been thrown on the island supposing the ship to have perished in the gale. This precaution taken, they returned with sad hearts to the cavern.

It was now necessary to adopt some measures, not only to secure their safety, but to provide for their actual subsistence. Their small supply of food was nearly exhausted and could not last them more than another day. How were they to procure more?

The prospect was indeed appalling! All around announced that winter had set in and the few birds met with in these regions had probably migrated at its approach. Flocks of wild geese and swans, winging their way southward, have often afforded a warning to the mariners of the Arctic seas that the long night of winter was drawing near, and their absence now was a bad omen to our hapless adventurers. It was essential for them to go in search of some means of subsistence. Having therefore partaken of a scanty meal, they set out with the intention of penetrating further inland, taking with them all that remained of their provisions, and armed with their guns, knives, and hatchets.

The pilot clung to the hope of finding some hut or cabin, such as he knew the whale-fishers were in the habit of erecting during their short stay in these islands and where they not unfrequently left such things as they did not remain long enough to make use of, and which they did not consider worth the trouble of carrying away.

They commenced their walk through the ravine which lay deep between masses of rock that in places projected far over the path, obscuring the scanty light and so adding greatly to the difficulties of the way, rough and slippery as it was. With undaunted energy, they pursued their course during the greater part of the day. No living object crossed their path. As night approached, Ivan and Alexis proposed returning to the cavern for the night and waiting for another day to explore in a different direction. The pilot, however, decided that, exhausted as they were, it would be vain to think of reaching the cavern that night and fatal to think of repose where they were, without the possibility of lighting a fire to protect themselves from wild beasts, or the still greater danger of cold. He knew well that should sleep overtake them, exposed to the rigor of the night, they would probably never again open their eyes. They agreed, therefore, to continue their toilsome walk through the night, which fortunately was clear and bright, with the moon shining in its full splendor on the frozen world below.

[Chapter 19](#)

A Welcome Discovery

For three hours, the pilot and his companions pursued their way through the ravine, which was no easy task. In many parts, as has been remarked, their path was obstructed by pieces of rock which had fallen from the precipices above, whilst in other places the overhanging rocks nearly met, leaving but a dark and narrow passage between, making them fear that there might be no outlet, and that they might be forced to retrace their steps, when all their toil would prove fruitless. Well was it for the unhappy men that a deep sense of the overruling providence of God was well-rooted in their hearts, and that in the dark gloom of the frightful ravine, they were able to raise their thoughts to that Being who had saved them when "they were even at death's door," and the stormy waters of the sea had well-high overwhelmed them.

They continued their course for some time longer in silence, till they suddenly found they were descending a sharp declivity, which terminated in an open space surrounded by rocks, which formed a shelter on every side from the cold winds of that climate.

Whilst engaged in examining this singular spot, an exclamation from Ivan attracted the attention of his companions. He had struck his foot against a hard substance, which, on stooping to examine, he found to be a large piece of wood. His exclamation brought the others to his side. They eagerly searched for more and were not long in finding several larger pieces, apparently branches of some tree.

"God be praised!" said they, "We have now the means of warming ourselves and may venture to take some repose."

"I believe our discovery promises even more than you think," said the pilot. "These branches have belonged to some tree, which must have been dragged here by men. It is possible that some of our fellow-creatures may be on the island. At all events, it is clear that this spot has been visited at some period and we may find other traces of those who have been here." He then proposed that they should light a fire in this welcome place of rest and await the return of day in order to examine the place more closely.

Having done this and shared the small supply of food that was left, they prepared for repose, wrapping their cloaks around them and drawing close to the blazing pile, which it was agreed should be watched in turns by one of the party whilst the others slept.

Ivan was the first to watch. The night was still and calm. A slight sound presently caught his ear. He listened attentively and was soon convinced that what he heard was the trickling of water.

He aroused the sleepers and after a short search, they discovered, by the light of the cloudless moon, a clear stream issuing from the rock and falling into a kind of basin at the distance of a few feet.

"God has indeed been merciful to us," said the pilot. "This is better to drink than melted snow."

The pure stream was indeed most refreshing after being so long deprived of good water and having lived for many days on salt provisions. They then examined by the light of a torch the basin

into which the water fell. It appeared to be formed of stones placed with some method and regularity and was plainly the work of men's hands. This last discovery had a most beneficial effect on their spirits and again drawing around the burning wood, they gave themselves up to the repose which had been so agreeably interrupted.

Chapter 20

Further Discoveries

Accustomed to the severity of the climate of Archangel, our poor adventurers thought but little of passing a night in the open air, even in Spitzbergen. They slept and watched by turns, till warned of the return of day by the gorgeous tints that colored the points of the rocks as the sun rose. They are of peculiar beauty just before the long winter succeeds the unbroken daylight of summer and "holds o'er the glittering waste her starry night."

Anxious to make the most of the short period of day, they advanced through an opening which appeared to afford the only outlet to the encircled space, but they found this passage was soon terminated by a rock which ran directly across. Looking more closely, they perceived steps cut in the rock. Animated by fresh hopes at this new discovery, they quickly ascended the steps, which brought them to a path which apparently ran round the rock. This they followed till they reached the summit.

Had they been suddenly transported into another world, their astonishment could not have been greater.

The view was grand and beautiful in the extreme. Lofty rocks bounded the view on the east, above which the sun was now appearing and tinging the sky with hues of matchless splendor, and illuming a large valley, which on the north side was bounded by mountains whose high peaks seemed lost in the clouds above. A stream crossed the valley and emptied itself into a narrow bay or creek, formed by the waters of the frozen ocean. Here and there, patches of verdure appeared amongst the slight covering of snow, large drops of dew rested on these green spots and sparkled in the bright rays of the rising sun. The sky above was clear and blue, and the atmosphere appeared many degrees milder than that they had so lately left.

The pilot explained to his young friends the various causes of the contrast between the scene they now beheld and that which they had left behind. High mountains sheltered the valley from the severity of the north and east winds, whilst to the south it was open to the full power of the sun, whose scorching rays being reflected on the surrounding rocks of granite, a degree of heat accumulates which thus clothes with verdure a soil which for the greater part of the year is covered many feet deep with snow.

The summer being so recently ended, the valley yet partially retained this cheering aspect. Impatient to enter this land of promise, the three friends descended the precipitous path which led direct from the summit of the rock into the valley and which they felt sure had been trodden by some who, like themselves, had been cast on this desolate land.

The first object which attracted their attention was a quantity of wood or drift timber, which lay scattered on the shore of the small bay or gulf.

“You know,” said the pilot, “that a great part of the continent of North America consists of immense forests. In the tremendous floods which visit that country, whole trees are torn up by the roots and carried by the torrents towards the sea. It is supposed they are then driven by the winds and waves on to these remote and barren coasts, where no tree or shrub reaches to the height of more than a few feet, thus supplying fuel to those who are unfortunate enough to be imprisoned in this foreign land. Thus does the providence of God provide for the wants of His creatures even in the most desolate places.”

As they pursued their way along the side of the clear stream, Alexis observed that some spots were thickly covered with a plant which he knew to be the cochlearia. He picked some tufts of it and showed them to the pilot.

“It is an excellent discovery,” said he, “as it is the best antidote against scurvy, from whence it is commonly called scurvy-grass. The Greenlanders and Icelanders pickle it and keep it in barrels for winter use.”

They also found a species of cress and sorrel, which plants grow even in the most ungenial soil.

Chapter 21

An Unexpected Repast

Whilst Alexis and the pilot followed the course of the stream, Ivan retraced his steps to examine some large marshy pools which he had noticed near the shores of the bay. These had apparently been filled during the late storm, when the waters of the great ocean had passed their usual bounds. Ivan knew that not unfrequently a vast quantity of fish are in this manner cast into these pools, from whence they cannot escape. He was not long in discovering a good-sized fish struggling in one of these reservoirs. He endeavored to strike it with his hatchet, but the fish immediately dived, leaving the water so thick and muddy that Ivan could distinguish nothing. He was sure, however, that it could not escape him and determined to possess himself of it unaided, which he finally succeeded in doing by means of an outlet for the water, which he let off till he could plainly distinguish his prize and easily

secure it. He next lit a fire, for he had fuel at hand and hoped to surprise his companions by so unexpected a repast as a good piece of cooked salmon would afford them.

The blazing driftwood soon attracted the attention of the pilot and Alexis and they hastened back to ascertain the cause.

Ivan triumphantly displayed his prize, whilst they on their parts had good tidings to communicate, having discovered a better and more spacious cavern than their first place of refuge, added to which its situation in the valley was infinitely better than that in the ravine.

It was long since the unhappy men had tasted anything but dry, salt meat, and still drier biscuit. It was with cheered and thankful hearts that they partook of the refreshing meal so unexpectedly bestowed on them and at the close of it they forgot not to offer a prayer of thankfulness for the unlooked for comfort.

Chapter 22

A Nocturnal Visit

They then decided to repair at once to the newly-found cave. Ivan took with him the remains of the fish, whilst Alexis and the pilot undertook the more laborious task of dragging along large pieces of driftwood, wherewith to keep up a fire during the night, which the pilot judged would be especially necessary, as he had observed prints on the snow which he felt sure were those of the polar bear. If not anxious for, he was by no means averse to an encounter with one of these monsters of the frigid zone, as he knew that, could they succeed in killing one, not only its flesh, but also the fat and skin would be invaluable.

On reaching the newly discovered cave, they lit a fire and then proceeded to examine the interior, partly by the glowing light which the blazing wood afforded and partly by the light of their torches. They discovered niches cut in the sides of the cave, as if for seats, in front of which large stones were placed, supported by smaller ones, apparently to supply the place of tables. Pieces of charred wood lay scattered about and the vaulted roof was black with soot and smoke. It was evident that it had sheltered some who, like themselves, had been compelled to find a refuge on this wild spot.

The remains of the salmon supplied them with a good supper and having replenished their fire and placed their guns and hatchets close at hand, and wrapped their warm cloaks around them, they soon slept soundly.

The pilot's sleep was luckily less sound than that of his young companions, and on awaking about

midnight, he found that their fire was reduced to embers. He rose to put on more wood. On advancing to the entrance of the cave, a low growl caught his ear, which he knew at once to be that of the white bear, who had probably been attracted to the spot by the scent of the fish, the fragments of which had been thrown outside. Having no doubt as to the close vicinity of one of these formidable monsters, the pilot hastened to awake Alexis and Ivan, and to prepare for an encounter. Having carefully examined their firearms, they all three advanced to the mouth of the cave. They easily distinguished the bear, as the moon shone clear and bright without, whilst their own fire afforded them light within. They paused an instant ere they provoked an attack. Then the pilot advanced a step or two and threw a piece of wood before the animal. The bear smelt it, turning it over and over. While doing so a shot struck him. Ivan had fired, but without sufficient steadiness and the ball hit the creature in the neck, instead of the head. Enraged by the wound, he rose on his hind legs, with one bound cleared the fire which was between him and his assailants, and was preparing to spring upon the foremost, when a shot from the pilot's gun, taken with surer aim, brought him to the ground, when the young men quickly dispatched him with their bayonets.

It was with no small satisfaction that they all contemplated their prize.

“Not only have we reason to be thankful for our safety,” said the pilot, “but for the comforts we can now provide ourselves with. The long shaggy coat of soft hair which enabled *him* to defy this rigorous climate, will help *us* to protect ourselves the better against it. The flesh will afford us a welcome and wholesome supply of food, and with the fat we may contrive to make candles, which will be invaluable when we quite lose sight of the sun. We shall probably, ere long, meet with more of these animals, but it is necessary to attack or meet them with caution, and to avoid wounding them, as by doing so you only provoke their rage and so greatly increase the danger of the contest.”

It required their united strength to drag the carcass of the huge monster away from the spot where they had killed him, which they did in order to retire farther into the cave for greater security.

Chapter 23

Thoughts for the Future

The three friends were now too fully occupied to think any more of sleep. They passed the remainder of the night in cutting up and preparing different parts of their prize for future use. The skin was carefully stripped off, rubbed with some of the yet warm fat on the inside to make it soft and pliable, and then spread out to dry. The flesh was cut into pieces and placed where it would quickly freeze, and thus be fit to use even at the end of many weeks. The fat was to be preserved till they could hit upon some expedient for making it serviceable.

It was now evident that they were destined to pass the winter in the icebound land on which they had been cast. It was, therefore, necessary to consider how they were to protect themselves from the severity of the climate and procure a sufficient supply of food. Added to which the pilot was anxious to find a place of shelter, as the cave they were now in did not appear to him calculated to protect them from the intense cold of the winter season.

Having found so many traces of their fellow creatures, he still clung to the hope that they might discover some habitation that had been occupied by those who had passed some time on the island. It was therefore resolved that they should search diligently whilst the period of daylight lasted.

Early the next day, they started with this object and directed their steps towards the eastern side of the valley, but no trace of any human dwelling rewarded their labor, and after spending eight hours in the search, they returned wearied and exhausted to the cave.

The next day, however, they prepared with renewed courage for another expedition, which was now to be towards the other side of the bay. They took a supply of provisions for two days. On starting, they directed their course towards the mouth of the bay or gulf. After a laborious walk of some hours, they reached a spot where enormous masses of rock impeded their progress and which formed a rugged boundary on one side of the valley. They quickly resolved to explore what lay beyond this barrier. On attaining the summit, a frightful scene presented itself. A frozen world lay before them, on whose icy surface the rays of the setting sun were now reflected. As the pilot and his young companions contemplated the dreary prospect, their hearts sank within them. They felt they were in truth beyond the help of man and for a time they forgot how God had hitherto watched over and preserved them. The silence of death was around them, which none cared to break, lest the expression of his own gloomy fears should increase the painful anxiety and apprehension all so plainly shared.

A few minutes passed thus and then the silence was broken by the pilot.

“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee!” he exclaimed, as he fell on his knees and bowed his head in token, as it were, of humble trust and submission. His young companions sank on their knees beside him and covering their faces with the folds of their cloaks, remained awhile in prayer for that help and comfort they so much needed.

[Chapter 24](#)

A Shelter Found

Ivan was the first to rise from the attitude of devotion. During the short time so employed, many

painful thoughts had passed rapidly through his mind, and oppressed and weighed down his spirit. He turned without speaking from his companions and wandered a little distance from them.

It occasionally happens that accident places within our reach what our utmost diligence fails to discover. So it was on this occasion. On turning an angle of the rock, the young man's attention was arrested by a large cleft which ran between two immense rocks. Roused from his reverie, he examined more closely and remarked at some distance below where he stood, something that bore a resemblance to a wall.

He called eagerly to the others, who, on joining him, also thought they could perceive on a projecting part of the rock down in the ravine, what they believed to be the wall of some building. With some difficulty, they made their way to the place.

What was their surprise on discovering, close to a steep part of the rock, a small building formed of stones, the interstices of which were well stopped with moss. A projection of the rock formed the roof, at one corner of which a hole had been left, evidently as an outlet for smoke, the trace of which was visible on the rock which rose above the building.

The house, or hut, appeared of a tolerable size, with a door on one side, whilst on two other sides there were windows with strong shutters. The fourth side was formed by the rock against which it had been constructed, around it was a wide and deep ditch, the interior of which was lined with stones, which having been mortared together formed a smooth and even surface, by which it was not, therefore, easy to descend. A small drawbridge was in front.

The situation had been well-chosen, as not only was it sheltered on every side, but it commanded a view of the sea as well as of a great part of the valley.

Without stopping to congratulate themselves on their fortunate discovery, our wanderers hastened to ascertain whether any human being occupied the dwelling, which had so unexpectedly appeared before them. Neither voice nor sound replied to their call. They therefore descended the side of the ditch and climbing up the other side found themselves in front of the door.

All was silent and the sound of their repeated knocks died away unanswered. Ivan pushed away the shutter from one of the windows. All was dark within, but he perceived a faint and unpleasant smell as he looked into the apparently tenantless abode.

As it was now plain that no living creature was there, Ivan unhesitatingly entered by the window he had opened, but he had scarcely done so ere a feeling of suffocation threatened to overcome him. He hastily opened the door to admit the fresh air, without which he could not have remained inside.

Having allowed time for the air to circulate and so dispel the noxious vapor which from some cause or other filled the hut, the party proceeded to examine it. The pilot lit one of their torches and by its light they perceived that the sides of the building consisted of wooden planks, the chinks between which were carefully filled up with moss. Wooden benches ran round the sides and a table stood in the center. There was a hatchet and other carpenter's tools lying about.

A rude fireplace had been made against the rock, which joined one side of the dwelling. In front of which were two iron saucepans, a frying pan and a plate. All these were covered with rust, a proof that it was long since they had been used.

To the joy caused by the discovery of more than they had ever dared to hope for, succeeded a long desire to ascertain the fate of those who had once possessed what had now fallen into their hands.

Chapter 25

A Melancholy Sight

Every corner of the newly discovered habitation was closely examined. The light of the torch carried by the pilot presently fell on what was clearly an opening in the rock and of sufficient size to admit of an entrance into the interior. Ivan rashly advanced to the aperture, but the pilot, aware of the dangerous and often fatal effect of air long pent up in subterraneous places, withheld him from going further. In order that he might do so with safety, he collected some pieces of the wood that lay scattered about and set light to them close to the opening, and the door of the hut being left open, the smoke was carried into the cavity. When the fire had burnt some time, the pilot loaded his gun and discharged it at the mouth of what they imagined to be a cave or recess in the rock. He then thought they might enter without fear.

On passing the narrow opening, they found a wide passage, which led them into a spacious cavern, the heavy foul air of which for a moment made their torch burn dim. The next instant, they started back with an exclamation of terror, as the light fell full upon a human form enveloped in fur, seated on the ground and resting against the side of the cave. A long grey beard fell upon the chest. The young men drew back at the unexpected and ghastly sight.

“We need not fear,” said the pilot, “it is but the mortal remains of some unfortunate being, who has perished here. It is not *sleep* but *death* that you now behold.”

Alexis and Ivan obeyed and saw that it was indeed but a lifeless and inanimate corpse. On touching it, the furs and clothes crumbled into dust. In silent awe, they contemplated the sad spectacle and thought with dismay that possibly such might be their fate. Whoever it was whom they now beheld, there could be no doubt that he had ended his existence alone in that desolate place—uncared for, unattended. No one to receive his last sigh, no one to soothe his last hour. No mourner to provide a resting place for his remains.

The pilot, unwilling to prolong the time for such saddening reflections, proposed at once that they

should inter the body and so fulfil a duty which had so unexpectedly devolved upon them.

The cousins saw the propriety of the pilot's suggestion and prepared to obey him.

With such tools as they had found in the hut, they with some difficulty prepared a grave in the ravine below and then carefully deposited therein the body of the unfortunate stranger.

Whilst engaged in the sad ceremony, the young men were too painfully affected to speak. Ere they turned from the grave, the pilot uttered a short prayer, not for him whose earthly trial had long since ended, but for himself and his young companions, that they might be strengthened to bear whatever the will of God might appoint for them and that the sufferings of this present life might prepare them for a better.

On turning from the solitary grave, they decided that it was too late for them to think of returning to the cave which had lately sheltered them. They therefore determined to pass the night in the newly discovered abode.

They collected wood for a fire and having partaken of a hasty meal of the food they had brought with them, they proceeded to search the cave where they had found the corpse. Amongst other articles, all more or less useful, they found a small lamp on a table which stood not far from where the body had lain.

"This is worth all the rest to us," said the pilot, "the fat of the bear when melted will burn well and we can make wicks of our handkerchiefs. We shall at least have some light during the long and dark winter. They found also a knife and fork, some tin plates and mugs, and also several skins of bears and mats, but these last were of no avail, as they fell to pieces on being removed.

Chapter 26

A Second Encounter with Bears

No time was lost the following morning in repairing to the cavern, where they had left what remained of the slaughtered bear, as well as some other articles with which they had not encumbered themselves when setting out on the search, which had proved, fortunately, so successful. They reached the valley just as a bright circle in the horizon announced that the sun was about to afford them a short period of light. By the time they got in front of the cave, its rays enabled them to distinguish that the entrance was effectually stopped by the presence of two bears, who were busily engaged in devouring the remains of the one they had killed, which had been thrown at some little distance, and by the scent of which they had probably been attracted.

“We must act with prudence and caution,” said the pilot, as he perceived their formidable enemies, one of which was an unusual size. “We might possibly frighten away these two monsters, but we should then lose what would be of inestimable value to us could we succeed in killing even one. We are three against two and if we act with courage and coolness, I think we shall be more than a match for them. These animals never spring upon their adversary, but raise themselves upon their hind legs and boldly advance to seize their intended victim, whom, if they can, they enclose with a deadly embrace from which suffocation instantly ensues. It is hazardous to fire at them, as should the shot not prove effectual, it only increases their ferocity and it is therefore safest to attack them with a spear or bayonet. This we will now prepare to do. I will undertake the biggest of the two and Ivan shall make an attack upon the other, whilst Alexis shall be ready to assist whichever he may perceive to be in danger. Look that your guns are well-primed and the bayonet well-fixed. Have your hatchets also ready to seize at a moment’s notice.”

As the cousins listened to these instructions and prepared to obey them, it was not wonderful if their hearts beat somewhat faster than usual or if they half wished that the bears would take fright on perceiving them and leave them in undisturbed possession of the field. The pilot was, on the contrary, only anxious that the prey should not escape him.

They were now within a stone’s throw of the animals. The pilot uttered a cry, which caused them to look round and for the first time to notice the approach of the three men. It produced but little effect. The brutes passed their rough paws over their muzzles and resumed their loathsome repast.

The ground occupied by the attacking party was somewhat higher than that in front of the cave and the pilot now rolled a large stone towards the enemy. The monsters looked angrily at those who had thus disturbed them and with a low growl threw themselves upon the stone. A second stone was sent in the same direction and was immediately attacked by the lesser bear and the pilot’s object answered—of separating the animals. It is well-known that the surest way of escaping an attack from these monsters is by throwing something in their way. Even a glove is sufficient for their purpose, as the bear will not stir till he has turned every finger of it inside out and as these creatures are not very dexterous with their paws, this affords time for escape. The pilot employed this stratagem to enable him to approach close before his intended attack should be perceived. When within twenty steps, he purposely attracted the bear’s notice. The monster raised his head and with a savage growl rose on his hind legs to meet his enemy, but ere he touched him, the bayonet was deep in the animal’s breast. The pilot dexterously detached the gun from the bayonet, but the bear fell on being wounded and as the blow was mortal, a few strokes with the hatchet served to shorten the dying struggle.

Ivan’s encounter was less prompt and the bear he was to attack appeared at first to avoid him and made an attempt to rejoin his older and more powerful companion. Thwarted in the attempt, he rushed furiously upon Ivan, howling with rage and displaying two rows of tremendous teeth. A wound, which was not mortal from Ivan’s bayonet, increased his fury and the young man’s peril, but Alexis, who anxiously watched every movement, now fired, and taking close aim pierced the animal’s skull just below the eye, which laid the savage beast dead at their feet. Thus ended the combat, which greatly encouraged our young friends and re-animated their spirits. It removed also much anxiety as to the future and in the occupation they would have in disposing of the carcasses of the bears, they

would forget the melancholy impressions caused by the events of the preceding day.

Thus does the unerring wisdom of the Almighty mingle joys and sorrows. Appointing to each and all what He sees best. Well would it be if His creatures would learn to distinguish His hand in all that befalls them and ever be ready to exclaim with trust and humility, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good."

Chapter 27

They Leave the Cavern

On entering the cave, they found all as they had left it. Their savage visitors, having fallen upon the offal without, had not gone further.

Having satisfied themselves that all was safe, they hastened to drag the smallest bear into the cave, where they could undisturbed cut up and clean the carcass. This done, they next drew the larger one within the mouth of the cave, before which they lit a good fire and roasted a piece of the flesh, which is esteemed a great delicacy by the inhabitants of the countries frequented by this animal.

Whilst Ivan prepared the meal, the pilot and Alexis employed themselves in cleaning the skin. The other bear was to be left untouched till the following day. The lesser one fully employing them till night, when they retired to rest after the fatigues and perils of the day.

The first question which arose next morning was how they could best transport the contents of the cave to the hut, which they intended to prepare as their future abode.

The pilot recommended the construction of a sledge upon which they might place all they wished to remove. It was, however, no easy task to find the materials requisite for such a purpose and the ingenuity of the young men was severely taxed ere it was accomplished. At last their labor was rewarded by the completion of a sledge, which, for want of nails, was securely held together by the sinews of the bears they had killed. Wood they had in plenty and their hatchets rudely formed the straits or slides, upon which the upper part was to rest, on this they spread the skins and thus completed their work.

Some days elapsed during the preparations for removal, but the fourth day saw them ready to depart. Not being able to take both the carcasses, they left one behind, carefully barricading the entrance of the cave with the wood that lay around, in order to secure it against the intrusion of such animals as might be drawn there by the scent of food.

A whole day was spent in the labor of dragging the sledge to their new habitation. The next was passed in improving the sledge by the means of the tools they had found in the hut.

On returning with it to the deserted cavern, they perceived traces of some animal, but the entrance having been fortunately secured, all within had been left unmolested.

Having spent the day in preparing the remaining carcass for removal, our poor mariners lay down to take their last night's rest in the cave and on the following day, they finally took possession of their more comfortable abode.

Their time and thoughts found ample employment for some time in making the necessary arrangements for their comfort during the dreaded winter.

A supply of grease for their lamps was provided from the melted fat of the animals they had killed. The flesh was exposed to the cold and allowed to freeze to ensure its keeping. A large quantity of wood was collected with much toil and trouble, and carefully piled against the hut. The bridge, so long unused, was replaced over the little moat and so arranged as to be drawn up to prevent the approach of any unwelcome intruder.

[Chapter 28](#)

The Journal

Having made these preparations, the pilot and his companions next proceeded to a closer examination of their new dwelling, hoping to meet some articles that might conduce to their future comfort.

At the further extremity of the cave, where they had found its former occupant, they noticed a recess before which was a plank of wood, hung upon rude hinges, to serve the purpose of a door. Having removed it, they entered a long passage, above which the rock formed a natural arch. The passage led to another large cavern, rough pillars of rock seemed to support the vaulted roof. The bottom was of dry sand and around the side were several niches. These were carefully examined and in one of them, to their great joy, they discovered a barrel of salt and a smaller one filled with nails and some tools which were likely to be of great service to them. Their satisfaction was still further increased by finding a barrel of powder and another of large shot, which had been carefully placed on a large flat stone which projected some little way from the side of the rock. This last acquisition appeared of greater value to them than any other, as it afforded them not only the means of obtaining food, but of defending themselves against the attacks of wild beasts. A ship's lantern completed their discoveries and this they resolved to hang in the center of the cave and keep it burning by means of

the fat of the bears which they had prepared for that purpose.

As they were about to leave the cavern, well-satisfied with the results of their investigations, Ivan struck his foot against some hard substance. On stooping to ascertain what it was, he found a small tin box. The friends hastened back to the more habitable part of their abode in order to examine its contents. They hoped now to learn something about those who had once occupied this desolate dwelling. Their curiosity was soon gratified.

On raising the lid, they found pens, ink, and paper. The latter proved to be a journal, closely written and somewhat effaced by time. Alexis and Ivan saw that it was written in Dutch and having learnt something of that language at the Naval College at St. Petersburg, they were able to read it.

It was a journal written by a captain, who, with ten sailors, had passed five whole years on that desert land. The captain had outlived his companions in misfortune and it was this unhappy survivor of the ill-fated party whose body they had so lately consigned to its last resting-place.

From this melancholy source of information they learnt that five and twenty years ago, a Dutch vessel, the *Bonne Esperance*, had sailed, in company with others, for the polar seas for the whale fishery. When the little fleet had reached the latitudes where they expected to meet with the objects of their pursuit, they no longer kept together. The captain of the *Bonne Esperance* boldly pushed forward into the more northern waters, where, amid fields of ice, the whale is usually found.

The Dutch vessel made its way through floating fragments of ice. Regardless of the danger of being beset by the icebergs, the captain and his crew busied themselves with the fishery. Suddenly the wind changed and the fate of the poor mariners was sealed. The ship was beset with masses of ice which quickly precluded all chance of escape and threatened destruction to those thus hemmed in. The wind which had driven the icy masses against the ship suddenly calmed and was succeeded by so dense a fog that their position was, if possible, more perilous. When the fog cleared away they discovered they were not far from land. The ship had in fact been driven within a short distance of the bay where the pilot and Ivan and Alexis were now stationed.

The journal contained a full account of the way in which these unhappy men passed five long years in this land of exile. Their suffering, their toils, their privations were all detailed and the sad record filled the hearts of those who read it with grief and pity.

Eleven of their fellow-creatures had perished one after another in this mournful banishment. The captain had been the last!

The journal stopped abruptly, with the record that increasing illness and weakness no longer allowed the writer to guide his pen!

[Chapter 29](#)

Serious Reflections

The perusal of the captain's journal deeply affected the two cousins and their spirits sank at the terrible prospect before them. Their thoughts dwelt only on the misery which threatened them, whilst they forgot the mercies which had mingled with the trial. They did not, however, forget that it was their own misconduct which was the original cause of their sad position and this reflection added to the bitterness of their sorrow.

The good pilot listened to the sad tale with deep sympathy, but no remorse or self-reproach mingled with his regrets for the past or his fears for the future. He had met with his fate whilst faithfully discharging the duties of that state of life in which God had placed him. With sincere and humble trust, he desired to submit to His will.

Having for a moment communed with his own heart and raised his thoughts to that Being who can alone bestow peace and comfort, the pilot turned to his young friends, who remained absorbed in profound melancholy.

"Let us not," said he, "give way to despondency and discontent, rather let us endeavor to 'run with patience the race which is set before us.' The fate of those whose history we have just read may not be ours. *Their* race has long since been run. *Their* trials long ago ended and whilst we hope that they have entered into their rest, let *us* strive to make our 'calling and election sure.' The work that God has given to us to do, let us do it with patience and submission. Let not distrust or vain fears for the future paralyze our endeavors, but rather let us, in dependence on God's blessing, use our best efforts to provide for our daily wants and to guard against such dangers as may befall us."

The pilot's words had the desired effect and found a ready answer in hearts in which the love and fear of God had been early implanted. The young men silently took the pilot's hands, as if to assure him that his advice should not be unheeded.

Chapter 30

Preparations for the Future

The pilot wisely led his young companions to employ their time in various preparations for the season when they would no longer be able to make them.

Their supply of wood had to be greatly increased. Moss collected for beds, as at present they had nothing but the hard ground on which to spread their cloaks and the skins of the bears. The flesh of these latter to be salted and smoked to keep during the winter. The moat round the hut to be deepened and repaired, so as to protect them more surely from the approach of unwelcome visitors. These labors occupied them for some weeks and were but just completed when extreme cold set in.

A dense fog, impenetrable alike to the faint twilight and the clear brightness of the winter moon, covered the island and occasioned a darkness that could almost be felt. The fire, which was kept burning night and day, was barely enough to protect them from the severity of the cold. At the same time, they contemplated the blazing pile, which cast a ruddy glow around, with hearts full of thankfulness for the light and warmth it afforded, and the comfort they experienced from it in those dreary hours.

The cold, however, was so intense that their breath froze upon their lips. The snow which they melted in their kettle froze as soon as it was removed from the fire, which during the hours of rest, one was obliged to watch, whilst the others slept close enough to it to avoid the danger of perishing from cold. The suffering and inconvenience they experienced suggested a remedy to the pilot.

“If we could but construct a stove,” said he, “such as is used in every cabin in Russia!”

His young companions caught eagerly at the idea and Ivan interrupted him to say that he had observed in some of the chasms of the rock, what looked like clay and this he knew would assist the pilot in his project.

After much labor and repeated failures, the work was accomplished and a stove, rude and unfinished as it was, cheered and warmed the little abode. They were besides enabled to prepare their food with greater ease and comfort.

They now only occasionally left the hut, either to fetch wood from their little stock or snow which they were obliged to melt in order to obtain water.

One day that Alexis was thus engaged, he perceived a bear making his way right for the moat, which having been nearly filled by the snow that had fallen and been drifted by high winds, and then frozen, was now but a slight obstacle to his approach.

Alexis hastily left his occupation and rushed into the house uttering a cry for help and closing the door behind him.

“Your guns, your guns!” exclaimed the pilot, laughing at the young man’s alarm. “We will welcome our rude visitor with powder and shot. We can afford that now. We must take good aim from the windows of our fortress.”

The shutters were quickly removed in obedience to his orders. The sky was clear and the moon cast a bright light on the snowy surface below, enabling those in the hut plainly to distinguish the approach of the enemy. When within shot, the pilot and Ivan took aim, both balls entered the animal’s

head and he rolled heavily over into the half-filled moat, which he was in the act of crossing when hit.

“I care not how soon we have another chance,” said the pilot. “We can spare powder and shot, and in return we shall get meat, fur, and grease. That will not be a bad bargain. I think, too, that if we manage well, our prize may be the means of obtaining another. I have lately conjectured that there may be also foxes about and if so, we might attract them by leaving some of the carcass of the bear outside, near enough for a shot to reach them, should they be led into the snare. Their flesh is far superior to that of the bear and their fur scarcely less valuable.”

Ivan and his cousin were highly delighted at this prospect and readily assisted the pilot to dispose of their prize and second his views.

The moat was partially cleared of the snow and the offal of the bear placed so as to attract some of these creatures should there be any in the neighborhood.

[Chapter 31](#)

The Arctic Fox

The Arctic fox is the prettiest of the animals of the snow-covered countries. It is smaller than the common fox and its sharp nose and short ears are almost hid in fur, which at the approach of winter becomes perfectly white. In Spitzbergen and Greenland, where the ground is eternally frozen, these creatures live in the clefts of rocks. They are tame and inoffensive, and are killed for the sake of their skins. They are easily taken, either in pitfalls dug in the snow and baited with fish, or in the springs made with whalebone laid over a hole made in the snow, baited with such food as they are known to prey upon.

One day, a short, low bark announced the vicinity of some of these animals. The inhabitants of the hut soon discovered three of the little creatures busily engaged with the food which had been placed purposely to attract them. They directly loaded their guns with small shot and gently opened the door. Then raising their pieces, took so true an aim that two of the foxes were killed and the third apparently wounded. They lost no time in stripping off the skin and preparing the flesh for use. The remainder of the carcass was destined to prepare a fresh trap. This was accomplished by placing the intended bait on the ground and pouring water over it so that it might freeze, and thus be firmly attached to the spot, so that these rapacious little animals might be more easily secured, whilst engaged in obtaining the food thus made difficult to gain. The plan succeeded and a few more foxes were captured.

Then a long imprisonment followed. The sun had long since ceased to cheer them and now snow fell in abundance, whilst the wind, which howled without, drifted it against the dwelling, blocking it up

as with a frozen wall. Their lamp and stove were kept burning night and day. Of wood and fat they had enough to last for many weeks and the pilot knew that ere those weeks had elapsed, the weather might be such as to allow of their leaving the hut.

After a close imprisonment of three weeks, the desired opportunity arrived. The weather settled into a clear, still, and severe frost, of which they gladly took advantage for making an excursion to the bay in search of drift wood. To protect themselves from the intense cold, they made large fur caps, or hoods, of the skins of the bears, which covered not only their heads, but their necks and shoulders, reaching to the waist. Of the fox skins, they made leggings to come far above the knee, fastening all together with the tendons and sinews which they had carefully preserved and dried, and by the same means they fastened to their feet pieces of wood, shaped like the bottom of a sledge to prevent their sinking into the deep snow. Two weeks were passed in these preparations, and in repairing and improving their sledge, upon which, before they started, they placed provisions to last for some days.

Chapter 32

The Morse, or Arctic Walrus

Thus singularly equipped, our poor islanders left their dreary dwelling by the clear light of the moon reflected on the crystal surface over which their path lay. On reaching the bay, they found the shore deep in snow. The labor of removing which, in order to get at the wood beneath, would be considerable. Added to which they had no implements with them with which they could attempt it.

Whilst hesitating as to the course to be pursued, the low, but well-known growl of a bear caught their ear. It seemed to proceed from behind a huge iceberg, which lay toward the middle of the bay. The cousins looked at the pilot as if for instructions how to act.

“One, two, or three, we will face them,” said he. “I never turned my back upon one of these gentlemen yet and have no wish to do so now.”

Alexis and Ivan smiled their acquiescence in this bold decision.

They silently advanced and soon discovered two large bears engaged in a desperate conflict with a walrus. The sea monster defended itself desperately with its long tusks, roaring and exhibiting all the marks of rage. Its opponents were so engaged in the fury of their struggle that our friends had time to fix their pikes in the frozen ground and deliberately take aim unperceived. Two shots were fired and took effect. The animals staggered for a moment, but quickly recovered themselves and rushed with increased rage upon the walrus, apparently not aware of the presence of other enemies. Alexis discharged his gun with surer aim. The shot entered one animal's brain and laid him

motionless on the ice. The pilot and Ivan had meanwhile reloaded and the other bear shared his companion's fate.

The walrus, however, only exchanged one enemy for another and ere the unwieldy creature could extricate himself from the half-frozen pool in which he lay, three well-directed shots ended the unequal contest.

So rich a booty was beyond the most sanguine expectations of the little party. The next question was how to dispose of it? Their sledge could but convey one of their prizes. It was agreed to secure the last, as being of greater value to them than the others. The flesh of the walrus is infinitely preferable to that of carnivorous animals, as they are supposed to feed entirely on shellfish and marine vegetables, which they root up from the bottom of the sea by means of their strong tusks. The walrus is also much prized for its oil, of which as much as one or two barrels may be obtained from one animal. The thick skin is used as leather and their tusks, which weigh from ten to thirty pounds each, are of some value, being often used instead of ivory.

Three days were spent in carrying home the fruits of their encounter and many more were employed in disposing of all that was so valuable to them, not only for food and light, but also for other purposes.

Chapter 32

A Disappointment Which Leads to a Discovery

Fuel was, however, no less necessary to them than food, and as the weather was now calm and settled, they again prepared for an excursion in search of it. They were now provided with rough spades or shovels for removing the snow under which the wood lay buried. They were impatient to start, as the gloom of the winter night had lately been broken by the frequent appearance of the aurora borealis, and the pilot was aware that the constant recurrence of this beautiful meteor is supposed to precede some great change of weather or temperature.

The young men were never tired of watching this singular phenomenon of the norther regions, as its streams of light illuminated as by magic the frozen scene around. Besides white, the aurora displays yellow, green, and purple-red colors, which, when reflected on the crystal points of the rocks and icebergs, presents a scene of such beauty as it would be difficult to describe. The pilot's fears were soon realized. A sudden change in the weather defeated the project they had so much at heart. The wind blew with terrific violence, driving the snow full upon the hut. Profound darkness succeeded to the light afforded by the bright rays of the aurora and effectually prevented every attempt to leave the hut. As deep a gloom settled on the spirits of the cousins. The good pilot did not leave them long

to indulge in useless regrets or unavailing fears.

“We will take advantage,” said he, “of our imprisonment to search for the food and clothing which we are sure from the captain’s journal must yet be in some part of the cave. He spoke of provisions of various sorts which were still in store, when death ended alike his sufferings and his wants.”

Ivan and Alexis never hesitated to comply with their good friend’s suggestions, and taking each a lamp, they readily followed him through the vaulted passage before described.

The light of Ivan’s lamp presently fell on some rough steps in the side of the rock, which appeared to be formed partly by nature, partly by art. On ascending them, they found themselves in a small, dry cave, which had apparently been chosen on that account as a store place.

Various cases stood around. It may be imagined with what eagerness they were examined. In one, to their great joy, they found a good supply of linen and other clothes. All was in good preservation, as the case had been well-covered with tar to preserve it from damp. A barrel was next opened, in which they found meat and fish, well-cured and smoked. A large box filled with the skins of bears, foxes, and wolves completed the welcome discovery. Each barrel and case had been closely fastened and well tarred, all air being thus excluded.

The joy experienced by Alexis and Ivan was somewhat checked by a reproof which the good pilot felt he should not altogether withhold.

“You see now that what you looked upon as a hardship and disappointment has turned into a cause of thankfulness. Had we gone in search of wood, these treasures might have remained for some time, or perhaps altogether, undiscovered. Thus does it frequently happen that those things we most fear are, by a kind and merciful God, converted into occasions for joy and thankfulness. Give thanks, therefore, unto Him who has dealt mercifully with us.”

Chapter 34

A New Misfortune

The long-desired opportunity at length arrived and the little party left the hut with the advantage of fine, clear weather, and with the bright lights of the aurora illumining the otherwise dreary scene.

They soon reached the shores of the bay and found that the tempest, which had seemed to oppose their plans, had in effect greatly helped.

The gale had, as it were, swept the snow from the shore and thus left the wood uncovered. They

had, however, some trouble in removing it, as it was fast frozen to the ground on which it lay. The young men insisted on sharing this labor between them, only letting the pilot load the sledge with the wood they succeeded in removing. They had for some days remarked that their kind friend and guide seemed suffering from weakness and lassitude, so that they were anxious to spare him unnecessary fatigue. For several successive days, they returned for the drift wood which they found in abundance.

After the first two days, Ivan and Alexis went alone, leaving the pilot to cut up and stow away the supply they brought.

The cold was daily increasing and they looked forward with satisfaction to the warmth and shelter of their little home which they might now soon enjoy without any serious apprehensions for the future.

The task of providing fuel was scarcely accomplished, when Alexis and Ivan perceived that, though unwilling to complain, the pilot was really ill. A severe cold coming upon him when his health was somewhat impaired by the hardships and privations he had been exposed to and which he was less able to bear than his younger partners in the trial, resulted in serious illness, and on the third day, from the time he was attacked, he was wholly unable to rise from the bed of moss and skins on which he lay.

The cousins knew not how to relieve their friend. What would become of them on that uninhabited land should they be deprived of one who had been as a father to them and whose advice and guidance had been their chief comfort in their misfortune.

Each in turn watched by the invalid and as they saw the height to which the fever reached, they felt hope die within them. Their distress was aggravated by knowing that such food as they had was more likely to be prejudicial than otherwise to their suffering friend. Suddenly it occurred to Alexis that it was possible some stores left by the Dutch captain might hitherto have escaped their notice, and could they discover any tea and procure some fresh water, instead of the melted snow they were now using, he believed it would, by God's blessing, forward the pilot's recovery.

Leaving his cousin therefore to watch by the sick bed, Alexis took his lamp and made his way to the cave where they had already found the stores which had so greatly benefited them.

Alexis carefully and closely examined every hole and crevice. He presently observed a cleft in one side of the cave, well-stopped with moss. Could anything be hidden there? As there was no outlet to the outward air, why should it have been thus carefully stopped up?

Placing his lamp on the ground and drawing out his knife, he hastened to remove the dry, hard moss, which filled the crevice. As he did so, he found that on one side only was the hard rock, the other side consisted of two large loose pieces of stone, capable of being removed. He now felt sure something was concealed behind, and as he could not unaided remove the heavy stones, he hastened to seek Ivan's assistance. The pilot slept and the cousins silently stole from his side.

With some difficulty, the stones were moved away and then by the light of their lamps, they discovered two or three small barrels. For an instant their hopes were damped by the fear that it must

be money that had been thus carefully hidden.

“No, no, it is something better than money,” said Alexis, as he rolled one of the little barrels to his cousin, “it is too light for money.”

With their hatchets, they soon forced it open. It was full of good, dry flour.

Another was as quickly opened. More than one packet of tea and coffee fell at their feet.

In silence, the cousins contemplated this most welcome discovery. It might be the means of preserving the life of one whom they looked up to almost as to a father.

A few bottles of brandy completed the stock of provisions which had thus fallen into their hands. They agreed not to mention the discovery to their poor friend, especially as Ivan determined to go alone to obtain fresh water wherewith to make the tea from which they hoped he would derive so much benefit.

Well-protected from the intense cold by the fur garments they had made, and with one of the kettles and his hatchet hung to his belt, and his gun in his hand, Ivan left the hut and after a long and laborious walk reached the stream which ran into the gulf so often mentioned. It was a mass of ice, for this he was prepared and his hatchet soon enabled him to obtain as much of the frozen water as his kettle would hold.

It was late when Alexis' anxiety was relieved by the return of his cousin. The time so busily spent by the one had been passed in anxious watching and suspense by the other.

The pilot's strength appeared to be giving way under the continuance of his disorder and he lay exhausted, and apparently incapable of all exertion.

Great was the poor man's thankfulness when a cup of tea was held to his parched lips. It was the first thing that had appeared to refresh him or allay the thirst from which he suffered.

With a heartfelt acknowledgment for the relief thus afforded him, and a few words expressive of his gratitude to his young friends, the pilot closed his eyes. It may have been that ere he slept, he communed with his God and besought His mercy for himself and his companions in misfortune. Certain it was that neither the pilot's faith nor resignation failed him in his hour of trial. Away from his native land and all dear to him, he could yet calmly look upon death and trust himself to the mercy of that God whom he knew watched over him in that lonely isle, and could raise him up there, as well as elsewhere, should it be His will to do so.

And such apparently was the will of the Most High! The pilot awoke calm and refreshed. The cousins perceived the happy change and were deeply thankful for it. For many days, the invalid took little besides the tea which had been so fortunately discovered, but when all trace of fever had disappeared, his kind nurses prepared for him all that they hoped would conduce to his recovery. Cakes of flour baked on their stove. Soup made of the yet fresh meat of the foxes and brandy mixed

with water from the stream formed the diet of the invalid. Very different it was to what it had been before his illness. The change was nearly as beneficial to the young men as to the pilot.

Chapter 35

Time Passes Without Any Incident

A month elapsed ere the pilot's recovery was complete and during that time, the cousins were obliged occasionally to go in search of wood. The task of procuring fuel became daily more laborious, owing to the increasing thickness of the frozen snow beneath which it lay. They had, however, the comfort of thinking that the greater part of the tedious winter was past and that the time was drawing near when they might expect some diminution in the extreme cold.

For the present, they had to redouble their precautions against their great enemies, the bears, as during the severe cold and consequent scarcity of food, their boldness and ferocity greatly increases. They had also on more than one occasion seen in the distance a number of wolves, but from these animals they had less to fear, as they well-knew their dread of fire. When engaged in any out-of-door occupation, they took the precaution of keeping a good fire burning near so as to guard against the near approach of the enemy, and on more than one occasion, when carrying home driftwood, they kept a fire lighted at the further end of the sledge to prevent an attack from wolves, who, pressed hard by hunger, followed in their track and were only kept at bay by the blazing fagots which blazed and cracked upon a block of ice placed as a temporary hearthstone on the sledge.

In the midst of these many perils and privations, it may well be imagined that our poor islanders awaited with no little impatience the approach of milder weather and the breaking up of the long winter, when these ferocious animals would seek other haunts and when they might hope for the appearance of those who would deliver them from their dreary prison.

Chapter 36

A Tempest Visits Spitzbergen

Four long months had passed away, the gloomy monotony of which had only occasionally been

relieved by the cold but bright light of the moon and the more glowing rays of the aurora borealis and other luminous meteors, which from time to time embellish the northern sky. But these had latterly been of less frequent occurrence and at the same time some abatement in the severity of the cold appeared to herald an approaching change.

One night, about the beginning of March, when all slept soundly, the pilot was awoken by a terrible noise, which at first he took for that of wild beasts. He quickly aroused his companions to aid in the defence of their dwelling. Ivan cautiously opened the door in order to ascertain what were the enemies with which they had to deal.

A terrific gust of wind, almost throwing him down and forcing open the door, announced that a violent tempest had burst upon them. The heavens were covered with heavy masses of black clouds, snow fell in large flakes, accompanied by rain which threatened to penetrate the chinks and crevices of the little hut, while the fierce violence of the gale seemed to shake the surrounding rocks to their foundations. The frightful cracking of the ice, against which the stormy waves lashed in wild fury, increased the terror of Ivan and his cousin. The pilot alone was calm and still in the midst of the apparent danger. He betrayed neither surprise nor fear. He knew that the transition from winter to summer was often attended with sudden and extraordinary tempests and in reply to the anxious looks and inquiries of his young friends, he quietly observed, "God is over all, my sons. The guilty alone need tremble at the manifestation of His power. This storm probably precedes the return of the season we so earnestly desire. The mighty waters, roused from their long repose, now burst their covering of ice. The huge masses, dashing against each other, will be broken into a thousand fragments and the icy chain which has formed our prison will be thus destroyed. The waters of the great deep will be set loose and open to those vessels from which we expect deliverance. 'God is our hope and strength; a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof rage and swell: and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same.'"

A silence of some minutes succeeded the pilot's address. His words seemed to have raised thoughts of hope and trust in the minds of the two young men, who now were able calmly to await the issue of the storm.

For six days the conflicting elements raged around the little hut, keeping its inmates close prisoners. On the seventh, the heavens cleared, the wind became hushed, and the moon's calm silvery light shone upon all around. The cousins gladly took advantage of the first calm, which succeeded the storm, to look abroad and take a survey of the vicinity. The face of nature had assumed a different aspect and the cold had much diminished. How did they rejoice at perceiving that the points of the rocks were no longer covered with snow and that in some places the sides of the hills were freed from their snowy mantle, and in its place patches of lichen and moss were beginning to appear. On visiting the gulf or bay, a new and strange scene met their gaze. Mountains of ice that had appeared hitherto to be firmly fixed in the depths of the sea, now floated on its surface. In some places, icebergs, tossed one upon another, exhibited lofty columns with other fragments, forming a natural bridge, resting upon them. While others in the forms of towers and arches, all of a lightness and beauty inconceivable in any other material, fixed their attention and compelled, in spite of the

loneliness and inhospitable character of the scene, their admiration. The young men suddenly observed that the horizon was brightly suffused with red, which gradually became more vivid, and finally they discovered the rays of the long-absent sun behind the lofty mountains of this ice-bound land. This cheering apparition, short as it was, filled their hearts with joy, a joy such as we may imagine to be felt at the restoration of sight to one long blind. They hastened home to communicate the glad tidings to the pilot.

Chapter 37

The Sun's Return Brings Hope and Warmth

The patience of the little party was destined to further trial. A week of thick fog prevented the fulfilment of their hopes. At the end of that time, the sky cleared and the glorious rays of "the bright orb of day" appeared above the rocks, diffusing warmth and gladness on all around, and filling the hearts of our poor islanders with joy and gratitude. For several succeeding days, they watched it rise higher and higher in the horizon, till at last it rose in its full and perfect splendor. Having for the allotted period enlightened the other hemisphere, it was now daily approaching towards the Pole.

During the six months between the 20th of March and the 23rd of September, the sun never sets to the regions surrounding the North Pole. While during the whole of that time, the South Pole is in darkness and during the same period, it there never rises. During the other six months of the year, the reverse of this takes place. To the North Pole, it never rises, to the South Pole, never sets. Between the extremes of these times, the sun is seen at different elevations—sometimes shimmering round the horizon during the whole twenty-four hours. At other times, a few degrees above it.

The general aspect of the land changed rapidly under the vivifying influence of the sun. The melted snow flowed in torrents down the sides of the high hills and mountains. The "crystal pavement by the breath of heaven cemented firm" was gradually thawed and broken up, and bright enameled patches of moss and lichen appeared in its place. Each night a thick fog enveloped the country, which was followed by mild and abundant rain, which hastened the deliverance of the land from its icy thralldom.

Grass and cochlearia was soon found in abundance. Troops of reindeer assembled in the valley which now assumed a gay and cheerful aspect under the warmth of the returning sun. Towards the sea, the view was less charming and our friends knew it would yet be some time ere its waters were yet freed from the ice by which for so many months they had been bound. But even here, they were on more than one occasion struck with admiration at the singular and beautiful effect of the sun shining on the huge masses of ice. Colors of every shade and hue were reflected on these vast

mirrors as the rays fell in various directions. On one side, all was a burnished gold, on the other side, the richest purple, or the most gorgeous crimson dazzled the eye. Whilst in an opposite direction, the various piles of ice were tinted with the softest blue. Our poor exiles gazed entranced on a sight so new and so imposing. In addition to other advantages, the breakup of the winter relieved them from the presence of their dreaded enemies, the bears, who now betook themselves to the coasts, where fish were to be found in abundance.

Chapter 38

Good Advice

As the season advanced, their hopes of deliverance increased and they anxiously looked for the time when ships engaged in the whale-fishery would approach the shores of Spitzbergen. The good pilot occasionally endeavored to check his young companions' eager desire for rescue and reminded them that even when the time should arrive for vessels to navigate those seas, it was yet possible that they might not visit that part of the coast on which they were, even should any vessel make for Spitzbergen. He exhorted them to patience and resignation to the divine will, in case they should be doomed to pass another winter in their dreary cell.

"We should always be prepared for the worst," said the good and pious man, "and we shall not then give way to despair should it come upon us. If we set our hearts unrestrainedly upon any one thing, we only expose ourselves to disappointment. We should rather endeavor to possess our souls in patience and calmly await what God appoints. The time is not yet come when ships are likely to approach this coast. Instead of being filled with anxiety for the future, let us rather employ the present. We are never placed in any situation in which there is not some work to be done. Let us then, my young friends, act as we should if we knew we were to spend another winter here. We may repair our hut, lay in a stock of provisions against winter, and if it should not be our fate to need them, they may possibly benefit others, who like ourselves may at some future time be cast away on this isolated land. What would have become of us without the provisions left here by the Dutch captain and his companions? Instead of wasting our time in idleness, we will employ it in what may prove a similar blessing to others, if not ourselves."

These words perhaps were not calculated to raise the spirits of those to whom they were addressed, but the truth and wisdom of the advice could not be gainsaid, and perhaps both Alexis and Ivan felt that had they earlier listened to the warnings and counsels of those older than themselves, they had been spared the suffering which followed the indulgence of their own wills and inclinations. The lesson had not been thrown away upon them and now, as upon former occasions, they listened in respectful silence and resolved to follow implicitly the advice and directions of their

friend.

Chapter 39

Time Well Employed

The first work undertaken by the pilot and his companions was that of thoroughly cleaning and airing the hut. For six long months, the continued cold had made this impossible, but now doors and windows were thrown open to admit the fresh air and the warm beams of the sun. The smoke so long pent up in the small room now made its escape. And fires lit in the adjoining caves purified the place and contributed greatly to the future preservation of whatever might be placed there.

The furs and skins of the animals they had killed were taken out, well beaten, and left exposed to the sun. Such linen as they had found, and made use of, was washed and every utensil they had used in cooking was carefully cleaned and repaired. The stove, from constant use, was nearly worn out and it was resolved to construct a new and more durable one. A small piece of ground near the hut was dug up and sown with onions, peas, and such other vegetables as were found among the captain's stores. A quantity of moss was collected, dried, and put aside for future use. The little moat which protected the habitation was cleaned out and somewhat enlarged. They also prepared fishing lines from the sinews and bowels of the animals they had killed, and being already provided with hooks found among the other stores in the cabin, they were soon able to take advantage of the opportunities afforded for fishing, as the bay was now nearly freed from ice, and seldom a day passed without a meal being thus provided, making a wholesome and agreeable change from the dried and salted meat on which they had so long subsisted, and of which they had long since become thoroughly tired. A month passed rapidly away in these useful and different labors, and the wisdom of the pilot's advice was fully proved in the cheerful and healthy appearance of the young men.

In one of their expeditions to the bay, in search of wood, they had the good fortune to get near enough to a troop of reindeer to wound one and kill another. The latter afforded them a welcome supply of good fresh meat, which they were able to keep fresh, in spite of the increasing heat of the weather, by forming at the bottom of the moat, on the north side of it, which the sun never reached, a small cave, or cellar, in the thick ice that still lined it, and covering it over with a large and heavy stone, so that all air was excluded. In this little larder, they kept their provisions fresh and good. The wounded deer was carefully nursed and they looked forward with great pleasure to its being made useful in drawing their sledge on the excursions they contemplated when their various labors at home should be completed.

Much yet remained to be done and many journeys had to be made to the shores of the bay to

obtain wood, not only for the necessary repairs, but in order also to lay up a good stock for fuel. All, however, was cheerfully undertaken and performed, and at last the place that had sheltered them during the past winter was still more available for such a purpose, should it be the will of God that another should find them there, and if not, they felt they should be well-repaid for their toil by the hope that it might in the future prove a blessing to any poor creature who might be unfortunate enough to need it.

Chapter 40

A Signal is Prepared

The pilot now proposed that they should make some distant excursions with the view of reconnoitering other parts of the island and ascertaining what facilities the coast might afford for the approach of whalers, and for the landing of those who were engaged in the fishery. The season was now favorable for this purpose. The pilot reckoned that it must be about the end of the month of May and that there was yet a month before the extreme heat would commence.

He knew also that the period had arrived when those seas would be visited by the ships engaged in the great whale fishery and that many yearly penetrated as far as the coasts of Spitzbergen, but that they never lingered there after the 22nd of June, but hastened to leave the regions of the North Pole as soon as the longest day was passed.

Thus then was their hope of deliverance circumscribed within the limits of a few weeks. It was therefore with mingled feelings of hope and fear that these poor men started on their journey.

Before leaving the neighborhood of that part of the island where they had hitherto dwelt, they proposed to plant a signal on some elevated spot, which would serve to inform the crew of any vessel nearing that coast, that there were some on it who needed assistance. They directed their steps towards the spot from whence they had first announced their having reached land to their companions in the ship. They rested some time by the spring from which they had first obtained fresh water and visited the caves where they had passed the first nights after their landing.

The reindeer was the companion of their wanderings and harnessed to the sledge performed for them a service of no small value. Amongst other things, they took with them a long pole, found on the shores of the bay, which had possibly once been the mast of some unfortunate vessel driven on the shores. This they intended to plant on the elevated spot from whence they had displayed their first signal. And now once again, they stood on the summit of the rock whereon they had kindled the fire which they hoped would summon their companions from the ship.

Again they beheld the vast ocean unbroken by any object save the huge icebergs which were floating like moving islands on its bosom, from each of which the rays of the sun were reflected back in every variety of the most gorgeous colors. The firm erection of the pole was a work of some labor, but at last it was securely fixed in the rock and the skin of the reindeer they had killed was fastened to it, thus making a sufficiently conspicuous object to any vessel which might approach the island. This done they returned, after an absence of some days, to the hut, in order to prepare for their excursion to the side of the island which they had not yet explored.

Chapter 41

Expedition Along the Coast

Having loaded the sledge with provisions for at least a week and made all secure in the hut, the little party again started, but in a different direction to any they had hitherto taken, their chief object being to keep the sea continually in view. In order to accomplish this, they kept as near the coast as possible, in spite of the difficulties they encountered owing to the lofty rocks which every now and then intercepted their path, and ridges and precipices which rose immediately from the sea to the height of three or four thousand feet. Such is the character of this bold and rocky coast, which is thus described by one of our navigators:

“The coast of Spitzbergen appears to be neither habitable nor accessible, for it was formed of high, barren, black rocks—without the least mark of vegetation. In many places, bare and pointed, in other parts, covered with snow—appearing even above the clouds. The valleys between the high cliffs were filled with snow and ice. The prospect of such a scene would have suggested the idea of perpetual winter, had not the mildness of the weather, the smooth water, bright sunshine, and constant daylight, given a cheerfulness and novelty to the whole of this striking and romantic scene.”

Along such a coast had our poor adventurers to make their way, but at times this was impracticable, and they were obliged to descend into the valleys and ravines, and choose such paths as were accessible to the sledge and the reindeer. They chose, however, for their places of rest such open and elevated spots as gave them a free view of the sea, on which all their hopes were fixed.

The first night they were fortunate enough to find a cave sufficiently large to shelter them and from which they had a full view of the mighty ocean stretching far away to the east. On the other side, a lofty mass of rock almost hid it from them. Here an evening meal was soon prepared, a fire lit, not only for protection, but to serve as a beacon should any ship come in sight, their reindeer attended to and secured, and then, having sought the protection of the Most High, they gladly prepared for rest.

Ivan and Alexis soon slept, but ere the pilot followed their example, his attention was caught by a

noise which appeared to him like thunder. He sat up to listen. A second, and a third time the same sound seemed to roll and echo amongst the surrounding rocks. Could another storm be about to visit the island? He arose and advanced to the entrance of the cave. All was still. The cloudless canopy of heaven at once assured him that what he had heard could not be thunder. Could it be a gun from any ship having seen the beacon-light? He hastily aroused the young men, thinking they might discern any object in the distance better than he could. Alexis ascended to a point of the ridge between them and one part of the ocean, whilst the pilot and Ivan eagerly scanned that which could be seen from the cave. But as far as eye could reach or the telescope could enable them to see, no speck appeared upon the waters.

It was possible that what the pilot had heard was the noise of some fragment of rock loosened from its hold, bounding from rock to rock till it rested in the valley. The disappointment of hopes so suddenly raised interfered somewhat with the repose which had thus been broken and they were ready the next morning earlier than might have been expected to resume their journey.

In order to avoid the line of rocks, they descended into a ravine and for a time lost sight of the sea. But after a walk of two hours, they emerged upon an open plain, from whence they again beheld it glittering in the rays of the sun. Whilst here and there along the coast, magnificent icebergs raised their fantastic forms, which the sunbeams fell on, but could not dissolve. A line of rocks bounded the plain and opening to the right they found themselves in a small valley encircled by hills and traversed by a clear and rapid stream. Here they determined to halt and refresh themselves after their toilsome walk. The reindeer was allowed freely to seek its own supply of food from the moss and lichen which carpeted the valley. Theirs was procured from the stream, which was abundantly supplied with fish and the edges of which were well-furnished with watercress.

The sight of this little valley was most refreshing to the weary travellers. They seemed suddenly transported to another world and their delight was much increased by the sight of a quantity of water-fowl, which apparently frequented the banks of the stream. It was one of those small and fertile valleys which are to be found in the otherwise barren and desolate region of Spitzbergen. And were they doomed to pass another winter in exile, they thought it might be less terrible here, than where the last had been passed. Alas! they forgot that when winter resumed her reign, the little valley would be buried in snow.

[Chapter 42](#)

The Valley Produces More Than They Expected

Our explorers were in no hurry to leave this refreshing spot, but leisurely prepared to take their

mid-day meal there. With this intention, they proceeded to light a fire, over which they erected their long poles. From these was soon suspended a good sized pot, supplied with water from the stream, in which was destined to boil a fish and some cress obtained from the same source. When all was ready, the little party seated themselves, and with thankful hearts, prepared to partake of the repast. Scarcely had they done so, ere they were startled by the report of firearms.

All three started to their feet. The reindeer startled by the sound, bounded up the hill.

Another shot was heard.

It was no delusion. The hour of their deliverance was at hand. They neither spoke nor moved. Presently a shout of human voices was heard, and looking in the direction from whence it proceeded, they beheld on the summit of the hill above them, four men, armed with guns and in the dress of sailors. They were gazing in wonder at the valley and its occupants. A shout of joy, deep and heartfelt, burst from the lips of the pilot and his companions as they waved their caps to encourage the approach of the strangers.

“God is merciful!” exclaimed the pilot. “He has heard our prayers and ended our trials! His goodness and mercy are infinite!”

So saying, he advanced with Ivan and Alexis to those who were rapidly descending the hill.

Little need had they to ask their help and pity! The captain of the *Juno* stood before them!

It would be vain to attempt to describe the joy of the meeting. It was too great to find vent in words. Tears of thankfulness stood in the eyes of the good captain, as he again and again embraced his long lost friends. He had mourned deeply over their probable fate and had bitterly reproached himself as being the cause of it. He had come in fear and trembling to seek them, and now that he saw them safe and well before his eyes, he could find no words to express the thankfulness which filled his heart.

After the first moments of joy were over, the captain informed them that his ship lay at some little distance from the land, but that the boat from which he had so lately landed was in a little bay at the other side of the ridge of rocks. It was proposed, therefore, that instead of retracing their steps in order to regain the hut, they should accompany the captain and proceed by water to the bay so often mentioned, from whence they could regain the hut with but little fatigue. The captain accordingly despatched the three sailors who accompanied him to make all ready for the reception of his friends. And as they leisurely followed, he informed them that he had come within sight of land only two days ago, and not daring to approach those rugged and precipitous coasts, or encounter the icebergs which still made them dangerous, he had anchored at some distance and had from time to time fired one of the ship’s guns in the hope that it would apprise those he was come to rescue that succor was at hand. This then was the sound that had aroused the pilot the preceding evening.

Chapter 43

Fate of the *Juno*

Having seen the signals made by the pilot and the two young men to announce that they had reached land and had ascertained that they could pass the winter in security on its desolate shores, no time was lost in preparing to leave the ship.

The captain was busy directing his men, when he was suddenly interrupted by the second pilot, whose air and manner announced that some calamity threatened them.

“Is it possible to leave the ship tonight?” said he. “A storm is at hand and it is impossible to say what may be the consequences or whether the vessel can outlive it?”

Not a moment was to be lost in endeavoring to act upon the pilot’s warning, though the captain felt that if the vessel was to be abandoned so suddenly, it would involve the loss of all upon which their future subsistence depended, and though they might escape a watery grave, they might perish by a death equally to be dreaded. The choice, however, was not allowed them and short was the warning given them.

The gale predicted by the pilot came on with sudden fury. Snow fell in large flakes and the violence of the wind drove the icebergs, amongst which the ship was entangled, away from the land which the poor mariners had looked to as their only hope. The captain thus discovered that the ice around them was detached and not a part of the island to which he had despatched the pilot.

“My God, have mercy upon our poor friends!” he exclaimed, as he perceived that the hurricane was driving the masses of ice and the vessel, which was firmly beset by them, farther and farther from the land. “We shall never rejoin them. For ourselves we must submit to the will of God. Should the ship hold together and survive the tempest, we may yet be preserved.”

These words revived the hopes and courage of the unhappy crew, and the captain carefully concealed from them his own fears, which far outweighed his hopes. He dreaded the destruction of the ship from the icebergs that surrounded her, and which if they became more detached might at any moment crush her by being driven upon her by the violence of the gale. He knew too that even if she escaped this danger and was driven out to sea, that the danger would be only changed for another and that damaged as she was, they would be at the mercy of the winds and waves. For three days and nights the storm raged with fearful violence round the devoted ship. And when at last the sky cleared and wind lulled, no trace of land was to be discerned—only a wide waste of stormy waters, unbroken except by the large fragments of ice, around and over which the still angry waves beat and dashed themselves.

But one hope now remained and their only chance of rescue was from any ship that might like themselves have lingered too long in those dangerous latitudes. A constant and vigilant watch was maintained. A lantern was kept burning day and night at the mast head and signal guns were fired at intervals in the hope that some ship might be within hearing.

Chapter 44

The Rescue

The dreary hours passed away and hope was almost extinguished in the hearts of the most sanguine, when suddenly a cry was heard from the man on the lookout, "A ship, a ship! We are saved!"

It is needless to describe the joy and gratitude of all on board the *Juno* at this unexpected deliverance, or the anxiety with which they watched the boat which they soon saw despatched to their assistance. Some risk attended the undertaking from the masses of floating ice through which the boat had to make its way to the disabled vessel, now wholly at the mercy of the icy masses, which, whilst they almost kept her shattered frame together, seemed to bear her as it were onward to destruction.

The Danish vessel which was destined to rescue the crew of the ill-fated *Juno* was at some distance, unencumbered by any such masses of ice as had beset the *Juno*, and borne her away from the coast of Spitzbergen. And as any near approach to the icebergs might have been fatal to the former, it was only by means of her boat that the rescue of the *Juno's* crew could be attempted.

The attempt succeeded and those who had almost given themselves up as lost were placed in safety on board the Danish vessel, which lost not an hour in leaving those dangerous seas. All on board soon saw with joy that they were rapidly leaving behind them all the perils which beset the mariner who lingers late in those latitudes, and that they were advancing into more southerly waters, which roll free of the icy mountains that obstruct the northern seas.

On arriving at Copenhagen, the captain of the *Juno* made immediate preparation for his return to England. Previous to which, however, he wrote to the merchant Ozaroff to tell him all that had befallen them and of the fate of his son and nephew, who, with the pilot, he believed to be in Spitzbergen, as he knew they had reached the island in safety. He endeavored to soften the intelligence by the assurance that he would take advantage of the first ships that should start in the ensuing season, bound for the whale fishery on those coasts, to go in search of his two young friends and the pilot, as his conscience reproached him with having led them to act in a way which had ended so unhappily, and that he could not be happy unless he was permitted to restore them to the

home they had so thoughtlessly forsaken.

Chapter 45

They Leave the Island

During the captain's recital of all that befell him after the dreadful storm, which drove his ship far from the coast on which the pilot and his companions had landed, the boat was fast approaching the part of the island where they knew they must land in order to reach the hut. It was with mingled feelings of astonishment and admiration that the captain and the sailors who accompanied him beheld the various contrivances which had been effected by the pilot and his young companions during their long residence on that spot. All was examined with interest and the captain, having despatched the boat to his ship to convey the intelligence of what had occurred, determined on remaining with the friends he had so recently recovered, till all was arranged for their departure from the isle.

In token of their gratitude for the many mercies which had been vouchsafed to them, as well as for their final deliverance, the pilot and his young companions determined to do all in their power to make the fruits of their own labor and experience available for any of their fellow-creatures who might be unhappy enough to require it. Their supply of such provisions as were likely to keep was carefully stowed away and secured from damp and injury. The tools, which had been repaired and constructed with so much labor and ingenuity, were packed and deposited in a place of security, and finally they drew up a short statement of their residence on that spot, with such instructions and information as were likely to prove of value. Directions were added as to where the articles they left would be found. And Ivan, having translated the little document into English, deposited it in a small iron box, which was placed on what had served as their table in their singular abode.

All being completed, they signified their readiness to depart, though ere they did so, they offered up a prayer of thankfulness for their deliverance, no less than for the protection which had been vouchsafed to them during their time of trial. It had pleased God to turn their sorrow into joy and their hearts were filled with gratitude as they thought of their deliverance from their gloomy prison, and probable restoration to their home and friends.

Chapter 46

Return to Archangel

We pass over the long and somewhat tedious voyage they experience on their return from Spitzbergen.

It was marked by no incident of importance and however impatient our young friends might feel to be restored to their friends and country, they had profited too much by the lessons of patience and submission so lately taught them, to betray any undue eagerness, but rather endeavored to maintain the calm self-possession and trusting patience which now, as under every trial, marked the conduct of the good pilot. We will leave it to our readers to imagine what was felt by all three when they once more beheld the shores of their native land and the good ship bore them safe into the harbor of Archangel.

The news of their arrival was not long in reaching the ears of those most interested in it. It was needless to send messengers to announce it. There were many eager to be the first to carry the joyful news to the merchant Ozaroff. Deep and universal had been the sympathy felt for him, as well as for the pilot's family, for both enjoyed the esteem and respect of their fellow-citizens. This was now fully displayed by the joy caused by the return of those who had been mourned as lost.

The pilot was soon surrounded by his wife and children, whilst Alexis and Ivan were welcomed by Ozaroff with mingled feelings of happiness and gratitude. No word of reproach passed his lips. He knew that they had suffered and he trusted that the remainder of their lives would show that they had profited by the lesson which the Almighty had in mercy taught them. He remembered that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," and he was contented to await the fruits of that chastening.

We may picture to ourselves the happiness of the two homes, which had been for so many months cheerless and desolate, but which were now gladdened by the presence of the missing ones.

Through the kindness of Ozaroff, the pilot was enabled to give up his arduous and perilous calling. His health had suffered materially and he now needed rest both of body and mind. This was secured to him by the liberality of Ozaroff, who was anxious not only to repay the kindness and care which he had bestowed on his son and nephew, but also to prove his gratitude for the lessons of true piety and wisdom the pilot had taught them. Their future lives proved these had not been learnt in vain.

Alexis made his father's wishes the rule of his future conduct and devoted himself to that calling which had placed Ozaroff amongst the most independent and respectable of the merchants of the Russian seaport.

Ivan, with his uncle's approbation and consent, followed a sailor's career and by his steadiness, courage, and acquirements, rose to some distinction.

THE END.

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