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Title: Archibald Hughson: An Arctic Story

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Release date: November 6, 2007 [eBook #23383]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Nick Hodson of London, England

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ARCHIBALD HUGHSON: AN ARCTIC STORY ***

W.H.G. Kingston

"Archibald Hughson"

Chapter One.

Archibald Hughson, a young Shetland lad, having a strong desire to go to sea, and his mother withholding her consent, determines to run from home.—He is treacherously assisted by Max Inkster, a wicked sailor, who succeeds in getting him stowed away on board the "Kate," a Greenland whaler.

"Where are you going, Archy?" asked Maggie Hughson, as she ran after her brother, who was stealing away from the house, evidently not wishing to be intercepted.

The young Hughson's home stood high up on the slope of a hill on the small island of Bressay, one of the Shetland group. Hence the eye ranged over the northern ocean, while to the eastward appeared the isle of Noss, with the rocky Holm of Noss beyond, the abode of numberless sea-fowl, and to be reached by a rope-way cradle over a broad chasm of fearful depth. The house, roofed with stone, and strongly-built, as it needed to be to withstand the fierce gales blowing over that wild sea, was surrounded by patches of cultivated ground, without trench or bank, or a tree to be seen far or near.

Archy stopped when he heard his sister's voice; for, though headstrong and obstinate, he loved her more than any other human being.

"I am going over to Lerwick to see Max Inkster," he answered, looking back at her. "The 'Kate' sails to-morrow, and I promised him a visit before he goes."

"Oh, surely you don't forget that our mother told you she wished you would not have anything to say to that man!" exclaimed Maggie. "He is bad in many ways, and he can only do you harm."

"I am not going to be led by any one," answered Archy. "I like to hear his tales of the sea, and his adventures when chasing the whale, or hunting white bears, and those sort of things away in Greenland, and perhaps some day I may go to sea myself, and I want to know what sort of a life I am likely to lead. I am not going to be kept digging potatoes, and tending cattle and sheep all my life."

"Oh Archy! don't think of it," said Maggie. "It would break our mother's heart to have you go. You know that our father was lost at sea, and so was uncle Magnus, and many other relations and friends. God will bless you, and you will be far happier, if, in obedience to her, you give up your wild notions and stay at home."

"I am not going to be dictated to, Maggie, by mother or you," exclaimed Archy. "Max is a fine fellow, notwithstanding what you say. He is expecting me, and I am not going to break my engagement; so, good-bye, Maggie. Go back home, and look after mother—that's your duty, which you are so fond of talking about."

Maggie, finding that her arguments were of no avail, returned home, as she could not venture longer to leave her mother, who was ill in bed.

Archy took his way till he was out of sight of the house, and then from beneath a large stone, he pulled out a bundle, which he slung at the end of a stick over his shoulder, and proceeded across the island till he came to the shore of the sound which divides it from the mainland. Several large black high-sided ships lay at anchor, with numerous boats hanging to the davits, and mostly barque-rigged. They were whalers, belonging to Hull and other English and Scotch ports, on their way to Baffin Bay, or the shores of Greenland.

Archy found a boat just about to cross the sound to Lerwick, and, asking for a passage, he jumped in. On landing, he made his way to the house where Max Inkster lodged. The door was open. Archy walked in. Max was alone in a little room on one side of the passage; he was smoking, and a bottle and glass were on the table.

"Glad to see you, lad," he said. "Sit down. I doubted that you would come."

"Why?" asked Archy.

"I thought your mother and sister would advise you to keep away from a fellow like me," answered Max, looking hard at his young guest. He was a strongly-built broad-shouldered man, with an unpleasant expression in his weather-beaten countenance.

"My mother is ill, and did not know I was coming, and I am not going to be dictated to by Maggie," said Archy.

"That's the right spirit, boy," said Max. "If they suspect what you intend doing, they will take good care to prevent you."

"I don't intend to let them know," replied Archy. "But I wish mother was not ill. I am half inclined to stop at home till next season, and then I'll do what I choose, whatever they may say."

"I see how it is," observed Max, with a sneer on his lips. "You are beginning to think we lead too hard a life for you, and you would rather be looking after the cows, and being at the beck and call of mistress Maggie. I thought you had more spirit. You are afraid—that's the truth of it."

"No one shall say I am afraid," exclaimed Archy. "I have asked several captains to take me, but they refused without my mother's leave, and that she won't give, just because my father and uncle Magnus were lost at sea, and so she has taken it into her head that I shall be lost also. If you can help me to go in the 'Kate,' I am ready. There's my bundle of clothes."

"No great stock for a voyage to the Arctic Seas; but we must rig you out when you get on board," observed Max, taking up Archy's bundle, and stowing it away in a large seaman's bag which stood in the corner of the room. "You will have to keep pretty close till we are well clear of the land, or the captain will be for putting you on shore again. Here, take a glass of grog, it will help to keep up your courage." Max mixed a strong glass of whisky and water, and pushed it across the table to Archy.

Archy's scruples soon vanished. He now only thought of the adventures he hoped to meet with among the icebergs.

Max had gained his object. From a quarrel which had occurred years before, he had long harboured an ill-feeling towards the Hughson's; and, for the purpose of thwarting and annoying Mrs Hughson, he was ready to encourage Archy in his disobedience to her. When once a person yields to the suggestions of Satan, he knows not into what crimes he may be hurried. Those who associate with unprincipled people run a fearful risk of being led astray by them. Archy, notwithstanding his mother's warnings, had persisted in visiting Max Inkster, for the sake of hearing his long yarns of nautical adventure, and he would at first have been excessively indignant had he been told that he was likely, in consequence, to be led into any further act of disobedience.

"Did any one see you come in here?" asked Max. "No; Nanny Clousta was out, and no one was passing at the time," answered Archy.

"Well, then, stay quiet here till dark, and I'll take you on board, and stow you away in the hold," said Max. "You must remain there till I give you a signal to come out; but, remember, that you are not to tell the captain or any one else that I had a hand in helping you. Just say that you slipped on board in a shore boat, and hid yourself of your own accord. You will promise me that?"

Archy had not been in the habit of telling falsehoods; but he had already made one step in the downward course, and though he hesitated, he at last said, "I promise. I needn't tell that I knew who took me on board, and I can find my own way below, so there's no necessity to mention your name."

"That's it," said Max. "You will want some food, though. Here, just fill your pockets with this bread and cheese." He took some from a cupboard. "And here is a flask of whisky and water. You may have to lie hid for a couple of days, or more, may be; so you must manage your provisions accordingly."

Max went out, and Archy fell asleep, with his head on the table. It was late at night before his evil councillor returned.

"Rouse up, boy," he whispered. "It's time we were aboard. I have got a man to take us off, and he will think you belong to the ship. Here, shoulder my bag, and come along."

Max placed his heavy sea-bag on his young companion's shoulder. Archy staggered on under it till he reached the boat. The boatman, who had been paid before, pulled away, and they were soon alongside the whaler. Max clambered up the side, and hoisted his bag by a rope after him. Archy followed. The officer of the watch was aft, and as the crew and their friends were constantly coming and going, no notice was taken of them. Max took up his bag, and as he passed up the main hatchway, which was open, having ascertained that there was no one below, he made a sign to Archy to slip down the ladder.

"I'll be with you in a few minutes," he whispered. "No one is likely to go there at this hour."

Archy did as he was bid, and felt his way in the dark, till he found himself among the empty casks in the hold, which were stowed ready for use. There were certain spaces between the tiers which would afford him room to hide himself away. Into one of these he crept, and lay down waiting for Max. He fancied that where he was he should not be seen by anyone moving about the hold, unless expressly looking for him. He thought that Max was a long time in coming, and perhaps would not come at all. On the return of daylight, which would stream down through the open hatchway, should he not be discovered? he thought. The crew would certainly be at work at an early hour, and he might not have time to find a more secure hiding-place. Then he would have to undergo the annoyance and disgrace of being

put on shore, and severely reprimanded by the captain, a very severe man, he had been told. At last he heard some one moving, and presently a light fell on his eyes. He was afraid to stir, almost to breathe, lest he should be discovered.

“Well, if I had not come you would have been hauled out to a certainty in the morning,” said Max, who had only just then been able to pay him his promised visit. “You must come down lower than this. Here, keep after me. Now crawl in there, and don’t come out till you hear three blows, which I’ll give on the casks above your head. You will know by the movement of the ship when we have been at sea a couple of days or so. There; now you have got your will. Here’s your bundle; it will serve as a pillow, and, remember, don’t take any notice of me. I am your friend, but I am not a man who chooses to be trifled with.” Saying this, Max, putting out the lantern, crept away, and Archy was left in solitude and total darkness. The liquor his evil councillor had given him made him sleepy, so he could not think. Otherwise his conscience might have been aroused, and he might have recollected his poor mother lying on a bed of sickness, and his affectionate sister watching for his return. Satan knows that he has his victims secure when they are in that condition.

Archy Hughson was at length awakened by the loud tramp of the crew on deck, the boats being hoisted in, the anchor hove up. He could hear the ripple of the water against the sides of the ship. The “Kate” was under way, but she was not yet even out of Bressay Sound. The hours passed by. He began to grow very weary of his imprisonment, and to long for the expected signal from Max, even though he should soon afterwards have to face the captain, and perhaps be punished for having concealed himself on board. As he thought of this, he began to wish he had waited till he had overcome his mother’s objections, and been able to go sea, like other lads, with a proper outfit. Now and then a better feeling, akin to remorse, stole over him, when he thought of the sorrow and anxiety his absence must cause his mother, who, though over-indulgent, had ever been affectionate and kind to him. Still he did not perceive the wickedness of his own heart, or the cruel ingratitude of which he had been guilty. “She should have let me go, it’s her own fault,” he repeated, hardening himself. “It’s too late now to draw back. I should look very foolish if I was to be set on shore on Unst, and have to find my way home by myself.”

Unst is the most northern of the Shetland Islands, and Archy guessed that by that time the “Kate” was not far off it.

He had little appetite to eat the food he had brought, but he soon drank up the contents of the flask. The mixture was somewhat strong, and sent him off to sleep again. Once more Satan had him at an advantage, for even then, had he gone to the captain, he would have been sent on shore, and retrieved his fault by returning home and relieving his mother’s anxiety. Undo it he could not; for a sin, once committed, can never by man’s power be undone, never forgiven. All sin is committed against God—the slightest evil thought, the slightest departure from truth, is sin against God’s pure and holy law, and He alone can forgive sin. He forgives it only according to the one way He has appointed. He blots it out altogether from remembrance. That way is through faith in the perfect and complete atonement of Jesus Christ, whose blood, shed for man, “cleanseth from all sin.” There is no other way. He accepts no other recompense for sin. There is no undoing a sin, no making amends. All sins, from such as those which men call the smallest to the greatest, are registered, to be brought up in judgment against the sinner, and the all-cleansing blood of Jesus can alone blot them out. Man, as a proof of his living faith in Christ’s atonement,—of his sorrow for sins committed,—of his hatred of sin, of his repentance,—will, of necessity, do all he can to make amends to his fellow-man for the wrong he has done him; he will restore what he has taken; he will explain the truth where he has spoken falsely; he will be kind and gentle to those he has treated harshly; he will give to those of his substance, or forward their interests whom he has injured in any way. But all this cannot blot out one letter in the eternal register of accusations to be brought against him at the day of judgment. Oh! that people did but know this, and would remember that when they sin they sin not only against their fellow-man, but against the all-pure, all-holy God, who can by no means overlook iniquity; in whose sight even the heavens are unclean, without whose knowledge not a sparrow falls to the ground, and by whom the very hairs of our head are numbered.

Chapter Two.

Appearing on deck, Archy is severely reprimanded by the captain, a strict, yet a kind and religious man—His first Sunday at sea—Among the icebergs and ice—Capture of a whale.

Archy Hughson felt very weak and very wretched. The ship had for some hours been tumbling fearfully about, so it seemed to him, now pitching into the seas, which struck her stout bows with heavy blows, now rolling from side to side. He knew that a strong gale was blowing, and he could not help dreading that the casks might break loose, and come down upon him. He longed to escape from his prison, and began to think that Max must have forgotten him altogether. At length he again fell asleep. He was awakened by three heavy knocks above his head, Max’s promised signal. He waited the time agreed on, and then began to crawl out, and grope his way upwards. At last he saw daylight above him, and scrambling along, he reached the foot of a ladder. Climbing up with uncomfortable feelings at his heart as to the reception he might meet with, he gained the upper deck.

The first person he encountered was an old man with weather-beaten features, but a kind expression of countenance, Andrew Scollay by name, a boat-steerer, who was at that moment about to descend.

“Why, lad, where do you come from?” asked old Andrew, putting his hand on the boy’s shoulder.

“I wanted to come to sea; so I hid myself away,” answered Archy. “I hope I have not done wrong.”

“You have not done right, boy, or you would not have needed to hide yourself away,” said Andrew, scanning his features. “I think I have seen you before. What is your name?”

Archy told him.

"What, widow Hughson's son? Oh, boy, boy, you have acted a cruel part towards your poor mother. Anyhow, I would we had found you out two days ago. However, come along with me to the captain—you'll hear what he has to say."

Andrew led Archy aft, where Captain Irvine was standing, and explained in a few words what he knew of him. Captain Irvine, looking sternly at him, inquired how he had managed to conceal himself so long on board? On that point Archy gave a truthful reply.

"How did you know you could find a place where you could hide yourself?" asked the captain.

"I have often before been on board whalers, and knew how the casks were stowed," answered Archy, hoping that he should avoid further questions which might implicate Max Inkster.

"You are deserving of severe punishment for coming on board without my leave," said the captain. "I must consider how I shall treat you. If we fall in with a homeward-bound ship, I shall put you on board. If not, see how you behave yourself. Had your mother asked me to take you I would have done so, and you would have come in for a share of profits; but you have done more wrong to her than you have to me; and though I might flog you, as you deserve, I shall let your own conscience punish you. I hope you have got one, which will make you mourn for your fault. Now go for'ard. You must not eat the bread of idleness, and Mr Scollay will put you to some work or other. I must speak to you again about this, and let me see, as you have chosen to come on board, that you do your best to learn your duty."

Archy's conscience was not aroused. He went forward, well pleased at having, as he thought, got off so cheaply; yet he did not feel at his ease. He looked, indeed, very pale and sick, and miserable. Old Andrew's kind heart was touched, as he remarked his woe-begone appearance. He took him below, and got the steward to give him some food. He then sent him to wash himself.

"I must see about rigging you out," he said. "The clothes you have on are not fit for the work you will have to do."

Archy felt grateful to old Andrew, and thanked him warmly.

"Don't speak about that, boy," remarked Andrew. "It's not that you deserve what I may do for you; but you are poor, and helpless, and wretched, and that's just the state man was in when Christ came down from heaven to help him; and so I have a notion that it becomes His disciples, who desire to be like Him, to assist the helpless and miserable."

The crew generally did not treat Archy as kindly as old Andrew had done. They attacked him, as soon as he got among them, with all sorts of questions, laughing and jeering at his folly. No one laughed at him more than Max Inkster. Archy felt inclined to retort, but he remembered his promise to Max, and gave him no sign of recognition, he was treated as one of the ship's boys, and was put to do all sorts of drudgery and dirty work. Often and often he wished that he had remained at home, to look after his mother's farm, and help Maggie in attending to her.

Several days passed by—Archy was beginning to find himself at home among the crew—Max at length spoke to him as if to a stranger.

"We must make a sailor of you, boy, as you have chosen to come to sea," he said, when the order had just been given to reef topsails. "Lay out on the yard with me, and I'll show you what to do."

Archy had several times been aloft, but had never assisted in reefing. He now followed Max up the rigging. There was a heavy sea running, and the ship was pitching violently.

"Now, don't be afraid—come out on the yard," said Max. "There—lean over, and catch hold of those reef points. Cling tight though, with your knees and elbows, or you will pitch down on deck, and have your brains dashed out."

Archy did as he was bid. He felt very nervous, though, and was thankful when he was safe off the yard. It was coming on to blow harder and harder, and the canvas was still further reduced. Max did not again invite him to go aloft—none but practised seamen could have ventured on the yards. At length, all the canvas was taken off the ship, except a close-reefed main-topsail, when the helm was put down, and she was hove-to. The wind whistled shrilly through the bare poles and rigging. It was blowing a perfect hurricane. All around appeared mountains of heaving water, each succeeding sea threatening to swallow up the labouring ship. Archy was surprised at the calmness of the officers and crew, when he expected every moment that one of those tremendous seas would come on board, and send the ship to the bottom. He wished that he could pray, as his mother had taught him to do, but he dared not; yet he trembled at the thought of what would happen.

Night came on—the gale seemed to increase. He, with all except the watch on deck, had gone below.

"What, lad, art afraid?" asked Max, who observed his pale countenance. "You thought a life at sea was all sunshine and calm."

"I have found out what it is, and I wish that I had not been fool enough to come," answered Archy, with some bitterness.

Max laughed. "Many a lad thinks like you," he said. "They get accustomed to it, and so must you, though the training is not pleasant, I'll allow."

While Max was speaking, a tremendous blow was felt, as if the ship had struck a rock, and then came a sound of rending and crashing timbers, while the water rushed down the hatchway.

"The ship's on her beam ends," cried several voices, and all hands sprang on deck. Archy followed. A scene of wreck and destruction met his sight. The sea had swept over the ship, carrying away the staunchions, bulwarks, and rails,

the binnacle, and the chief portion of the wheel. A fearful shriek reached his ears, and he caught sight for an instant of a man clinging to the binnacle. No help could be afforded him—the poor fellow knew that too well; still he clung to life; but in a few seconds a sea washed over him and he disappeared.

The captain was on deck, calmly issuing his orders,—the crew flew to obey them, while Archy clung to the main-mast, expecting every moment to be his last. Things were at length put to rights; spare spars were lashed to the remaining staunchions—life lines were stretched along the deck, fore and aft. The names of the crew were then called over—two did not answer, another, it was found, had unseen been carried to his dread account.

The next day was the Sabbath. The gale had moderated, and the ship was again put on her course. On that day the captain invariably invited all not on duty to assemble for service in his cabin; Max and a few others generally made excuses for not attending. The captain took this occasion to speak of the uncertainty of human life.

“The fate of our shipmates may be that of any one of us, my lads,” he observed. “I do not ask how they were prepared to meet their God, but how are you prepared? Even if you are living pure and blameless lives, have you made peace with Him according to the only way He has offered to reconcile you to Himself? Have you a living faith in the atoning blood of Jesus shed for you? He wishes you to be reconciled to Him, and He has offered to you the easiest and simplest way, the only way by which you can be so. Remember, ‘now is the accepted time,’ ‘now is the day of salvation.’ It is God tells you this. If you put off that day it may be too late—for He says nothing about to-morrow. Some of you may say that you lead hard lives, have little enjoyment, and much suffering, and that that must satisfy God and give you a right to heaven. God does not tell you that; but He says, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. He that believeth not is condemned.’ Oh lads, if you knew of the love of Jesus for you, and how He longs for you all to be saved, you could not stand aloof from Him as you do, and try to keep Him out of your thoughts, and do nothing to please or serve Him. I speak to young and old, for He loves the youngest boy on board here as well as the oldest, and His blood, which cleanseth from all sin, will wash away the sins of the greatest criminal as completely as it will cleanse the most harmless youngster, though he, too, needs to be washed as much as the other.” Such was the substance of Captain Irvine’s discourse on the Sunday after the storm. Archy had attended, and the words were continually haunting him. Max, as usual, had kept away.

“I wonder you can stand that sort of thing,” he said to Archy, when he next met him. “I have no fancy for those discourses of the skipper; but if you want to curry favour with him, by all means go, just as old Andrew and Dr Sinclair, and some others do. They have prayers with him every morning in his cabin. You will not turn psalm-singer, I hope, lad.”

“I don’t suppose I shall,” answered Archy. “But still I should not like to be washed overboard, as Bill and Ned were the other night.”

“As to that, you must run your chance as others do,” answered Max. “I don’t let such things trouble me.”

Archy could not help letting them trouble him, though.

The next day the whole crew were busily employed in getting the whale boats ready and the gear fitted. There were seven boats in all—three slung to the davits on each side, and one over the stern, with a harpooner to each. The whale lines were spliced and coiled away in the stern of the boats; the harpoons were spanned, that is, fastened to the ends of the lines, and various articles were stowed away in the boats, so that they were all ready to be lowered, and to shove off at a moment’s notice, should a whale appear. The crow’s-nest was also got up to the main topgallant mast-head. It is like a tall cask with a seat in it, where the officer can take his station and look out far and wide over the ocean to watch for the spouting of the monsters of the deep.

Next morning, when Archy went on deck, he saw at no great distance from the ship a vast white towering mass, glittering like alabaster in the rays of the sun. At the lower part were projecting points and curious arches, and a deep cavern, with numberless columns and long icicles hanging from the roof, while the summit was crowned with pinnacles and towers of every possible shape. From the higher points, as the ice melted under the rays of the hot sun, came down two or three tiny cascades of bright water, leaping from ledge to ledge till they fell with a splash into the calm ocean.

Archy had often heard of icebergs, but he had formed little conception of what they really were. He stood gazing at it for some minutes, lost in wonder.

“Well, boy, what do you think of it?” asked Andrew Scollay, who was passing at the time.

“It’s very wonderful,” said Archy.

“All God’s works are wonderful,” observed old Andrew. “You will see thousands of such bergs as this where we are going, all formed by God’s will, just as He forms everything else in the world; and yet if all the kings of the earth and their people were to try and build up one like them, they could not succeed. Now, Archy, I put it to you, whether it is not wise to try and be friends with such a God—to know that you are under His care and protection, instead of disobeying Him and daring His power? The time may come before long when you will feel how helpless you are to take care of yourself, boy. I have seen stout ships crushed in a moment between masses of ice, as if they had been made of paper, and once I saw one of those large bergs come down and overwhelm a passing ship, not a soul on board escaping. Ay, and I have known numbers of poor fellows, when their ships have gone done, wandering over the ice till they have been frozen or starved to death. I don’t tell you these things to frighten you, but that you may learn to put your trust in God. The person who truly trusts Him is never frightened. It is a blessed thing to know that He cares for us.”

Archy was unable to make any reply; but the old man’s words were not forgotten.

The next day many more icebergs were seen, and as the ship passed near some of them, Archy could not help dreading that they might topple over and carry her and all on board to the bottom.

In a short time the ship made the ice. As far as the eye could reach, the whole ocean was covered with broken sheets of ice,—some several miles in extent, others of smaller size, which the seamen called floes,—huge icebergs towering up among them. The ship sailed along the edge of a large floe for some distance, till an opening appearing, her head was pointed towards it. She entered and sailed onwards for a considerable distance, the water being as smooth as in the most sheltered harbour. The captain, or an officer, was continually stationed in the crow's-nest to look out for the widest openings. Into these she forced her way, now and then being impeded by pieces of ice, against which her bow was driven to turn them aside. At length, after running through a narrow passage, her further progress was stopped by a sheet of ice through which she could not force her way, while beyond the water appeared perfectly open. The sails were furled; the ice-saws got out, and the crew commenced sawing out large blocks, so as to form a passage towards the open water. The work was very laborious; for, in addition to the operation of sawing, each block had to be towed out into the wider channel. At length a canal was formed, and the ship glided through it. Once more the sails were set and she steered to the northward. Again, however, she had to encounter similar obstructions. Still the captain pushed on, eager to get to a part of the bay where whales were plentiful. Generally there was a breeze, and she made good progress through the open water, but sometimes she lay becalmed, with her sails hanging against the masts. All the time a sharp look out was kept for whales, but hitherto, although a few had been seen, the wary monsters had escaped the harpoons of their pursuers.

At that season, in those northern regions, when the sun but just sinks below the horizon ere it rises again, night and day are much alike.

Archy, with the watch below, had turned in. He was awakened by a loud stamping on the deck, and the cry of "a fall, a fall." The men rushed up on deck, carrying their clothes with them, and dressing as they went. Instantly running to the boats, they began to lower them. In the distance was a boat with a flag flying, a signal that a whale had been struck, and was fast. The boats shoved off, and away they went at a rapid rate to the assistance of their friends. The monster soon appeared on the surface. The boats pulled towards it, and numberless lances were darted at its body. Again it sounded, to reappear shortly still closer to the ship. Once more the boats dashed on—the water around the animal was dyed red with blood, mixed with oil, which issued from its wounds and blow-holes. The boats again drew near, and more lances were hurled at it. Suddenly the creature reared its tail high in the air, whirling it round with a loud noise, which reached the ship. At the same moment the nearest boat was thrown upwards several feet, while the crew were sent flying on every side into the water, the boat itself being reduced to a mass of wreck. Their companions went forward to rescue the drowning men, who were seen to be hauled into the boats; but whether any had perished could not be discovered by those who, with Archy, were eagerly watching what was taking place, from the deck of the ship. Directly afterwards the whale rolled over on its side, and remained perfectly quiet. The flag was lowered, and the men, standing up in the boats, gave three loud huzzas, which were echoed by those on board. Two holes being made in the tail of the whale, ropes were passed through them, which being made fast to the boats, they towed their prize in triumph to the ship. The animal now being secured alongside, the process of flensing or cutting off the blubber commenced. Tackles were rigged with hooks, which were fixed in the blubber. This was cut by means of spades, and the tackle being worked by a windlass, as the blubber was cut off in long strips, it was hoisted on board. Here it was cut into pieces, and stowed in casks in the hold. Thus, as the whale was turned round and round, the blubber was stripped off, till the whole coat was removed. The whalebone, of which the gills are formed, being then extracted, the carcase was cast adrift, when it was seen to be surrounded by vast numbers of fish and wild sea-birds, coming from all directions to banquet on the remaining flesh. The operation, which lasted five hours, being concluded, the crew were piped to supper.

"There, Archy, you have seen our first whale killed," observed Max. "I hope we shall have many more before long, and soon be back home again; and if you are tired of the life, you can go on shore and look after your mother's farm."

Chapter Three.

The "Kate" encounters a fearful gale amid icebergs, and narrowly escapes a falling berg.—Calm after storm.—Though scoffed at by his shipmates, Archy tries, unsuccessfully, to follow the advice given him by Captain Irvine.

Captain Irvine was anxious to reach the northern point of Baffin Bay, where whales were said to abound. He used, therefore, every exertion to force the ship through the ice. Sometimes she threaded her way through narrow passages, at the risk of being caught and nipped by the floes pressing together; at others, to avoid this catastrophe, she had to take shelter in a dock, cut out as rapidly as the crew could use their saws, in one side of a floe. Scarcely had she been thus secured when another floe, with a sullen roar, pressed on by an unseen power, would come grinding and crashing against the first with irresistible force, and the before level surface, rent and broken asunder, would appear heaved up into large hillocks, and huge masses, many hundred tons in weight, would be lifted on to the opposing barrier, threatening to overwhelm the ship. Suddenly the whole field of ice would be again in motion, the broken fragments would be thrown back on each other or pressed down beneath the surface, and a lane of water would appear, edged on each side by a wall of ice. The boats would then be lowered to tow the ship along, or, should the wind be favourable, the sails were set, and in spite of the blows she might receive from the floating fragments, she would force her way onwards towards the open water.

Often and often as Archy watched what was taking place, he fully expected to find the ship crushed to fragments, and wondered that Captain Irvine could venture into so fearfully dangerous a position. Still the ship, escaping all dangers, made her way to the north, and by degrees Archy grew accustomed to the scenes he witnessed, and viewed them with the same indifference as the rest of the crew.

For a whole day she had made her way through open water, with a strong breeze. The weather began to lour—the wind blew stronger and stronger—numerous icebergs appeared ahead—in a short time the ship was surrounded by them. Now one was passed by, now another. It seemed often as if no power could save her from being dashed against their precipitous sides. Perhaps the captain expected the gale to moderate, if so, he was mistaken. It soon blew fiercer than ever. At length the ship got under the lee of a large berg, which towered up a hundred feet or more above the mast-heads. The sails were furled—the boats carried out ice anchors and made them fast to the foot of the berg. There the ship rode, sheltered from the gale, in smooth water, while the wind howled and roared, and the sea, hissing and foaming, dashed with fury against the bergs, which were observed at a distance on either side.

Archy recollected the account Max had given him some time before of icebergs suddenly overturning, and as he looked up at the frozen mountain above him, he could not help thinking what their fate might be, should the gale, which blew on the other side, force the berg over. Still he had not learned to put his trust in God. Fear made his heart sink within him, but he dared not contemplate the future. All he could say to himself was, "I hope it will not. How dreadful it would be. What would become of us!" He had no one to whom he could go for consolation. Max, he knew, would only laugh at him and call him a coward. He wished that Old Andrew would speak to him, but he was on duty on deck, and had the ship to attend to.

Several hours passed by, still the gale did not abate. Archy thought the captain and officers looked more serious than usual. Several of them turned their eyes ever and anon towards the summit of the berg. At length the chief mate came forward. He had just reached the fore-castle, when a small piece of ice, the size of a bullet it seemed, fell splashing into the water just ahead of the ship. Another and another followed. With a startling cry, the captain shouted, "Cut the hawser, loose the jib and fore-staysail, hands aloft for your lives lads." The head sails were hoisted, the fore-topsail sheeted home. The ship, coming round, shot away from the berg. The after sails were speedily loosed. In another instant, with a crashing thundering noise, down came vast masses of ice, falling into the water, with loud splashes, close astern, while numerous smaller pieces fell with fearful force on deck. Happily no one was struck, but a piece went right through one of the quarter boats. The ship, as if aware of her danger, flew on. Downwards came the vast mountain of ice with a crashing roar, louder than any thunder, directly on the spot where she had just before floated, sending the spray in thick sheets flying over her poop. Had she remained a moment longer she must have been overwhelmed. Many a cheek of the hardy crew was blanched with horror. Even now it seemed that they had scarcely escaped the fearful danger, for the berg astern of them rocked to and fro as if still intent on their destruction. The first mate and one of the best hands were at the helm; the wind whistled loudly, the sails appeared as if about to fly from the bolt ropes, as the ship heeled over to the gale. Numerous other bergs appeared ahead, and as she rushed onwards, it seemed impossible that she could avoid them. No sooner was one weathered than another appeared in her course. The yards were braced sharp up. She dashed by a huge berg, her masts, as she heeled over, almost touching its sides. Now an opening appeared between two large ice mountains. The only way to escape was by passing between them. The ship dashed into the passage, now she glided onward in comparatively smooth water. The bergs were moving. Nearer and nearer they drew to each other. In a short time they might meet and crush the hapless vessel into a thousand fragments. To escape by the way she had entered the passage was impossible. The wind came aft. The yards were squared, more sail was set, faster and faster she flew onwards, yet fast as she went, it seemed as if the masses of ice would catch her ere she could escape them in their deadly embrace. Every man and boy was at his station, ready to clew up and haul down directly the ship should be free, and again exposed to the fury of the gale. No one could tell but that other bergs might be ahead, or in what direction it might be necessary to steer. Archy, as he held on to a rope he had been ordered to tend, looked up at the vast ice-cliffs with horror in his eyes, expecting every moment to see them falling over upon the ship. He glanced aft, and saw the captain standing calm and undismayed, ready to issue whatever orders might be necessary.



The channel seemed interminable, for, fast as the vessel glided on, still those terrible cliffs frowned down upon her. At length the open water appeared ahead, with fewer bergs than had before been seen floating on it. The ship glided out into the heaving ocean; and as she heeled over, Archy thought the masts would go over the side; but sail (though not without difficulty) was rapidly shortened, and the masts stood firm. Onwards, as before, she flew in her course; several other bergs were weathered, till at length all present dangers

were passed, and she was now hove-to to await the termination of the storm. In a few hours the gale ceased, and once more she proceeded on her course.

A calm succeeded the storm. The ship floated on the smooth water. It was the Sabbath-day; the captain as usual had summoned the crew to prayers, the greater number went willingly, for they were well aware of the imminent danger they had escaped, and were glad to express their gratitude to Him who had preserved them. Max Inkster, with a few others, made excuses for staying away.

"What, lad, are you going to hear the old man preach?" he asked, with a sneer, as he saw Archy making his way aft. "For my part, I think we have too much of that sort of thing aboard here. I have made up my mind to cut and run from the ship if I could find a few brave fellows to accompany me. We should have more liberty and a larger allowance of grog, with less psalm-singing, on board other vessels I know of, and reach home sooner again into the bargain. But don't you go and tell others what I say; I only ask you, if we go, will you join us?"

"I'll think about it, Max," answered Archy, "but I promised old Andrew that I would attend prayers."

"Much good may your prayers do you," sneered Max. "You are the fellow who sneaked off from his dying mother, and now you talk of praying."

"I did, I did," groaned Archy, "and I feel how wicked I was to do so."

As all the other men had by this time collected in the cabin, Archy could stay no longer, and hurried off, the words last spoken by Max ringing in his ears. He thought of them all the time the captain was offering up prayer, and returning thanks to God for having mercifully preserved him and his crew from the danger to which they had been exposed, and humbly petitioning for protection for the future.

When the service was over, as Archy was leaving the cabin, Captain Irvine called him back.

The old captain had been ill for some days. Archy was struck with his peculiarly grave and solemn manner. He kindly took the young boy's hand.

"I have a few words to say to you, lad," he said. "I knew your father; he was a God-fearing man, and I believe he is in heaven. Your mother, too, is a Christian woman, and she, when she leaves this world, will join him there. Now lad, I have to ask you what is your hope? There is but one way to go there, remember that. Have you sought that way?"

Archy hung down his head. "I know I was very wicked to leave my mother as I did," he answered, "and I could not help thinking the other day, when the iceberg was about to come down upon us, where I should go to."

"Ah, lad, it's a great thing to see your sin, but God wants you to do more than that. You must acknowledge it to Him and seek His way for blotting it out. Do you know that way, laddie, which only a God of infinite love and mercy could have devised for saving weak fallen man from the consequences of sin? Have you sought the Saviour? Sorrow will not wash away sin. The blood of the Saviour, which He shed when He suffered instead of man on Calvary, can alone do it. Only those who seek Him and trust in Him can benefit by that blood. Have you earnestly sought him, laddie? I am sure if you do seek Him, desiring to turn away from your sins, that you will find Him."

Archy could only repeat, "I am very sorry I ran away from mother and hid myself aboard the ship, and I thought when we were so near being destroyed the other day, what would become of me."

Archy exactly described his state, and the captain knew he spoke truly. There are too many like him, who only think of their sins at the approach of danger.

"Ah, laddie! I should be thankful if you could honestly tell me that you mourn for your sins, because you have grievously offended our loving Father in heaven, and that you have sought forgiveness from Him, through the all-cleansing blood of His dear Son, shed for you on Calvary," said Captain Irvine. "Do you ever pray?"

"Not since I came aboard here," answered Archy.

"And I am afraid not for some time before, either," observed the captain. "For if you had prayed that God's Holy Spirit would guide and direct you, and keep you out of temptation, you would not have ran away from home as you did. Now, laddie, what I want you to understand is, that you are weak and helpless in yourself, that you can neither walk aright nor do any good thing by yourself; but that if you seek the aid of the Holy Spirit you will walk aright, you will be able to withstand temptation, and to do God's will. If you do not pray and seek His aid, you cannot expect to find it; yet if you do seek it, you will assuredly find it, for He hath said, 'Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.'"

Archy listened attentively to what the captain said, and tried to understand it, but the danger which had alarmed his conscience had passed away, and when he went forward and mixed again with his careless shipmates, he forgot much that had been said. Still, when he turned into his bunk, he did try to pray; but he dared not bravely kneel down in the sight of others lest they should laugh at him, and he had been so long unaccustomed to offer up prayer, that he could not even think of what words to say. Captain Irvine, however, did not forget him, and day after day he called him into the cabin, or spoke to him on deck. He gave him a Bible also, and marked many passages in it, which Archy promised to read. The captain had also a library of books on board, which were lent to the men, and two or three of these he put into Archy's hands as likely to be useful to him. Old Andrew also frequently took an opportunity of speaking to him, but his work occupied most of the day, and when he went below he was generally too sleepy to sit long over a book. Max and others also did their utmost to interrupt him, and he made but little progress either in reading the Bible or any other of the books which had been lent him. Still, in some respects, he was trying to follow the good advice which the captain had given him. Weak, however, are all our efforts when we trust to our own

strength. Archy did not seek assistance from the only source which can give it, and, consequently, his good resolutions were soon scattered to the wind.

Chapter Four.

Archy wishing to be present when a whale is struck, against orders goes off in one of the boats.—Attack a whale and her calf, but lose both, and the boat's bows are stove against a floe.—The crew escape by landing on it, and dragging the boat after them. Preparations made to wait for the arrival of the ship in search of them.

The ship had for some time been off the western shore of the bay, and several whales had been taken—every one was actively engaged, for when the operation of flensing was not going on, the boats were generally away in chase of their prey.

Archy had hitherto always remained on board. He had long wished, however, to be present at one of the exciting scenes he had only witnessed from a distance. How to manage it was the difficulty. He knew that it would be of no use asking leave from the captain, or any of the boat-steerers, for idlers were not allowed in the boats. He had thought that he should at once engage in all the adventures described by Max, and was one day expressing his disappointment in his presence.

"They will come time enough," observed Max. "But if you have a fancy to see some sport, and may be to get tossed in the air, or drowned, or have to spend a night on a floe, and be well nigh frozen, as I have more than once, I'll give you a chance. You know that I am your friend, or I would not do it. Now, the next time a fall is called, do you tumble into my boat; I'll rail away if old Andrew sees you, but pretend you have hurt your leg and lie still, and depend upon it he will be in too great a hurry to shove off to put you on board again, and as the captain did not punish you for hiding away, he will not say much to you on that account."

Archy knew very well that he ought to have suspected Max's advice, but he was so eager to see a whale struck, that he forgot all other considerations. Hoping therefore that he might soon have the opportunity he desired, he turned into his bunk with his clothes on, ready to slip into the boat at a moment's notice. The ship was standing some distance off the land, and though the sea was generally open, here and there masses of ice were to be seen floating about from enormous icebergs down to small pieces of a few feet in diameter. Archy hoped that before long the boats would be lowered to go in chase of a whale. He tried to keep awake, but sleep soon overpowered him. He was aroused by hearing the sound of stamping overhead, and he looked for cry of "a fall, a fall." He sprang on deck, and without waiting to see whether he was observed, slipped into old Andrew's boat, in which Max pulled one of the oars, and throwing himself down in the bottom, remained perfectly still. The rest of the crew followed. Old Andrew was the last, having been detained longer than usual. The boat shoved off, and only then Max pretended to have discovered him. Andrew, on seeing the lad, was about to put back, but at that moment the spout of another whale was observed at no great distance. The crew, bending to their oars, pulled towards it; and Andrew, in the excitement of the moment, forgot all about Archy. The boat dashed on. A sucking whale was seen playing near the old one.

"We shall have her boys, we shall have her," shouted Andrew.

The whale discerned the approach of her foes, and diving down with her calf, disappeared.

"Give way lads, give way," cried Andrew, "she will not desert the young one."

He was right, though had the old whale been alone, she would soon have been miles away. The boat continued in the direction the whale had been seen to take, and in a short time the small animal again came to the surface to breathe. The boat was soon up to the animal, when its faithful mother rose also to afford it protection. The boat dashed up to it, and Andrew, going forward, plunged his unerring harpoon deep into its side. No sooner did the monster feel the wound than away she darted, towing the boat, the young whale keeping up with her. The crew pulled with might and main, hoping to get up alongside again in order to fix another harpoon, and to pierce her with their lances. They had nearly succeeded, when up went her tail in the air, and down she dived into the depths of ocean, her calf following her example. Immediately the whale line was allowed to run out; and, as the end was approached, another was fastened on. That too had nearly been drawn out, when the crew, lifting up their oars, made a signal for assistance from their companions, but they were already too far off to be seen, indeed the other boats were engaged with the whale first attacked.

"Hold on," shouted Andrew. "Though she might not come up by herself, the young one will, and she will follow."

He was right; for at the moment that the bow of the boat seemed about to be drawn under water, and the knife was lifted to cut the line, it slackened, and the young whale came to the surface some way ahead, followed immediately afterwards by its mother. Remaining stationary a short time to breathe, during which a portion of the line was hauled in, the monster again began to make her way along the surface.

"Rare fun!" exclaimed Archy, who was sitting near Max. "I would not have missed this on any account."

"We shall not be merry long if that bank of clouds to the north brings a gale with it," growled out Max.

Archy looked around; the sea, hitherto calm, was already ruffled with waves, and an icy breeze swept over the surface. Still no whaler, with a fish fast, would have thought of giving up the pursuit. Already the monster, wearied by its exertions, was slackening its speed; the crew began to haul in the line, the first was got in. They were already in the hopes of again wounding the animal mortally before she could once more sound, when inspired with a mother's instinct to do her utmost for the preservation of her young one, she again darted forward. A large floe appeared

ahead, out of which arose several hummocks. The whale made rapid way towards it. The crew pulled with might and main, still hoping to reach her before she could dive below the ice. In vain were all their efforts. Still she went on. She reached the edge of the floe. It was possible she might turn or make her way along it, rather than venture with her young one below its surface, where they might be unable to find an opening for breathing. Again she stopped; as Andrew had expected. The crew continued to haul in the line, when once more she moved on, and it was necessary to secure it round the bollard.

“She is ours,” cried Andrew; “she will not venture under the ice.” The crew bent to their oars, hoping in another instant to be up with her, when, with a sudden start, she dashed forward. With great presence of mind Andrew cut the line, just in time to prevent the boat from being dragged under the floe, but not sufficiently soon to save her bows from being stove. The water came rushing in through the fearful rent that had been made. The crew leaped out on the ice, old Andrew seizing Archy, who, bewildered at the occurrence, had sat still. Already the boat was half full of water, and not without great difficulty she was hauled up on the ice, against which the sea was beating violently, and several articles were washed out of her. Archy had instinctively clutched a bucket by his side, to which he held when he was dragged out. It contained a tinder-box and powder flask.

There the whole party stood on the exposed floe by the side of their shattered boat. They looked around. Neither the ship nor the boats were to be seen, while the thick mist, which came driving over the ocean, concealed even some of the nearest icebergs from view. Two or three of the men loudly expressed their anxiety. Max’s countenance exhibited the alarm he felt. Old Andrew alone preserved his usual equanimity.

“My lads,” he said, “I’ll allow we are in bad case, but don’t let us give way to despair. We must do our best to repair the boat; and if the ship does not come to look for us, we must set out to look for her.”

The injuries, however, that the boat had received were very severe, and it was evident that no means they had at their disposal were sufficient to repair her. Even a piece of canvas would have been of value, but they had no canvas and no nails. The sea, too, which had rapidly got up, now dashed furiously against the sides of the floe, threatening to sweep over it, and break it to pieces beneath their feet. Andrew looked around, and observing a large hummock at some distance, urged his companions to drag the boat towards it.

“Yonder ice hill will afford us some shelter,” he said. “And if we make a signal from the top, it will be more readily seen than one down on the level.”

The men exerting all their strength dragged the boat along, Archy helping, till they reached the hummock, she was then turned bottom uppermost under its lee. An axe having been saved, one of the oars was cut into lengths, which served to prop her up and afford them some shelter from the freezing wind. Two oars were also lashed together to serve as a flagstaff, and all the handkerchiefs that could be mustered were joined to form a flag. A hole, after much labour, was dug with the axe in the top of the hummock, and the flagstaff was planted, but the furious wind threatened every moment to blow it down again. The gale was increasing, and already they felt almost perished, but their great want was food. They had come away without breakfast, and no provisions had been put in the boat. Even should they be able to resist the gale, and should the floe continue together, they ran a fearful risk of perishing of hunger. The snow falling heavily formed a bank round the boat, and assisted to keep out the wind,—here they all collected, crouching down as close together as possible, for the sake of obtaining warmth from each other.

“If we had but a fire we might do pretty well till the ship comes to take us off,” observed Max. “We have got some wood, at all events, and when that’s gone we must burn the boat and form a roof of snow over our heads instead, after Esquimaux fashion.”

No sooner was the proposal made than the remaining oars, boat-stretchers, and every piece of wood that could be found was cut up. Archy produced the tinder-box from the bucket, and in a short time a fire was blazing up, which served to warm their chilled limbs, and slightly to raise their spirits. Few of them, however, were disposed to talk much.

Chapter Five.

Andrew Scollay, a religious old man, encourages his shipmates in their fearful position, without food, fire, or shelter.—Archy distinguishes between his false and real friend.—He takes a run over the ice with Andrew, when a sail is seen, and at last a boat approaches.

Hour after hour passed by, and still there was no abatement of the storm. Loud noises meantime were heard around, denoting the breaking up of the floe on which they floated, and they could not tell how soon the portion on which they had taken refuge might be rent from the main body and floated away. Often did Archy wish that he had remained on board, and not exposed himself to the fearful danger in which he was placed. At length old Andrew spoke to him.

“Are you happy, boy?” he asked. “But you need not tell me—I know you are not. I am sorry to find you placed in this fearful position, but it was through your own fault—you chose to come against orders. It is bad for us, but then we came because it was our duty.”

“I am sure I am very sorry I did come,” answered Archy. “But I didn’t think this would happen.”

“People never know what will happen when they do what is wrong,” said Andrew. “Satan tempts them to sin, and then leaves them to take the consequences. Lads, I speak to you all as I speak to this boy. Are you prepared to meet your God?”

"Why do you say that?" said Max, in a husky voice.

"Because I think, before many hours are over our heads, the summons will come," said Andrew, solemnly. "Any moment the ice may break up, and the sea may wash over us, or we may sit here till we die of cold and hunger."

"You are croaking," said Max. "Our captain is not the man to desert us."

"I am speaking the solemn truth," said Andrew. "The captain will do his best to search for us, but the gale will have driven the ship miles away by this time, and before she can get up to us we may be dead. I don't speak thus to frighten you, lads, but because I wish to see your souls saved. You may say that you are such sinners that there is no hope of that. I wish you did know that you are sinners. You heard the captain read to you the other day the account of the thief on the cross. He knew that he was a sinner, but he found the Saviour even at the last moment of his life. He trusted to Jesus, who saved him; and he had the assurance from the lips of that loving One, that he was saved. Jesus will say to you what He said to the thief on the cross, if you will even now turn to Him: 'Now is the day of grace, now is the day of salvation.' Oh, lads, I pray you to throw yourselves on His mercy, to trust to Him. His blood cleanseth from all sin."

The seamen listened attentively to what Andrew said: they had often heard similar words from the lips of the captain, but they were in safety then on board their stout ship, and they had allowed them to pass away unheeded. Now, although they still hoped to escape, they could not help acknowledging that they were in a fearfully perilous position. Still no one replied. What was passing in their minds Andrew could not tell. He continued, addressing them in the same strain for some time. Again and again he told them of the Saviour's love, and how earnestly He desired them to come to Him and be saved.

Archy, however, had drunk in every word Andrew had said.

"But would Jesus pardon me, who has so grievously offended Him?" he asked at last—"me, who have so often been told of His loving kindness and mercy?"

"Yes, lad, that He will," said Andrew, taking Archy's hand, "He has promised it, and His word is sure. He has sent us this blessed message:—'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.' He does not say from some sins, or from only slight sins, but from all sins."

"Oh, then, I'll try and give Him my heart," exclaimed Archy. "I'll trust to Him."

"Yes, do that, Archy; but give him your heart now—trust to Him now," said Andrew, earnestly. "We will pray, lad, that the Holy Spirit will help you, for He alone can carry out the work in your heart;" and the pious old man, kneeling down on the ice, lifted up his voice in prayer; and surely that prayer was not uttered in vain. Still, although the rest of the party made no response to his exhortations, he persevered; and from the loud crashing roar of the ice, as the broken fragments were dashed together, it seemed too likely that the day of grace for all would ere long be past. Hour after hour went by, and yet the portion of the floe on which they had taken refuge kept together. The storm continued to rage, and the snow still fell heavily. Piece after piece of the boat had been cut away its place being supplied with a wall and roof of snow, which the seamen gradually built up. They were beginning to feel the pangs of hunger, and they could scarcely get sufficient warmth from the small fire they were able to maintain to keep themselves from being frozen. It was near mid-summer. Had it been the winter they could not thus have existed many hours. Every now and then one of the party ran to the summit of the hillock in the hopes of seeing the ship. Still the falling snow shut out all but the nearest objects from view, and here and there alone a tall iceberg could be seen rising dimly amid the foaming seas. "No hope, no hope," was the mournful cry of one after the other, as they returned to the hut.

"Don't say there's no hope," observed old Andrew. "God can send us help, though we can't help ourselves. Oh, lads, I again say, and it may be for the last time, put your trust in Him. I don't tell you that He will send us relief. It may be His will that our bodies should perish on the spot where we are sitting; but I do tell you, that He offers to rescue your souls, and will certainly, if you put your trust in Him, not allow them to perish."

Archy sat close to old Andrew, listening attentively to what he said, he had now learned to distinguish between his real and false friend. How earnestly he wished that he had not been led astray by the evil counsel of the latter. The rest of the party sat silent, their countenances exhibiting the despair which had taken possession of their hearts. Their fuel was well nigh exhausted, and suffering from hunger they knew that they could not hold out long against the cold. Andrew proposed that they should let the fire out for a time, and warm themselves by exercise.

"We will then light it again, and it will enable us to lie down and rest without fear of being frozen," he observed.

To this wise advice the men would not agree.

"If die we must, we will keep warm while we can," growled out Max.

"Then, Archy, you and I will try and keep our blood flowing by using our limbs," said Andrew. "See, the snow has ceased falling, and there's less wind than there was."

This was said after they had spent many hours on the ice. How many they could scarcely tell, for no sun appeared to mark the progress of the day.

Andrew, taking his young companion's hand, rose, and together they went to the top of the hummock, and gazed around for a minute, though they could now see much further than before. No sail appeared to cheer their sight. They quickly descended, and Andrew, with the activity of a young man, ran backwards and forwards under the lee of the hummock. Archy felt the benefit of the exercise; but though his hunger had increased, his blood circulating freely, made him feel better able to endure the cold than before.

When at length they returned to the hut, they found the remaining pieces of wood burning, and that in a short time they would be left without any fire.

"If you had followed my advice it would have been better for us all," observed Andrew.

The men made no reply; they all appeared to have fallen into a state of stupor, and to have become indifferent to their fate. Andrew and Archy sat down to rest, and to enjoy the warmth of the fire, anxiously watching the last few pieces of wood as they were gradually consumed. The embers which they scraped together afforded them heat for some time longer—then, by degrees, those died out.

"It is our duty to hold out while we can, boy," said Andrew, when the last spark of the fire was extinguished. "Come and take another run."

Archy felt very weak and faint from want of food, still he endeavoured to exert himself. Again they visited the top of the hummock, but still no sail was to be seen. The sea tumbled and foamed, and the surrounding masses of ice ground and crashed against each other, and the floe on which they were appeared to have decreased in size, while huge blocks, thrown up by the waves, rested on its weather side. Even Andrew was unable to run backwards and forwards as fast as before, and again they sought shelter within the hut. No questions were asked them; indeed most of their companions appeared to be asleep. Andrew in vain tried to arouse them. Archy felt that he, too, should like to lie down and go to sleep; but from doing this Andrew used every effort to prevent him, and in a short time proposed that they should take another run to the top of the hummock. With difficulty Archy followed him.

For some time the old man stood looking round in every direction, then his eyes rested on a particular spot to the northward, and Archy saw him raise his hands as if in prayer.

"Lad," he said suddenly, "look between those two icebergs. What do you see?"

Archy gazed with beating heart. "A sail! a sail!" he exclaimed.

"Yes—of that there's no doubt," said Andrew, calmly, "and may God direct her course towards us. She is at present standing this way; but should a whale be seen, she may steer in a different direction." They anxiously watched the approaching ship for some minutes.

"We will tell our companions," said Andrew—"the news will rouse them if they are not too far gone."

Archy forgetting his hunger, and no longer feeling his weakness, rushed back to the hut, shouting, "a sail! a sail!" Max, and two of the other men, started as the sound reached their ears, but before they had gained their feet they again sank down on the ice. After making several efforts, they were at length able to walk, having in the meantime aroused their companions, who, sitting up, looked around with bewildered glances, as if not comprehending the news they heard. Archy again ran back, Max and the rest, with tottering steps, trying to follow him. They succeeded at length, and as they saw the ship, almost frantic with joy, they shook each other's hands, and shouted and danced like mad people, their sufferings, their fears of death, were in a moment forgotten, and so probably also were any good resolutions they might have formed. How different was their behaviour to that of Andrew. Archy remarked it.

The ship came on with a strong breeze, threading her way amid the masses of ice in her course. She had got within a couple of miles. Still, unless the eyes of those on board were directed in their direction, the flag flying from the hummock might not be seen. She came nearer and nearer.

"She will not pass us now," cried Max.

"We will pray to God that she may not," said Andrew; but at that moment the vessel was seen to haul her wind, and to stand to the westward. A loud groan of bitter disappointment was uttered by Max and the other men.

"God's will be done," said Andrew. "See, mates, she has hove-to, she is lowering her boat. They are after a fish."

With what eagerness did the eyes of the starving seamen watch the ship. It was impossible to say in what direction she might next steer. They no longer felt cold or hunger.

"See, see, what is that?" cried one of the men, as a dark object was discovered darting out from behind the nearest iceberg.

Directly afterwards a boat was seen fast to a whale, and following in its wake. The whale approached the floe, but while still at some distance its flukes were seen to rise in the air, and down it shot into the ocean. Although those on the ice knew that they were too far off to be heard, they shouted again and again, their voices sounding strangely hollow in each other's ears. The first line had apparently been run out from the boat; a second had been bent on; that, too, came to an end. They could see the four oars lifted up as a signal for assistance from the ship. Once more the boat approached them at a rapid rate, dragged on by the whale. It was evident she was in great distress, and that her crew dreaded the fate they themselves had suffered. Suddenly she stopped—the line had been cut. Would they turn away? No, the crew bent to their oars—the boat-steerer stands up and waves. They are seen—help will come to them. Again the cheer.

"Let us thank God, for He has sent yonder boat to our assistance," said Andrew.

Chapter Six.

Rescued!—On board the "Laplander" whaler, which is nearly full, and expects soon to return home.—Max

Inkster tries to undermine Archy's good resolutions, but the latter remembers that "a friend in need is a friend indeed."—Sail for home.—A tempting channel appearing, it is entered, but the ship is nipped, and the "Laplander" is abandoned.—Escape to the floe with only a few clothes and provisions, when a plan is formed for reaching the coast of Greenland.

The boat had some distance to pull before a spot could be found where she could safely approach the ice on the lee side of the floe.

Max and the two other men, regardless of their almost dead companions in the hut, were hurrying down towards her, when Andrew called them back. "Shame on you," he exclaimed. "Would you leave the poor fellows to perish for the sake of sooner putting food into your own mouths? Come, help them along, they want it more than we do."

The men thus summoned, returned and assisted Andrew and Archy, who were dragging their nearly insensible shipmates over the ice. At length they reached the edge, and were cordially welcomed by the crew of the boat, who made all speed to return to their ship the "Laplander." She was almost full, they said, and they hoped soon to return home.

The rescued men, on being lifted on board, were at once put under the doctor's care,—for even Andrew and Archy, who had hitherto held out so bravely, felt all their strength leave them directly they reached the boat. They, however, in a couple of days were sufficiently recovered to go on deck and mix with the crew.

Archy found the "Laplander" a very different vessel to the "Kate." The captain was a bold brave seaman, but he was nothing else. There were no Sunday services, no prayer-meetings, no lending library of religious books, but there was much swearing and ungodliness among the crew.

Max, who quickly forgot the fearful danger in which he had been placed, and his providential preservation, did his utmost to laugh Archy out of his good resolutions.

"I wonder a lad of spirit like you can listen to the long sermons of old Andrew," he said to him one day while Andrew was out of hearing. "I never could stand those preaching fellows."

"But Andrew kept his courage up, and did his best to preserve my life, while you and the rest gave way to despair," answered Archy. "You cannot say that he is not a brave man, though he does preach long sermons."

"Yes, he is brave, I'll allow," said Max.

"Then tell me, what do you think makes him brave?" asked Archy.

"He is naturally brave, I suppose," replied Max.

"Now, I think that it is because he trusts in God, and believes that God will take care of him," said Archy firmly. "And he knows that if he should lose his life that he will go to heaven. That's my opinion of the matter."

"Your opinion, indeed," exclaimed Max scornfully. "I should like to know what business a fellow like you has to form an opinion," and Max turned away, unable further to answer the boy, whom he had hitherto so easily led. He took every opportunity after this of annoying Archy, and incited his godless companions to do the same.

Archy often wished that he was on board the "Kate" again, and anxiously looked out in the hopes of falling in with her. The captain had been much put out by the loss of the whale and two lines when they had been rescued, and seemed to associate them in some way with the circumstance. A few days afterwards the watch below were aroused with the welcome cry of "a fall! a fall!" a whale was fast. The remaining boats pulled away, and in a few hours the captain's good humour was restored by having the whale alongside. All hands were now in high spirits. "One fish more, and hurrah for old England," was the cry.

Several days passed away without any further success. In vain Andrew and Archy looked out for the "Kate." The season was advancing, still the captain of the "Laplander," anxious to get a full ship, cruised backwards and forwards in the hopes of killing one fish more. At length that object was attained, but one of the boats was knocked to pieces, and two of her crew drowned. The huge monster was secured alongside with all haste, the blubber was got on board, and the instant the carcass was cut adrift, the crew giving three shouts of joy at being full, sail was made, and the ship stood to the southward.

The ice, as she proceeded, gathered thickly around her. Boldly, however, she pushed on through the passages which appeared between the floes. Now she was threading a narrow lane of water, now sailing across an open lake, but still on every side appeared those threatening fields of ice, which might at any moment enclose her in their deadly embrace. The captain, or one of the mates, was constantly in the crow's-nest, looking out for the most open passages ahead, through which the ship might be steered.

They had sailed on for some distance, when the ice on either side was seen to be moving. A tempting channel, however, appeared before them. The "Laplander" sailed into it. She had scarcely entered when the opposite floes began to approach each other. Still the breeze was strong and fair, and the captain hoped that he might be able to push through into an open space beyond before they could close. Nearer and nearer they came to each other, till the broad passage assumed the appearance of a narrow canal. It was at length seen that escape was impossible. The sails were furled, the ship was secured to the floe on one side, and an attempt was made to cut a dock in which she might remain while the inevitable concussion took place. Almost before the ice-saws could be got out and set to work, a loud crashing roaring sound was heard. The floes meeting with terrific force, vast masses rose up in the air, huge fragments being thrown upon each other, till in one instant a ridge, reaching almost to the height of the ship's tops, was formed. The seamen, not waiting for the captain's orders, seized their bags and bedding, and whatever

they could lay hands on, and leaped out on the ice.

"Follow me, Archy," cried Andrew, seizing a bag of biscuits, and throwing a couple of blankets over his shoulder. "In another minute the ship may be crushed to fragments."

Archy lowered himself down with Andrew on to the ice, and with the rest of the crew they hurried away from the ship. Scarcely had they left her when the floes closed in, and vast masses of ice were seen rising up around her, the rending and crashing sound of her stout timbers telling them too plainly of her fate. Not till they had got some distance did the fugitives venture to stop and watch what was going forward. The masts were seen to totter, and large fragments of wreck were thrown on either side over the surface. The captain, as he saw the destruction of his vessel, wrung his hands with despair, while dismay was depicted on the countenances of his crew. So sudden had been the nip, that except the clothes on their backs and the bedding they carried under their arms, nothing had been saved. As yet too, the danger of approaching the wreck was too great to allow of the attempt being made, for the ice, pressing closer and closer, continued to throw up vast slabs, beneath which any one going near the spot might in an instant have been crushed. Suddenly the tall masts fell with a crash, and the whole upper part of the ship was cast in fragments on to the ice. For several minutes the seamen stood aghast, till the floes having accomplished their work, remained at rest. Andrew was the first to speak.

"Lads," he said, "I have seen this sort of thing occur before, and I and all with me reached home in safety, so may we now if we exert ourselves; may be the boats have escaped, and the provisions and stores may have been thrown up on the ice. I for one am ready to go back to the wreck and see what has been saved."

Several of the men agreed to accompany Andrew, and they made their way among the masses of ice which strewed the surface. Their search was in part satisfactory. Two of the boats had escaped injury, while their chests and a large portion of the provisions and stores which had been on the upper deck, were found scattered about. The officers, arousing themselves, now followed the example which Andrew had set. While one party were employed in collecting provisions, another cut the sails from the yards, which had been thrown on the ice, and erected tents in which they might shelter themselves from the piercing wind. Others chopped up wood, and fires were lighted. Some time was thus occupied, and at length an encampment was formed, with all the stores and provisions which had been collected piled up around, and the weary seamen were able to rest from their labours. A consultation was now held as to the means to be taken for preserving their lives. The boats could only carry a portion of their number, even should the ice again open and allow them to escape. As far as could be seen, it had closed in on every side, and probably they would have to drag them many long leagues before the open water could be gained. The land, by the captain's calculation, was upwards of fifty miles away, but the Danish settlements, where they could obtain assistance, were much further off. At the same time, it was possible that they might find another vessel fast in the ice nearer at hand, which might afford them shelter. One thing only was certain, that they must lose no time in making preparations for their journey. Unhappily, the captain, disheartened by the destruction of his ship, was incapable of exerting himself. Although a good seaman, he was destitute of that higher courage which a confidence in God's superintending care can alone give. He sat in his tent, with his head resting on his hands, for many hours, gazing toward the wreck, without issuing any orders. The officers differed from each other as to what was best to be done, while many of the crew exhibited a mutinous disposition, and assembled altogether in a tent which they had erected for themselves. Collecting a quantity of the smaller fragments of the wreck, they made up a large fire within, around which they sat, cooking some of the provisions which they had appropriated from the common store.

Archy, from the time of leaving the ship, had kept close to Andrew, and assisted him in whatever work he was engaged on. While, however, he was collecting wood at a short distance from the camp, Max came up to him.

"Well, Archy," he said, "I see old Andrew intends to make you work for him; that's his reason for keeping you by his side. Now, boy, if I were you I would not be led by the nose. Come and join us. I'll own I had a hand in getting you into this scrape, and I wish to help you out of it. I and some of the other men have formed a plan to make our escape, and it's my opinion that those who remain here will lose their lives. That can't be helped, you see, for it's impossible that all should be saved, and as I am your friend I don't wish to leave you behind. Come along now, we have got a roaring fire inside there, and the fellows will let you join them if I ask them." Max pointed to the tent of the mutineers.

"I promised to stay by Andrew," said Archy. "Unless he goes I can't join you."

"I'll see about asking him by-and-bye," said Max.

"What do you propose doing, then?" asked Archy.

"Making off with the boats," answered Max. "It's the only chance we have of saving our lives, and we shall be sure to reach one of the Danish places on the coast."

"What, you would not desert old Andrew?" exclaimed Archy.

"Oh, of course not," answered Max, in a tone which made Archy suspect him, especially when he added, "Mark me, my lad, if you let old Andrew or any of the rest know of what I have been saying to you, there are some among us who would not scruple a moment to knock you on the head. Remember my words. I ask you again, will you come with us?"

"No," answered Archy firmly. "I promised to stick by Andrew, and I am not going to desert him."

"Then take the consequences," exclaimed Max angrily, "and remember, hold your tongue, or it will be the worse for you."

Archy saw him return to the tent; but the men who crowded round the fire seemed very unwilling to allow him a place among them, and Archy suspected that had he listened to Max he should have had very little chance of getting near

it either.

On rejoining Andrew, Archy refrained from mentioning what Max had said, as there were several other persons within hearing, and, indeed, not till some time afterwards did he find his friend alone. Andrew, with some of the better disposed men, and a few of the officers, had taken up their quarters in a tent, and were now collected round a fire in the centre of it, though a much smaller one than that formed by the men. Andrew made room for Archy by his side. While they were discussing their supper, they agreed that they would form a number of sledges with runners for the boats, and placing the provisions and tents, with guns and ammunition on them, and such other stores as they might require, set off without further delay for the land. No one seemed to suspect the treachery meditated by Max and his party. The carpenter's chest had fortunately been saved, and while one party assisted him in collecting wood and forming the sledges and runners, others were engaged in doing up the provisions and stores in packages of a size suitable for being carried on the sledges. The mutineers even assisted, and were especially busy in fitting runners to the boats.

Some progress had been made in the work, when night coming on compelled them to desist from their labours, and take shelter in their respective tents. Archy, as he lay down to sleep, began to think that in spite of the threats of Max he ought to have told Andrew what he had said.

"To-morrow morning will be time enough," he thought, and he was soon asleep.

Chapter Seven.

Mutiny! Most of the crew carrying the greater part of the provisions, set off without the others.—Proposals for pursuit, but not carried out, and at last the remainder commence their journey across the ice, meeting with great difficulties.—The captain becomes ill, but is cheered by Andrew.—He at length dies, after Andrew has placed before him the truth, which he accepts.—He is buried in a snow tomb.

Archy was awakened by hearing one of the officers, who had gone out of the tent, exclaim, "Why, what have become of the boats?" The rest of the inmates of the tents were quickly on foot. They looked around. Far away in the distance two dark spots could be seen on the ice. Andrew and several others ran to the tent of the mutineers—it was empty. The fire had burnt a hole in the ice and disappeared. Had it not been for those objects far off they might have supposed that the sleepers had gone in with it and been drowned. The provisions were next examined—the packages prepared for travelling had greatly diminished. Several, indignant at being thus deserted, proposed setting off in pursuit of the fugitives.

"They have fire-arms with them, and you will not get them to come back, lads," said the captain, who had come out of his tent.

In spite of his warnings, and the advice of Andrew, who urged that it was better to let them go, a number of men, and two of the officers, started away, vowing that they would bring back the mutineers, and punish them for their treachery.

At first, the party thus deserted seemed inclined to give way to despair, and Archy more than ever regretted that he had not warned his friends of the intended treachery.

"Come along, lads, to the wreck," exclaimed Andrew. "Perhaps we may find another boat, which we may be able to repair, and some more provisions to replace those carried off."

Thus appealed to, the carpenter, with several men, set off with Andrew to the wreck, Archy accompanying his friend. After climbing over a number of huge masses of ice, they made their way to the opposite floe, which was now firmly united to the one it had struck. Here they found a quantity of the wreck scattered about, as well as several casks of meat and biscuits, and wedged between two slabs, the smallest boat, which had hung at the stern. The carpenter, on examining her, expressed his hopes that by fastening canvas round her, he could make her float sufficiently to enable them to pass from one floe to another, should they meet any open channels in their course. This discovery raised their spirits. The party immediately hastened back to their companions with the news. It was agreed that they should at once move across to the floe, with the tents and provisions, and forming a new encampment, go on with the work of preparing the sledges. Frequently as they went backwards and forwards, they looked out for the return of the party who had gone in pursuit of the mutineers. The latter had got far out of sight before they could have been overtaken. What had become of the pursuers no one could say. Some supposed that the two parties had united and gone on together, while others fancied that they had fought, and that those who had been defeated had been left alone on the ice, while the victors had pushed on with the boats.

The whole day was occupied in moving to the new encampment, and it was nearly dark before their tents were erected and other preparations made for passing the night. The wind had latterly increased greatly, and clouds had been collecting to the north. Scarcely had they got under shelter when the snow began to fall heavily, and the sharp wind swept across the icy plain with terrific force.

"Archy, we may be thankful that we are not with those poor fellows who deserted us," observed Andrew as they sat together round the fire in their tent. "It will be a mercy if any of them escape even if they reached the open water before nightfall, and it's my opinion that they will not have done that."

"They deserve their fate, whatever it may be," growled out one of the men.

"Ah, friend, we all deserve far more than we receive," said Andrew. "If God was to treat us according to our merits, the best of us could only look for punishment. Let us pray that He will have mercy on them as well as on us. Oh,

mates, I wish you could all understand the great love which God has for us poor sinners. We exposed ourselves of our own free choice to the danger and hardship we have to endure, but He in His mercy offers us free salvation and eternal happiness for our souls. He gave Jesus Christ to suffer instead of us, and it's our own fault if we do not accept His precious gift. All He asks us to do is to trust to His love, and believe that Jesus died for us and that His blood washes away all our sins."

Several of Andrew's companions listened with deep earnestness to his words, and on that bleak floe, and amid those arctic snows, believed to the salvation of their souls.

All night long the wind swept by them, the snow fell faster and faster, but they heeded not the tempest. A bright light had burst upon them, and they could look forward with hope to the future, trusting to that God of love and mercy whom they had hitherto only known as a stern and severe judge.

When morning broke all hands set to work to clear away the snow, which had covered up the boat and everything left outside the tents. The wind, however, had ceased, and they were able to go on with their labours, and by the evening the sledges were completed and the boat prepared and placed on runners. They were then loaded, that the party might be ready to start the following morning on their journey. Twice during the day, Andrew with several of the other men had gone over to the old encampment to ascertain if any of those who had deserted them had come back. They cast their eyes in vain over the wide snow-covered plain,—not a trace of a human being could be seen. It was too probable that all had perished. More than half the ship's company had thus been lost.

The night was passed in comparative comfort. They had well-formed tents, abundance of bedding, and ample fires. All knew that in future the case would be very different. The sledges were chiefly loaded with provisions. They were obliged to reduce their tents to the smallest possible size, and they could carry but a limited supply of fuel. There were five sledges in all, each drawn by four men, while six men were harnessed to the boat, in which the old captain, who was unable to walk, was placed. Andrew joined the latter party, and Archy, on account of his youth, was excused from dragging a sledge,—he, however, carried his blankets and some provisions on his back, each man being also loaded in the same way. The snow having partially melted under the still hot rays of the sun, had again frozen, and had filled up all inequalities in the ice. This enabled the party to drag the sledges along during the first day without difficulty. They had, however, to make frequent circuits to avoid the hummocks, which in some places were very numerous. They calculated by nightfall that they had advanced nearly twelve miles on their journey towards the coast. The uneven appearance of the ice beyond them, interspersed in many places with huge icebergs, warned them that in future they could not hope to advance so rapidly.

Hitherto they had not suffered much from cold, but that night, as they lay in their tents with the small fires which their limited supply of fuel allowed them to keep up, they were nearly frozen. Andrew several times remembering the advantage he had before gained from taking exercise, got up and ran about to warm himself. Those who followed his example awoke refreshed and fit for work, whereas those who had remained quiet all the night, found their limbs stiff and their feet and hands frozen, and it was not till after, with the help of their companions, they had moved about and undergone great pain, that they were able to proceed. Some, indeed, had suffered so much, that they entreated to be left to die rather than undergo the hardships they would have to endure. Andrew urged them to arouse themselves.

"It is our duty, lads, to straggle on as long as we can. God may think fit to try us, but let us trust in Him and He may find a way for us at last to escape, though we are too blind to see it," he observed.

His exhortations produced a good effect, and once more they proceeded on their journey. The old captain had suffered the most, and it seemed very probable that he would be unable to hold out many days longer. Andrew seeing his condition, frequently spoke to him, and though hitherto he had turned scornfully away, he now willingly listened to the words the faithful Christian uttered.

"Oh!" he exclaimed at length, "I wish that I had heard you before. It is too late now, I have been a terrible sinner, God can never pardon so bad a man as I am."

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Andrew, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. He saved the thief on the cross, He saved the jailor at Philippi. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. He says, 'Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool.'"

This was said while they were stopping to take their mid-day meal.

The old captain raised himself up and grasped Andrew's hand.

"Do you really speak the truth to me?" he exclaimed.

"I repeat what God says, sir, and He cannot lie," answered Andrew. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

"I do, I do," cried the old man. "But oh! what would I now give had I known this in my youth. What years of wickedness and misery it would have saved me."

"Ah, sir! there are thousands upon thousands who may say that," replied Andrew. "Archy, you hear the captain's words. Don't forget them, boy. If God in His mercy allows you to return home in safety, repeat them to your young companions, and urge them to 'seek the Lord while He may be found.' You may thus render them a service for which they will have cause to thank you through eternity."

"I will try," said Archy humbly, "but it is difficult to speak to others."

"Pray for the aid of God's Holy Spirit, and He will enable you to do it," said Andrew.

"I will try," repeated Archy, for he had discovered his own weakness. Through that discovery alone can strength be obtained.

The shipwrecked party again pushed on, the party keeping ahead. Some of the men had begun to complain that the boat detained them. They supposed that the ice was attached throughout to the mainland, and believed that they could do without her. The captain tried to persuade them that they were mistaken, but they had lost their respect for him, and declared that they knew better. Andrew thought the captain was right, and entreated them to listen to his advice. Their replies showed that they were bent on pushing on. The worthy carpenter, James Foubister by name, also a Shetlander, sided with Andrew, and promised not to desert the old captain. Their example influenced most of the other men attached to the boat, who agreed, should the rest of the party do as they proposed, to remain with them. By exerting themselves to the utmost they overtook the sledge parties soon after they had encamped. Andrew again spoke earnestly to his companions, pointing out to them the danger they would run by separating, and he hoped at length that they had abandoned their design.

The next day they went on as before. The cold was increasing, and except when they were in active exercise, they felt it severely. The old captain especially, from being unable to move, suffered greatly, and was rapidly sinking. Andrew, whenever the party stopped, acted the part of a true Christian, and was by his side, endeavouring to console and cheer him with the blessed promises of the gospel. What other comfort could he have afforded? The old man felt its unspeakable value, and after his voice had lost the power of utterance, holding Andrew's hand, he signed to him to stoop down and speak them in his ear, and so he died,—with a peaceful expression in his countenance, which told of the sure and certain hope he had gone to realise. Andrew and the carpenter proposed carrying on the captain's body to bury it on shore, but the rest objected, as causing them unnecessary labour. A snow tomb was therefore built, in which the old man's body was placed, and there they left him, out on that wild frozen ocean, where many of England's bravest sons rest from their toils. Happy are those who have died as he died, trusting in the Lord. The men were too much engrossed with their own sufferings to mourn his loss, but few failed, when the next morning they started on their journey, to cast a glance at the tomb. "Poor old man, he is better off than we are," was the expression uttered by most of them.

The fatigue of dragging the sledges over the rough ice was now so great, that some of the men purposed leaving their tents and the remainder of their fuel behind, and the officers had much difficulty in making them see the folly of such a proceeding. As they advanced, not only large hummocks, but vast icebergs became numerous, among which they were frequently enveloped, and many a circuit had to be made to avoid them.

The day after the captain's death it began to snow heavily. The sledges were as usual ahead, still Andrew and his party managed to proceed with the boat. The snow-storm increasing in density, they at length lost sight of their companions. For some time they followed up their tracks, but these were gradually obliterated by the falling snow. Still they went on, till they found themselves at the base of an iceberg, but not a trace was visible to show whether the party ahead had made their way round by the north or south end. As any delay would have increased the difficulty of overtaking them, they pushed on, taking a southerly direction.

Having doubled the berg, they saw a clear space before them, but though the snow had ceased, the sledge parties were nowhere visible.

The captain's rifle had been saved. Andrew fired it in the hopes that the signal might be heard, but no reply came to their listening ears. Once more they went on, but their progress was slow and tedious.

Chapter Eight.

Proceeding on against many difficulties.—Archy and his companions at last discover land ahead, and camp in a snow-hut.—At daybreak, seeing no traces of the mutineers, they push on, and arrive at the edge of the floe. Cross a channel and getting on an opposite floe, build a snow-hut; but the water rising, leave it, and build another, which also is washed away. Build a third, and are awake by a bear.—Two men frost bitten are left behind.

As the sun was about to set, a shout escaped Archy's lips. "Land, land!" he cried out. All gazed eagerly in the direction to which he pointed. There appeared a range of snowy mountains far higher than any icebergs. They were clear and well defined, and Andrew and Foubister declared that they could not be, as some of the rest supposed, a bank of clouds. They remained visible till the sun sunk beneath the horizon. The discovery somewhat cheered their spirits, but still many days must elapse before they could reach the shore, and even when there, no inhabitants might be found to assist them, or food to enable them to exist during the coming winter. Their present condition indeed was very trying. The tents were on the sledges, and they had only sufficient fuel in the boat to keep a fire alight for one night; while their provisions, with the utmost economy, would last them but a fortnight or three weeks at the furthest.

"If the cold goes on increasing, we shall be frozen to death before the morning," exclaimed several of the men.

"Not so, mates," said Andrew. "I have seen the natives build a snow-hut in the course of an hour, and have been as warm as I could wish within it during the hardest frost. They call it an igloo, and they fashion it much after the way the seals make their houses, so that it is well suited to the climate. We may depend on that, as God himself taught the seals. Now turn to and clear a space down to the ice, while the carpenter and I saw out some blocks of snow." His companions followed Andrew's directions; and while Foubister sawed out the blocks, which were about three feet long, and half as wide, he placed them in a circle on the space which had been cleared. He then put on another tier, gradually sloping inwards till a dome was formed, and lastly the keystone of the arch was dropped into its place. Archy, who was helping Andrew, remained with him inside, and were thus completely walled in. The carpenter, with

his saw, then cut a hole to serve as a doorway, on the lee side of the hut.

"We have yet got to form a bed and fire-places. Hand in more blocks, mates," said Andrew.

With these he and Archy quickly built up a raised place on either side of the hut, with a circular one in the centre. Some of the provisions, with a portion of the fuel, and all the bedding and blankets, were then brought inside, when Andrew stopped up the doorway with some blocks of snow, which he had retained for the purpose.

"Now, mates," he said, "you will soon see that we can be warm enough, but we must keep up as small a fire as can be made to burn. Look here now; this log will last us all night if we chop it into chips, and just put on three or four at a time."

Andrew's plan was found to answer perfectly. The fire was sufficient to melt the snow in a saucepan, and to enable them to enjoy some hot tea, and the hut soon became so warm that they were glad to throw off their great coats. Their only regret was that Andrew had not thought before of building a snow-hut.

"Better late than never. It will not be the last by many that we shall have to build," he answered.

They were all so comfortable that Andrew had great difficulty in rousing them in the morning to encounter the biting wind blowing across the floe. Having enjoyed a warm breakfast, and put on their outer clothing, they cut their way out of their burrow, and once more proceeded eastward. They did not fail to look out for their companions, but not a moving object was to be discerned in any direction across the wide ice-field.

After travelling all day, they were convinced that they saw the land ahead, though it appeared no nearer than before.

"May be it will not appear nearer to-morrow or next day," said Andrew. "But that must not disappoint us. It will be nearer notwithstanding. That we know for a certainty, and if we persevere we shall reach it at last."

As they advanced, several cracks and broad fissures were found in the ice, and in one place there was a wide pool or lake only thinly covered over, to avoid which they had to make a circuit.

"We are not far off the open water, mates," said Andrew, "and we may be thankful that we have the boat, though I fear our poor shipmates will be in a sad plight."

Making their way onwards, the ice being tolerably smooth, they arrived sooner than Andrew had expected at the edge of the floe. The channel which divided it from the opposite floe was upwards of a couple of miles wide, a long distance to traverse in their battered boat. The wind had gone down, and the sea was tolerably calm, it was therefore important to cross while it remained so. Andrew, however, was very unwilling to cross without waiting for their missing shipmates.

"Just think, mates, how we should feel if we had been with the sledges had they crossed and left us to our fate on the floe?"

"But they deserted us, and we may lose our lives if we wait for them," argued the other men.

At last Andrew persuaded them to remain, while he and Archy set off to climb to the top of a small iceberg, a little way to the north, from whence they hoped to obtain a view over a considerable portion of the floe. They lost no time in starting, but the distance was much greater than they had expected.

"It seems to me as if the iceberg were moving away from us," exclaimed Archy. "We have been walking on for the last half hour, and appear no nearer."

"The berg is a good deal larger than I had fancied," answered Andrew. "But never fear, we shall get up to it at last, and if we can manage to climb to the top, we shall have a wider view over the plain, and a better chance of seeing the poor fellows. It goes to my heart to leave them to perish, and yet perish they must if they do not soon reach the mainland. We must forget that they intended to desert us, and even if they did, it is our duty to return good for evil, so come along Archy."

The iceberg was at length gained. Then came the difficulty of climbing to the top. After walking nearly round it, they found a portion melted and broken by the summer sun which afforded them footing. With the aid of a boat-hook, and a coil of rope which Andrew had brought, they at last reached one of the highest points. Hence they could see the edge of the floe extending for a considerable way to the north, while their eyes ranged over a wide extent of level ice, but all was one white waste. Not the smallest dark spot could be seen upon it.

"I am afraid, Archy, we must give them up," sighed Andrew. "We should risk the loss of our own lives if we were longer to wait for them."

Descending the iceberg, Andrew and Archy made their way back to the boat. The boat was at once launched, and though she leaked slightly, one hand bailing could keep her free. They all therefore, embarked, and towing the runners, they made their way across to the floe. As they found themselves once more gliding smoothly over the water, their spirits rose, and some were anxious to try and make their way south in the boat. Andrew and the carpenter, however, strongly objected to doing this.

"The ice may close upon us, and we may run short of provisions long before we can reach the Danish settlements," he observed. "Let us get hold of the land first."

It was nearly dark by the time they reached the edge of the opposite ice, and having unloaded their boat, they hauled her up, and proceeded on to a hummock at a little distance. Here, without loss of time, they build an igloo in

which to shelter themselves for the night.

The first part passed quietly away, but about midnight Archy was awoke by the sound of the crashing of ice, and a loud dashing of waves. He aroused his companions, they listened for a few seconds.

"The sea is breaking up the ice close to us," exclaimed Andrew. "Put on your clothes, lads, or we may be drowned in our den."

In another minute the whole party made their way out of the hut, carrying their bedding under their arms. The sea was already close up to the stern of the boat. Fortunately she had been placed on the runners. They had just time to seize her, and drag her along, before the ice, on which she had been resting, gave way. On they went as fast as they could drag the boat, but even then it seemed doubtful whether they could escape from the fast following sea. Their hut and the hummock, near which it had been built, quickly disappeared. The wind blew with fearful violence; the ice beneath their feet rose and fell as they passed over it. Whenever they halted, the crashing ice behind them warned them to push on again. At last a berg in the floe appeared ahead, they made their way towards it, hoping that they might obtain shelter under its lee till the gale had ceased. The men were so fatigued that they would have thrown themselves down under shelter of the boat to rest had not Andrew persuaded them to build another igloo. Here they once more sought shelter, hoping to remain undisturbed for the remainder of the night. Andrew and Foubister, however, agreed to keep watch and watch, and Archy begged to take his turn.

"No, no," said Andrew, "you were the means of saving our lives. You want sleep more than we do."

Two hours passed away, when, as Andrew listened, he heard again the same terrific sound which had before awakened them. Once more all were aroused, and hastening out as before, they found the sea still encroaching on them. Complaining bitterly of their hard fate, the men dragged on their boat, still the sea pursued them. Scarcely had they got a hundred yards from the berg beneath which they had taken shelter, when it crashed away through the broken ice. No one now felt inclined to stop. The raging sea tore up the ice behind them, the vast slabs crashing together with a terrific sound, urging them to greater speed.

On they went till day dawned, when they found themselves near a low iceberg. They now declared that they could go no further, and Andrew and Foubister agreed, that even should the ice overtake them, they might find refuge on the slope of the berg, up which they could without difficulty haul the boat. Having placed her, as they hoped, in safety, they built another snow-hut, where they proposed remaining till the storm had ceased. As they had now become expert architects, they were not long in constructing the igloo, and all thankfully crept in to recruit their strength. Even Andrew felt that he could not have held out much longer.

The crashing sounds of the breaking ice had ceased, and no longer fearing having again to take to flight, the whole party fell asleep. They had not closed the doorway, as was their custom at night, on account of the heat which was soon generated in so confined a space. Archy was the first to awake, as he did so he heard a scraping sound, and directly afterwards he caught sight of the white snout of a huge animal poked in at the opening. A few smouldering chips alone remained of the fire in the centre of the hut. His first impulse was to seize one and throw it at the intruder, shouting out to his companions at the same time. They quickly sprung to their feet. The carpenter seized an axe.

"A bear, a bear," he cried out, as he made a blow at the nose of the animal, who, uttering fierce growls, quickly beat a retreat.

They all rushed out, when the bear was seen at a short distance sitting on his haunches examining its wounded nose. Andrew hurried to the boat. Happily the bear had not attacked their provisions. The rifle was loaded, his only fear was that the bear would make off before he could get near enough to wound it mortally. The creature was, however, evidently meditating an attack. It advanced, he fired, and it rolled over on the snow. His companions uttered a shout of joy, as they had no longer any fear of suffering for want of food for some time to come. The bear was cut up, and returning to their hut, they were soon employed in cooking steaks over their rekindled fire.

"I suspect those fellows never venture far from land," observed Andrew; "so we may now feel pretty sure, mates, that we shall be able to reach it without having another channel to cross."

The whole party were, however, too much knocked up to make another move during that day, and even Andrew and Foubister, who were most anxious to proceed on their journey, consented to remain till the following morning. The day and night were passed between sleeping and eating, for as soon as the men woke up, they relighted their fire and cooked more bear's steaks, in spite of Andrew's warnings that they would soon exhaust all their fuel.

"Never fear, old man," was the answer, "we shall get enough when we reach the shore, and let us enjoy ourselves while we can. The natives manage to live, why should not we?"

"The natives know how to catch the seal and the walrus, and unless we can prove ourselves as good hunters as they are, we may chance to starve," answered Andrew.

His warnings, however, had no effect, and when the next morning they came to examine the contents of the boat, they found they had only sufficient fuel to last them another night.

Once more they were on their journey. The carcass of the bear added considerably to their load, the ice too was rough and broken, and they made but slow progress. The land was seen clearly ahead, but after toiling all day it seemed almost as far off as when they started. The days too were becoming shorter and shorter, while the cold rapidly increased, and once more they were compelled to encamp on the open floe. That night the remainder of their fuel was consumed. Two of the men had been complaining during the day of pains in their feet, and when they pulled off their boots, to their dismay they discovered that they were perfectly black. In vain their companions rubbed them

to restore the circulation. Their groans were piteous to hear, and when the morning came they were utterly unable to rise. Andrew proposed to place them in the boat, and to drag them along to the shore. When, however, morning came, the ice ahead appeared even rougher than that which they had passed over on the previous day, and in spite of his desire to preserve their lives, it was found that with their diminished strength this would be impossible. It was therefore agreed that the poor fellows should be left in the hut, and that should any Esquimaux be met with, they should be sent with their sledges and dogs to their relief. With sad hearts the rest of the party closed the hut, which they felt would too probably prove the tomb of their companions.

Chapter Nine.

Archy has a mask to protect his eyes from snow-blindness, from which all the rest suffer.—He leads them by a string, when an Esquimaux is discovered searching for seals, who builds an igloo, and melting some snow, bathes the blind men's eyes, and provides for them.

Four human beings with heavy packs on their backs were making their toilsome way over the snow-covered surface of the frozen sea. One by one their companions had dropped. They had reached the wished for shore, but lofty ice-cliffs rose before them on which they had found it hopeless to seek for shelter of subsistence, and again they were attempting to make their way to the southward. First the boat which they had dragged over so many leagues had been consumed for fuel, and then the sledge was piece by piece burned to give them warmth in their snow-hut during the night. Archy had held out bravely; Andrew had wonderfully been supported, ever with confidence seeking for aid from above, he felt that his own life and that of his companions depended on his exertions. Foubister and David Saunders, one of the crew of the "Kate," encouraged by him had hitherto kept up their spirits, yet as they looked ahead and saw the icy plain stretched out before them they might well have given way to despair. They had just set out from the snow-hut which had sheltered them during the night, and in which the last chip of the sledge had been consumed. As the embers of their fire died out, Foubister, brave and determined man as he was, had exclaimed, "Why need we go further? It will only be to perish in a few hours of cold, as the rest have done."

"Because it is our duty to trust to God and struggle to the last," answered Andrew. "He may send us help when we least expect it. Let us go on while life and strength remain."

Kneeling down, Andrew offered up an earnest prayer for protection, and the whole party then strapping on their packs, with renewed strength set forward on their journey. Archy would probably have sunk under the hardships he was enduring had not his old friend supported and cheered him throughout. His other companions were also constant in their kindness. They gave him a larger supply of food than they took themselves, and chafed his feet and dried his socks at the end of each day's journey. They had also made him a mask to protect his face, of a piece of canvas lined with woollen stuff, having breathing places in it for the nostrils and mouth, and two holes as small as possible for the eyes. He was surprised to find when he put it on how well he could see through those small holes. Neither he nor his friends were aware at the time of their importance.

They had started before daylight, for the sky was clear and the moon and stars afforded them ample light to see their way. The sun at length rose above the horizon, and cast his brilliant rays over the sheet of snow. All the three men had, on the previous day, complained of a peculiar smarting of the eyes, but little did they think at the time of what it portended. As they proceeded the smarting sensation increased, till at length David Saunders began to stumble, and exclaimed that all was dark. His words struck dismay into the hearts of his companions, for both Andrew and Foubister had for some time found a difficulty in seeing objects before them, and in a short time the latter cried out that he too was blind. It would have been certain death to stop, so, although Andrew himself was suffering intense pain, he urged his companions to proceed, hoping still that they might discover some Esquimaux' huts on the shore, or find other means of preserving their lives.

"And how do your eyes feel, Archy?" asked Andrew, in a voice which showed his anxiety.

"I have no pain, and can see as well as ever," answered Archy.

"Thank God," replied Andrew. "You must then be our guide, for I too have lost my sight." Archy on hearing this felt ready to burst into tears.

"Oh! what can I do? How can I lead you?" he exclaimed.

"Trust in God and go straight on, lad. Here, take this line and we will hold on to it," he added uncoiling a short length of rope which he carried at his side, and he put the end into Archy's hands. He and Foubister and Saunders then took hold of it, following each other in line.

"Now move on, Archy," said Andrew, "and keep a bright look out ahead, as well as on the right hand and on the left. If you see anything like smoke or little round hillocks near the shore, we may be certain that natives are there, or may be you will catch sight of the masts of a ship in the horizon, no fear of her getting away from us, for she will be fast frozen in."

Thus cheered by the confiding faith of old Andrew and his dauntless courage, the party proceeded onwards over the ice-field, Archy's eyes alone, protected by his mask, escaping the snow-blindness. Every now and then, with anxious voices, one or the other would cry out, "Do you see anything ahead, Archy, any sign of Esquimaux on the shore,—any vessel in the distance?"

"No, I only see tall ice-cliffs on the left, and icebergs rising up here and there out of the frozen sea," he answered. Several times on hearing this Saunders declared it was useless to go on, and even Foubister once proposed building a snow-hut as well as their blindness would allow them, and then lying down within it to die.

“What! and let the poor lad who has still got his eyesight perish with us?” exclaimed Andrew. “Shame on you, mate. I did not think to hear such words come from your lips. No, no, while we have life its our duty to go on, and if its God’s will that we should die, let us die doing our duty. If He pleases He can send us help and restore our eyesight, and He has shown us pretty clearly that we must lean on Him and Him alone.”

Thus rebuked, the honest carpenter did not allow another repining word to escape him.

There was but little wind, and the air felt warm and pleasant. Reaching a small iceberg they all sat down, placed by Archy on a ledge under its shelter to rest. He unpacked their wallets, and helped them to their food. By Andrew’s direction, also with the carpenter’s axe, he chopped off a thin layer of ice from the berg. From this, when held up in the direct rays of the sun, water dropped into their saucepan sufficiently fast to quench the thirst from which they had before been suffering. They were not aware that they might greatly have relieved the pain in their eyes by bathing them with the cold water. Revived by their meal they again proceeded as before, yet what could they expect at the end of their day’s journey? Could they hope to live through the night in an ill-built snow-hut without fire, might it not too probably become their tomb? Mile after mile was passed over, and still came the same answer from Archy to their constant inquiries. Night was approaching,—Andrew urged them to push on rather than stop, as long as they had strength to move.

“If you wish, I will go on,” said Archy, “or, I think, with your help I could build a snow-hut and we could keep warm enough inside it without a fire, I hope.”

“No, no, on, on,” said Andrew. “We will stop in time to build a hut before dark.” So on again they went.

Suddenly Andrew felt the rope by which he was led slacken, when Archy cried out, “Stop, I see something dark moving ahead.”

“What is it, what is it, boy?” exclaimed the three men together.

“It seems to me like a seal,” answered Archy. “But no—I don’t think a seal would move in that way,—Hurrah! it is a man,—he has risen to his feet,—he sees us,—he is coming this way.”

Archy hurried on, leading his companions. The stranger advanced towards them. When he was still at some distance he stopped and seemed to be examining them, doubtful of their character. Archy raised his hands and beckoning, the stranger once more drew near. From his dress and skins and harpoon in his hand and a coil of line and spears hung to his shoulders, Archy guessed that he was an Esquimaux engaged in searching for seals. He was accompanied by two dogs, who rushed forward barking, but retreated when called by their master. The native having apparently satisfied himself that the approaching party could do him no harm, came up to them, and looked with an inquiring glance at their eyes. He at once seemed to understand that they had been struck with snow-blindness, and he made signs to Archy that he could cure them. Archy inquired where he lived, when he pointed to the south-east, and beckoning to him, led the way onwards. In a short time they reached a large seal which the hunter had apparently just killed; he pointed to it, and signified that they were welcome to eat some of its flesh. Archy intimated that they were weary rather than hungry. The Esquimaux appeared quickly to make up his mind what was best to be done. Clearing a space in the snow he called Archy to assist him, and at once began to build an igloo. He was greatly delighted when Archy produced the carpenter’s saw, and apparently well accustomed to its use, he set to work to shape out the required blocks. In a short time a hut was completed, into which he dragged a considerable portion of the seal. From his capacious pocket he took a shallow bowl, in which he placed some moss wicks, and filled it with seal oil, produced by his chewing the blubber. A light was quickly struck, and the much valued lamp soon shed a genial warmth through the snow-formed habitation. A large lump of blubber hung over the lamp, continued to feed it as the oil supplied by the first process was exhausted. He now melted some snow in the seamen’s saucepan, and explained to Archy that if his blind friends would bathe their eyes in the water their sight would be restored. They followed his advice, and at length the pain from which they were suffering gradually subsided.

The Esquimaux seemed greatly surprised at their preferring their own dried food to the raw blubber on which he and his dogs regaled themselves. Yielding, however, to their prejudices, he heated some steaks over the lamp, of which he hospitably pressed Archy to partake. Hunger induced him to follow his new friend’s advice, and finding the steaks far more palatable than he expected, he persuaded the rest of the party to join in the repast.

“I don’t know what it may look like,” observed David Saunders, gulping down a huge lump. “But its not such bad eating after all, and I am much obliged to you, friend Esquimaux, for your kindness.”

“Friends,” said Andrew, before they lay down to rest on their snow couches, “let us thank God for His mercy in sending this kind native to our help. Oh! ’tis a blessed thing to know that He will never desert those who trust in Him.”

The Esquimaux seemed fully to understand what they were about, and knelt down with them. Though they did not understand each other’s language, yet their hearts were lifted up together to the same merciful Being, the God alike of the dark-skinned Esquimaux and the civilised Englishman.

Chapter Ten.

The Esquimaux leaves, and does not return.—All are able to see, and proceed.—Find bears before them, and at the same time the masts of a ship are discovered.—Push on, and at last assistance arriving, the bears are killed, and Captain Irvine takes Archy on board the “Kate,” the rest following.—Adventures of the “Kate”—shut up in the ice—short provisions.—Captain dies.—Ice opens, when sail is set, and the crew, enduring much suffering, the “Kate” arrives off Unst, an island of Shetland.—Archy, now truly repentant,

writes to his mother, and when all on board have recovered, starts for home.—His arrival and reception.

When Archy awoke he was somewhat alarmed on finding that the hunter and his dogs had left the hut. The lamp was still burning, and a large piece of seal's flesh lay on the floor. Archy hoped, therefore, that the Esquimaux's intentions were friendly, and that he did not purpose to desert them altogether. Andrew, when he awoke, expressed his opinion that the hunter would certainly return. His and his companions' eyes were still so painful, that having the means of procuring water they resolved to wait in the hut till their sight was restored, and then to try and make their way to the village of their new friend. That their confidence in his honesty was not misplaced, was proved by his return in the afternoon, when he and his dogs arrived, dragging another seal after them on a small sleigh, which he had probably before left at a distance.

He now intimated that his people at the village were in want of food, and that after eating and resting, he must go away to them; but he signified that he would soon again return; and as a proof of his good intentions, left them a large portion of the first seal that he had killed.

Long before dawn the next morning the hunter set off. That day, though one of suffering, was passed in thankfulness by the shipwrecked seamen. Their lives had been preserved, food had been supplied to them, and they might now hope, even if they could not reach the Danish settlements, to pass the winter in safety in the camp of the friendly natives.

Two days passed by, and the hunter did not return. The eyes of the three men were free from pain, and when they awoke after the third night of their sojourn in the hut, they could see clearly. Archy, with unwearied diligence, had tended to all their wants, and he had frequently gone out to look for the expected return of the hunter, whenever they had expressed anxiety on the subject. At length they agreed that if he did not appear that evening, to set out without waiting for him longer, as their supply of blubber was nearly exhausted, and without it they could not keep their lamp burning. The morning came; still the hunter did not appear. Packing up, therefore, the lamp with its wicks, and every particle of blubber they could scrape together, they again set out. They soon found it necessary, however, to tie some spare comforters round their heads, to shade their eyes from the glare of the sun, the pricking sensation, the prelude to snow-blindness, again quickly returning.

After travelling for some hours, they looked out anxiously for the huts of the Esquimaux they expected to see. The traces of their friend's sledge and footsteps had been entirely obliterated by a fall of snow, so that they had not the benefit of them as a guide; still they went on. Frequently icebergs rose up in their course, and at length these became so numerous that they were completely bewildered among them. After a time they emerged again into a more open space, when Archy, whose quick eyes were ever on the alert, cried out that he saw three objects moving some way ahead.

"They are bears, I do believe," he exclaimed, "and they seem as if they were digging into the snow with their snouts." After going on a little further the rest agreed that he was right. Andrew got his rifle ready.

"If we attempt to run the creatures will follow—it's their nature to do so. We must try and kill one of them, and frighten the others away. Show a bold front, friends, and we may yet escape their claws."

While Andrew had been speaking Archy had cast his eyes westward.

"Look, look," he exclaimed. "I see the masts of a ship rising up against the yellow sky, near where the sun has just gone down."

Forgetting for the moment about the bears, the whole party turned their eyes in the direction Archy pointed.

"You are right, boy—praise heaven for it," said Andrew. "Though my eyes are weak I see the masts clearly. She must have been caught in the floe before she could make her way into harbour for shelter. We may reach her this night, and we will try to give the bears the go-by without interfering with them."

The thought of a friendly greeting from countrymen, and a warm cabin and wholesome food, after all their toils, raised the spirits of the weary seamen. They once more pushed forward, making a circuit to avoid the savage animals, and then directed their course towards the ship. The long twilight enabled them to keep the masts in sight for a considerable time, and they were then able to steer by a star, which shone forth just above the ship. They did not fail, however, very frequently, to turn their heads over their shoulders to ascertain whether they were pursued.

"If the bears track us, we must turn round and face them boldly," said Andrew. "Ever meet Satan, and all spiritual foes in the same way, lad, and they will flee from you," added the old man, putting his hand on Archy's shoulder.

On and on they went, often stumbling over inequalities in the ice, which the increased darkness prevented them from perceiving. Still they struggled forward, hope urging them on. Although the ship could no longer be seen, they felt confident that she was before them, and that they must, if they persevered, reach her at last. The cold was intense, but, weary as they were, they dared not sit down lest their limbs might become benumbed, and might refuse to carry them forward. They knew, too, that the savage bears might be following in their track with stealthy steps, and might at any moment be close upon them. Hours seemed to pass away. It was impossible to calculate time. Their guiding star shone brightly from the sky; still as yet their straining eyes could not make out the looked for ship.

"We cannot now be far off from her," observed Andrew, "for we have steered too straight a course to pass by her. Archy, you have the sharpest eyes among us, can't you make her out, lad?"

"Yes, yes, I see her," he suddenly exclaimed; "but her deck seems to be housed in, and snow covers the roof, and I took it to be a low iceberg. Now I can make out the masts and rigging rising above it—she cannot be more than a mile away."

“Cheer up, friends, we will soon reach her then,” cried Andrew. “If we were to give a hearty shout, those on board would hear us.”

“I hope they may, and send us help,” exclaimed Saunders, “for here come the bears, and they will be upon us in another minute.”

On hearing this Andrew unslung his rifle, and turning round, observed a large white animal, scarcely to be distinguished from the snow, not forty paces off, stealing towards them. To fly towards the ship, close as they were to her, would have invited the bears to pursue at a faster speed. Facing their foes, they halted, as they proposed—the bears stopped also, sitting down on their haunches to watch their proceedings.

“Archy, run on, and shout as you go—the watch on deck may hear you, and assistance may be sent to us in case we fail to beat off the bears.”

Archy ran on as he was directed. At length he got the ship clearly in sight, but still she seemed a long, long way off. He stopped, however, and shouted with all his might. No reply came, but he heard behind him a cry, and then a shot fired. He knew that it must be from Andrew’s gun. Once more he pushed forward, though his legs were ready to sink beneath him. Just then the moon arose bright and full. He had stopped to give another shout, when, looking back to see if his friends were coming, he discovered, to his dismay, a bear stealing towards him. He remembered Andrew’s caution, not to fly, and bravely facing the animal, he clapped his hands together, shouting even louder than before, in the hopes of frightening it away. At that instant a hail came from the ship—he hailed in return. The bear stopped, apparently astonished at the strange sounds which met its ears. Directly afterwards another hail was heard, and turning his head for an instant, he caught sight of a party of men coming towards him from the ship. The bear seemed unwilling to encounter so many foes, and began slowly to retreat. In another minute Archy was surrounded by a number of men, shouting to him in well-known tones.

“My friends out there want your help,” said Archy, not stopping to explain who he was.

They all had arms in their hands—while some stopped to fire at the retreating bear, others run on in the direction indicated. Some of the bullets took effect, and the bear was seen to drop on the snow. While most of them dashed forward towards the wounded bear, one of them remained by Archy.

“Where do you come from, lad—who are you?” he asked. Archy, with a bounding heart, recognised the voice. It was that of Captain Irvine.

“I am Archy Hughson, sir, and Andrew Scollay, and David Saunders, and Foubister, the carpenter of a ship which took us on board, are out there—I hope the bears have not hurt them.”

“I trust not,” said the captain; “but come along, laddie, to the ship—tell me more as you go. You seem scarcely able to stand.”

Archy was, indeed, gasping for breath, and well nigh dropping from fatigue and excitement. The kind captain supporting him, they made their way toward the ship; but Archy, though he tried to speak, had lost all power of utterance. One of the other men came quickly to their assistance, and Archy was lifted on board, and placed in the captain’s cabin, under the care of Dr Sinclair. In a short time the rest of the party arrived, bringing Andrew and Foubister unhurt, though well nigh exhausted; but poor Saunders had been severely wounded by one of the bears, two of which had, however, been killed.

Andrew, on being carried below, soon somewhat recovered. His first act was to kneel down, when, lifting up his hands, he returned thanks to that all powerful and merciful God who had preserved him and his companions.

“Shipmates,” he said, as he observed the look of astonishment with which some of those who stood around regarded him. “Had you gone through the dangers we have encountered, and been preserved from them to reach the ship again, you would feel that it was not your own arm, or your own strength had saved you, but He, who not only takes care of the bodies of us sinful and ungrateful creatures, but is willing and ready to save our immortal souls alive.”

Archy remained for some days in a state of unconsciousness, but under the care of Dr Sinclair he gradually recovered. The captain treated him with the greatest kindness.

“I have heard all about you, Archy,” he said, “and I don’t speak to you now to blame you for your conduct in leaving home. I’ll leave it to your own conscience to do so. God, in His mercy, has led you through severe trials and hardships, and has mercifully preserved your life, that you may, I trust, henceforth devote it to His service, and not, as heretofore, to that of Satan. Ever remember, Archy, that we ‘cannot serve two masters’—we must be either Christ’s loving subjects, and obey His laws, or we must be Satan’s slaves, and do his will—he is a hard, and oftentimes a very cunning task-master. Most of his slaves, while following their own devices and inclinations, and, as they may fancy, doing no great harm, are in reality carrying out his objects. He blinds their eyes, and they are thus easily led captive by his emissaries, just as you were led away, as I have since discovered, by that unhappy man, Max Inkster. God’s ways are inscrutable. He has been allowed to perish, I fear, in his sins, while your life has been preserved. Then, again I say, my boy, ‘Pray without ceasing,’ that God’s Holy Spirit may strengthen and support you to walk in His ways, and to obey His holy laws.”

Archy assured the captain that such was his wish, and that, feeling his own weakness, he would ever seek for strength from above.

“You will need it now, and throughout life,” said Captain Irvine, solemnly. “To God alone can we look for sure help, in time of need, in all our temporal difficulties, much more than in our spiritual trials. I would that all on board the ship knew this—it would sustain them in the many dangers and the hardships they must be called on to endure. We have

now been well nigh a month shut up in the ice, and must expect to remain nearly eight months longer. We had provisions only at the usual rate of consumption for three months, and therefore from the day the ship was frozen up, I was compelled to place the crew on short allowance. Our fuel, too, will be exhausted long before the ice breaks up. When that time comes, should the weather prove tempestuous, the ship will be exposed to fearful danger from the huge masses of ice tossed about by the waves, or from being driven against the icebergs which may appear in her course. With the crew weakened as ours will of necessity be by that time, how little able shall we be of ourselves to contend against the perils which will surround us. I tell you this, Archy, that you may be induced more completely to trust to the protection of that God who can alone enable us to escape them."

Archy at length recovered his strength. Some time had passed before he discovered that the captain, and Andrew, and one or two other persons, had given up to him a portion of their own scanty allowance of food. When he found this out, he begged that he might not have a larger share than the rest.

"You, a growing lad, want it more than we do," said Andrew. "And I, for one, feel that if it had not been for you we should have been left to die on the ice far away from this. The crew also said that you enabled them to kill one of the two bears they got the night of our return."

The want of sufficient food at length began to tell on the frames of the hardy seamen. Parties constantly went out hunting in the hopes of killing seals or bears, but notwithstanding all their skill in capturing the mighty whale, they were unable to catch the wary seals at their blow-holes in the ice, although they succeeded, after a long chase, in obtaining two more bears, who had been tempted by hunger to approach the ship. They were disappointed in receiving no visits from the Esquimaux. Andrew feared truly that the friendly native who had come to their rescue, had himself, on his return, fallen a victim to the savage animals who had followed them when making their way to the ship.

The occurrences on board the "Kate" during that long winter cannot be detailed at length. That dreaded disease, the scurvy, produced by salt provisions and want of vegetable diet, broke out among the crew; more than half were laid up by it, and unable to quit their beds; the good captain himself was also taken ill—he had been long suffering from a disease caught when the ship was first entrapped by the ice, and when it was expected that she would be crushed to pieces, as the "Laplander" had been. Archy had now the satisfaction of repaying his kindness, by watching over him, as a dutiful son would tend a father. He scarcely ever left his side. Much of the time was spent in reading the Bible, the dying captain's consolation and joy. Again and again he urged on Archy the advice he had before given. Archy did not vow, as some might have done, that he would follow it, but as he knelt by the captain's bedside, he earnestly prayed that he might have grace to do so. The captain, feeling that his hours were numbered, desired to bid farewell to his crew. It was a sad sight to see the once hardy strong men pass in and out of the cabin—to observe the tottering steps and the pale thin cheeks of most of them. The captain had a word of exhortation and advice for each, and many felt the solemn importance of his words.

The good captain was the first to die, and the doctor feared that ere long several others would sink under the disease from which they suffered. A deep gloom settled on most of the crew, but there was light and brightness in old Andrew's cabin, which he endeavoured to shed abroad. That light came from within. It arose from his firm faith in God's loving mercy and protecting providence. "Do not despair, mates," he said, over and over again. "God has thought fit to take our good captain, who has changed this cold bleak scene for one of brightness and glory in that better land aloft there, where there is room for each one of us too, if we will consent to become the subjects of the being who rules there; but He may not think fit as yet to call us there, though we are His subjects here below. If He does not want us, he will find the means of carrying our ship in safety home."

Month after month passed by; though suffering from hunger, and intense cold from want of fuel, the crew held out. The ice began to move much earlier in the year than had been expected. A strong gale sprung up from the northward—huge masses of ice rose and fell around the ship—now as they crashed away, an open channel appeared ahead. Sail was set, though not without difficulty, as few were able to go aloft. The water, too, as the ship began to move, rushed in through many a leak, and the pumps were set to work. Now it seemed as if she was again about to be imprisoned—then once more the ice broke away, and she continued her course. But of her whole crew, scarcely six were fitted for work. Many were sick in bed, unable to move; others could just crawl to the pumps, and work them with their feeble arms. The brave doctor, who had retained his strength, exerted himself to the utmost—now standing at the helm, now assisting in making sail, now taking a turn at the pumps, in addition to his duties among the sick. Archy, who had also retained his strength, felt no little satisfaction on finding that he was of as much use as his older shipmates.

At length the ship was free; but alas, many of the poor fellows who had hitherto held out, sank quickly under the fatal disease from which they had long been suffering. One by one they sank, till ten had died besides the captain.

The voyage home was almost as trying as their detention in the ice. Scarcely a drop of water remained, their stock of provisions was well nigh exhausted, every particle of fuel had been consumed, while their numbers were daily diminishing, their strength decreasing, and the water gaining on the pumps. Still they struggled, like brave men, to the last.

"Surely we cannot be far off the land?" said Andrew, one morning to Archy.

"I'll go aloft and have a look out," answered Archy; and he made his way to the mast-head.

His heart bounded as he caught sight, in the far distance, of blue hills rising out of the tossing waters. The welcome cry he uttered brought on deck all who had strength sufficient to crawl out of their berths. The ship was steered in the direction towards which Archy pointed, the breeze was favourable, and in a short time the well-known headlands and points of Unst, the most northern isle of Shetland, appeared in sight. Before evening the anchor was dropped in one of the deep voes which run up far inland all round the coast. The inhabitants of the village, on its shores, gazed

with astonishment at the battered vessel, and the way in which the sails, which the crew had not strength to furl, fluttered from the yards. In a short time a number of boats, with friendly visitors, were on board, and the news was sent to Lerwick that the long missing "Kate" had returned. Archy sent a few lines to his mother; he signed his note, "from your repentant son," but he trembled lest she to whom it was addressed might no longer be alive to receive it. A portion of the crew, able to bear the journey were the next day sent on overland; the brave surgeon, however, refused to quit the sick and dying.

"I will stay and help you, sir," said old Andrew. "God has preserved my strength, and it is my duty to employ it in tending to my suffering fellow creatures; and though there are many at home ready to welcome me, the welcome will come more warmly to my heart when I feel that I have not left undone what I ought to have done."

"And may I likewise stay?" said Archy. "What Andrew thinks is right is my duty also."

Not till the sick had recovered sufficiently to be taken on shore did Andrew and Archy set out on their journey to the south. As they were starting a letter was put into Archy's hands. He eagerly read it. It was from his mother. Although his transgression had caused her unspeakable sorrow, she had never ceased to pray that God would protect him amid the dangers he would encounter, and that his heart might be changed and a new spirit put within him.

"You are welcome back, my boy. God alone can forgive sin, and if you have sought forgiveness in His appointed way, sure I am that it has not been refused." This letter cheered Archy on his homeward journey, and when at length he found himself in his mother's arms, and Maggie hanging round his neck, he wondered how he could have been so hard-hearted as to quit them; and he promised that he would henceforth remain at home to assist and support them. He felt, indeed, that he could never make amends for the suffering and anxiety he had caused his mother, to which he acknowledged that the hardships he had endured were in comparison nothing.

Archy had learned many important lessons, and above all, the great truth, that He who rules the world is a God of justice, and also of unbounded love and mercy; and although, in His justice, He allows the obstinate and perverse to perish in their sins, He will hear the prayers and abundantly bless all who humbly come to Him seeking for forgiveness and protection.

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