The Sea Lions; or, The Lost Sealers Volume 2

James Fenimore Cooper

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CHAPTER I.

"A sculler's notch in the stern he made,
An oar he shaped of the bottle blade;
Then sprung to his seat with a lightsome leap
And launched afar on the calm, blue deep."
The Culprit Fay.

Roswell was hardly on the ice before a sound of a most portentous sort reached his ear. He knew at once that the field had been rent in twain by outward pressure, and that some new change was to occur that might release or might destroy the schooner. He was on the point of springing forward in order to join Daggett, when a call from the boat arrested his steps.

"These here fields are coming together, Captain Gar'ner, and our boat will soon be crushed unless we get it out of the water."

Sure enough, a single glance behind him sufficed to assure the young master of the truth of this statement. The field he was on was slowly swinging, bringing its western margin in closer contact with the eastern edge of the floe that lay within it. The movement could be seen merely by the closing of the channel through which the boat had come, and by the cracking and crushing of the ice on the edges of the two fields. So tremendous was the pressure, however, that cakes as large as a small house were broken off, and forced upward on the surface of the field, or ground into small fragments, as it might be under the vice of a power hitherto unknown to the spectators. Slow as was the movement of the floe, it was too fast to allow of delay; and, finding a suitable place, the boat was hauled up, and put in security on the floe that lay nearest the schooner.

"This may give us a long drag to get back into the water, Stimson, and a night out of our banks," said Roswell, looking about him, as soon as the task was achieved.

"I do not know that, sir," was the answer. "It seems to me that the floe has parted alongside of them rocks, and if−so−be that should turn out to be the case, the whull on us, schooner, boat, and all hands, may drift into the bay; for that there is a current setting from this quarter up towards our island, I'm sartain of, by the feel of my oar, as we come along."

"It may be so — the currents run all manner of ways, and field−ice may pass the shoals, though a berg never can. I do not remember, nevertheless, to have ever seen even a floe within the group — nothing beyond large cakes that have got adrift by some means or other."

"I have, sir, though only once. A few days a'ter we got in, when I was ship−keeper, and all hands was down under the rocks of the north eend, a field come in at the northern entrance of the bay, and went out at the southern. It might have been a league athwart it, and it drifted, as a body might say, as if it had some one aboard to give it the right sheer. Touch it did at the south cape, but just winding as handy as a craft could have done it, in a good tide's way, out to sea it went ag'in, bound to the south pole for−ti−'now."

"Well, this is good news, and may be the means of saving the Vineyard craft in the end. We do seem to be setting bodily into the bay, and if we can only get clear of that island, I do not see what is to hinder it. Here is a famous fellow of a mountain to the northward, coming down before the wind, as one might say, and giving us a cant into the passage. I should think that chap must produce some sort of a change, whether it be for better or worse."

"Ay, ay, sir," put in Thompson, who acted as a boat−steerer at need, "he may do just that, but it is all he can do. Mr. Green and I sounded out from the cove for a league or more, a few days since, and we found less than twenty fathoms, as far as we went. That chap up to the nor'ard there, draws something like a hundred fathoms, if he draws an inch. He shows more above water than a first−rate's truck."

"That does he, and a good deal to spare. Thompson, do you and Todd remain here, and look after the boat, while the rest of us will shape our course for the schooner. She seems to be in a wicked berth, and 'twill be no more than neighbourly to try to get her out of it."

Truly enough might Roswell call the berth of the Sea Lion, of the Vineyard, by any expressive name that implied danger. When the party reached her, they found the situation of that vessel to be as follows. She had been

endeavouring to work her way through a passage between two large fields, when she found the ice closing, and that she was in great danger of being `nipped.' Daggett was a man of fertile resources, and great decision of character. Perceiving that escape was impossible, all means of getting clear being rendered useless by the floes soon touching, both before and behind him, he set about adopting the means most likely to save his vessel. Selecting a spot where a curve, in the margin of the field to leeward, promised temporary security, at least, he got his vessel into it, anchored fast to the floe. Then he commenced cutting away the ice, by means of axes first, and of saws afterwards, in the hope that he might make such a cavity as, by its size and shape, would receive the schooner's hull, and prevent her destruction. For several hours had he and his people been at this work, when, to their joy, as well as to their great astonishment, they were suddenly joined by Roswell and his party. The fact was, that so intently had every one of the Vineyard men's faculties been absorbed by their own danger, and so much was each individual occupied by his own duty, that not a man among them had seen the boat, or even any of the crew, until Gardiner called out to Daggett as he approached, announcing his presence by his voice.

"This is good fortune, truly, Captain Gar'ner," said Daggett, shaking his brother master most cordially by the hand; "good fortune, do I call it! I was satisfied that I should fall in with you, somewhere about this group of islands, for they lie just about where my late uncle had given us reason to suppose some good sealing ground might be met with; but I did not hope to see you this morning. You observe our position, Captain Gar'ner; there is every prospect of a most awful nip!"

"There is, indeed, though I see you have been making some provision for it. What luck have you had in digging a slip to let the schooner into?"

"Well, we might have had worse, though better would have been more agreeable. It's plain sailing, so long as we can work above water, and you see we've cleared a fine berth for the craft, down to the water's edge; but, below that, 't is blind work and slow. The field is some thirty feet thick, and sawing through it is out of the question. The most we can do is to get off pieces diagonally. I am not without hopes that we have done enough of this to make a wedge, on which the schooner will rise, if pressed hard on her off−side. I have heard of such things, Captain Gar'ner, though I cannot say I ever saw it."

"It's a ticklish business to trust to such a protector; still, a great deal must be gained by cutting away so much of this upper ice, and it is possible your schooner may be lifted, as you seem to expect. Has anything been done to strengthen the craft in−board?"

"Not as yet; though I've thought of that, too. But what is the stoutest ship that ever floated, against the pressure of such an enormous field of ice? Had we not better keep cutting away?"

"You can continue to work the saw and the axes, but I will give an eye to strengthening the craft in−board. Just point out the spars and plank you can spare, and we'll see what can be done. At any rate, my lads, you can now work with the certainty that your lives are safe. My schooner lies about six leagues from you, as safely moored as if she lay in a dock. Come, Captain Daggett, let me see your spare spars and plank."

Great encouragement it certainly was to these mariners, so far from home, and in their imminently perilous condition, to know that a countryman and a friend was so near them, to afford shelter and protection. The American sailor is not a cheering animal, like his English relative, but he quite as clearly understands what ought to be received with congratulation, as those who are apt to make more noise. The Vineyard men, in particular, were habitually quiet and thoughtful, there being but one seaman in the craft who did not husband his lay, and look forward to meet the wants of a future day. This is the result of education, men usually becoming quiet as they gain ideas, and feel that the tongue has been given to us in order to communicate them to our fellows. Still, the joy at receiving this unlooked−for assistance was great among the Vineyard men, and each party went to work with activity and zeal.

The task of Roswell Gardiner was in−board, while that of Daggett and his men continued to be on the ice. The latter resumed the labour of cutting and sawing the field, and of getting up fenders, or skids, to protect the inner side of their vessel from the effects of a `nip.' As for Gardiner, he set about his self−assumed duty with great readiness and intelligence. His business was to strengthen the craft, by getting supports up in her hold. This was done without much difficulty, all the upper part of the hold being clear and easily come at. Spars were cut to the proper length, plank were placed in the broadest part of the vessel, opposite to each other, and the spars were wedged in carefully, extending from side to side, so as to form a great additional support to the regular construction of the schooner. In little more than an hour, Roswell had his task accomplished, while Daggett did

not see that he could achieve much more himself. They met on the ice to consult, and to survey the condition of things around them.

The outer field had been steadily encroaching upon the inner, breaking the edges of both, until the points of junction were to be traced by a long line of fragments forced upward, and piled high in the air. Open spaces, however, still existed, owing to irregularities in the outlines of the two floes; and Daggett hoped that the little bay into which he had got his schooner might not be entirely closed, ere a shift of wind, or a change in the tides, might carry away the causes of the tremendous pressure that menaced his security. It is not easy for those who are accustomed to look at natural objects in their more familiar aspects, fully to appreciate the vast momentum of the weight that was now drifting slowly down upon the schooner. The only ray of hope was to be found in the deficiency in one of the two great requisites of such a force. Momentum being *weight*, multiplied into *velocity*, there were some glimpses visible, of a nature to produce a slight degree of expectation that the last might yet be resisted. The movement was slow, but it was absolutely grand, by its steadiness and power. Any one who has ever stood on a lake or river shore, and beheld the undeviating force with which a small cake of ice crumbles and advances before a breeze, or in a current, may form some idea of the majesty of the movement of a field of leagues in diameter, and which was borne upon by a gale of the ocean, as well as by currents, and by the weight of drifting ice−bergs from without. It is true that the impetus came principally from a great distance, and could scarcely be detected or observed by those around the schooner; still, these last were fully aware of the whole character of the danger, which each minute appeared to render more and more imminent and imposing. The two fields were obviously closing still, and that with a resistless power that boded destruction to the unfortunate vessel. The open water near her was already narrowed to a space that half an hour might suffice to close entirely.

"Have you set that nearest island by compass, Daggett?" asked Roswell Gardiner, as soon as he had taken a good look around him. "To me it seems that it bears more to the eastward than it did an hour since. If this should be true, our inner field here must have a very considerable westerly set."

"In which case we may still hope to drift clear," returned Daggett, springing on board the schooner, and running aft to the binnacle, Roswell keeping close at his side. "By George! it is as you say; the bearings of that island are altered at least two points!"

"In which case our drift has exceeded a league—Ha! what noise is that? Can it be an eruption of the volcano?"

Daggett, at first, was inclined to believe it was a sound produced by some of the internal convulsions of the earth, which within, as if in mockery of the chill scene that prevailed without, was a raging volcano, the fierce heats of which found vent at the natural chimneys produced by its own efforts. This opinion, however, did not last long, and he gave expression to his new thoughts in his answer.

"'T is the ice," he said. "I do believe the pressure has caused the fields to part on the rocks of that island. If so, our leeward floe may float away, as fast as the weather field approaches."

"Hardly," said Roswell, gazing intently towards the nearest island; "hardly; for the most weatherly of the two will necessarily get the force of the wind and the impetus of those bergs first, and make the fastest drift. It may lessen the violence of the nip, but I do not think it will avert it altogether."

This opinion of Gardiner's fully described all that subsequently occurred. The outer floe continued its inroads on the inner, breaking up the margins of both, until the channel was so nearly closed as to bring the field from which the danger was most apprehended in absolute contact with the side of the schooner. When the margin of the outer floe first touched the bilge of the schooner, it was at the precise spot where the vessel had just been fortified within. Fenders had also been provided without, and there was just a quarter of a minute, during which the two captains hoped that these united means of defence might enable the craft to withstand the pressure. This delusion lasted but a moment, however, the cracking of timbers letting it be plainly seen that the force was too great to be resisted. For another quarter of a minute, the two masters held their breath, expecting to see the deck rise beneath their feet, as the ice rose along the points of contact between the floes. Such, in all probability, would have been the result, had not the pressure brought about another change, that was quite as much within the influence of the laws of mechanical forces, though not so much expected. Owing to the wedge−like form of the vessel's bottom, as well as to the circumstance that the ice of the outer floe had a similar shape, projecting beneath the schooner's keel, the craft was lifted bodily, with an upward jerk, as if she were suddenly released from some imprisoning power. Released she was, indeed, and that most opportunely, for another half−minute would have seen her ribs broken in, and the schooner a mangled wreck. As she now rose, Roswell gave vent to his delight in a loud cry,

and all hands felt that the occurrence might possibly save them. The surge upward was fearful, and several of the men were thrown off their feet; but it effectually released the schooner from the nip, laying her gradually up in the sort of dock that her people had been so many hours preparing for her reception. There she lay, inclining a little, partly on her bilge, or sewed, as seamen term it, when a vessel gets a list from touching the ground and being left by the tide, neither quite upright, nor absolutely on her beam−ends.

No sooner was the vessel thus docked, than all apprehension of receiving further injury from the outer floe ceased. It might force the schooner altogether on the inner field, driving the vessel before it, as an avalanche of mud in the Alps is known to force cottages and hamlets in its front; but it could no longer `nip' it. It did not appear probable to the two masters, however, that the vessel would be forced from its present berth, the rending and cracking of the ice sensibly diminishing, as the two floes came closer and closer together. Nor was this all: it was soon very obvious that the inner field was drifting, with an increased motion, into the bay, while the larger, or outer floe, seemed to hang, from some cause or other. Of the fact there was soon no doubt, the fissure beginning to open, as slowly and steadily as it had closed, but noiselessly, and without any rending of the ice.

"We shall get you clear, Daggett! we shall get you clear!" cried Roswell, with hearty good−will, forgetting, in that moment of generous effort, all feelings of competition and rivalry. "I know what you are after, my good fellow— have understood it from the first. Yonder high land is the spot you seek; and along the north shore of that island are elephants, lions, dogs, bears, and other animals, to fill up all the craft that ever came out of the Vineyard!"

"This is hearty, Gar'ner," returned the other, giving his brother master a most cordial shake of the hand, "and it's just what I like. Sealing is a sociable business, and a craft should never come alone into these high latitudes. Accidents will happen to the most prudent man living, as you see by what has just befallen me; for, to own the truth, we've had a narrow chance of it!"

The reader will remember that all which Daggett now said, was uttered by a man who saw his vessel lying on the ice, with a list that rendered it somewhat difficult to move about on her deck, and still in circumstances that would have caused half the navigators of this world to despair. Such was not the fact with Daggett, however. Seven thousand miles from home, alone, in an unknown sea, and uncertain of ever finding the place he sought, this man had picked his way among mountains and fields of ice, with perhaps less hesitation and reluctance than a dandy would encounter the perils of a crossing, when the streets were a little moistened by rain. Even then, with his vessel literally shelfed on the ice, certain that she had been violently nipped, he was congratulating himself on reaching a sealing ground, from which he could never return without encountering all the same dangers over again. As for Roswell, he laughed a little at the other's opinion of the sealing business, for he was morally certain the Vineyard−man would have kept the secret, had it been in his possession alone.

"Well, well, we'll forget the past," he said, "all but what we've done to help one another. You stood by me off Hatteras, and I've been of some service to you here. You know how it is in our calling, Daggett; first come, first served. I got here first, and have had the cream of the business for this season; though I do not by any means wish to be understood as saying that you are too late."

"I hope not, Gar'ner. 'T would be vexatious to have all this risk and trouble for nothing. How much ile have you stowed?"

"All my ground−tier, and a few riders. It is with the skins that we are doing the best business."

Daggett's eyes fairly snapped at this announcement, which aroused all his professional ambition, to say nothing of that propensity to the "root of all evil," which had become pretty thoroughly incorporated with his moral being, by dint of example, theory, and association. We have frequently had occasion to remark how much more `enjoyable,' for the intellectual and independent, is a country on the decline, than a country on the advance. The one is accumulating that wealth which the other has already possessed and improved; and men cease to dwell so much on riches in their inmost souls, when the means of obtaining them would seem to have got beyond their reach. This is one of the secrets of the universal popularity of Italy with the idle and educated; though the climate, and the monuments, and the recollections, out of doubt, contribute largely to its charms. Nevertheless, man, as a rule, is far more removed from the money−getting mania in Italy, than in almost any other portion of the Christian world; and this merely because the time of her wealth and power has gone by, leaving in its train a thousand fruits, that would seem to be the most savoury, as the stem on which they grew would appear to be approaching its decay. On Martha's Vineyard, however, aud in no part of the Great Republic, indeed, has this waning season

yet commenced, and the heart of man is still engrossed with those desires that are to produce the means which are to lay the foundations for the enjoyment of generations to come.

"That's luck, indeed, for a craft so early in the season," returned Daggett, when his eyes had done snapping. "Are the critturs getting to be wild and skeary?"

"Not more so than the day we began upon them. I have taken the greatest care to send none but my most experienced hands out to kill and skin, and their orders have been rigid to give as little alarm as possible. If you wish to fill up, I would advise you to take the same precautions, for the heel of the season is beginning to show itself."

"I will winter here, but I get a full craft," said Daggett, with a resolute manner, if not absolutely serious in what he said. "Trouble enough have I had to find the group, and we Vineyard−men don't relish the idee of being outdone."

"You would be done up, my fine fellow," answered Roswell, laughing, "did you attempt to pass a winter here. The Sea Lion of Humse's Hull would not herself keep you in fuel, and you would have to raft it off next summer on your casks, or remain here for ever."

"I suppose a body might expect to see you back again, another season," observed Daggett, glancing meaningly towards his companion, as if he had seriously revolved so desperate a plan in his mind. "'Tis n't often that a sealer lets a station like that you've described drop out of his recollection in a single v'y'ge."

"I may be back or I may not"—said Roswell, just then remembering Mary, and wondering if she would continue to keep him any longer in suspense, should he return successful from his present adventure—"That will depend on others more than on myself. I wish, however, now we are both here, and there can no longer be any `hide and go seek' between us, that you would tell me how you came to know anything about this cluster of islands, or of the seals then and there to be found?"

"You forget my uncle, who died on Oyster Pond, and whose effects I crossed over to claim?"

"I remember him very well—saw him often while living, and helped to bury him when dead."

"Well, our information came from him. He threw out several hints consarning sealing−grounds aboard the brig in which he came home; and you needn't be told, Gar'ner, that a hint of that kind is sartain to find its way through all the ports down east. But hearing that there was new sealing−ground wasn't knowing where to find it. I should have been at a loss, wasn't it for the spot on my uncle's chart that had been rubbed over lately, as I concluded, to get rid of some of his notes. You know, as well as I do, that the spot was in this very latitude and longitude, and so I came here to look for the much−desired land."

"And you have undertaken such an outfit, and come this long distance into an icy sea, on information as slight as this!" exclaimed Roswell, astonished at this proof of sagacity and enterprise, even in men who are renowned for scenting dollars from pole to pole.

"On this, with a few hints picked up, here and there, among some of the old gentleman's papers. He was fond of scribbling, and I have got a sort of a chart that he scratched on a leaf of his bible, that was made to represent this very group, as I can now see."

"Then you could have had no occasion for the printed chart, with the mark of obliteration on it, and did not come here on that authority after all."

"There you're wrong, Captain Gar'ner. The chart of the group had no latitude or longitude, but just placed each island with its bearings and distances from the other islands. It was no help in finding the place, which might be in one hemisphere as well as in the other."

"It was, then, the mark of the obliteration_____"

"*Marks*, if you please, Captain Gar'ner," interrupted the other, significantly. "My uncle talked a good deal aboard of that brig about other matters besides sealing. We think several matters have been obliterated from the old chart, and we intend to look 'em all up. It's our right, you know, seeing that the old man was Vineyard−born, and we are his nearest of kin."

"Certainly" — rejoined Roswell, laughing again, but somewhat more faintly than before. "Every man for himself in this world is a good maxim; it being pretty certain if we do not take care of ourselves, no one will take care of us."

"Yes, sir," said Stimson, who was standing near; "there is one to care for every hair of our heads, however forgetful and careless we may be ourselves. Wasn't it for this, Captain Gar'ner, there's many a craft that comes

into these seas that would never find its way out of 'em; and many a bold sailor, with a heart boiling over with fun and frolic, that would be frozen to an ice−cicle every year!"

Gardiner felt the justice of this remark, and easily pardoned its familiarity for its truth. In these sealers the discipline is by no means of that distant and military or naval character that is found in even an ordinary merchantman. As every seaman has an interest in the result of the voyage, some excuse was made for this departure from the more general usage; and this familiarity itself never exceeded the bounds that were necessary to the observance of duty.

"Ay, ay," returned Roswell, smiling—"in one sense you are right enough; but Captain Daggett and myself were speaking of human affairs, as human affairs are carried on.— Is not this inner field drifting fast away from the outer, Daggett? If so, we shall go directly into the bay!"

It was as Gardiner thought. By some means that were not apparent, the floes were now actually separating, and at a rate of movement which much exceeded that of their junction. All idea of further danger from the outer field disappeared, as a matter of course.

"It's so, Captain Gar'ner," said Stimson, respectfully, but with point; "and who and what brought it about for our safety and the preservation of this craft?—I just ventur' to ask that question, sir."

"It may be the hand of Providence, my good fellow; for I very frankly own I can see no direct physical cause. Nevertheless, I fancy it would be found that the tides or currents have something to do with it, if the truth could be come at."

"Well, sir, and who causes the tides and currents to run, this−a−way and that−a−way?"

"There you have me, Stephen; for I never could get hold of the clew to their movements at all," answered Roswell, laughing. "There is a reason for it all, I dare say, if one could only find it out. Captain Daggett, it is high time to look after the safety of your schooner. She ought to be in the cove before night sets in, since the ice has found its way into the bay."

This appeal produced a general movement. By this time the two fields were a hundred fathoms asunder; the smaller, or that on which the vessel lay, drifting quite fast into the bay, under the joint influences of wind and current; while the larger floe had clearly been arrested by the islands. This smaller field was much lessened in surface, in consequence of having been broken at the rocks, though the fragment that was thus cut off was of more than a league in diameter, and of a thickness that exceeded many yards.

As for the Sea Lion of the Vineyard, she was literally shelfed, as has been said. So irresistible had been the momentum of the great floe, that it lifted her out of the water as two or three hands would run up a bark canoe on a gravelly beach. This lifting process had, very fortunately for the craft, been effected by an application of force from below, in a wedge−like manner, and by bringing the strongest defences of the vessel to meet the power. Consequently, no essential injury had been done the vessel in thus laying her on her screw−dock.

"If a body could get the craft *off* as easily as she was got *on*," observed Daggett, as he and Roswell Gardiner stood looking at the schooner's situation, "it would be but a light job. But, as it is, she lies on ice at least twenty feet thick, and ice that seems as solid as flint!"

"We know it is not quite as hard as that, Daggett," was Roswell's reply; "for our saws and axes make great havoc in it, when we can fairly get at it."

"If one *could* get fairly at it! But here you see, Gar'ner, everything is under water, and an axe is next to useless. Nor can the saws be used with much advantage on ice so thick."

"There is no help for it but hard work and great perseverance. I would advise that a saw be set at work at each end of the schooner, allowing a little room in case of accidents, and that we weaken the foundation by two deep cuts. The weight of the vessel will help us, and in time she will settle back into her "native element,' as the newspapers have it."

There was, indeed, no other process that promised success, and the advice of Gardiner was followed. In the course of the next two hours deep cuts were made with the saws, which were pushed so low as to reach quite to the bottom of the cake. This could be done only by what the sailors called "jury−handles," or spars secured to the plates. The water offered the principal obstacle, for that lay on the shelf at least five feet deep. Perseverance and ingenuity, however, finally achieved their aim. A cracking was heard, the schooner slowly righted, and settled off into the sea again, as easily and harmlessly as if scientifically launched. The fenders protected her sides and copper, though the movement was little more than slowly sinking on the fragment of the cake, which, by means of

the cuts, had been gradually so much reduced as to be unable to uphold so great a weight. It was merely reversing the process of breaking the camel's back, by laying the last feather on his load.

This happy conclusion to several hours of severe toil, occurred just as the field had drifted abreast of the cove, and was about the centre of the bay. Hazard came up also at that point, on his return from the volcano, altering his course a little to speak the strangers. The report of the mate concerning his discoveries was simple and brief. There was a volcano, and one in activity; but it had nothing remarkable about it. No seal were seen, and there was little to reward one for crossing the bay. Sterility, and a chill grandeur, were the characteristics of all that region; and these were not wanting to any part of the group. Just as the sun was setting, Gardiner piloted his companion into the cove; and the two Sea Lions were moored amicably side by side, and that too at a spot where thousands of the real animals were to be found within a league.

CHAPTER II.

"The morning air blows fresh on him;
The waves dance gladly in his sight;
The sea−birds call, and wheel, and skim—
O, blessed morning light!"
Dana.

The very day succeeding the arrival of the Sea Lion of the Vineyard, even while his mate was clearing the vessel, Daggett had a gang on the north shore, killing and skinning. As Roswell's rules were rigidly observed, no other change was produced by this accession to the force of the sealers, than additional slaughter. Many more seals were killed, certainly, but all was done so quietly that no great alarm was awakened among the doomed animals themselves. One great advantage was obtained by the arrival of the new party that occasioned a good deal of mirth at first, but which, in the end, was found to be of great importance to the progress of the work. Daggett had taken to pieces and brought with him the running part of a common country wagon, which was soon found of vast service in transporting the skins and blubber across the rocks. The wheels were separated, leaving them in pairs, and each axle was loaded with a freight that a dozen men would hardly have carried, when two or three hands would drag in the load, with an occasional lift from other gangs, to get them up a height, or over a cleft. This portion of the operation was found to work admirably, owing, in a great measure, to the smooth surfaces of the rocks; and unquestionably these wheels advanced the business of the season at least a fortnight; — Gardiner thought a month. It rendered the crews better natured, too, much diminishing their toil, and sending them to their bunks at night in a far better condition for rest than they otherwise could have been.

Just one month, or four weeks to a day, after the second schooner got in, it being Sunday of course, Gardiner and Daggett met on the platform of a perfectly even rock that lay stretched for two hundred yards directly beneath the house. It was in the early morning. Notwithstanding there was a strong disposition to work night and day on the part of the new−comers, Roswell's rule of keeping the Sabbath as a day of rest had prevailed, and the business of washing, scrubbing and shaving, had just commenced. As for the two masters, they required fewer ablutions than their men, had risen earlier, and were already dressed for the day.

"To−morrow will be the first day of February," said Daggett, when the salutations of the morning were passed, "and I was calculating my chances of getting full this season. You will be full this week, I conclude, Gar'ner?"

"We hope to be so, by the middle of it," was the answer. "I think the seal are getting to be much shyer than they were, and am afraid we shall demonstrate that `the more haste is the worse speed.'"

"What is that to you?" returned Daggett quickly. "Of course you will sail for home as soon as you can get off."

Gardiner did not like the "of course," which was indirectly saying what the other would do himself under similar circumstances. Still, it caused no difference in his own decision, which had been made up under the influence of much reflection, and of a great deal of good feeling.

"I shall do no such thing, Captain Daggett," was the answer. "I do not fancy the idea of leaving a fellow−creature, a countryman — nay, I might say, a neighbour, on this lone spot, with the uncertainty of his ever getting out of it. If you can come to some understanding with my officers and crew, I will keep the schooner here until we are both full, and ready to sail in company."

"In which case you would nat'rally ask a lay for yourself?"

"Naturally, perhaps, I might," returned Roswell, smiling, "though positively, I shall not. Not one of us in the cabin will look for any othe advantage than your good company. I have talked this matter over with my mates, and they say that the advantage of having a consort in getting through the ice is sufficient to justify us in holding on two or three weeks longer. With the men, it will be a little different, perhaps; and they will require some pay. The poor fellows live by their hands, and what their hands do they will expect to be compensated for."

"They shall have good lays, depend on it. As for yourself, Captain Gar'ner, I trust my owners will not forget to do what is right, if we ever get home, and meet with luck in the market."

"Never fear for me, Daggett. I look for my reward in the bright eyes and pleasant smiles of as excellent a girl as Long Island can produce. Mary never fails to reward me in that way whenever I do right. It *is* right to stand by

you just now—to do as I would be done by; and I'll do it. Set the thing down as decided, but make your bargain with my men. And now, Daggett, what say you to climbing yonder mountain to−day, by way of getting a good survey of our territories, as well as to take a look at the state of the ice?"

Daggett assented very cheerfully, his mind being greatly relieved by this assurance of standing by him, on the part of Roswell; for he had been undecided whether to remain after the departure of the other schooner or not. All was now clear to him, however, and the two masters made their preparations to ascend the mountain as soon as they had breakfasted. Stimson was summoned to be of the party, his officer having got to be accustomed to, and desirous of, his company.

For the first two hours after quitting the house, Gardiner, Daggett, and the boat−steerer, were busily employed in working their way across the broken surface of the island, to the base of the cone−like pinnacle that formed the apex of all. There they rested, and took a little refreshment, conversing the while on the state of the ice in the offing, so far as the last could be seen from their present elevation.

"We shall have a sharp hill to climb, should we succeed in getting up here," observed Roswell, "though the rocks appear to be quite clear of snow just now."

"Just now, or never. This is the antarctic dog−days, Gar'ner," answered Daggett, laughing, "and we must make the most of them. A man can move about without his pee−jacket at noon−day, and that is something gained; for, I have heard of ice making in the bays, even at mid−summer."

"We are not in a high enough latitude for that, thank heaven, though pretty well south too. This is our harvest−time here, sure enough, and we had better look to it."

As Gardiner said this, the eyes of all three were turned on the sterile scene around them. The island was not absolutely destitute of vegetation, as is the case a few degrees further south; but it might be said to be nearly so. A few stunted plants were to be seen in the fissures of the rocks, and a little soil had been made, seemingly by the crumbling of the stones, in which a wiry grass occasionally showed itself. As for the mountain, however, it was mostly bare; and when our party began to climb, the ascent was not only difficult, but in places dangerous. Roswell had foreseen this, and he had made a provision accordingly. In addition to his lance, used as a leaping−staff and walking−pike, each man had a small coil of ratlin−stuff thrown over his shoulder, in order to help him in difficult places, or enable him to help his companions. It was in the descent chiefly that these ropes were expected to be of service, though their utility was made apparent ere the three reached the summit. The ascent of a mountain a thousand feet in height is no great exploit under ordinary circumstances. Even when there are precipitous cliffs, gorges, ravines and broken masses, youth, activity and courage will commonly overcome all the difficulties, placing the foot of man on eminences that nature would appear to have intended solely for the dominion of the goat. Thus did it turn out with the three sealers, all of whom stood on the bald cap of that mountain, after a vigorous and somewhat hazardous ascent, that occupied rather more than an hour. They had greatly aided each other in achieving their purpose, to be sure; and the ratlin−stuff was found of use on more than one occasion.

An extraordinary, and, considering the accessories, a most brilliant view, rewarded the adventurers. But, after a few minutes passed in pure admiration of what they beheld, the minds of all three adverted to the parts which gave such unusual splendour to the panorama. Icebergs were visible on all sides of them, the great bay excepted; and the group was surrounded by them, in a way that would seem to proclaim a blockade. At that season, the south winds prevailed, though changes were frequent and sudden, and the vast frozen fleet was drifting north. Gardiner saw that the passage by which he had brought in his schooner was now completely closed, and that the only means of exit from the bay was by its northern outlet. The great depth of the bergs still prevented their coming within the cluster of islands, while their number and size completely stopped the floes from passing.

To the northward, the sea was much more open. Gardiner and Daggett both thought, as they gazed in that direction, that it would be easy enough to take a vessel through the difficulties of the navigation, and that a good run of eight−and−forty hours would carry her quite beyond the crowded ice. This sight awakened some regrets in the two masters, that they were not then in a condition to depart.

"I am almost sorry that we have made a holiday of the Sunday," said Daggett, seating himself on a point of rock, to get a little rest after so fatiguing an ascent. "Every minute of time is precious to men in our situation."

"Every minute of time is precious to all men, Captain Daggett, in another and a still more important sense, if they did but know it," put in Stimson, with a zealous freedom, and a Christian's earnestness.

"I understand you, Stephen, and will not gainsay it. But a sealin' v'y'ge is no place, after all, for a man to give himself up to Sabbaths and religion."

"All places are good, sir, and all hours Sabbaths, when the heart is in the true state. God is on this naked rock, as he is on the Vineyard; and a thought, or a syllable, in his praise, on this mountain, are as pleasant to him as them that arise from churches and priests."

"I believe it is, at least, a mistake in policy to give the men no day of rest," said Roswell, quietly. "Though not prepared to carry matters as far as my friend Stephen here, I agree with him entirely in *that*."

"And not in believing, sir, that the Spirit of God is on this island?"

"In that too, certainly. Neither Captain Daggett nor myself will be disposed to dispute either of these two propositions, I think, when we come to reflect on them. A day of rest would seem to be appointed by nature; and I make no doubt we have filled up all the sooner for having observed one. Seamen have so many calls on their time which cannot be neglected, that it is unwise in them to increase the number unnecessarily."

"This is not the spirit, Captain Gar'ner, I'm sorry to say, in which we should keep our day of rest, though it is well that we keep it at all. I'm no stickler for houses and congregations, though they are good enough in their times and seasons; for every man has a tabernacle in his own heart, if he's disposed to worship."

"And if any place on earth can particularly incline one to worship God, surely it must be some such spot as this!" exclaimed Roswell, with a degree of fervour it was not usual for him to exhibit. "Never in my life have my eyes seen a sight as remarkable and as glorious as this!"

Well might our young mariner thus exclaim. The day was fine for the region, but marked by the caprice and changeful light of high latitudes. There was mist in places, and flurries of snow were to be seen to the southward, while the ocean to the northward of the group was glittering under the brightness of an unclouded sun. It was the mixed character of this scene that rendered it so peculiar, while its grandeur, sublimity, and even beauty, were found in its vastness, its noble though wild accessories, its frozen and floating mountains, glowing in prismatic light, and the play of summer on the features of an antarctic view.

"'T is a remarkable spot, as no one can deny," answered Dagget; "but I like its abundance of seal the most of all. I cannot say I have much taste for sights, unless they bring the promise of good profit with them. We Vineyarders live in a small way, and are not rich enough to take delight in landscapes."

"Serve God, and reverence his holy name," said Stimson, earnestly, "and all places will be good to look upon. I have been on the Vineyard in my time, and have never found any difference as to the spot, so long as the heart is right."

"A poor man must work," answered Daggett, dropping his eyes from the more distant and gorgeous views of the drifting ice−mountains, to the rocky shore, that was still frequented by thousands of seals, some of the largest of which might be seen, even from that elevation, waddling about; "ay, a poor man must work, Sundays or no Sundays; and he who would make his hay, must do it while the sun shines. I like meetin'−goin' at the right place, and sealin' when sealin' ought to be done. This day is lost, I fear, and I hope we shall not have reason to regret it."

Stimson did not abandon what he conceived to be his duty, but answered this cold, worldly spirit in the best manner his uncultivated speech enabled him to do. But his words were thrown away on Daggett. The lust of gold was strong within him; and while that has full dominion over the heart, it is vain to expect that any purely spiritual fruits will ripen there. Daggett was an instance of what, we fear, many thousands resembling him might be found, up and down the land, of a man energetic by temperament, industrious by habit, and even moderate in his views, but whose whole existence is concentrated in the accumulation of property. Born poor, and in a state of society in which no one other generally recognised mode of distinction is so universally acknowledged as that of the possession of money, it is not surprising that a man of his native disposition should early bend all his faculties to this one great object. He was not a miser, like Deacon Pratt, for he could spend freely, on occasion, and perfectly understood the necessity of making liberal outfits to insure ample returns; but he lived for little else than for gain. What such a man might have become, under more favourable auspices, and with different desires instilled into his youthful mind, it is not easy to say; it is only certain that, as he was, the steel−trap is not quicker to spring at the touch, than he was to arouse all his manifold energies at the hopes or promise of profit. As his whole life had been passed in one calling, it was but natural that his thoughts should most easily revert to the returns that calling had so often given. He never dreamed of speculations, knew nothing of stocks, had no concern with manufactures in cotton or wool, nor had any other notion of wealth than the possession of a good farm on the Vineyard, a

reasonable amount of money "at use," certain interests in coasters, whalers, and sealers, and a sufficiency of household effects, and this in a very modest way, to make himself and family comfortable. Notwithstanding this seeming moderation, Daggett was an intensely covetous man; but his wishes were limited by his habits.

While one of the masters of the sealing crafts was drawing these pictures, in his imagination, of wealth after his manner, very different were the thoughts of the other. Roswell's fancy carried him far across that blue and sparkling ocean, northward, to Oyster Pond, and Deacon Pratt's homestead, and to Mary. He saw the last in her single−hearted simplicity, her maiden modesty, her youthful beauty,— nay, even in her unyielding piety; for, singular as it may seem, Gardiner valued his mistress so much the more for that very faith to which, in his own person, he laid no claim. Irreligious he was not, himself, though skeptical on the one great tenet of Christianity. But, in Mary, it struck him it was right that she should believe that which she had been so sedulously taught; for he did not at all fancy those inquiring minds, in the other sex, that lead their possessors in quest of novelties and paradoxes. In this humour, then, the reader will not be surprised to hear that he imagined the deacon's niece in her most pleasing attributes, and bedecked her with all those charms that render maidens pleasant to youthful lovers. Had Mary been less devout, less fixed in her belief that Jesus was the Son of God, strange as it may seem, the skeptical young man would have loved her less.

And what was that rugged, uncultivated seaman, who stood near the two officers, thinking of, all this time? Did he, too, bend his thoughts on love, and profit, and the pleasures of this world? Of love, most truly, was his heart full to overflowing; but it was the love of God, with that affection for all his creatures, that benevolence and faith, which glow as warmly in the hearts of the humblest and least educated, as in those of the great and learned. His mind was turned towards his Creator, and it converted the extraordinary view that lay before his sight into a vast, magnificent, gorgeous, though wild temple, for his worship and honour. It might be well for all of us occasionally to pause in our eager pursuit of worldly objects, and look around on the world itself, considering it as but a particle in the illimitable fields of creation,—one among the many thousands of other known worlds, that have been set in their places in honour of the hand that made them. These brief but vivid glances at the immensity of the moral space which separates man from his Deity, have very healthful effects in inculcating that humility which is the stepping−stone of faith and love.

After passing an hour on the bald cap of the mountain, sometimes conversing, at others ruminating on the scene, a change in the weather induced our party to move. There had been flurries of snow visible all the morning, but it was in the distance, and among the glittering bergs. Once the volcano had thus been shut in from view; but now a driving cloud passed over the mountain itself, which was quickly as white as the pure element could make it. So heavy was the fall of snow, that it was soon impossible to see a dozen yards, and of course the whole of the plain of the island was concealed. At this most inauspicious moment, our adventurers undertook their descent.

It is always much less dangerous to mount an acclivity than to go down it. The upward progress is easily enough arrested, while that in the other direction is frequently too rapid to be under perfect command. Roswell felt the truth of this, and would have proposed a delay until the atmosphere became clear again, but it struck him that this was not likely to occur very soon. He followed Daggett, therefore, though reluctantly, and with due caution. Stimson brought up the rear.

For the first ten minutes our adventurers got along without any great difficulty. They found the precise point at which they had reached the summit of the mountain, and began to descend. It was soon apparent that great caution must be used, the snow rendering the footing slippery. Daggett, however, was a bold and hot−blooded man when in motion, and he preceded the party some little distance, calling out to those behind him to come on without fear. This the last did, though it was with a good deal more caution than was observed by their leader. At length, all three reached a spot where it seemed they could not overcome the difficulties. Beneath them was the smooth face of a rock already covered with snow, while they could not see far enough in advance to ascertain in what this inclined plane terminated. Daggett, however, insisted that he knew the spot; that they had passed up it. There was a broad shelf a short distance below them; and once on that shelf, it would be necessary to make a considerable circuit in order to reach a certain ravine, down which the path would be reasonably easy. All remembered the shelf and the ravine; the question was merely whether the first lay beneath them, and as near as Daggett supposed. A mistaken confidence beset the last, and he carried this feeling so far as to decline taking an end of a line which Roswell threw to him, but seated himself on the snow and slid downward, passing almost immediately out of sight.

"What has become of him?" demanded Roswell, endeavouring to pierce the air by straining his eye−balls. "He is not to be seen!"

"Hold on to the line, sir, and give me the other end of it; I will go and see," answered Stimson.

It being obviously the most hazardous to remain to the last, and descend without the support of one above him, Roswell acquiesced in this proposal, lowering the boat−steerer down the rock, until he too was hid from his sight. But, though out of sight in that dense snow−storm, Stimson was not so distant as to be beyond the reach of the voice.

"Go more to the right, sir," called out the seaman, "and steady me with the line along with you."

This was done, the walking being sufficiently secure at the elevation where Roswell was. Presently, Stimson shook the line, and called out again.

"That will do, Captain Gar'ner," he said. "I am on the shelf *now* , and have pretty good footing. Lay the line down on the snow, sir, and slide as slowly as you can; mind and keep close at its side. I'll stand by to fetch you up."

Gardiner understood all this perfectly, and did as he was desired to do. By keeping near the line he reached the shelf precisely at the spot where Stimson was ready to meet him; the latter arresting his downward movement by throwing the weight of his own body forward to meet his officer. By such a precaution Roswell was stopped in time, else would he have gone over the shelf, and down a declivity that was so nearly perpendicular as to offer no means of arresting the movement.

"And what has become of Captain Daggett?" demanded Gardiner, as soon as on his feet again.

"I fear he has shot off the rock, sir," was the answer. "At the place where I reached this shelf, it was so narrow I could with great difficulty walk—could not, indeed, had not the line been there to steady me; and, judging from the marks in the snow, the poor man has gone down helpless!"

This was appalling intelligence to receive at such a time, and in such a place! But, Roswell was not unmanned by it; on the contrary, he acted coolly and with great judgment. Making a coil of the ratlin−stuff, he threw the line down until certain it reached bottom, at the distance of about six fathoms. Then he caused Stimson to brace himself firmly, holding on to the line, aided by a turn round a rise in the rock, and he boldly lowered himself down the precipice, reaching its base at about the distance he had calculated so to do.

It still snowed violently, the flakes being large, and eddying round the angles of the rocks, in flurries so violent as, at moments, to confound all the senses of the young man. He was resolute, however, and bent on an object of humanity, as well as of good fellowship. Living or dead, Daggett must be somewhere on his present level; and he began to grope his way among the fragments of rock, eager and solicitous. The roaring of the wind almost prevented his hearing other sounds; though once or twice he heard, or fancied that he heard, the shouts of Stimson from above. Suddenly, the wind ceased, the snow lessened in quantity, soon clearing away altogether; and the rays of the sun— and this in the dog−days of that region, be it remembered— fell bright and genial on the glittering scene. At the next instant, the eyes of Roswell fell on the object of his search.

Daggett had been carried over the narrow shelf on which Stimson landed, in consequence of his having no support, or any means of arresting his momentum. He did thrust forward his lance, or leaping−staff; but its point met nothing but air. The fall, however, was by no means perpendicular, several projections of the rocks helping to lessen it; though it is probable that the life of the unfortunate sealer was saved altogether by means of the lance. This was beneath him as he made his final descent, and he slid along it the whole length, canting him into a spot where was the only piece of stinted vegetation that was to be seen for a considerable distance. In consequence of coming down on a tolerably thick bunch of furze, the fall was essentially broken.

When Roswell reached his unfortunate companion, the latter was perfectly sensible, and quite cool.

"God be thanked that you have found me, Gar'ner," he said; "at one time I had given it up."

"Thank God, also, that you are living, my friend," answered the other. "I expected only to find your body; but you do not seem to be much hurt."

"More than appears, Gar'ner; more than appears. My left leg is broken, certainly; and one of my shoulders pains me a good deal, though it is neither out of joint or broken. This is a sad business for a sealing v'y'ge!"

"Give yourself no concern about your craft, Daggett— I will look to her, and to your voyage."

"Will you stand by the schooner, Gar'ner? — Promise me that, and my mind will be at peace."

"I do promise. The two vessels shall stick together, at all events, until we are clear of the ice."

"Ay, but that won't do. *My* Sea Lion must be filled up as well as your own. Promise me *that*."

"It shall be done, God willing. But here comes Stimson; the first thing will be to get you out of this spot."

Daggett was obviously relieved by Roswell's pledges; for, amid the anguish and apprehensions of his unexpected state, his thoughts had most keenly adverted to his vessel and her fortunes. Now that his mind was somewhat relieved on this score, the pains of his body became more sensibly felt. The situation of our party was sufficiently embarrassing. The leg of Daggett was certainly broken, a little distance above his ancle; and various bruises in other places, gave notice of the existence of other injuries. To do anything with the poor man, lying where he was, was out of the question, however; and the first thing was to remove the sufferer to a more eligible position. Fortunately it was no great distance to the foot of the mountain, and a low level piece of rock was accessible by means of care and steady feet. Daggett was raised between Roswell and Stimson in a sitting attitude, and supporting himself by putting an arm around the neck of each. The legs hung down, the broken as well as the sound limb. To this accidental circumstance the sufferer was indebted to a piece of incidental surgery that proved of infinite service to him. While dangling in this manner the bone got into its place, and Daggett instantly became aware of that important fact, which was immediately communicated to Roswell. Of course the future mode of proceeding was regulated by this agreeable piece of information.

Sailors are often required to act as physicians, surgeons and priests. It is not often that they excel in either capacity; but, in consequence of the many things they are called to turn their hands to, it does generally happen that they get to possess a certain amount of address that renders them far more dexterous, in nearly everything they undertake, than the generality of those who are equally strangers to the particular act that is thus to be exercised. Roswell had set one or two limbs already, and had a tolerable notion of the manner of treating the case. Daggett was now seated on a rock at the base of the mountain, with his legs still hanging down, and his back supported by another rock. No sooner was he thus placed, than Stimson was despatched, post−haste, for assistance. His instructions were full, and the honest fellow set off at a rate that promised as early relief as the circumstances would at all allow.

As for our hero, he set about his most important office the instant Stimson left him. Daggett aided with his counsel, and a little by his personal exertions; for a seaman does not lie down passively, when anything can be done, even in his own case.

Baring the limb, Roswell soon satisfied himself that the bone had worked itself into place. Bandages were instantly applied to keep it there while splints were making. It was, perhaps, a little characteristic that Daggett took out his knife, and aided in shaving down these splints to the necessary form and thickness. They were made out of the staff of the broken lance, and were soon completed. Roswell manifested a good deal of dexterity and judgment in applying the splints. The handkerchiefs were used to relieve the pressure in places, and rope−yarns from the ratlinstuff furnished the means of securing everything in its place. In half an hour, Roswell had his job completed, and that before there was much swelling to interfere with him. As soon as the broken limb was thus attended to, it was carefully raised, and laid upon the rock along with its fellow, a horizontal position being deemed better than one that was perpendicular.

Not less than four painful hours now passed, ere the gang of hands from the vessels reached the base of the mountain. It came prepared, however, to transport the sufferer on a hand−barrow that had been used in conveying the skins of seal across the rocks. On this barrow Daggett was now carefully placed, when four men lifted him up, and walked away with him for a few hundred yards. These were then relieved by four more; and, in this manner, was the whole distance to the house passed over. The patient was put in his bunk, and some attention was bestowed on his bruises and other injuries.

Glad enough was the sufferer to find himself beneath a roof, and in a room that had its comforts; or what were deemed comforts on a sealing voyage. As the men were in the dormitory very little of the time except at night, he was enabled to sleep; and Roswell had hopes, as he now told Stimson, that a month or six weeks would set the patient on his feet again.

"He has been a fortunate fellow, Stephen, that it was no worse," added Roswell, on that occasion. "But for the luck which turned the lance−pole beneath him, every bone he has would have been broken."

"What you call *luck*, Captain Gar'ner, I call *Providence* ," was Stephen's answer. "The good book tells us that not a sparrow shall fall without the eye of Divine Providence being on it."

CHAPTER III.

"Now far he sweeps, where scarce a summer smiles,
On Bhering's rocks, or Greenland's naked isles;
Cold on his midnight watch the breezes blow,
From wastes that slumber in eternal snow,
And waft across the waves' tumultuous roar,
The wolf's long howl from Oonalaska's shore."
Campbell.

Roswell Gardiner set about his duties, the succeeding day, with a shade of deep reflection on his brow. A crisis had, indeed, come in his affairs, and it behooved him to look well to his proceedings. Daggett's presence on the island was no longer of any moment to himself or his owner, but there remained the secret of the Key, and of the buried treasure. Should the two schooners keep together, how was he to acquit himself in that part of his duty, without admitting of a partnership, against which he knew that every fibre in the deacon's system, whether physical or moral, would revolt. Still, his word was pledged, and he had no choice but to remain, and help fill up the rival Sea Lion, and trust to his own address in getting rid of her again, as the two vessels proceeded north.

The chief mate of Daggett's craft, though a good sealer, was an impetuous and reckless man, and had more than once found fault with the great precautions used, by the orders of Roswell. Macy, as this officer was called, was for making a regular onslaught upon the animals, slaying as many as they could at once, and then take up the business of curing and trying−out as a regular job. He had seen such things done with success, and he believed it was the most secure mode of getting along. `Some of these fine mornings,' as he expressed it, `Captain Gar'ner would turn out, and find that his herd was off—gone to pasture in some other field.' This was a view of the matter with which Roswell did not at all agree. His forbearing and cautious policy had produced excellent results so far, and he hoped it would continue so to do, until both schooners were full. On the morning when the men next went forth, he as leader of both crews, therefore, our young master renewed his admonitions, pointing out to the new−comers, in particular, the great necessity there was of using forbearance, and not to alarm the seals more than the work indispensably required. The usual number of "Ay, ay's, sir!" were given in reply, and the gangs went along the rocks, seemingly in a good humour to obey these injunctions.

Circumstances, however, were by no means favourable to giving Roswell the same influence over the Vineyard−men as he possessed over his own crew. He was a young commander, and this was his first voyage in that capacity, as all well knew; then, there had been rivalry and competition between the two crafts, which was a feeling not so easily removed; next, Macy felt, and even intimated, that he was the lawful commander of his own schooner, in cases in which Daggett was disabled, and that the latter had no power to transfer him and his people to the authority of any other individual. All these points were discussed that day, with some freedom, particularly among the Vineyard−men, and especially the last.

Wisely has it been said that "the king's name is a tower of strength." They who have the law on their side, carry with them a weight of authority that it is not easy to shake by means of pure reasoning on right or wrong. Men are much inclined to defer to those who are thus armed, legal control being ordinarily quite as effective in achieving a victory, as having one's "quarrel just." In a certain sense, authority indeed becomes justice, and we look to its proper exercise as one of the surest means of asserting what "is right between man and man."

"The *commodore* says that the critturs are to be treated delicately," said Macy, laughing, as he lanced his first seal that morning, a young one of the fur species; "so take up the pet, lads, and lay it in its cradle, while I go look for its mamma."

A shout of merriment succeeded this sally, and the men were only so much the more disposed to be rebellious and turbulent, in consequence of hearing so much freedom of remark in their officer.

"The child's in its cradle, Mr. Macy," returned Jenkins, who was a wag as well as the mate. "In my judgment, the best mode of rocking it to sleep will be by knocking over all these grim chaps that are so plenty in our neighbourhood."

"Let'em have it!" cried Macy, making an onset on an elephant, as he issued the order. In an instant, the rocks at

that point of the island were a scene of excitement and confusion. Hazard, who was near at hand, succeeded in restraining his own people, but it really seemed as if the Vineyard−men were mad. A great many seals were killed, it is true; but twenty were frightened to take refuge in the ocean, where one was slain. All animals have their alarm cries, or, if not absolutely cries, signals that are understood by themselves. Occasionally, one sees a herd, or a flock, take to its heels, or to its wings, without any apparent cause, but in obedience to some warning that is familiar to their instincts. Thus must it have been with the seals; for the rocks were soon deserted, even at the distance of a league from the scene of slaughter, leaving Hazard and his gang literally with nothing to do, unless, indeed, they returned to complete some stowage that remained to be done, on board their own craft.

"I suppose you know, Mr. Macy, all this is contrary to orders," said Hazard, as he was leading his own gang back towards the cove. "You see I am obliged to go in and report."

"Report and welcome!" was the answer. "I have no commander but Captain Daggett;—and, by the way, if you see him, Hazard, just tell him we have made a glorious morning's work of it."

"Ay, ay; you will have your hands full enough to−day, Macy; but how will it be to−morrow?"

"Why, just as it has been to−day. The devils must come up to blow, and we're sartain of 'em, somewhere along the shore. This day's work is worth any two that I've seen, since I came upon the island."

"Very true; but what will to−morrow's work be worth? I will tell Captain Daggett what you wish me to say, however, and we will hear his opinion on the subject. In my judgment, he means to command his craft till she gets back to the Hole, legs or no legs."

Hazard went his way, shaking his head ominously as he proceeded. Nor was he much mistaken in what he expected from Daggett's anger. That experienced sealer sent for his mate, and soon gave him to understand that he was yet his commander. Loose and neighbourly as is usually the discipline of one of these partnership vessels, there is commonly a man on board who is every way competent to assert the authority given him by the laws, as well as by his contract. Macy was sent for, rebuked, and menaced with degradation from his station, should he again presume to violate his orders. As commonly happens in cases of this nature, regrets were expressed by the offender, and future obedience promised.

But the mischief was done. Sealing was no longer the regular, systematic pursuit it had been on that island, but had become precarious and changeful. At times, the men met with good success; then, days would occur in which not a single creature, of any of the different species, would be taken. The Vineyard schooner was not more than half−full, and the season was fast drawing to a close. Roswell was quite ready to sail, and he began to chafe a little under the extra hazards that were thus imposed on himself and his people.

In the mean time, or fully three weeks after the occurrence of the accident to Daggett, the injuries received by the wounded man were fast healing. The bones had knit, and the leg promised, in another month, to become tolerably sound, if not as strong as it had been before the hurt. All the bruises were well, and the captain of the Vineyard craft was just beginning to move about a little on crutches; a prodigious relief to one of his habits, after the confinement to the house. By dint of great care, he could work his way down on the shelf that stretched, like a terrace, for two hundred yards beneath the dwelling. Here he met Roswell, on the morning of the Sabbath, just three weeks after their unfortunate visit to the mountain. Each took his seat on a low point of rock, and they began to converse on their respective prospects, and on the condition of their vessels and crews. Stephen was near his officer, as usual.

"I believe Stimson was right in urging me to give the men their Sabbaths," observed Gardiner, glancing round at the different groups, in which the men were washing, shaving, and otherwise getting rid of the impurities created by another week of toil. "They begin anew, after a little rest, with a better will, and steadier hands."

"Yes, the Sabbath *is* a great privilege, especially to such as are on shore," returned Daggett. "At sea, I make no great account of it: a craft must jog along, high days or holidays."

"Depend on it, the same account is kept of the day, Captain Daggett, in the great log−book above, whether a man is on or off soundings," put in Stephen, who was privileged ever to deliver his sentiments on such subjects. "The Lord is God on the sea, as on the land."

There was a pause; for the solemn manner and undoubted sincerity of the speaker produced an impression on his companions, little given as they were to thinking deeply on things of that nature. Then Roswell renewed the discourse, turning it on a matter that had been seriously uppermost in his mind for several days.

"I wish to converse with you, Captain Daggett, about our prospects and chances," he said. "My schooner is

full, as you know. We could do no more, if we stayed here another season. You are about half−full, with a greatly diminished chance of filling up this summer. Mr. Macy's attack on the seals has put you back a month, at least, and every day we shall find the animals less easy to take. The equinox is not very far off, and then, you know, we shall get less and less sun,—so little, as to be of no great use to us. We want day−light to get through the ice, and we shall have a long hundred leagues of it between us and clear water, even were we to get under way to−morrow. Remember what a serious thing it would be, to get caught up here, in so high a latitude, after the sun has left us!"

"I understand you, Gar'ner," answered the other, quietly, though his manner denoted a sort of compelled resignation, rather than any cordial acquiescence in that which he believed his brother master intended to propose. "You're master of your own vessel; and I dare say Deacon Pratt would be much rejoiced to see you coming in between Shelter Island and Oyster Pond. I'm but a cripple, or I think the Vineyard craft wouldn't be many days' run astarn!"

Roswell was provoked; but his pride was touched also. Biting his lip, he was silent for a moment, when he spoke very much to the point, but generously, and like a man.

"I'll tell you what it is, Daggett," said our hero, "good−fellowship is good−fellowship, and the flag is the flag. It is the duty of all us Yankee seamen to stand by the stripes; and I hope I'm as ready as another to do what I ought to do, in such a matter; but my owner is a close calculator, and I am much inclined to think that he will care less for this sort of feeling than you and I. The deacon was never in blue water."

"So I suppose—He has a charming daughter, I believe, Gar'ner?"

"You mean his niece, I suppose," answered Roswell, colouring. "The deacon never had any child himself, I believe — at least he has none living. Mary Pratt is his niece."

"It's all the same — niece or daughter, she's comely, and will be rich, I hear. *Well*, I am *poor*, and what is more, a *cripple!*"

Roswell could have knocked his companion down, for he perfectly understood the character of the allusion; but he had sufficient self−command to forbear saying anything that might betray how much he felt.

It is always easier to work upon the sensitiveness of a spirited and generous−minded man, than to influence him by force or apprehensions. Roswell had never liked the idea of leaving Daggett behind him, at that season, and in that latitude; and he relished it still less, now that he saw a false reason might be attributed to his conduct.

"You certainly do not dream of wintering here, Captain Daggett?" he said, after a pause.

"Not if I can help it. But the schooner can never go back to the Vineyard without a full hold. The very women would make the island too hot for us in such a case. Do your duty by Deacon Pratt, Gar'ner, and leave me here to get along as well as I can. I shall be able to walk a little in a fortnight; and, in a month, I hope to be well enough to get out among the people, and regulate their sealing a little myself. Mr. Macy will be more moderate with my eye on him."

"A month! He who stays here another month may almost make up his mind to stay eight more of them; if, indeed, he ever get away from the group at all!"

"A late start is better than a half−empty vessel. When you get in to Oyster Pond, Gar'ner, I hope you will send a line across to the Vineyard, and tell 'em all about us."

Another long and brooding pause succeeded, during which Roswell's mind was made up.

"I will do this with you, Daggett," he said, speaking like one who had fully decided on his course. "Twenty days longer will I remain here, and help to make out your cargo; after which I sail, whether you get another skin or a thousand. This will be remaining as long as any prudent man ought to stay in so high a latitude."

"Give me your hand, Gar'ner. I knew you had the clear stuff in you, and that it would make itself seen at the proper moment. I trust that Providence will favour us — it's really a pity to lose as fine a day as this; especially as the crittur's are coming up on the rocks to bask, something like old times!"

"You'll gain no great help from that Providence you just spoke of, Captain Daggett, by forgetting to keep `Holy the Sabbath,' said Stimson, earnestly. "Try forbearance a little, and find the good that will come of it."

"He is right," said Roswell, "as I know from having done as he advises. Well, our bargain is made. For twenty days longer I stay here, helping you to fill up. That will bring us close upon the equinox, when I shall get to the northward as fast as I can. In that time, too, I think you will be able to return to duty."

This, then, was the settled arrangement. Roswell felt that he conceded more than he ought to do; but the feeling

of good−fellowship was active within him, and he was strongly averse to doing anything that might wear the appearance of abandoning a companion in his difficulties. All this time our hero was fully aware that he was befriending a competitor; and he was not without his suspicions that Daggett wished to keep him within his view until the visit had been paid to the Key. Nevertheless, Roswell's mind was made up. He would remain the twenty days, and do all he could in that time to help along the voyage of the Vineyarders.

The sealing was now continued with more order and method than had been observed under Macy's control. The old caution was respected, and the work prospered in proportion. Each night, on his return to the house, Gardiner had a good report to make; and that peculiar snapping of the eye, that denoted Daggett's interest in his calling, was to be again traced in the expression of the Vineyarder's features; a certain proof that he was fast falling into his old train of thought and feeling. Daggett was never happier than when listening to some account of the manner in which an old elephant or lion had been taken, or a number of fur−seals had been made to pay their tribute to the enterprise and address of his people.

As for Roswell, though he complied with his promise, and carried on the duty with industry and success, his eye was constantly turned on those signs that denote the advance of the seasons. Now he scanned the ocean to the northward, and noted the diminished number as well as lessened size of the floating bergs; proofs that the summer and the waves had been at work on their sides. Next, his look was on the sun, which was making his daily course, lower and lower, each time that he appeared, settling rapidly away towards the north, as if in haste to quit a hemisphere that was so little congenial to his character. The nights, always cool in that region, began to menace frost; and the signs of the decline of the year that come so much later in more temperate climates, began to make themselves apparent here. It is true, that of vegetation there was so little, and that little so meagre and of so hardy a nature, that in this respect the progress of the seasons was not to be particularly noted; but in all others, Roswell saw with growing uneasiness that the latest hour of his departure was fast drawing near.

The sealing went on the while, and with reasonable returns, though the golden days of the business had been seriously interrupted by Macy's indiscretion and disobedience. The men worked hard, for they too foresaw the approach of the long night of the antarctic circle, and all the risk of remaining too long. As we have had frequent occasion to use the term `antarctic,' it may be well here to say a few words in explanation. It is not our wish to be understood that these sealers had penetrated literally within that belt of eternal snows and ice, but approximatively. Few navigators, so far as our knowledge extends, have absolutely gone as far south as this. Wilkes did it, it is true; and others among the late explorers have been equally enterprising and successful. The group visited by Gardiner on this occasion was quite near to this imaginary line; but we do not feel at liberty precisely to give its latitude and longitude. To this hour it remains a species of private property; and in this age of anti−rentism and other audacious innovations on long−received and venerable rules of conduct, we do not choose to be parties to any inroads on the rights of individuals when invaded by the cupidity and ruthless power of numbers. Those who wish to imitate Roswell must find the islands by bold adventure as he reached them; for we are tongue−tied on the subject. It is enough, therefore, that we say the group is *near* the antarctic circle; whether a little north or a little south of it, is a matter of no moment. As those seas have a general character, we shall continue to call them the antarctic seas; with the understanding that, included in the term, are the nearest waters without as well as within the circle.

Glad enough was Roswell Gardiner when his twenty days were up. March was now far advanced, and the approach of the long nights was near. The Vineyard craft was not full, nor was Daggett yet able to walk without a crutch; but orders were issued by Gardiner, on the evening of the last day, for his own crew to "knock off sealing," and to prepare to get under way for home.

"Your mind is made up, Gar'ner," said Daggett, in a deprecating sort of way, as if he still had latent hopes of persuading his brother−master to remain a little longer. "Another week would almost fill us up."

"Not another day," was the answer. "I have stayed too long already, and shall be off in the morning. If you will take my advice, Captain Daggett, you will do the same thing. Winter comes in this latitude very much as spring appears in our own; or with a hop, skip, and a jump. I have no fancy to be groping about among the ice, after the nights get to be longer than the days!"

"All true enough, Gar'ner; all quite true — but it has such a look to take a craft home, and she not full!"

"You have a great abundance of provisions; stop and whale awhile on the False Banks, as you go north. I would much rather stick by you there a whole month, than remain here another day."

"You make me narvous, talking of the group in this way! I'm sartain that this bay must remain clear of ice several weeks longer."

"Perhaps it may; it is more likely to be so than to freeze up. But this will not lengthen the days and carry us safe through the fields and bergs that we know are drifting about out here to the northward. There's a hundred leagues of ocean thereaway, Daggett, that I care for more just now, than for all the seal that are left on these islands. But, talking is useless; I go to−morrow; if you are wise, you will sail in company."

This settled the matter. Daggett well knew it would be useless to remain without the aid of Roswell's counsel, and that of his crew's hands; for Macy was not to be trusted any more as the leader of a gang of sealers. The man had got to be provoked and reckless, and had called down upon himself latterly more than one rebuke. It was necessary, therefore, that one of the Sea Lions should accompany the other. The necessary orders were issued accordingly, and "hey for home!" were the words that now cheerfully passed from mouth to mouth. That pleasant idea of "home," in which is concentrated all that is blessed in this life, the pale of the Christian duties and charities excepted, brings to each mind its particular forms of happiness and good. The weather−beaten seaman, the foot−worn soldier, the weary traveller, the adventurer in whatever lands interest or pleasure may lead, equally feels a throb at his heart as he hears the welcome sounds of "hey for home." Never were craft prepared for sea with greater rapidity than was the case now with our two Sea Lions. It is true that the Oyster−Ponders were nearly ready, and had been quite so, for a fortnight; but a good deal remained to be done among the Vineyarders. The last set themselves to their task with a hearty good−will, however, and with corresponding results.

"We will leave the house standing for them that come after us," said Roswell, when the last article belonging to his schooner was taken out of it. "The deacon has crammed us so full of wood that I shall be tempted to throw half of it overboard, now we have so much cargo. Let all stand, Hazard, bunks, planks and all; for really we have no room for the materials. Even this wood," pointing to a pile of several cords that had been landed already to make room for skins and casks that had been brought out in shocks, "must go to the next comer. Perhaps it may be one of ourselves; for we sailors never know what port will next fetch us up."

"I hope it will be old Sag, sir," answered Hazard, cheerfully; "for, though no great matter of a seaport, it is near every man's home, and may be called a sort of door−way to go in and out of the country through."

"A side−door, at the best," answered Roswell. "With you, I trust it will be the next haven that we enter; though I shall take the schooner at once in behind Shelter Island, and tie her up to the deacon's wharf."

What images of the past and future did these few jocular words awaken in the mind of our young sealer! He fancied that he saw Mary standing in the porch of her uncle's habitation, a witness of the approach of the schooner, looking wistfully at the still indistinct images of those who were to be seen on her decks. Mary had often done this in her dreams; again and again had she beheld the white sails of the Sea Lion driving across Gardiner's Bay, and entering Peconic; and often had she thus gazed in the weatherworn countenance of him who occupied so much of her thoughts—so many of her prayers—picturing through the mysterious images of sleep the object she so well loved when waking.

And where was Mary Pratt at that day and hour when Roswell was thus issuing his last orders at Sealer's Land; and what was her occupation, and what her thoughts? The difference in longitude between the group and Montauk was so trifling that the hour might be almost called identical. Literally so, it was not; but mainly so, it was. There were not the five degrees in difference that make the twenty minutes in time. More than this we are not permitted to say on this subject; and this is quite enough to give the navigator a pretty near notion of the position of the group. As a degree of longitude measures less than twenty−eight statute miles at the polar circles, this is coming within a day's run of the spot, so far as longitude is concerned; and nearer than that we do not intend to carry the over−anxious reader, let his curiosity be as lively as it may.

And where, then, was Mary Pratt? Safe, well, and reasonably happy, in the house of her uncle, where she had passed most of her time since infancy. The female friends of mariners have always fruitful sources of uneasiness in the pursuit itself; but Mary had no other cause for concern of this nature than what was inseparable from so long a voyage, and the sea into which Roswell had gone. She well knew that the time was arrived when he was expected to be on his way home; and as hope is an active and beguiling feeling, she already fancied him to be much advanced on his return. But a dialogue which took place that very day—nay, that very hour — between her and the deacon, will best explain her views and opinions, and expectations.

"It's very extr'or'nary, Mary," commenced the uncle, "that Gar'ner doesn't write! If he only know'd how a man

feels when his property is ten thousand miles off, I'm sartain he would write, and not leave me with so many misgivings in the matter."

"By whom is he to write, uncle?" answered the more considerate and reasonable niece. "There are no post−offices in the antarctic seas, nor any travellers to bring letters by private hands."

"But he *did* write once; and plaguy good news was it that he sent us in that letter!"

"He did write from Rio, for there he had the means. By my calculations, Roswell has left his sealing ground some three or four weeks, and must now be as many thousand miles on his way home."

"D'ye think so, gal?—d'ye think so?" exclaimed the deacon, his eyes fairly twinkling with pleasure. "That would be good news; and if he doesn't stop too long by the way, we might look for him home in less than ninety days from this moment!"

Mary smiled pensively, and a richer colour stole into her cheeks, slowly but distinctly.

"I do not think, uncle, that Roswell Gardiner will be very likely to stop on his way to us here, on Oyster Pond," was the answer she made.

"I should be sorry to think that. The best part of his v'y'ge may be made in the West Ingees, and I hope he is not a man to overlook his instructions."

"Will Roswell be obliged to stop in the West Indies, uncle?"

"Sartain—if he obeys his orders; and I think the young man will do *that*. But the business there will not detain him long,"—Mary's countenance brightened again, at this remark,—"and, should you be right, we may still look for him in the next ninety days."

Mary remained silent for a short time, but her charming face was illuminated by an expression of heartfelt happiness, which, however, the next remark of her uncle's had an obvious tendency to disturb.

"Should Gar'ner come home successful, Mary," inquired the deacon, "successful in all things—successful in sealing, and successful in that other matter—the West Ingee business, I mean—but successful in all, as I daily pray he may be,—I want to know if you would then have him; always supposing that he got back himself unchanged?"

"Unchanged, I shall never be his wife," answered Mary, tremulously, but firmly.

The deacon looked at her in surprise; for he had never comprehended but one reason why the orphan and penniless Mary should refuse so pertinaciously to become the wife of Roswell Gardiner; and that was his own want of means. Now the deacon loved Mary more than he was aware of himself, but he had never actually made up his mind to leave her the heiress of his estate. The idea of parting with property at all, was too painful for him to think of making a will; and without such an instrument, there were others who would have come in for a part of the assets, "share and share alike," as the legal men express it. Of all this was the deacon fully aware, and it occasionally troubled him: more of late than formerly, since he felt in his system the unerring signs of decay. Once had he got so far as to write on a page of foolscape, "In the name of God, Amen;" but the effort proved too great for him, and he abandoned the undertaking. Still Deacon Pratt loved his niece, and was well inclined to see her become the wife of "young Gar'ner," more especially should the last return successful.

"Unchanged!" repeated the uncle, slowly; "you sartainly would not wish to marry him, Mary, if he was *changed!*"

"I do not mean changed, in the sense you are thinking of, uncle. But we will not talk of this now. Why should Roswell stop in the West Indies at all? It is not usual for our vessels to stop there."

"No, it is not. If Gar'ner stop at all, it will be on a very *unusual* business, and one that may make all our fortunes— your'n, as well as his'n and mine, Mary."

"I hope that sealers never meddle with the transportation of slaves, uncle!" the girl exclaimed, with a face filled with apprehension. "I would rather live and die poor, than have anything to do with them!"

"I see no such great harm in the trade, gal; but such is not Roswell's ar'nd in the West Ingees. It's a great secret, the reason of his call there; and I will venture to foretell that, should he make it, and should it turn out successful, you will marry him, gal."

Mary made no reply. Well was she assured that Roswell had an advocate in her own heart, that was pleading for him, night and day; but firm was her determination not to unite herself with one, however dear to her, who set up his own feeble understanding of the nature of the mediation between God and man, in opposition to the plainest language of revelation, as well as to the prevalent belief of the church, since the ages that immediately

succeeded the Christian era.

CHAPTER IV.

"Poor child of danger, nursling of the storm,
Sad are the woes that wreck thy manly form!
Rocks, waves, and winds the shatter'd bark delay;
Thy heart is sad, thy home is far away."
Campbell.

It was about midday, when the two Sea Lions opened their canvass, at the same moment, and prepared to quit Sealer's Land. All hands were on board, every article was shipped for which there was room, and nothing remained that denoted the former presence of man on that dreary island, but the deserted house, aud three or four piles of cord−wood, that had grown on Shelter Island and Martha's Vineyard, and which was now abandoned on the rocks of the antarctic circle. As the topsails were sheeted home, and the heavy fore−and−aft mainsails were hoisted, the songs of the men sounded cheerful and animating. `Home' was in every tone, each movement, all the orders. Daggett was on deck, in full command, though still careful of his limb, while Roswell appeared to be everywhere. Mary Pratt was before his mind's eye all that morning; nor did he even once think how pleasant it would be to meet her uncle, with a "There, deacon, is your schooner, with a good cargo of elephant−oil, well chucked off with fur−seal skins."

The Oyster Pond craft was the first clear of the ground. The breeze was little felt in that cove, where usually it did not seem to blow at all, but there was wind enough to serve to cast the schooner, and she went slowly out of the rocky basin, under her mainsail, foretopsail, and jib. The wind was at south−west,—the nor−wester of that hemisphere,— and it was fresh and howling enough, on the other side of the island. After Roswell had made a stretch out into the bay of about a mile, he laid his foretopsail flat aback, hauled over his jib−sheet, and put his helm hard down, in waiting for the other schooner to come out and join him. In a quarter of an hour, Daggett got within hail.

"Well," called out the last, "you see I was right, Gar'ner; wind enough out here, and more, still further from the land. We have only to push in among them bergs while it is light, pick out a clear spot, and heave−to during the night. It will hardly do for us to travel among so much ice in the dark."

"I wish we had got out earlier, that we might have made a run of it by day−light," answered Roswell. "Ten hours of such a wind, in my judgment, would carry us well towards clear water."

"The delay could not be helped. I had so many traps ashore, it took time to gather them together. Come, fill away, and let us be moving. Now we are under way, I'm in as great haste as you are yourself."

Roswell complied, and away the two schooners went, keeping quite near to each other, having smooth water, and still something of a moderated gale, in consequence of the proximity and weatherly position of the island. The course was towards a spot to leeward, where the largest opening appeared in the ice, and where it was hoped a passage to the northward would be found. The further the two vessels got from the land, the more they felt the power of the wind, and the greater was their rate of running. Daggett soon found that he could spare his consort a good deal of canvass, a consequence of his not being full, and he took in his topsail, though, running nearly before the wind, his spar would have stood even a more severe strain.

As the oldest mariner, it had been agreed between the two masters that Daggett should lead the way. This he did for an hour, when both vessels were fairly out of the great bay, clear of the group altogether, and running off north−easterly, at a rate of−nearly ten knots in the hour. The sea got up as they receded from the land, and everything indicated a gale, though one of no great violence. Night was approaching, and an Alpine−like range of icebergs was glowing, to the northward, under the oblique rays of the setting sun. For a considerable space around the vessels, the water was clear, not even a cake of any sort being to be seen; and the question arose in Daggett's mind, whether he ought to stand on, or to heave−to and pass the night well to windward of the bergs. Time was precious, the wind was fair, the heavens clear, and the moon would make its appearance about nine, and might be expected to remain above the horizon until the return of day. This was one side of the picture. The other presented less agreeable points. The climate was so fickle, that the clearness of the skies was not to be depended on, especially with a strong south−west wind—a little gale, in fact; and a change in this particular might be produced

at any moment. Then it was certain that floes, and fragments of bergs, would be found near, if not absolutely among the sublime mountain−like piles that were floating about, in a species of grand fleet, some twenty miles to leeward. Both of our masters, indeed all on board of each schooner, very well understood that the magnificent array of icy islands which lay before them was owing to the currents, for which it is not always easy to account. The clear space was to be attributed to the same cause, though there was little doubt that the wind, which had now been to the southward fully eight−and−forty hours, had contributed to drive the icy fleet to the northward. As a consequence of these facts, the field−ice must be in the vicinity of the bergs, and the embarrassment from that source was known always to be very great.

It required a good deal of nerve for a mariner to run in among dangers of the character just described, as the sun was setting. Nevertheless, Daggett did it; and Roswell Gardiner followed the movement, at the distance of about a cable's length. To prevent separation, each schooner showed a light at the lower yard−arm, just as the day was giving out its last glimmerings. As yet, however, no difficulty was encountered; the alpine−looking range being yet quite two hours' run still to leeward. Those two hours must be passed in darkness; and Daggett shortened sail in order not to reach the ice before the moon rose. He had endeavoured to profit by the light as long as it remained, to find a place at which he might venture to enter among the bergs, but had met with no great success. The opening first seen now appeared to be closed, either by means of the drift or by means of the change in the position of the vessels; and he no longer thought of *that*. Fortune must be trusted to, in some measure; and on he went, Roswell always closely following.

The early hours of that eventful night were intensely dark. Nevertheless, Daggett stood down towards the icy range, using no other precautions than shortening sail and keeping a sharp look−out. Every five minutes the call from the quarter−deck of each schooner to "keep a bright look−out" was heard, unless, indeed, Daggett or Roswell was on his own forecastle, thus occupied in person. No one on board of either vessel thought of sleep. The watch had been called, as is usual at sea, and one half of the crew was at liverty to go below and turn in. What was more, those small fore−and−aft rigged craft were readily enough handled by a single watch; and this so much the more easily, now that their top−sails were in. Still, not a man left the deck. Anxiety was too prevalent for this, the least experienced hand in either crew being well aware that the next four−and−twenty hours would, in all human probability, be decisive of the fate of the voyage.

Both Daggett and Gardiner grew more and more uneasy as the time for the moon to rise drew near, without the orb of night making its appearance. A few clouds were driving athwart the heavens, though the stars twinkled as usual, in their diminutive but sublime splendour. It was not so dark that objects could not be seen at a considerable distance; and the people of the schooners had no difficulty in very distinctly tracing, and that not very far ahead, the broken outlines of the chain of floating mountains. No alpine pile, in very fact, could present a more regular or better defined range, and in some respects more fantastic outlines. When the bergs first break away from their native moorings, their forms are ordinarily somewhat regular; the summits commonly resembling table−land. This regularity of shape, however, is soon lost under the rays of the summer sun, the wash of the ocean, and most of all by the wear of the torrents that gush out of their own frozen bosoms. A distinguished navigator of our own time has compared the appearance of these bergs, after their regularity of shape is lost, and they begin to assume the fantastic outlines that uniformly succeed, to that of a deserted town, built of the purest alabaster, with its edifices crumbling under the seasons, and its countless unpeopled streets, avenues and alleys. All who have seen the sight unite in describing it as one of the most remarkable that comes from the lavish hand of nature.

About nine o'clock on the memorable night in question, there was a good deal of fog driving over the ocean to increase the obscurity. This rendered Daggett doubly cautious, and he actually hauled up close to the wind, heading off well to the westward, in order to avoid running in among the bergs, in greater uncertainty than the circumstances would seem to require. Of course Roswell followed the movement; and when the moon first diffused its mild rays on the extraordinary scene, the two schooners were pitching into a heavy sea, within less than a mile of the weather−line of the range of bergs. It was soon apparent that floes or field ice accompanied the floating mountains, and extended so far to the southward of them as to be already within an inconvenient if not hazardous proximity to the two vessels. These floes, however, unlike those previously encountered, were much broken by the undulations of the waves, and seldom exceeded a quarter of a mile in diameter; while thousands of them were no larger than the ordinary drift ice of our own principal rivers in the time of a freshet. Their vicinity to

the track of the schooners, indeed, was first ascertained by the noise they produced in grinding against each other, which soon made itself audible even above the roaring of the gale.

Both of our masters now began to be exceedingly uncomfortable. It was soon quite apparent that Daggett had been too bold, and had led down towards the ice without sufficient caution and foresight. As the moon rose, higher and higher, the difficulties and dangers to leeward became at each minute more and more apparent. Nothing could have been more magnificent than the scene which lay before the eyes of the mariners, or would have produced a deeper feeling of delight, had it not been for the lively consciousness of the risk the two schooners and all who were in them unavoidably ran, by being so near and to windward of such an icy coast, if one may use the expression as relates to floating bodies. By that light it was very easy to imagine Wilkes' picture of a ruined town of alabaster. There were arches of all sizes and orders; pinnacles without number; towers, and even statues and columns. To these were to be added long lines of perpendicular walls, that it was easy enough to liken to fortresses, dungeons and temples. In a word, even the Alps, with all their peculiar grandeur, and certainly on a scale so vastly more enlarged, possess no one aspect that is so remarkable for its resemblance to the labours of man, composed of a material of the most beautiful transparency, and considered as the results of human ingenuity, on a scale so gigantic. The glaciers have often been likened, and not unjustly, to a frozen sea; but here were congealed mountains seemingly hewed into all the forms of art, not by the chisel it is true, but by the action of the unerring laws which produced them.

Perhaps Roswell Gardiner was the only individual in those two vessels that night who was fully alive to all the extraordinary magnificence of its unusual pictures. Stephen may, in some degree, have been an exception to the rule; though he saw the hand of God in nearly all things, "It's wonderful to look at, Captain Gar'ner, isn't it?" said this worthy seaman, about the time the light of the moon began to tell on the view; "wonderful, truly, did we not know who made it all!" These few and simple words had a cheering influence on Roswell, and served to increase his confidence in eventual success. God did produce all things, either directly or indirectly; this even his sceptical notions could allow; and that which came from divine wisdom must be intended for good. He would take courage, and for once in his life trust to Providence. The most resolute man by nature feels his courage augmented by such a resolution.

The gales of the antarctic sea are said to be short, though violent. They seldom last six−and−thirty hours, and for about a third of that time they blow with their greatest violence. As a matter of course, the danger amid the ice is much increased by a tempest; though a good working breeze, or small gale of wind, perhaps, adds to a vessel's security, by rendering it easier to handle her, and to avoid floes and bergs. If the ice is sufficient to make a lee, smooth water is sometimes a consequence; though it oftener happens that the turbulence produced in clear water is partially communicated over a vast surface, causing the fields and mountains to grind against each other under the resistless power of the waves. On the present occasion, however, the schooners were still in open water, where the wind had a long and unobstructed rake, and a sea had got up that caused both of the little craft to bury nearly to their gunwales. What rendered their situation still more unpleasant was the fact that all the water which came aboard of them now soon froze. To this, however, the men were accustomed, it frequently happening that the moisture deposited on their rigging and spars by the fogs froze during the nights of the autumn. Indeed, it has been thought by some speculators on the subject, that the bergs themselves are formed in part by a similar process, though snows undoubtedly are the principal element in their composition. This it is which gives the berg its stratified appearance, no geological formation being more apparent or regular in this particular than most of these floating mountains.

About ten, the moon was well above the horizon; the fog had been precipitated in dew upon the ice, where it congealed, and helped to arrest the progress of dissolution; while the ocean became luminous for the hour, and objects comparatively distinct. Then it was that the seamen first got a clear insight into the awkwardness of their situation. The bold are apt to be reckless in the dark; but when danger is visible, their movements become more wary and better calculated than those of the timid. When Daggett got this first good look at the enormous masses of the field−ice, that, stirred by the unquiet ocean, were grinding each other, and raising an unceasing rushing sound like that the surf produces on a beach, though far louder, and with a harshness in it that denoted the collision of substances harder than water, he almost instinctively ordered every sheet to be flattened down, and the schooner's head brought as near the wind as her construction permitted. Roswell observed the change in his consort's line of sailing, slight as it was, and imitated the manoeuvre. The sea was too heavy to dream of tacking,

and there was not room to ware. So close, indeed, were some of the cakes, those that might be called the stragglers of the grand array, that repeatedly each vessel brushed along so near them as actually to receive slight shocks from collisions with projecting portions. It was obvious that the vessels were setting down upon the ice, and that Daggett did not haul his wind a moment too soon.

The half−hour that succeeded was one of engrossing interest. It settled the point whether the schooners could or could not eat their way into the wind sufficiently to weather the danger. Fragment after fragment was passed; blow after blow was received; until suddenly the field−ice appeared directly in front. It was in vast quantities, extending to the southward far as the eye could reach. There remained no alternative but to attempt to ware. Without waiting longer than to assure himself of the facts, Daggett ordered his helm put up and the main gaff lowered. At that moment both the schooners were under their jibs and foresails, each without its bonnet, and double−reefed mainsails. This was not canvass very favourable for waring, there being too much after−sail; but the sheets were attended to, and both vessels were soon driving dead to leeward, amid the foam of a large wave; the next instant, ice was heard grinding along their sides.

It was not possible to haul up on the other tack ere the schooners would be surrounded by the floes; and seeing a comparatively open passage a short distance ahead, Daggett stood in boldly, followed closely by Roswell. In ten minutes they were fully a mile within the field, rendering all attempts to get out of it to windward so hopeless as to be almost desperate. The manoe\uvre of Daggett was begun under circumstances that scarcely admitted of any alternative, though it might be questioned if it were not the best expedient that offered. Now that the schooners were so far within the field−ice, the water was much less broken, though the undulations of the restless ocean were still considerable, and the grinding of ice occasioned by them was really terrific. So loud was the noise produced by these constant and violent collisions, indeed, that the roaring of the wind was barely audible, and that only at intervals. The sound was rushing, like that of an incessant avalanche, attended by cracking noises that resembled the rending of a glacier.

The schooners now took in their foresails, for the double purpose of diminishing their velocity and of being in a better condition to change their course, in order to avoid dangers ahead. These changes of course were necessarily frequent; but, by dint of boldness, perseverance and skill, Daggett worked his way into the comparatively open passage already mentioned. It was a sort of river amid the floes, caused doubtless by some of the inexplicable currents, and was fully a quarter of a mile in width, straight as an air−line, and of considerable length; though how long could not be seen by moonlight. It led, moreover, directly down towards the bergs, then distant less than a mile. Without stopping to ascertain more, Daggett stood on, Roswell keeping close on his quarter. In ten minutes they drew quite near to that wild and magnificent ruined city of alabaster that was floating about in the antarctic sea!

Notwithstanding the imminent peril that now most seriously menaced the two schooners, it was not possible to approach that scene of natural grandeur without feelings of awe, that were allied quite as much to admiration as to dread. Apprehension certainly weighed on every heart; but curiosity, wonder, even delight, were all mingled in the breasts of the crews. As the vessels came driving down into the midst of the bergs, everything contributed to render the movements imposing in all senses, appalling in one. There lay the vast maze of floating mountains, generally of a spectral white at that hour, though many of the masses emitted hues more pleasing, while some were black as night. The passages between the bergs, or what might be termed the streets and lanes of this mysterious−looking, fantastical, yet sublime city of the ocean, were numerous, and of every variety. Some were broad, straight avenues, a league in length; others winding and narrow; while a good many were little more than fissures, that might be fancied lanes.

The schooners had not run a league within the bergs before they felt much less of the power of the gale, and the heaving and setting of the seas were sensibly diminished. What was, perhaps, not to be expected, the field−ice had disappeared entirely within the passages of the bergs, and the only difficulty in navigating was to keep in such channels as had outlets, and which did not appear to be closing. The rate of sailing of the two schooners was now greatly lessened, the mountains usually intercepting the wind, though it was occasionally heard howling and scuffling in the ravines, as if in a hurry to escape, and pass on to the more open seas. The grinding of the ice, too, came down in the currents of air, furnishing fearful evidence of dangers that were not yet distant. As the water was now sufficiently smooth, and the wind, except at the mouths of particular ravines, was light, there was nothing to prevent the schooners from approaching each other. This was done, and the two masters held a

discourse together on the subject of their present situation.

"You're a bold fellow, Daggett, and one I should not like to follow in a voyage round the world," commenced Roswell. "Here we are, in the midst of some hundreds of ice−bergs; a glorious sight to behold, I must confess—but are we ever to get out again?"

"It is much better to be here, Gar'ner," returned the other, "than to be among the floes. I'm always afraid of my starn and my rudder when among the field−ice; whereas there is no danger hereabouts that cannot be seen before a vessel is on it. Give me my eyes, and I feel that I have a chance."

"There is some truth in that; but I wish these channels were a good deal wider than they are. A man may *feel* a berg as well as see it. Were two of these fellows to take it into their heads to close upon us, our little craft would be crushed like nuts in the crackers!"

"We must keep a good look−out for that. Here seems to be a long bit of open passage ahead of us, and it leads as near north as we can wish to run. If we can only get to the other end of it, I shall feel as if half our passage back to Ameriky was made."

The citizen of the United States calls his country "America" *par excellence*, never using the addition of `North,' as is practised by most European people. Daggett meant `home,' therefore, by his `Ameriky,' in which he saw no other than the east end of Long Island, Gardiner's Island, and Martha's Vineyard. Roswell understood him, of course; so no breath was lost.

"In my judgment," returned Gardiner, "we shall not get clear of this ice for a thousand miles. Not that I expect to be in a wilderness of it, as we are to−night; but after such a summer, you may rely on it, Daggett, that the ice will get as far north as 45°, if not a few degrees further."

"It is possible: I have seen it in 42° myself; and in 40° to the nor'ard of the equator. If it get as far as 50°, however, in this part of the world, it will do pretty well. That will be play to what we have just here—In the name of Divine Providence, what is that, Gar'ner!"

Not a voice was heard in either vessel; scarcely a breath was drawn! A heavy, groaning sound had been instantly succeeded by such a plunge into the water, as might be imagined to succeed the fall of a fragment from another planet. Then all the bergs near by began to rock as if agitated by an earthquake. This part of the picture was both grand and frightful. Many of those masses rose above the sea more than two hundred feet perpendicularly, and showed wall−like surfaces of half a league in length. At the point where the schooners happened to be just at that moment, the ice−islands were not so large, but quite as high, and consequently were more easily agitated. While the whole panorama was bowing and rocking, pinnacles, arches, walls and all, seeming about to totter from their bases, there came a wave sweeping down the passage that lifted them high in the air, some fifty feet at least, and bore them along like pieces of cork, fully a hundred yards. Other waves succeeded, though of less height and force; when, gradually, the water regained its former and more natural movement, and subsided.

"This has been an earthquake!" exclaimed Daggett. "That volcano has been pent up, and the gas is stirring up the rocks beneath the sea."

"No, sir," answered Stimson, from the forecastle of his own schooner, "it's not that, Captain Daggett. One of them bergs has turned over, like a whale wallowing, and it has set−all the others a−rocking."

This was the true explanation; one that did not occur to the less experienced sealers. It is a danger, however, of no rare occurrence in the ice, and one that ever needs to be looked to. The bergs, when they first break loose from their native moorings, which is done by the agency of frosts, as well as by the action of the seasons in the warm months, are usually tabular, and of regular outlines; but this shape is soon lost by the action of the waves on ice of very different degrees of consistency; some being composed of frozen snow; some of the moisture precipitated from the atmosphere in the shape of fogs; and some of pure frozen water. The first melts soonest; and a berg that drifts for any length of time with one particular face exposed to the sun's rays, soon loses its equilibrium, and is canted with an inclination to the horizon. Finally, the centre of gravity gets outside of the base, when the still monstrous mass rolls over in the ocean, coming literally bottom upwards. There are all degrees and varieties of these ice−slips, if one may so term them, and they bring in their train the many different commotions that such accidents would naturally produce. That which had just alarmed and astonished our navigators was of the following character. A mass of ice that was about a quarter of a mile in length, and of fully half that breadth, which floated quite two hundred feet above the surface of the water, and twice that thickness beneath it, was the

cause of the disturbance. It had preserved its outlines unusually well, and stood upright to the last moment; though, owing to numerous strata of snow−ice, its base had melted much more on one of its sides than on the other. When the precise moment arrived that would have carried a perpendicular line from the centre of gravity without this base, the monster turned leisurely in its lair, producing some such effect as would have been wrought by the falling of a portion of a Swiss mountain into a lake; a sort of accident of which there have been many and remarkable instances.

Stimson's explanation, while it raised the curtain from all that was mysterious, did not serve very much to quiet apprehensions. If one berg had performed such an evolution, it was reasonable to suppose that others might do the same thing; and the commotion made by this, which was at a distance, gave some insight into what might be expected from a similar change in another nearer by. Both Daggett and Gardiner were of opinion that the fall of a berg of equal size within a cable's length of the schooners might seriously endanger the vessels by dashing them against some wall of ice, if in no other manner. It was too late, however, to retreat, and the vessels stood on gallantly.

The passage between the bergs now became quite straight, reasonably broad, and was so situated as regarded the gale, as to receive a full current of its force. It was computed that the schooners ran quite three marine leagues in the hour that succeeded the overturning of the berg. There were moments when the wind blew furiously; and, taking all the accessories of that remarkable view into the account, the scene resembled one that the imagination might present to the mind in its highest flights, but which few could ever hope to see with their proper eyes. The moon−light, the crowd of ice−bergs of all shapes and dimensions, seeming to flit past by the rapid movements of the vessels; the variety of hues, from spectral white to tints of orange and emerald, pale at that hour yet distinct; streets and lanes that were scarce opened ere they were passed; together with all the fantastic images that such objects conjured to the thoughts; contributed to make that hour much the most wonderful that Roswell Gardiner had ever passed. To add to the excitement, a couple of whales came blowing up the passage, coming within a hundred yards of the schooners. They were fin−backs, which are rarely if ever taken, and were suffered to pass unharmed. To capture a whale, however, amid so many bergs, would be next to impossible, unless the animal were killed by the blow of the harpoon, without requiring the keener thrust of the lance.

At the end of the hour mentioned, the Sea Lion of the Vineyard rapidly changed her course, hauling up by a sudden movement to the westward. The passage before her was closed, and there remained but one visible outlet, towards which the schooner slowly made her way, having got rather too much to leeward of it, in consequence of not earlier seeing the necessity for the change of course in that dim and deceptive light. Roswell, being to windward, had less difficulty, but, notwithstanding, he kept his station on his consort's quarter, declining to lead. The passage into which Daggett barely succeeded in carrying his schooner was fearfully narrow, and appeared to be fast closing; though it was much wider further ahead, could the schooners but get through the first dangerous strait. Roswell remonstrated ere the leading vessel entered, and pointed out to Daggett the fact that the bergs were evidently closing, each instant increasing their movement, most probably through the force of attraction. It is known that ships are thus brought in contact in calms, and it is thought a similar influence is exercised on the ice−bergs. At all events, the wind, the current, or attraction, was fast closing the passage through which the schooners had now to go.

Scarcely was Daggett within the channel, when an enormous mass fell from the summit of one of the bergs, literally closing the passage in his wake, while it compelled Gardiner to put his helm down, and to tack ship, standing off from the tottering berg. The scene that followed was frightful! The cries on board the leading craft denoted her peril, but it was not possible for Roswell to penetrate to her with his vessel. All he could do was to heave−to his own schooner, lower a boat, and pull back towards the point of danger. This he did at once, manfully, but with an anxious mind and throbbing heart. He actually urged his boat into the chasm beneath an arch in the fallen fragment, and made his way to the very side of Daggett's vessel. The last was nipped again, and that badly, but was not absolutely lost. The falling fragment from the berg alone prevented her and all in her from being ground into powder. This block, of enormous size, kept the two bergs asunder; and now that they could not absolutely come together, they began slowly to turn in the current, gradually opening and separating, at the very point where they had so lately seemed attracted to a closer union. In an hour the way was clear, and the boats towed the schooner stern foremost into the broader passage.

CHAPTER V.

"A voice upon the prairies,
A cry of woman's woe,
That mingleth with the autumn blast
All fitfully and low."
Mrs. Sigourney.

The accident to the Sea Lion of the Vineyard occurred very near the close of the month of March, which, in the southern hemisphere, corresponds to our month of September. This was somewhat late for a vessel to remain in so high a latitude, though it was not absolutely dangerous to be found there several weeks longer. We have given a glance at Mary Pratt and her uncle, about this time; but it has now become expedient to carry the reader forward for a considerable period, and take another look at our heroine and her miserly uncle, some seven months later. In that interval a great change had come over the deacon and his niece; and hope had nearly deserted all those who had friends on board the Sea Lion of Oyster Pond, as the following explanation will show was reasonable, and to be expected.

When Captain Gardiner sailed, it was understood that his absence would not extend beyond a single season. All who had friends and connections on board his schooner, had been assured of this; and great was the anxiety, and deep the disappointment, when the first of our own summer months failed to bring back the adventurers. As week succeeded week, and the vessel did not return, the concern increased, until hope began to be lost in apprehension. Deacon Pratt groaned in spirit over his loss, finding little consolation in the gains secured by means of the oil sent home, as is apt to be the case with the avaricious, when their hearts are once set on gain. As for Mary, the load on *her* heart increased in weight, as it might be, day by day, until those smiles, which had caused her sweet countenance to be radiant with innocent joy, entirely disappeared, and she was seen to smile no more. Still, complaints never passed her lips. She prayed much, and found all her relief in such pursuits as comported with her feelings, but she seldom spoke of her grief; never, except at weak moments, when her querulous kinsman introduced the subject, in his frequent lamentations over his losses.

The month of November is apt to be stormy on the Atlantic coasts of the republic. It is true that the heaviest gales do not then occur, but the weather is generally stern and wintry, and the winds are apt to be high and boisterous. At a place like Oyster Pond, the gales from the ocean are felt with almost as much power as on board a vessel at sea; and Mary became keenly sensible of the change from the bland breezes of summer to the sterner blasts of autumn. As for the deacon, his health was actually giving way before anxiety, until the result was getting to be a matter of doubt. Premature old age appeared to have settled on him, and his niece had privately consulted Dr. Sage on his case. The excellent girl was grieved to find that the mind of her uncle grew more worldly, his desires for wealth more grasping, as he was losing his hold on life, and was approaching nearer to that hour when time is succeeded by eternity. All this while, however, Deacon Pratt "kept about," as he expressed it himself, and struggled to look after his interests, as had been his practice through life. He collected his debts, foreclosed his mortgages when necessary, drove tight bargains for his wood and other saleable articles, and neglected nothing that he thought would tend to increase his gains. Still, his heart was with his schooner; for he had expected much from that adventure, and the disappointment was in proportion to the former hopes.

One day, near the close of November, the deacon and his niece were alone together in the "keeping−room,"—as it was, if it be not still, the custom among persons of New England origin to call the ordinary sitting−apartment,—he bolstered up in an easy−chair, on account of increasing infirmities, and she plying the needle in her customary way. The chairs of both were so placed that it was easy for either to look out upon that bay, now of a wintry aspect, where Roswell had last anchored, previously to sailing.

"What a pleasant sight it would be, uncle," Mary, almost unconsciously to herself, remarked, as, with tearful eyes, she sat gazing intently on the water, "could we only awake and find the Sea Lion at anchor, under the point of Gardiner's Island! I often fancy that such *may* be—nay, *must* be the case yet; but it never comes to pass! I would not tell you yesterday, for you did not seem to be as well as common, but I have got an answer, by Baiting Joe, to my letter sent across to the Vineyard."

The deacon started, and half−turned his body towards his niece, on whose face his own sunken eyes were now fastened with almost ferocious interest. It was the love of Mammon, stirring within him the lingering remains of covetousness. He thought of his property, while Mary thought of those whose lives had been endangered, if not lost, by the unhappy adventure. The latter understood the look, however, so far as to answer its inquiry, in her usual gentle, feminine voice.

"I am sorry to say, sir, that no news has been heard from Captain Daggett, or any of his people," was the sad reply to this silent interrogatory. "No one on the island has heard a word from the Vineyard vessel since the day before she sailed from Rio. There is the same uneasiness felt among Captain Daggett's friends, as we feel for poor Roswell. They think, however, that the two vessels have kept together, and believe that the same fate has befallen both."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed the deacon, as sharply as wasting lungs would allow—"Heaven forbid! If Gar'ner has let that Daggett keep in his company an hour longer than was necessary, he has deserved to meet with shipwreck, though the loss always falls heaviest on the owners."

"Surely, uncle, it is more cheering to think that the two schooners are together in those dangerous seas, than to imagine one, alone, left to meet the risks, without a companion!"

"You talk idly, gal—as women always talk. If you know'd all, you wouldn't think of such a thing."

"So you have said often, uncle, and I fear there is some mystery preying all this time on your spirits. Why not relieve your mind, by telling your troubles to me? I am your child in affection, if not by birth."

"You're a good gal, Mary," answered the deacon, a good deal softened by the plaintive tones of one of the gentlest voices that ever fell on human ear, "an excellent creatur' at the bottom—but of course you know nothing of the sealing business, and next to nothing about taking care of property."

"I hope you do not think me wasteful, sir? That is a character I should not like to possess."

"No, not wasteful; on the contrary, curful (so the deacon pronounced the word) and considerate enough, as to *keeping*, but awfully indifferent as to *getting*. Had I been as indifferent as you are yourself, your futur' days would not be so comfortable and happy as they are now likely to be, a'ter my departure—if depart I *must*."

"My future life happy and comfortable!" *thought* Mary; then she struggled to be satisfied with her lot, and contented with the decrees of Providence. "It is but a few hours that we live in this state of trials, compared to the endless existence that is to succeed it."

"I wish I knew all about this voyage of Roswell's," she added, aloud; for she was perfectly certain that there was something to be told that, as yet, the deacon had concealed from her. "It might relieve your mind, and lighten your spirits of a burthen, to make me a confidant."

The deacon mused in silence for more than five minutes. Seldom had his thoughts gone over so wide a reach of interests and events in so short a space of time; but the conclusion was clear and decided.

"You ought to know all, Mary, and you shall know all," he answered, in the manner of a man who had made up his mind beyond appeal. "Gar'ner has gone a'ter seal to some islands that the Daggett who died here, about a year and a half ago, told me of; islands of which nobody know'd anything, according to his account, but himself. His shipmates, that saw the place when he saw it, were all dead, afore he let me into the secret."

"I have long suspected something of the sort, sir, and have also supposed that the people on Martha's Vineyard had got some news of this place, by the manner in which Captain Daggett has acted."

"Isn't it wonderful, gal? Islands, they tell me, where a schooner can fill up with ile and skins, in the shortest season in which the sun ever shone upon an antarctic summer! Wonderful! wonderful!"

"Very extraordinary, perhaps; but we should remember, uncle, at how much risk the young men of the country go on these distant voyages, and how dearly their profits are sometimes bought."

"Bought! If the schooner would only come back, I should think nothing of all that. It's the cost of the vessel and outfit, Mary, that weighs so much on *my* spirits. Well, Gar'ner's first business is with them islands, which are at an awful distance for one to trust his property; but, `nothing ventured, nothing got,' they say. By my calculations, the schooner has had to go a good five hundred miles among the ice, to get to the spot; not such ice as a body falls in with, in going and coming between England and Ameriky, as we read of in the papers, but ice that covers the sea as we sometimes see it piled up in Gar'ner's Bay, only a hundred times higher, and deeper, and broader, and colder! It's desperate *cold* ice, the sealers all tell me, that of the antarctic seas. Some on 'em think it's colder down south than it is the other way, up towards Greenland and Iceland itself. It's extr'or'nary, Mary, that

the weather should grow cold as a body journeys south; but so it is, by all accounts. I never could understand it, and it isn't so in Ameriky, I'm sartain. I suppose it must come of their turning the months round, and having their winter in the midst of the dog−days. I never could understand it, though Gar'ner has tried, more than once, to reason me into it. I believe, but I don't understand."

"It is all told in my geography here," answered Mary, mechanically taking down the book, for her thoughts were far away in those icy seas that her uncle had been so graphically describing. "I dare say we can find it all explained in the elementary parts of this book."

"They *do* make their geographies useful, now−a−days," said the deacon, with rather more animation than he had shown before, that morning. "They've got 'em to be, now, almost as useful as almanacs. Read what it says about the seasons, child."

"It says, sir, that the changes in the seasons are owing to `the inclination of the earth's axis to the plane of its orbit.' I do not exactly understand what that means, uncle."

"No,—it's not as clear as it might be.—The declination—"

"*In*clination, sir, is what is printed here."

"Ay, inclination. I do not see why any one should have much inclination for winter, but so it must be, I suppose. The `'arth's orbit has an inclination towards changes,' you say."

"The changes in the seasons, sir, are owing to `the inclination of the earth's axis to the plane of its orbit.' It does not say that the orbit has an inclination in any particular way."

Thus was it with Mary Pratt, and thus was it with her uncle, the deacon. One of the plainest problems in natural philosophy was Hebrew to both, simply because the capacity that Providence had so freely bestowed on each had never been turned to the consideration of such useful studies. But, while the mind of Mary Pratt was thus obscured on this simple, and, to such as choose to give it an hour of reflection, perfectly intelligible proposition, it was radiant as the day on another mystery, and one that has confounded thousands of the learned, as well as of the unlearned. To her intellect, nothing was clearer, no moral truth more vivid, no physical fact more certain, than the incarnation of the Son of God. She had the "evidence of things not seen," in the fulness of Divine grace; and was profound on this, the greatest concern of human life, while unable even to comprehend how the "inclination of the earth's axis to the plane of its orbit" could be the cause of the change of the seasons. And was it thus with her uncle?— he who was a pillar of the "meeting," whose name was often in men's mouths as a "shining light," and who had got to be identified with religion in his own neighbourhood, to a degree that caused most persons to think of Deacon Pratt, when they should be thinking of the Saviour? We are afraid he knew as little of one of these propositions as of the other.

"It's very extr'or'nary," resumed the deacon, after ruminating on the matter for a few moments, "but I suppose it *is* so. Wasn't it for this `inclination' to cold weather, our vessels might go and seal under as pleasant skies as we have here in June. But, Mary, I suppose that wasn't to be, or it would be."

"There would have been no seals, most likely, uncle, if there was no ice. They tell me that such creatures love the cold and the ice, and the frozen oceans. Too much warm weather would not suit them."

"But, Mary, it might suit other folks! Gar'ner's whole ar'nd isn't among the ice, or a'ter them seals."

"I do not know that I understand you, sir. Surely Roswell has gone on a sealing voyage."

"Sartain; there's no mistake about *that*. But there may be many stopping−places in so long a road."

"Do you mean, sir, that he is to use any of these stopping−places, as you call them?" asked Mary, eagerly, half−breathless with her anxiety to hear all. "You said something about the West Indies once."

"Harkee, Mary—just look out into the entry and see if the kitchen door is shut. And now come nearer to me, child, so that there may be no need of bawling what I've got to say all over Oyster Pond. There, sit down, my dear, and don't look so eager, as if you wanted to eat me, or my mind may misgive me, and then I couldn't tell you, a'ter all. Perhaps it would be best, if I was to keep my own secret."

"Not if it has anything to do with Roswell, dear uncle; not if it has anything to do with him! You have often advised me to marry him, and I ought to know all about the man you wish me to marry."

"Yes, Gar'ner will make a right good husband for any young woman, and I *do* advise you to have him. You are my brother's da'ghter, Mary, and I give you this advice, which I should give you all the same, had you been my own child, instead of his'n."

"Yes, sir, I know that.—But what about Roswell, and his having to stop, on his way home?"

"Why, you must know, Mary, that this v'y'ge came altogether out of that seaman who died among us, last year. I was kind to him, as you may remember, and helped him to many little odd comforts,"—odd enough were they, of a verity,—"and he was grateful. Of all virtues, give me gratitude, say I! It is the noblest, as it is the most oncommon of all our good qualities. How little have I met with, in my day! Of all the presents I have made, and gifts be stowed, and good acts done, not one in ten has ever met with any gratitude."

Mary sighed; for well did she know how little he had given, of his abundance, to relieve the wants of his fellow−creatures. She sighed, too, with a sort of mild impatience that the information she sought with so much eagerness, was so long and needlessly delayed. But the deacon had made up his mind to tell her all.

"Yes, Gar'ner has got something to do, beside sealing," he resumed of himself, when his regret at the prevalence of ingratitude among men had exhausted itself. "Suthin"'— for this was the way he pronounced that word—"that is of more importance than the schooner's hold full of ile. Ile is ile, I know, child; but gold is gold. What do you think of *that?*"

"Is Roswell, then, to stop at Rio again, in order to sell his oil, and send the receipts home in gold?"

"Better than that — much better than that, if he gets back at all." Mary felt a chill at her heart. "Yes, that is the p'int — if he gets back at all. If Gar'ner ever does come home, child, I shall expect to see him return with a considerable sized keg—almost a barrel, by all accounts— filled with gold!"

The deacon stared about him as he made this announcement, like a man who was afraid that he was telling too much. Nevertheless, it was to his own niece, his brother's daughter, that he had confided thus much of his great secret— and reflection re−assured him.

"How is Roswell to get all this gold, uncle, unless he sells his cargo?" Mary asked, with obvious solicitude.

"That's another p'int. I'll tell you all about it, gal, and you'll see the importance of keeping the secret. This Daggett — not the one who is out in another schooner, another Sea Lion, as it might be, but his uncle, who died down here at the Widow White's—well, *that* Daggett told more than the latitude and longitude of the sealing islands— he told me of a buried treasure!"

"Buried treasure!—Buried by whom, and consisting of what, uncle?"

"Buried by seamen who make free with the goods of others on the high seas, ag'in the time when they might come back and dig it up, and carry it away to be used. Consisting of what, indeed! Consisting principally, accordin' to Daggett's account, of heavy doubloons; though there was a lot of old English guineas among 'em. Yes, I remember that he spoke of them guineas—three thousand and odd, and nearly as many doubloons!"

"Was Daggett, then, a pirate, sir?—for they who make free with the goods of others on the high seas are neither more nor less than pirates."

"No; not he, himself. He got this secret from one who *was* a pirate, however, and who was a prisoner in a gaol where he was himself confined for smuggling. Yes; that man told him all about the buried treasure, in return for some acts of kindness shown him by Daggett. It's well to be kind sometimes, Mary."

"It is well to be kind always, sir; even when it is misunderstood, and the kindness is abused. What was the redemption but kindness and love, and god−like compassion on those who neither understood it nor felt it? But money collected and buried by pirates can never become *yours*, uncle; nor can it ever become the property of Roswell Gardiner."

"Whose is it, then, gal?" demanded the deacon, sharply. "Gar'ner had some such silly notion in his head when I first told him of this treasure; but I soon brought *him* to hear reason."

"I think Roswell must always have seen that a treasure obtained by robbery can never justly belong to any but its rightful owner."

"And who is this rightful owner, pray? or *owners*, I might say; for the gold was picked up, here and there, out of all question, from many hands. Now, supposing Gar'ner gets this treasure, as I still hope he may, though he is an awful time about it — but suppose he gets it, how is he to find the rightful owners? There it is, a bag of doubloons, say—all looking just alike, with the head of a king, a Don Somebody, and the date, and the Latin and Greek — now who can say that `this is my doubloon; I lost it at such a time—it was taken from me by such a pirate, in such sea; and I was whipped till I told the thieves where I had hid the gold?' No, no, Mary; depend on't, no action of 'plevy would lie ag'in a single one of all them pieces. They are lost, one and all, to their former owners, and will belong to the man that succeeds in getting hold on 'em ag'in; who will become a rightful owner in his turn. All property comes from law; and if the law won't 'plevy money got in this way, nobody can maintain

a claim to it."

"I should be very, very sorry, my dear uncle, to have Roswell enrich himself in this way."

"You talk like a silly young woman, and one that doesn't know her own rights. We had no hand in robbing the folks of their gold. They lost it years ago, and may be dead— probably are, or they would make some stir about it — or have forgotten it, and couldn't for their lives tell a single one of the coins they once had in their possession; and don't know whether what they lost was thrown into the sea, or buried in the sand on a key — Mary, child; you must never mention anything I tell you on this subject!"

"You need fear nothing, sir, from me. But I do most earnestly hope Roswell will have nothing to do with any such ill−gotten wealth. He is too noble−hearted and generous to get rich in this way."

"Well, well, say no more about it, child; you're romantic and notional. Just pour out my drops; for all this talking makes me breathe thick. I'm not what I was, Mary, and cannot last long; but was it the last breath I drew, I would stand to it, that treasure desarted and found in this way belongs to the last holder. I go by the law, however; let Gar'ner only find it — well, well, I'll say no more about it now; for it distresses you, and that I don't like to see. Go and hunt up the Spectator, child, and look for the whaling news — perhaps there may be suthin' about the sealers too."

Mary did not require to be told twice to do as her uncle requested. The paper was soon found, and the column that contained the marine intelligence consulted. The niece read a long account of whalers spoken, with so many hundred or so many thousand barrels of oil on board, but could discover no allusion to any sealer. At length she turned her eyes into the body of the journal, which being semi−weekly, or tri−weekly, was crowded with matter, and started at seeing a paragraph to the following effect:—

"By the arrival of the Twin Sisters at Stonington, we learn that the ice has been found farther north in the southern hemisphere this season, than it has been known to be for many years. The sealers have had a great deal of difficulty in making their way through it; and even vessels bound round the Cape of Good Hope have been much embarrassed by its presence."

"That's it!—Yes, Mary, that's just it!" exclaimed the deacon. "It's that awful ice. If 'twasn't for the ice, sealin' would be as pleasant a calling as preachin' the gospel! It is possible that this ice has turned Gar'ner back, when he has been on his way home, and that he has been waiting for a better time to come north. There's one good p'int in this news — they tell me that when the ice is seen drifting about in low latitudes, it's a sign there's less of it in the higher."

"The Cape of Good Hope is certainly, in one sense, in a low latitude, uncle; if I remember right, it is not as far south as we are north; and, as you say, it *is* a good sign if the ice has come anywhere near it."

"I don't say it has, child; I don't say it has. But it may have come to the northward of Cape Horn, and that will be a great matter; for all the ice that is drifting about there comes from the polar seas, and is so much taken out of Gar'ner's track."

"Still he must come *through* it to get home," returned Mary, in her sweet, melancholy tones. "Ah! why cannot men be content with the blessings that Providence places within our immediate reach, that they must make distant voyages to accumulate others!"

"You like your tea, I fancy, Mary Pratt—and the sugar in it, and your silks and ribbons that I've seen you wear; how are you to get such matters if there's to be no going on v'y'ges? Tea and sugar, and silks and satins don't grow along with the clams on `Yster Pond"'—for so the deacon uniformly pronounced the word `oyster.'

Mary acknowledged the truth of what was said, but changed the subject. The journal contained no more that related to sealing or sealers, and it was soon laid aside.

"It may be that Gar'ner is digging for the buried treasure all this time," the deacon at length resumed. "That may be the reason he is so late. If so, he has nothing to dread from ice."

"I understand you, sir, that this money is supposed to be buried on a key—in the West Indies, of course."

"Don't speak so loud, Mary—there's no need of letting all 'Yster Pond know where the treasure is. It may be in the West Ingees, or it may not; there's keys all over the 'arth, I take it."

"Do you not think, uncle, that Roswell would write, if detained long among those keys?"

"You wouldn't hear to post−offices in the antarctic ocean, and now you want to put them on the sand−keys of the West Ingees! Woman's always a sailin' ag'in wind and tide."

"I do not think so, sir, in this case, at least. There must be many vessels passing among the keys of the West

Indies, and nothing seems to me to be easier than to send letters by them. I am quite sure Roswell would write, if in a part of the world where he thought what he wrote would reach us."

"Not he—not he—Gar'ner's not the man I take him for, if he let any one know what he is about in them keys, until he had done up all his business there. No, no, Mary. We shall never hear from him in that quarter of the world. It may be that Gar'ner is a digging about, and has difficulty in finding the place; for Daggett's account had some weak spots in it."

Mary made no reply, though she thought it very little likely that Roswell would pass months in the West Indies employed in such a pursuit, without finding the means of letting her know where he was, and what he was about. The intercourse between these young people was somewhat peculiar, and ever had been. In listening to the suit of Roswell, Mary had yielded to her heart; in hesitating about accepting him, she deferred to her principles. Usually, a mother—not a managing, match−making, interested parent, but a prudent, feminine, well−principled mother—is of the last importance to the character and well−being of a young woman. It sometimes happens, however, that a female who has no parent of her own sex, and who is early made to be dependent on herself, if the bias of her mind is good, becomes as careful and prudent of herself and her conduct as the advice and solicitude of the most tender mother could make her. Such had been the case with Mary Pratt. Perfectly conscious of her own deserted situation, high principled, and early awake to the defects in her uncle's character, she had laid down severe rules for the government of her own conduct; and from these rules she never departed. Thus it was that she permitted Roswell to write, though she never answered his letters. She permitted him to write, because she had promised not to shut her ears to his suit, so long as he practised towards her his native and manly candour; concealing none of his opinions, and confessing his deficiency on the one great point that formed the only obstacle to their union.

A young woman who has no mother, if she escape the ills attendant on the privation while her character is forming, is very apt to acquire qualities that are of great use in her future life. She learns to rely on herself, gets accustomed to think and act like an accountable being, and is far more likely to become a reasoning and useful head of a family, than if brought up in dependence, and under the control of even the best maternal government. In a word, the bias of the mind is sooner obtained in such circumstances than when others do so much of the thinking; whether that bias be in a right or in a wrong direction. But Mary Pratt had early taken the true direction in all that relates to opinion and character, and had never been wanting to herself in any of the distinctive and discreet deportment of her sex.

Our heroine hardly knew whether or not to seek for consolation in her uncle's suggestion of Roswell's being detained among the keys, in order to look for the hidden treasure. The more she reflected on this subject, the more did it embarrass her. Few persons who knew of the existence of such a deposit would hesitate about taking possession of it; and, once reclaimed, in what way were the best intentions to be satisfied with the disposition of the gold? To find the owners would probably be impossible; and a question in casuistry remained. Mary pondered much on this subject, and came to the conclusion that, were she the person to whom such a treasure were committed, she would set aside a certain period for advertising; and failing to discover those who had the best claim to the money, that she would appropriate every dollar to a charity.

Alas! Little did Mary understand the world. The fact that money was thus advertised would probably have brought forward a multitude of dishonest pretenders to having been robbed by pirates; and scarce a doubloon would have found its way into the pocket of its right owner, even had she yielded all to the statements of such claimants.

All this, however, did not bring back the missing Roswell. Another winter was fast approaching, with its chilling storms and gales, to awaken apprehensions by keeping the turbulence of the ocean, as it might be, constantly before the senses. Not a week now passed that the deacon did not get a letter from some wife, or parent, or sister, or perhaps from one who hesitated to avow her relations to the absent mariner; all inquiring after the fate of those who had sailed in the Sea Lion of Oyster Pond, under the orders of Captain Roswell Gardiner.

Even those of the Vineyard sent across questions, and betrayed anxiety and dread, in the very manner of putting their interrogatories. Each day did the deacon's apprehensions increase, until it was obvious to all around him that this cause, united to others that were more purely physical, perhaps, was seriously undermining his health, and menacing his existence. It is a sad commentary on the greediness for gain, manifested by this person, that ere the adventure he had undertaken on the strength of Daggett's reluctant communications was brought to any apparent result, he himself was nearly in the condition of that diseased seaman, with as little prospect of being

benefited by his secrets as was the man himself who first communicated their existence. Mary saw all this clearly, and mourned almost as much over the blindness and worldliness of her uncle as she did over the now nearly assured fate of him whom she had so profoundly loved in her heart's core.

Day by day did time roll on, without bringing any tidings of either of the Sea Lions. The deacon grew weak fast, until he seldom left his room, and still more rarely the house. It was now that he was induced to make his will, and this by an agency so singular as to deserve being mentioned. The Rev. Mr. Whittle broached the subject one day, not with any interested motive of course, but simply because the "meeting−house" wanted some material repairs, and there was a debt on the congregation that it might be a pleasure to one who had long stood in the relation to it that Deacon Pratt filled, to pay off, when he no longer had any occasion for the money for himself. It is probable the deacon at length felt the justice of this remark; for the sent to Riverhead for a lawyer, and made a will that would have stood even the petulant and envious justice of the present day; a justice that inclines to divide a man's estate infinitesimally, lest some heir become a little richer than his neighbours. After all, no small portion of that which struts about under the aspects of right, and liberty, and benevolence, is in truth derived from some of the most sneaking propensities of human nature!

CHAPTER VI.

"I, too, have seen thee on thy surging path
When the night−tempest met thee; thou didst dash
Thy white arms high in heaven, as if in wrath,
Threatening the angry sky; thy waves did lash
The labouring vessel, and with deadening crash
Rush madly forth to scourge its groaning sides;
Onward thy billows came, to meet and clash
In a wild warfare, till the lifted tides
Mingled their yesty tops, where the dark storm−cloud rides."
Percival.

The first movement of the mariner, when his vessel has been brought in collision with any hard substance, is to sound the pumps. This very necessary duty was in the act of performance by Daggett, in person, even while the boats of Roswell Gardiner were towing his strained and roughly treated craft into the open water. The result of this examination was waited for by all on board, including Roswell, with the deepest anxiety. The last held the lantern by which the height of the water in the well was to be ascertained; the light of the moon scarce sufficing for such a purpose. Daggett stood on the top of the pump himself, while Gardiner and Macy were at its side. At length the sounding−rod came up, and its lower end was held out, in order to ascertain how high up it was wet.

"Well, what do you make of it, Gar'ner?" Daggett demanded, a little impatiently. "Water there must be; for no craft that floats could have stood such a squeeze, and not have her sides open."

"There must be near three feet of water in your hold," answered Roswell, shaking his head. "If this goes on, Captain Daggett, it will be hard work to keep your schooner afloat!"

"A float she shall be, while a pump−break can work. Here, rig this larboard pump at once, and get it in motion."

"It is possible that your seams opened under the nip, and have closed again, as soon as the schooner got free. In such a case, ten minutes at the pump will let us know it."

Although there is no duty to which seamen are so averse as pumping—none, perhaps, that is actually so exhausting and laborious—it often happens that they have recourse to it with eagerness, as the only available means of saving their lives. Such was now the case, the harsh but familiar strokes of the pump−break being audible amid the more solemn and grand sounds of the grating of ice−bergs, the rushing of floes, and the occasional scuffling and howling of the winds. The last appeared to have changed in their direction, however; a circumstance that was soon noted, there being much less of biting cold in the blasts than had been felt in the earlier hours of the night.

"I do believe that the wind has got round here to the north−east," said Roswell, as he paced the quarter−deck with Daggett, still holding in his hand the well wiped and dried sounding−rod, in readiness for another trial. "That last puff was right in our teeth!"

"Not in our teeth, Gar'ner; no, not in *my* teeth," answered Daggett, "whatever it may be in *your'n*. I shall try to get back to the island, where I shall endeavour to beach the schooner, and get a look at her leaks. This is the *most* I can hope for. It would never do to think of carrying a craft, after such a nip, as far as Rio, pumping every foot of the way!"

"That will cause a great delay, Captain Daggett," said Roswell, doubtingly. "We are now well in among the first great body of the ice; it may be as easy to work our way to the northward of it, as to get back into clear water to the southward."

"I dare say it would; but, back I go. I do not ask you to accompany us, Gar'ner; by no means. A'ter the handsome manner in which you've waited for us so long, I couldn't think of such a thing! If the wind has r'ally got round to nothe−east, and I begin to think it has, I shall get the schooner into the cove in four−and−twenty hours; and there's as pretty a spot to beach her, just under the shelf where we kept our spare casks, as a body can wish. In a fortnight we'll have her leaks all stopped, and be jogging along in your wake. You'll tell the folks on Oyster

Pond that we're a−coming, and they'll be sure to send the news across to the Vineyard."

This was touching Roswell on a point of honour, and Daggett knew it very well. Generous and determined, the young man was much more easily influenced by a silent and indirect appeal to his liberal qualities, than he could possibly have been by any other consideration. The idea of deserting a companion in distress, in a sea like that in which he was, caused him to shrink from what, under other circumstances, he would regard as an imperative duty. The deacon, and still more, Mary, called him north; but the necessities of the Vineyarders would seem to chain him to their fate.

"Let us see what the pump tells us now," cried Roswell, impatiently. "Perhaps the report may make matters better than we have dared to hope for. If the pump gains on the leak, all may yet be well."

"It's encouraging and hearty to hear you say this; but no one who was *in* that nip, as a body might say, can ever expect the schooner to make a run of two thousand miles, without repairs. To my eye, Gar'ner, these bergs are separating, leaving us a clearer passage back to the open water."

"I do believe you are right; but it seems a sad loss of time, and a great risk, to go through these mountains again," returned Roswell. "The wind has shifted; and the nearest bergs, from some cause or other, are slowly opening; but recollect what a mass of floe−ice there is outside. Let us sound again."

The process was renewed this time much easier than before, the boxes being already removed. The result was soon known.

"Well, what news, Gar'ner?" demanded Daggett, leaning down, in a vain endeavour to perceive the almost imperceptible marks that distinguished the wet part of the rod from that which was dry. "Do we gain on the leak, or does the leak gain on us? God send it may be the first!"

"God has so sent it, sir," answered Stimson, reverently; for he was holding the lantern, having remained on board the damaged vessel by the order of his officer. "It is He alone, Captain Daggett, who could do this much to seamen in distress."

"Then to God be thanks, as is due! If we can but keep the leak under, the schooner may yet be saved."

"I think it may be done, Daggett," added Roswell. "That one pump has brought the water down more than two inches; and, in my judgment, the two together would clear her entirely."

"We'll pump her till she sucks!" cried Daggett. "Rig the other pump, men, and go to the work heartily."

This was done, though not until Roswell ordered fully half of his own crew to come to the assistance of his consort. By this time the two vessels had filled away, made more sail, and were running off before the new wind, retracing their steps, so far as one might judge of the position of the great passage. Daggett's vessel led, and Hazard followed; Roswell still remaining on board the injured craft. Thus passed the next few hours. The pumps soon sucked, and it was satisfactorily ascertained that the schooner could be freed from the water by working at them about one−fourth of the time. This was a bad leak, and one that would have caused any crew to become exhausted in the course of a few days. As Roswell ascertained the facts more clearly, he became better satisfied with a decision that, in a degree, had been forced on him. He was passively content to return with Daggett, convinced that taking the injured vessel to Rio was out of the question, until some attention had been paid to her damages.

Fortune—or as Stimson would say, Providence—favoured our mariners greatly in the remainder of their run among the bergs. There were several avalanches of snow quite near to them, and one more berg performed a revolution at no great distance; but no injury was sustained by either vessel. As the schooners got once more near to the field−ice, Roswell went on board his own craft; and all the boats, which had been towing in the open passage, were run up and secured. Gardiner now led, leaving his consort to follow as closely in his wake as she could keep.

Much greater difficulty, and dangers indeed, were encountered among the broken and grating floes, than had been expected, or previously met with. Notwithstanding fenders were got out on all sides, many a rude shock was sustained, and the copper suffered in several places. Once or twice, Roswell apprehended that the schooners would be crushed by the pressure on their sides. The hazards were in some measure increased by the bold manner in which our navigators felt themselves called on to push ahead; for time was very precious in every sense, not only on account of the waning season, but actually on account of the fatigue undergone by men who were compelled to toil at the pumps one minute in every four.

At the return of day, now getting to be later than it had been during the early months of their visit to these seas,

our adventurers found themselves in the centre of vast fields of floating ice, driving away from the bergs, which, influenced by under−currents, were still floating north, while the floes drove to the southward. It was very desirable to get clear of all this cake−ice, though the grinding among it was by no means as formidable as when the seas were running high, and the whole of the frozen expanse was in violent commotion. Motion, however, soon became nearly impossible, except as the schooners drifted in the midst of the mass, which was floating south at the rate of about two knots.

Thus passed an entire day and night. So compact was the ice around them, that the mariners passed from one vessel to the other on it, with the utmost confidence. No apprehension was felt so long as the wind stood in its present quarter, the fleet of bergs actually forming as good a lee as if they had been so much land. On the morning of the second day, all this suddenly changed. The ice began to open; why, was matter of conjecture, though it was attributed to a variance between the wind and the currents. This, in some measure, liberated the schooners, and they began to move independently of the floes. About noon, the smoke of the volcano became once more visible; and before the sun went down the cap of the highest elevation in the group was seen, amid flurries of snow.

Every one was glad to see these familiar land−marks, dreary and remote from the haunts of men as they were known to be; for there was a promise in them of a temporary termination of their labours. Incessant pumping — one minute in four being thus employed on board the Vineyard craft — was producing its customary effect; and the men looked jaded and exhausted. No one who has not stood at a pump−break on board a vessel, can form any notion of the nature of the toil, or of the extreme dislike with which seamen regard it. The tread−mill, as we conceive—for our experience extends to the first, though not to the last of these occupations — is the nearest approach to the pain of such toil, though the convict does not work for his life.

On the morning of the fourth day, our mariners found themselves in the great bay, in clear water, about a league from the cove, and nearly dead to windward of their port. The helms were put up, and the schooners were soon within the well−known shelter. As they ran in, Roswell gazed around him, in regret, awe, and admiration. He could not but regret being compelled to lose so much precious time, at that particular season. Short as had been his absence from the group, sensible changes in the aspect of things had already occurred. Every sign of summer — and they had ever been few and meagre—was now lost; a chill and dreary autumn having succeeded. As a matter of course, nothing was altered about the dwelling; the piles of wood, and other objects placed there by the hands of man, remaining just as they had been left; but even these looked less cheering, more unavailable, than when last seen. To the surprise of all, not a seal was visible. From some cause unknown to the men, all of these animals had disappeared, thereby defeating one of Daggett's secret calculations; this provident master having determined, in his own mind, to profit by his accident, and seize the occasion to fill up. Some said that the creatures had gone north to winter; others asserted that they had been alarmed, and had taken refuge on one of the other islands; but all agreed in saying that they were gone.

It is known that a seal will occasionally wander a great distance from what may be considered his native waters; but we are not at all aware that they are to be considered as migratory animals. The larger species usually take a wide range of climate to dwell in, and even the little furseal sometimes gets astray, and is found on coasts that do not usually come within his haunts. As respects the animals that so lately abounded on Sealer's Land, we shall hazard no theory, our business being principally with facts; but a conversation that took place between the two chief mates on this occasion may possibly assist some inquiring mind in its speculations.

"Well, Macy," said Hazard, pointing along the desertel rocks, "what do you think of *that?* Not an animal to be seen, where there were lately thousands!"

"What do I think of it? — Why, I think they are off, and I've know'd such things to happen afore" — The sealers of 1819 were not very particular about their English, even among their officers — "Any man who watches for signs and symptoms, may know how to take this."

"I should like to hear it explained; to me it is quite new."

"The seals are off, and that is a sign *we* should be off, too. There's my explanation, and you may make what you please of it. Natur' gives sich hints, and no prudent seaman ought to overlook 'em. I say, that when the seals go, the sealers should go likewise."

"And you set this down as a hint from natur', as you call it?"

"I do; and a useful hint it is. If we was in sailing trim, I'd ha'nt the old man, but I'd get him off this blessed night. Now, mark my words, Hazard—no good will come of that nip, and of this return into port ag'in; and of all

this veering and hauling upon cargo."

The other mate laughed; but a call from his commanding officer put a stop to the dialogue. Hazard was wanted to help secure the schooner of Daggett in the berth in which she was now placed. The tides do not appear to rise and fall in very high latitudes, by any means, as much as it does in about 50°. In the antaretic sea they are reported to be but of medium elevation and force. This fact our navigators had noted; and Daggett had, at once, carried his schooner on the only thing like a beach that was to be found on any part of that wild coast. His craft was snug within the cove, and quite handy for discharging and taking in. Beach, in a proper sense, it was not; being, with a very trifling exception, nothing but a shelf of rock that was a little inclined, and which admitted of a vessel's being placed upon it, as on the floor of a dock.

Into this berth Daggett took his schooner, while the other vessel anchored. There was nearly a whole day before them, and all the men were at once set to work to discharge the cargo of the injured vessel. To get rid of the pumps, they would cheerfully have worked the twenty−four hours without intermission. As fast as the vessel was lightened, she was hove further and further on the rock, until she was got so high as to be perfectly safe from sinking, or from injuring anything on board her; when the pumps were abandoned. Before night came, however, the schooner was so secured by means of shores, and purchases aloft that were carried out to the rocks, as to stand perfectly upright on her keel. She was thus protected when the tide left her. At low water it was found that she wanted eight feet of being high and dry, having already been lightened four feet. A good deal of cargo was still in, on this the first night after her return.

The crew of Daggett's vessel carried their mattresses ashore, took possession of the bunks, lighted a fire in the stove, and made their preparations to get the camboose ashore next day, and do their cooking in the house, as had been practised previously to quitting the island. Roswell, and all his people, remained on board their own vessel.

The succeeding day the injured schooner was cleared of everything, even to her spars, the lower masts and bowsprit excepted. Two large sealing crews made quick work with so small a craft. Empty casks were got under her, and at the top of the tide she was floated quite up to the small beach that was composed of the *débris* of rock, already mentioned. As the water left her, she fell over a little, of course; and at half−tide her keel lay high and dry.

The prying eyes of all hands were now busy looking out for the leaks. As might have been expected, none were found near the garboard streak, a fact that was clearly enough proved by a quantity of the water remaining in the vessel after she lay, entirely bare, nearly on her bilge.

"Her seams have opened a few streaks below the bends," said Roswell, as he and Daggett went under the vessel's bottom, looking out for injuries; "and you had better set about getting off the copper at once. Has there been an examination made inside?"

None had yet been made, and our two masters clambered up to the main hatch, and got as good a look at the state of things in the hold as could be thus obtained. So tremendous had been the pressure, that three of the deck beams were broken. They would have been driven quite clear of their fastenings, had not the wall of ice at each end prevented the possibility of such a thing. As it was, the top−timbers had slightly given way, and the seams must have opened just below the water−line. When the tide came in again, the schooner righted of course; and the opportunity was taken to pump her dry. There was then no leak, another proof that the defective places must be sought above the present water−line.

With the knowledge thus obtained, the copper was removed, and several of the seams examined. The condition of the pitch and oakum pointed out the precise spots that needed attention, and the caulking−irons were immediately set at work. In about a week the job was completed, as was fancied, the copper re−placed, and the schooner was got afloat again. Great was the anxiety to learn the effect of what had been done, and quite as great the disappointment, when it was found that there was still a serious leak that admitted too much water to think of going to sea until it was stopped. A little head−work, however, and that on the part of Roswell, speedily gave a direction to the search that was immediately set on foot.

"This leak is not as low down as the vessel's bilge," he said; "for the water did not run out of her, nor into her, until we got her afloat. It is somewhere, then, between her light−water load−line and her bilge. Now we have had all the copper off, and the seams examined in the wake of this section of the vessel's bottom, from the fore−chains to the main; and, in my judgment, it will be found that something is wrong about her stem, or her stern−post. Perhaps one of her wood−ends has started. Such a thing might very well have happened under so close a squeeze."

"In which case we shall have to lay the craft ashore again, and go to work anew," answered Daggett. "I see how it is; you do not like the delay, and are thinking of Deacon Pratt and Oyster Pond. I do not blame you, Gar'ner; and shall never whisper a syllable ag'in you, or your people, if you sail for home this very a'ternoon; leaving me and mine to look out for ourselves. You've stood by us nobly thus far, and I am too thankful for what you have done already, to ask for more."

Was Daggett sincere in these professions? To a certain point he was; while he was only artful on others. He wished to appear just and magnanimous; while, in secret, it was his aim to work on the better feelings, as well as on the pride of Gardiner, and thus secure his services in getting his own schooner ready, as well as keep him in sight until a certain key had been examined, in the proceeds of which he conceived he had a share, as well as in those of Sealer's Land. Strange as it may seem, even in the strait in which he was now placed, with so desperate a prospect of ever getting his vessel home again, this man clung like a leech to the remotest chance of obtaining property. There is a bull−dog tenacity on this subject, among a certain portion of the great American family—the god−like Anglo−Saxon— that certainly leads to great results in one respect; but which it is often painful to regard, and never agreeable to any but themselves, to be subject to. Of this school was Daggett, whom no dangers, no toil, no thoughts of a future, could divert from a purpose that was coloured by gold. We do not mean to say that other nations are not just as mercenary; many are more so; those, in particular, that have long been corrupted by vicious governments. You may buy half a dozen Frenchmen, for instance, more easily than one Yankee; but let the last actually get his teeth into a dollar, and the muzzle of the ox fares worse in the jaws of the bull−dog.

Roswell was deeply reluctant to protract his stay in the group; but professional pride would have prevented him from deserting a consort under such circumstances, had not a better feeling inclined him to remain and assist Daggett. It is true the last had, in a manner, thrust himself on him, and the connection had been strangely continued down to that moment; but this he viewed as a dispensation of Providence, to which he was bound to submit. The result was a declaration of a design to stand by his companion as long as there was any hope of getting the injured craft home.

This decision pointed at once to the delay of another week. No time was lost in vain regrets, however; but all hands went to work to get the schooner into shallow water again, and to look further for the principal leak. Accurate trimming and pumping showed that a good deal of the water was already stopped out; but too much still entered to render it prudent to think of sailing until the injury was repaired. This time the schooner was not suffered to lie on her bilge at all. She was taken into water just deep enough to permit her to stand upright, sustained by shores, while the tide left two or three streaks dry forward; it being the intention to wind her, should the examination forward not be successful.

On stripping off the copper, it was found that a woodend had indeed started, the inner edge of the plank having got as far from its bed as where the outer had been originally placed. This opened a crack through which a small stream of water must constantly pour, each hour rendering the leak more dangerous by loosening the oakum, and raising the plank from its curvature. Once discovered, however, nothing was easier than to repair the damage. It remained merely to butt−bolt anew the wood−end, drive a few spikes, cork, and replace the copper. Roswell, who was getting each moment more and more impatient to sail, was much vexed at a delay that really seemed unavoidable; as it arose from the particular position of the leak. Placed as it was, in a manner, between wind and water, it was not possible to work at it more than an hour each tide; and the staging permitted but two hands to be busy at the same time. As a consequence of these embarrassments, no less than six tides came in and went out, before the stem was pronounced tight again. The schooner was then pumped out, and the vessel was once more taken into deep water. This time it was found that the patience and industry of our sealers were rewarded with success; no leak of any account existing.

"She's as tight as a bottle with a sealed cork, Gar'ner," cried Daggett, a few hours after his craft was at her anchor, meeting his brother−master at his own gangway, and shaking hands with him cordially. "I owe much of this to you, as all on the Vineyard shall know, if we ever get home ag'in."

"I am rejoiced that it turns out so, Captain Daggett," was Roswell's reply; "for to own the truth to you, the fortnight we have lost, or shall lose, before we get you stowed and ready to sail again, has made a great change in our weather. The days are shortening with frightful rapidly, and the great bay was actually covered with a skim of ice this very morning. The wind has sent in a sea that has broke it up; but look about you, in the cove here— a boy might walk on that ice near the rocks."

"There'll be none of it left by night, and the two crews will fill me up in twenty−four hours. Keep a good heart, Gar'ner; I'll take you clear of the bergs in the course of the week."

"I have less fear of the bergs now, than of the new ice and the floes. The islands must have got pretty well to the northward by this time; but each night gets colder, and the fields seem to be setting back towards the group, instead of away from it."

Daggett cheered his companion by a good deal of confident talk; but Roswell was heartily rejoiced when, at the end of four−and−twenty hours more, the Vineyard craft was pronounced entirely ready. It was near the close of the day, and Gardiner was for sailing, or moving at once; but Daggett offered several very reasonable objections. In the first place, there was no wind; and Roswell's proposition to tow the schooners out into the middle of the bay, was met by the objection that the people had been hard at work for several days, and that they needed some rest. All that could be gained by moving the schooners then, was to get them outside of the skim of ice that now regularly formed every still night near the land, but which was as regularly broken and dispersed by the waves, as soon as the wind returned. Roswell, however, did not like the appearances of things; and he determined to take his own craft outside; let Daggett do as he might. After discussing the matter in vain, therefore, and finding that the people of the other schooner had eaten their suppers and turned in, he called all hands, and made a short address to his own crew, leaving it to their discretion whether to man the boats or not. As Roswell had pointed out the perfect absence of wind, the smoothness of the water, and the appearances of a severe frost, or cold, for frost there was now, almost at mid−day, the men came reluctantly over to his view of the matter, and consented to work instead of sleeping. The toil, however, could be much lessened, by dividing the crew into the customary watches. All that Roswell aimed at was to get his schooner about a league from the cove; which would be taking her without a line drawn from cape to cape, the greatest danger of new ice being within the curvature of the crescent. This he thought might easily be done in the course of a few hours; and, should there come any wind, much sooner. On explaining this to the crew, the men were satisfied.

Roswell Gardiner felt as if a load were taken off his spirits, when his schooner was clear of the ground, and his mainsail was hoisted. A boat was got ahead, and the craft was slowly towed out of the cove, the canvass doing neither good nor harm. As the vessel passed that of Daggett, the last was on deck; the only person visible in the Vineyard craft. He wished his brother−master a good night, promising to be out as soon as there was any light next morning.

It would not be easy to imagine a more dreary scene than that in which Deacon Pratt's schooner moved out into the waters that separated the different islands of this remote and sterile group. Roswell could just discern the frowning mass of the rocks that crowned the centre of Sealer's Land; and that was soon lost in the increasing obscurity. The cold was getting to be severe, and the men soon complained that ice was forming on the blades of their oars. Then it was that a thought occurred to our young mariner, which had hitherto escaped him. Of what use would it be for his vessel to be beyond the ice, if that of Daggett should be shut in the succeeding day? So sensible did he become to the importance of this idea, that he called in his boat, and pulled back into the cove, in order to make one more effort to persuade Daggett to follow him out.

Gardiner found all of the Vineyarders turned in, even to their officers. The fatigue they had lately undergone, united to the cold, rendered the berths very agreeable; and even Daggett begged his visiter would excuse him for not rising to receive his guest. Argument with a man thus circumstanced and so disposed, was absolutely useless. After remaining a short time with Daggett, Roswell returned to his own schooner. As he pulled back, he ascertained that ice was fast making; and the boat actually cut its way through a thin skim, ere it reached the vessel.

Our hero was now greatly concerned lest he should be frozen in himself, ere he could get into the more open water of the bay. Fortunately a light air sprung up from the northward, and trimming his sails, Gardiner succeeded in carrying his craft to a point where the undulations of the ground−swell gave the assurance of her being outside the segment of the crescent. Then he brailed his foresail, hauled the jib−sheet over, lowered his gaff, and put his helm hard down. After this, all the men were permitted to seek their berths; the officers looking out for the craft in turns.

It wanted about an hour of day, when the second mate gave Roswell a call, according to orders. The young master found no wind, but an intensely cold morning, on going on deck. Ice had formed on every part of the rigging and sides of the schooner where water had touched them; though the stillness of the night, by preventing

the spray from flying, was much in favour of the navigators in this respect. On thrusting a boat−hook down, Roswell ascertained that the bay around him had a skim of ice nearly an inch in thickness. This caused him great uneasiness; and he waited with the greatest anxiety for the return of light, in order to observe the condition of Daggett.

Sure enough, when the day came out distinctly, it was seen that ice of sufficient thickness to bear men on it, covered the entire surface within the crescent. Daggett and his people were already at work on it, using the saw. They must have taken the alarm before the return of day; for the schooner was not only free from the ground, but had been brought fully a cable's length without the cove. Gardiner watched the movements of Daggett and his crew with a glass for a short time, when he ordered all hands called. The cook was already in the galley, and a warm breakfast was soon prepared. After eating this, the two whale−boats were lowered, and Roswell and Hazard both rowed as far as the ice would permit them, when they walked the rest of the way to the imprisoned craft, taking with them most of their hands, together with the saw.

It was perhaps fortunate for Daggett that it soon began to blow fresh from the northward, sending into the bay a considerable sea, which soon broke up the ice, and enabled the Vineyard craft to force her way through the fragments, and join her consort about noon.

Glad enough was Roswell to regain his own vessel; and he made sail on a wind, determined to beat out of the narrow waters at every hazard, the experience of that night having told him that they had remained in the cove too long. Daggett followed willingly, but not like a man who had escaped by the skin of his teeth, from wintering near the antarctic circle.

CHAPTER VII.

"Beside the Moldau's rushing stream
With the wan moon overhead,
There stood, as in an awful dream,
The army of the dead."

Longfellow.

Most of our readers will understand what was meant by Mary Pratt's "inclination of the earth's axis to the plane of its orbit;" but as there may be a few who do not, and as the consequences of this great physical fact are materially connected with the succeeding events of the narrative, we propose to give such a homely explanation of the phenomenon as we humbly trust will render it clear to the most clouded mind. The orbit of the earth is the path which it follows in space in its annual revolution around the sun. To a planet there is no up or down, except as ascent and descent are estimated from and towards itself. In all other respects it floats in vacuum, or what is so nearly so as to be thus termed. Now, let the uninstructed reader imagine a large circular table, with a light on its surface, and near to its centre. The light shall represent the sun, the outer edge of the circle of the table the earth's orbit, and its surface the plane of that orbit. In nature there is no such thing as a plane at all, the space within the orbit being vacant; but the surface of the table gives a distinct notion of the general position of the earth as it travels round the sun. It is scarcely necessary to say that the axis of the earth is an imaginary line drawn through the planet, from one pole to the other; the name being derived from the supposition that our daily revolution is made on this axis.

Now, the first thing that the student is to fix in his mind, in order to comprehend the phenomenon of the seasons, is the leading fact that the earth does not change its attitude in space, if we may so express it, when it changes its position. If the axis were *perpendicular* to the plane of the orbit, this circumstance would not affect the temperature, as the simplest experiment will show. Putting the equator of a globe on the outer edge of the table, and holding it perfectly *upright*, causing it to turn on its axis as it passes round the circle, it would be found that the light from the centre of the table would illumine just one half of the globe, at all times and in all positions, cutting the two poles. Did this movement correspond with that of nature, the days and nights would be always of the same length, and there would be no changes of the seasons, the warmest weather being nearest to the equator, and the cold increasing as the poles were approached. No where, however, would the cold be so intense as it now is, nor would the heat be as great as at present, except at or quite near to the equator. The first fact would be owing to the regular return of the sun, once in twenty−four hours; the last to the oblique manner in which its rays struck this orb, in all places but near its centre.

But the globe ought not to be made to move around the table with its axis perpendicular to its surface, or to the "plane of the earth's orbit." In point of fact, the earth is inclined to this plane, and the globe should be placed at a corresponding inclination. Let the globe be brought to the edge of the table, at its south side, and with its upper or north pole inclining to the sun, and then commence the circuit, taking care always to keep this north pole of the globe pointing in the same direction, or to keep the globe itself in what we have termed a fixed attitude. As one half of the globe must always be in light, and the other half in darkness, this inclination from the perpendicular will bring the circle of light some distance beyond the north pole, when the globe is due−south from the light, and will leave an equal space around the opposite pole without any light at all, or any light directly received. Now it is that what we have termed the *fixed attitude* of the globe begins to tell. If the north pole inclined towards the orbit facing the rim of the table, the light would still cut the poles, the days and nights would still be equal, and there would be no changes in the seasons, though there would be a rival revolution of the globe, by causing it to turn once a year, shifting the poles end for end. The inclination being to the surface of the table, or to the *plane* of the orbit, the phenomena that are known to exist are a consequence. Thus it is, that the change in the seasons is as much owing to the fixed attitude of the earth in space, as we have chosen to term its polar directions, as to the inclination of its axis. Neither would produce the phenomena without the assistance of the other, as our experiment with the table will show.

Place, then, the globe at the south side of the rim of the table, with its axis inclining towards its surface, and its

poles always pointing in the same general direction, not following the circuit of the orbit, and set it in motion towards the east, revolving rapidly on its axis as it moves. While directly south of the light, it would be found that the north pole would be illuminated, while no revolution on the axis would bring the south pole within the circle of the light. This is when a line drawn from the axis of the globe would cut the lamp, were the inclination brought as low as the surface of the table. Next set the globe in motion, following the rim of the table, and proceeding to the east or right hand, keeping its axis always looking in the same general direction, or in an attitude that would be parallel to a north and south line drawn through the sun, were the inclination as low as the surface of the table. This movement would be, in one sense, sideways, the circle of light gradually lessening around the north pole, and extending towards the south, as the globe proceeded east and north, diminishing the length of the days in the northern hemisphere, and increasing them in the southern. When at east, the most direct rays of the light would fall on the equator, and the light would cut the two poles, rendering the days and nights equal. As the globe moved north, the circle of light would be found to increase around the *south* pole, while none at all touched the *north*. When on the north side of the table, the *northern* pole of the globe would incline so far from the sun as to leave a space around it in shadow that would be of precisely the same size as had been the space of light when it was placed on the opposite side of the table. Going round the circle west, the same phenomena would be seen, until coming directly south of the lamp, the north pole would again come into light altogether, and the south equally into shadow.

Owing to this very simple but very wonderful provision of divine power and wisdom, this earth enjoys the relief of the changes in the seasons, as well as the variations in the length of the days. For one half of the year, or from equinox to equinox, from the time when the globe is at a due−west point of the table until it reaches the east, the north pole would always receive the light, in a circle around it, that would gradually increase and diminish; and for the other half, the same would be true of the other hemisphere. Of course there is a precise point on the earth where this polar illumination ceases. The shape of the illuminated part is circular; and placing the point of a pencil on the globe at the extremest spot on the circle, holding it there while the globe is turned on its axis, the lines made would just include the portions of the earth around the globe that thus receives the rays of the sun at midsummer. These lines compose what are termed the arctic and antarctic circles, with the last of which our legend has now a most serious connection. After all, we are by no means certain that we have made our meaning as obvious as we could wish, it being very difficult to explain phenomena of this nature clearly, without actually experimenting.

It is usual to say that there are six months day and six months night in the polar basins. This is true, literally, at the poles only; but, approximatively, it is true as a whole. We apprehend that few persons—none, perhaps, but those who are in habits of study — form correct notions of the extent of what may be termed the icy seas. As the polar circles are in 23° 28', a line drawn through the south pole, for instance, commencing on one side of the earth at the antarctic circle, and extending to the other, would traverse a distance materially exceeding that between New York and Lisbon. This would make those frozen regions cover a portion of this globe that is almost as large as the whole of the Atlantic Ocean, as far south as the equator. Any one can imagine what must be the influence of frost over so vast a surface, in reproducing itself, since the presence of ice−bergs is thought to affect our climate, when many of them drift far south in summer. As power produces power, riches wealth, so does cold produce cold. Fill, then, in a certain degree, a space as large as the North Atlantic Ocean with ice in all its varieties, fixed, mountain and field, berg and floe, and one may get a tolerably accurate notion of the severity of its winters, when the sun is scarce seen above the horizon at all, and then only to shed its rays so obliquely as to be little better than a chill−looking orb of light, placed in the heavens simply to divide the day from the night.

This, then, was the region that Roswell Gardiner was so very anxious to leave; the winter he so much dreaded. Mary Pratt was before him, to say nothing of his duty to the deacon; while behind him was the vast polar ocean just described, about to be veiled in the freezing obscurity of its long and gloomy twilight, if not of absolute night. No wonder, therefore, that when he trimmed his sails that evening, to beat out of the great bay, that it was done with the earnestness with which we all perform duties of the highest import, when they are known to affect our well−being, visibly and directly.

"Keep her a good full, Mr. Hazard," said Roswell, as he was leaving the deck, to take the first sleep in which he had indulged for four−and−twenty hours; "and let her go through the water. We are behind our time, and must keep in motion. Give me a call if anything like ice appears in a serious way."

Hazard `ay−ay'd' this order, as usual, buttoned his pee−jacket tighter than ever, and saw his young superior—the transcendental delicacy of the day is causing the difference in rank to be termed " *senior* and *junior*"—but Hazard saw *his* superior go below, with a feeling allied to envy, so heavy were his eye−lids with the want of rest. Stimson was in the first−mate's watch, and the latter approached that old sea−dog with a wish to keep himself awake by conversing.

"You seem as wide awake, king Stephen," the mate remarked, "as if you never felt drowsy!"

"This is not a part of the world for hammocks and berths, Mr. Hazard," was the reply. "I can get along, and must get along, with a quarter part of the sleep in these seas as would sarve me in a low latitude."

"And I feel as if I wanted all I can get. Them fellows look up well into our wake, Stephen."

"They do indeed, sir, and they ought to do it; for we have been longer than is for our good, in their'n."

"Well, now we have got a fresh start, I hope we may make a clear run of it. I saw no ice worth speaking of, to the nor'ard here, before we made sail."

"Because you see'd none, Mr. Hazard, is no proof there is none. Floe−ice can't be seen at any great distance, though its blink may. But, it seems to me, it's all blink in these here seas!"

"There you're quite right, Stephen; for turn which way you will, the horizon has a show of that sort_____"

"Starboard"—called out the look−out forward—"keep her away—keep her away—there is ice ahead."

"Ice in here!" exclaimed Hazard, springing forward — "That is more than we bargained for! Where away is your ice, Smith?"

"Off here, sir, on our weather bow — and a mortal big field of it — jist sich a chap as nipp'd the Vineyard Lion, when she first came in to join us. Sich a fellow as that would take the sap out of our bends, as a squeezer takes the juice from a lemon!"

Smith was a carpenter by trade, which was probably the reason why he introduced this figure. Hazard saw the ice with regret; for he had hoped to work the schooner fairly out to sea in his watch; but the field was getting down through the passage in a way that threatened to cut off the exit of the two schooners from the bay. Daggett kept close in his wake, a proof that this experienced navigator in such waters saw no means to turn farther to windward. As the wind was now abeam, both vessels drove rapidly ahead; and in half an hour the northern point of the land they had so lately left came into view close aboard of them. Just then the moon rose, and objects became more clearly visible.

Hazard hailed the Vineyard Lion, and demanded what was to be done. It was possible, by hauling close on a wind, to pass the cape a short distance to windward of it, and seemingly thus clear the floe. Unless this were done, both vessels would be compelled to ware, and run for the southern passage, which would carry them many miles to leeward, and might place them a long distance on the wrong side of the group.

"Is Captain Gar'ner on deck?" asked Daggett, who had now drawn close up on the lee−quarter of his consort, Hazard having brailed his foresail and laid his topsail sharp aback, to enable him to do so — "If he isn't, I'd advise you to give him a call at once."

This was done immediately; and while it was doing, the Vineyard Lion swept past the Oyster Pond schooner. Roswell announced his presence on deck just as the other vessel cleared his bows.

"There's no time to consult, Gar'ner," answered Daggett. "There's our road before us. Go through it we must, or stay where we are until that field−ice gives us a jam down yonder in the crescent. I will lead, and you can follow as soon as your eyes are open."

One glance let Roswell into the secret of his situation. He liked it little, but he did not hesitate.

"Fill the topsail, and haul aft the foresheet," were the quiet orders that proclaimed what he intended to do.

Both vessels stood on. By some secret process, every man on board the two craft became aware of what was going on, and appeared on deck. All hands were not called, nor was there any particular noise to attract attention; but the word had been whispered below that there was a great risk to run. A risk it was, of a verity! It was necessary to stand close along that iron−bound coast where the seals had so lately resorted, for a distance of several miles. The wind would not admit of the schooners steering much more than a cable's length from the rocks for quite a league; after which the shore trended to the southward, and a little sea−room would be gained. But on those rocks the waves were then beating heavily, and their bellowings as they rolled into the cavities were at almost all times terrific. There was some relief, however, in the knowledge obtained of the shore, by having frequently passed up and down it in the boats. It was known that the water was deep close to the visible rocks, and

that there was no danger as long as a vessel could keep off them.

No one spoke. Every eye was strained to discern objects ahead, or was looking astern to trace the expected collision between the floe−ice and the low promontory of the cape. The ear soon gave notice that this meeting had already taken place; for the frightful sound that attended the cracking and rending of the field might have been heard fully a league. Now it was that each schooner did her best! Yards were braced up, sheets flattened, and the helm tended. The close proximity of the rocks on the one side, and the secret presentiment of there being more field−ice on the other, kept every one wide awake. The two masters, in particular, were all eyes and ears. It was getting to be very cold; and the sort of shelter aloft that goes by the quaint name of "crow's−nest," had been fitted up in each vessel. A mate was now sent into each, to ascertain what might be discovered to windward. Almost at the same instant, these young seamen hailed their respective decks, and gave notice that a wide field was coming in upon them, and must eventually crush them, unless avoided. This startling intelligence reached the two commanders in the very same moment. The emergency demanded decision, and each man acted for himself. Roswell ordered his helm put *down*, and his schooner *tacked*. The water was not rough enough to prevent the success of the manoeuvre. On the other hand, Daggett kept a rap full, and *stood on*. Roswell manifested the most judgment and seamanship. He was now far enough from the cape to beat to windward; and, by going nearer to the enemy, he might always run along its southern boundary, profit by any opening, and would be by as much as he could thus gain, to windward of the coast. Daggett had one advantage. By standing on, in the event of a return becoming necessary, he would gain in time. In ten minutes the two schooners were a mile asunder. We shall first follow that of Roswell Gardiner's, in his attempt to escape.

The first floe, which was ripping and tearing one of its angles into fragments, as it came grinding down on the cape, soon compelled the vessel to tack. Making short reaches, Roswell ere long found himself fully a mile to windward of the rocks, and sufficiently near to the new floe to discern its shape, drift, and general character. Its eastern end had lodged upon the field that first came in, and was adding to the vast momentum with which that enormous floe was pressing down upon the cape. Large as was that first visiter to the bay, this was of at least twice if not of thrice its dimensions. What gave Roswell the most concern was the great distance that this field extended to the westward. He went up into the crow's−nest himself, and, aided by the light of a most brilliant moon, and a sky without a cloud, he could perceive the blink of ice in that direction, as he fancied, for fully two leagues. What was unusual, perhaps, at that early season of the year, these floes did not consist of a vast collection of numberless cakes of ice; but the whole field, so far as could then be ascertained, was firm and united. The nights were now so cold that ice made fast wherever there was water; and it occurred to our young master that, possibly, fragments that had once been separated and broken by the waves, might have become re−united by the agency of the frost. Roswell descended from the crow's−nest half chilled by a cutting wind, though it blew from a warm quarter. Summoning his mates, he asked their advice.

"It seems to me, Captain Gar'ner," Hazard replied, "there's very little choice. Here we are, so far as I can make it out, embayed, and we have only to box about until day−light comes, when some chance may turn up to help us. If so, we must turn it to account; if not, we must make up our minds to winter here."

This was coolly and calmly said; though it was clear enough that Hazard was quite in earnest.

"You forget there may be an open passage to the westward, Mr. Hazard," Roswell rejoined, "and that we may yet pass out to sea by it. Captain Daggett is already out of sight in the western board, and we may do well to stand on after him."

"Ay, ay, sir — I know all that, Captain Gar'ner, and it may be as you say; but when I was aloft, half an hour since, if there wasn't the blink of ice in that direction, quite round to the back of the island, there wasn't the blink of ice nowhere hereabouts. I'm used to the sight of it, and can't well be mistaken."

"There is always ice on that side of the land, Hazard, and you may have seen the blink of the bergs which have hugged the cliffs in that quarter all summer. Still, that is not proving we shall find no outlet. This craft can go through a very small passage, and we must take care and find one in proper time. Wintering here is out of the question. A *hundred* reasons tell us not to think of such a thing, besides the interests of our owners. We are walking along this floe pretty fast, though I think the vessel is too much by the head; don't it strike you so, Hazard?"

"Lord, sir, it's nothing but the ice that has made, and is making for'ard! Before we got so near the field as to find a better lee, the little lipper that came athwart our bows froze almost as soon as it wet us. I do suppose, sir,

there are now several tons of ice on our bows, counting from channel to channel, forward."

On an examination this proved to be true, and the knowledge of the circumstance did not at all contribute to Gardiner's feeling of security. He saw there was no time to be lost, and he crowded sail with a view of forcing the vessel past the dangers if possible, and of getting her into a milder climate. But even a fast−sailing schooner will scarcely equal our wishes under such circumstances. There was no doubt that the Sea Lion's speed was getting to be affected by the manner in which her bows were weighed down by ice, in addition to the discomfort produced by cold, damp, and the presence of a slippery substance on the deck and rigging. Fortunately there was not much spray flying, or matters would have been much worse. As it was, they were bad enough, and very ominous of future evil.

While the Sea Lion of Oyster Pond was running along the margin of the ice in the manner just described, and after the blink to the westward had changed to a visible field, making it very uncertain whether any egress was to be found in that quarter or not, an opening suddenly appeared trending to the northward, and sufficiently wide, as Roswell thought, to enable him to beat through it. Putting his helm down, his schooner came heavily round, and was filled on a course that soon carried her half a mile into this passage. At first, everything seemed propitious, the channel rather opening than otherwise, while the course was such—north−north−west—as enabled the vessel to make very long legs on one tack, and that the best. After going about four or five times, however, all these flattering symptoms suddenly changed, by the passage's terminating in a *cul de sac*. Almost at the same instant the ice closed rapidly in the schooner's wake. An effort was made to run back, but it failed in consequence of an enormous floe's turning on its centre, having met resistance from a field closer in, that was, in its turn, stopped by the rocks. Roswell saw at once that nothing could be done at the moment. He took in all his canvass, as well as the frozen cloth could be handled, got out ice−anchors, and hauled his vessel into a species of cove where there would be the least danger of a nip, should the fields continue to close.

All this time Daggett was as busy as a bee. He rounded the headland, and flattered himself that he was about to slip past all the rocks, and get out into open water, when the vast fields of which the blink had been seen even by those in the other vessel, suddenly stretched themselves across his course in a way that set at defiance all attempts to go any further in that direction. Daggett wore round, and endeavoured to return. This was by no means as easy as it was to go down before the wind, and his bows were also much encumbered with ice; more so, indeed, than those of the other schooner. Once or twice his craft missed stays in consequence of getting so much by the head, and it was deemed necessary to heave−to, and take to the axes. A great deal of extra and cumbrous weight was gotten rid of, but an hour of most precious time was lost.

By the time Daggett was ready to make sail again, he found his return round the headland was entirely cut off, by the field's having come in absolute contact with the rocks!

It was now midnight, and the men on board both vessels required rest. A watch was set in each, and most of the people were permitted to turn in. Of course, proper look−outs were had, but the light of the moon was not sufficiently distinct to render it safe to make any final efforts under its favour. No great alarm was felt, there being nothing unusual in a vessel's being embayed in the ice; and so long as she was not nipped or pressed upon by actual contact, the position was thought safe rather than the reverse. It was desirable, moreover, for the schooners to communicate with each other; for some advantage might be known to one of the masters that was concealed by distance from his companion. Without concert, therefore, Roswell and Daggett came to the same general conclusions, and waited patiently.

The day came at last, cold and dreary, though not altogether without the relief of an air that blew from regions far warmer than the ocean over which it was now travelling. Then the two schooners became visible from each other, and Roswell saw the jeopardy of Daggett, and Daggett saw the jeopardy of Roswell. The vessels were little more than a mile apart, but the situation of the Vineyard Lion was much the most critical. She had made fast to the floe, but her support itself was in a steady and most imposing motion. As soon as Roswell saw the manner in which his consort was surrounded, and the very threatening aspect of the danger that pressed upon him, his first impulse was to hasten to him, with a party of his own people, to offer any assistance he could give. After looking at the ice immediately around his own craft, where all seemed to be right, he called over the names of six of his men, ordered them to eat a warm breakfast, and to prepare to accompany him.

In twenty minutes Roswell was leading his little party across the ice, each man carrying an axe, or some other implement that it was supposed might be of use. It was by no means difficult to proceed; for the surface of the

floe, one seemingly more than a league in extent, was quite smooth, and the snow on it was crusted to a strength that would have borne a team.

"The water between the ice and the rocks is a much narrower strip than I had thought," said Roswell, to his constant attendant, Stimson. "Here, it does not appear to be a hundred yards in width!"

"Nor is it, sir—whew—this trotting in so cold a climate makes a man puff like a whale blowing — but, Captain Gar'ner, that schooner will be cut in two before we can get to her. Look, sir; the floe has reached the rocks already, quite near her; and it does not stop the drift at all, seemingly."

Roswell made no reply; the state of the Vineyard Lion did appear to be much more critical than he had previously imagined. Until he came nearer to the land, he had formed no notion of the steady power with which the field was setting down on the rocks on which the broken fragments were now creeping like creatures endowed with life. Occasionally, there would be loud disruptions, and the movement of the floe would become more rapid; then, again, a sort of pause would succeed, and for a moment the approaching party felt a gleam of hope. But all expectations of this sort were doomed to be disappointed.

"Look, sir!" exclaimed Stimson—"she went down afore it twenty fathoms at that one set. She must be awful near the rocks, sir!"

All the men now stopped. They knew they were powerless; and intense anxiety rendered them averse to move. Attention appeared to interfere with their walking on the ice; and each held his breath in expectation. They saw that the schooner, then less than a cable's length from them, was close to the rocks; and the next shock, if anything like the last, must overwhelm her. To their astonishment, instead of being nipped, the schooner rose by a stately movement that was not without grandeur, upheld by broken cakes that had got beneath her bottom, and fairly reached the shelf of rocks almost unharmed. Not a man had left her; but there she was, placed on the shore, some twenty feet above the surface of the sea, on rocks worn smooth by the action of the waves! Had the season been propitious, and did the injury stop here, it might have been possible to get the craft into the water again, and still carry her to America.

But the floe was not yet arrested. Cake succeeded cake, one riding over another, until a wall of ice rose along the shore, that Roswell and his companions, with all their activity and courage, had great difficulty in crossing. They succeeded in getting over it, however; but when they reached the unfortunate schooner, she was literally buried. The masts were broken, the sails torn, rigging scattered, and sides stove. The Sea Lion of Martha's Vineyard was a worthless wreck—worthless as to all purposes but that of being converted into materials for a smaller craft, or to be used as fuel.

All this had been done in ten minutes! Then it was that the vast superiority of nature over the resources of man made itself apparent. The people of the two vessels stood aghast with this sad picture of their own insignificance before their eyes. The crew of the wreck, it is true, had escaped without difficulty; the movement having been as slow and steady as it was irresistible. But there they were, in the clothes they had on, with all their effects buried under piles of ice that were already thirty or forty feet in height.

"She looks as if she was built there, Gar'ner!" Daggett coolly observed, as he stood regarding the scene with eyes as intently riveted on the wreck as human organs were ever fixed on any object. "Had a man told me this *could* happen, I would not have believed him!"

"Had she been a three−decker, this ice would have treated her in the same way. There is a force in such a field that walls of stone could not withstand."

"Captain Gar'ner—Captain Gar'ner," called out Stimson, hastily; "we'd better go back, sir; our own craft is in danger. She is drifting fast in towards the cape, and may reach it afore we can get to her!"

Sure enough, it was so. In one of the changes that are so unaccountable among the ice, the floe had taken a sudden and powerful direction towards the entrance of the Great Bay. It was probably owing to the circumstance that the inner field had forced its way past the cape, and made room for its neighbour to follow. A few of Daggett's people, with Daggett himself, remained to see what might yet be saved from the wreck; but all the rest of the men started for the cape, towards which the Oyster Pond craft was now directly setting. The distance was less than a league; and, as yet, there was not much snow on the rocks. By taking an upper shelf, it was possible to make pretty good progress; and such was the manner of Roswell's present march.

It was an extraordinary sight to see the coast along which our party was hastening, just at that moment. As the cakes of ice were broken from the field, they were driven upward by the vast pressure from without, and the

whole line of the shore seemed as if alive with creatures that were issuing from the ocean to clamber on the rocks. Roswell had often seen that very coast peopled with seals, as it now appeared to be in activity with fragments of ice, that were writhing, and turning, and rising, one upon another, as if possessed of the vital principle.

In half an hour Roswell and his party reached the house. The schooner was then less than half a mile from the spot, still setting in, along with the outer field, but not nipped. So far from being in danger of such a calamity, the little basin in which she lay had expanded, instead of closing; and it would have been possible to handle a quick−working craft in it, under her canvass. An exit, however, was quite out of the question; there being no sign of any passage to or from that icy dock. There the craft still lay, anchored to the weather−floe, while the portion of her crew which remained on board was as anxiously watching the coast as those who were on the coast watched her. At first, Roswell gave his schooner up; but on closer examination found reason to hope that she might pass the rocks, and enter the inner, rather than the Great, Bay.

CHAPTER VIII.

"To prayer;—for the glorious sun is gone,
And the gathering darkness of night comes on;
Like a curtain from God's kind hand it flows,
To shade the couch where his children repose.
Then kneel, while the watching stars are bright,
And give your last thoughts to the guardian of night."

Ware.

Desolate, indeed, and nearly devoid of hope, had the situation of our sealers now become. It was mid−day, and it was freezing everywhere in the shade. A bright genial sun was shedding its glorious rays on the icy panorama; but it was so obliquely as to be of hardly any use in dispelling the frosts. Far as the eye could see, even from the elevation of the cape, there was nothing but ice, with the exception of that part of the Great Bay into which the floe had not yet penetrated. To the southward, there stood clustering around the passage a line of gigantic bergs, placed like sentinels, as if purposely to stop all egress in that direction. The water had lost its motion in the shift of wind, and new ice had formed over the whole bay, as was evident by a white sparkling line that preceded the irresistible march of the floe.

As Roswell gazed on this scene, serious doubts darkened his mind as to his escaping from this frozen chain until the return of another summer. It is true that a south wind might possibly produce a change, and carry away the blockading mass; but every moment rendered this so much the less probable. Winter, or what would be deemed winter in most regions, was already setting in; and should the ice really become stationary in and around the group, all hope of its moving must vanish for the next eight months.

Daggett reached the house about an hour before sunset. He had succeeded in cutting a passage through the ice as far as the cabin−door of his unfortunate schooner, when there was no difficulty in descending into the interior parts of the vessel. The whole party came in staggering under heavy loads. Pretty much as a matter of course, each man brought his own effects. Clothes, tobacco, rum, small−stores, bedding, quadrants, and similar property, was that first attended to. At that moment, little was thought of the skins and oil. The cargo was neglected, while the minor articles had been eagerly sought.

Roswell was on board his own schooner, now again in dangerous proximity to the cape. She was steadily setting in, when Daggett rejoined him. The crew of the lost vessel remained in the house, where they lighted a fire and deposited their goods, returning to the wreck for another load, taking the double sets of wheels along with them. When the two masters met, they conferred together earnestly, receiving into their councils such of the officers as were on board. The security of the remaining vessel was now all−important; and it was not to be concealed that she was in imminent jeopardy. The course taken by the floe was directly towards the most rugged part of Cape Hazard; and the rate of the movement such as to threaten a very speedy termination of the matter. There was one circumstance, however, and only that one, which offered a single chance of escape. The opening around the schooner still existed in part, about half of it having been lost in the collision with the outermost point of the rocks. It was this species of vacuum that, by removing all resistance at that particular spot, indeed, which had given the field its most dangerous cant, turning the movement of the vessel towards the rocks. The chance, therefore, existed in the possibility— and it was little more than a bare possibility — of moving the schooner in that small area of open water, and of taking her far enough south to clear the most southern extremity of the wall of stone that protected the cove. As yet, this open water did not extend far enough to admit of the schooner's being taken to the point in question; but it was slowly tending in that direction, and did not the basin close altogether ere that desirable object was achieved, the vessel might yet be saved. In order, however, to do this, it would be necessary to cut a sort of dock or slip in the ice of the cove, into which the craft might shoot, as a place of refuge. Once within the cove, fairly behind the point of the rocks, there would be perfect safety; if suffered to drift to the southward of that shelter, this schooner would probably be lost like her consort, and very much in the same manner.

Gardiner now sent a gang of hands to the desired point, armed with saws, and the slip was commenced. The

ice in the cove was still only two or three inches thick, and the work went bravely on. Instead of satisfying himself with cutting a passage merely behind the point of rock, Hazard opened one quite up into the cove, to the precise place where the schooner had been so long at anchor. Just as the sun was setting, the crisis arrived. So heavy had been the movement towards the rocks, that Roswell saw he could delay no longer. Were he to continue where he was, a projection on the cape would prevent his passage to the entrance of the cove; he would be shut in, and he might be certain that the Sea Lion would be crushed as the floe pressed home upon the shore. The ice−anchors were cut out accordingly, the jib was hoisted, and the schooner wore short round on her heel. The space between the floe and the projection in the rocks just named, did not now exceed a hundred feet; and it was lessening fast. Much more room existed on each side of this particular excrescence in the rugged coast, the space north being still considerable, while that to the southward might be a hundred yards in width; the former of these areas being owing to the form of the basin, and the latter to the shape of the shore.

In the first of the basins named, the schooner wore short round on her heel, her foresail being set to help her. A breathless moment passed as she ran down towards the narrow strait. It was quickly reached, and that none too soon; the opening now not exceeding sixty feet. The yards of the vessel almost brushed the rocks in passing; but she went clear. As soon as in the lower basin, as one might call it, the jib and foresail were taken in, and the head of the mainsail was got on the craft. This helped her to luff up towards the slip, which she reached under sufficient head−way fairly to enter it. Lines were thrown to the people on the ice, who soon hauled the schooner up to the head of her frozen dock. Three cheers broke spontaneously out of the throats of the men, as they thus achieved the step which assured them of the safety of the vessel, so far as the ice was concerned! In this way do we estimate our advantages and disadvantages, by comparison. In the abstract, the situation of the sealers was still sufficiently painful; though compared with what it would have been with the other schooner wrecked, it was security itself.

By this time it was quite dark; and a day of excitement and fatigue required a night of rest. After supping, the men turned in; the Vineyarders mostly in the house, where they occupied their old bunks. When the moon rose, the party from the wreck arrived, with their carts well loaded, and themselves half frozen, notwithstanding their toil. In a short time, all were buried in sleep.

When Roswell Gardiner came on deck next morning, his first glance told him how little was the chance of his party's returning north that season. The strange floe had driven into the Great Bay, completely covering its surface, lining the shores far and near with broken and glittering cakes of ice; and, as it were, hermetically sealing the place against all egress. New ice, an inch or two thick, or even six or eight inches thick, might have been sawed through, and a passage cut even for a league, should it be necessary. Such things were sometimes done, and great as would have been the toil, our sealers would have attempted it, in preference to running the risk of passing a winter in that region. But almost desperate as would have been even that source of refuge, the party was completely cut off from its possession. To think of sawing through ice as thick as that of the floe, for any material distance, would be like a project to tunnel the Alps.

Melancholy was the meeting between Roswell and Daggett that morning. The former was too manly and generous to indulge in reproaches, else might he well have told the last that all this was owing to him. There is a singular propensity in us all to throw the burthen of our own blunders on the shoulders of other folk. Roswell had a little of this weakness, overlooking the fact that he was his own master; and as he had come to the group by himself, he ought to have left it in the same manner, as soon as his own particular task was accomplished. But Roswell did not see this quite as distinctly as he saw the fact that Daggett's detentions and indirect appeals to his better feelings had involved him in all these difficulties. Still, while thus he felt, he made no complaint.

All hope of getting north that season now depended on the field−ice's drifting away from the Great Bay before it got fairly frozen in. So jammed and crammed with it did every part of the bay appear to be, however, that little could be expected from that source of relief. This Daggett admitted in the conversation he held with Roswell, as soon as the latter joined him on the rocky terrace beneath the house.

"The wisest thing we can do, then," replied our hero, "will be to make as early preparations as possible to meet the winter. If we are to remain here, a day gained now will be worth a week a month hence. If we should happily escape, the labour thus expended will not kill us."

"Quite true—very much as you say, certainly," answered Daggett, musing. "I was thinking as you came ashore, Gar'ner, if a lucky turn might not be made in this wise:— I have a good many skins in the wreck, you see, and you have a good deal of ile in your hold—now, by starting some of that ile, and pumping it out, and shooking

the casks, room might be made aboard of you for all my skins. I think we could run all of the last over on them wheels in the course of a week."

"Captain Daggett, it is by yielding so much to your skins that we have got into all this trouble."

"Skins, measure for measure, in the way of tonnage, will bring a great deal more than ile."

Roswell smiled, and muttered something to himself, a little bitterly. He was thinking of the grievous disappointment and prolonged anxiety that it pained him to believe Mary would feel at his failure to return home at the appointed time; though it would probably have pained him more to believe she would not thus be disappointed and anxious. Here his displeasure, or its manifestation, ceased; and the young man turned his thoughts on the present necessities of his situation.

Daggett appearing very earnest on the subject of removing his skins before the snows came to impede the path, Roswell could urge no objection that would be likely to prevail; but his acquiescence was obtained by means of a hint from Stimson, who by this time had gained his officer's ear.

"Let him do it, Captain Gar'ner," said the boat−steerer, in an aside, speaking respectfully, but earnestly. "He'll never stow'em in our hold, this season at least; but they'll make excellent filling−in for the sides of this hut."

"You think then, Stephen, that we are likely to pass the winter here?"

"We are in the hands of Divine Providence, sir, which will do with us as seems the best in the eyes of never−failing wisdom. At all events, Captain Gar'ner, I think 'twill be safest to act at once as if we had the winter afore us. In my judgment, this house might be made a good deal more comfortable for us all, in such a case, than our craft; for we should not only have more room, but might have as many fires as we want, and more than we can find fuel for."

"Ay, there's the difficulty, Stephen. Where are we to find wood, throughout a polar winter, for even one fire?"

"We must be saving, sir, and thoughtful, and keep ourselves warm as much as we can by exercise. I have had a *t*aste of this once, in a small way, already; and know what ought to be done, in many partic'lars. In the first place, the men must keep themselves as clean as water will make them—dirt is a great helper of cold — and the water must be just as frosty as human natur' can bear it. This will set everything into actyve movement inside, and bring out warmth from the heart, as it might be. That's my principle of keeping warm, Captain Gar'ner."

"I dare say it may be a pretty good one, Stephen," answered Roswell, "and we'll bear it in mind. As for stoves we are well enough off, for there is one in the house, and a good large one it is; then, there is a stove in each cabin, and there are the two cambooses. If we had fuel for them all, I should feel no concern on the score of warmth."

"There's the wrack, sir. By cutting her up at once, we should get wood enough, in my judgment, to see it out."

Roswell made no reply; but he looked intently at the boat−steerer for half a minute. The idea was new to him; and the more he thought on the subject, the greater was the confidence it gave him in the result. Daggett, he well knew, would not consent to the mutilation of his schooner, wreck as it was, so long as the most remote hope existed of getting her again into the water. The tenacity with which this man clung to property was like that which is imputed to the life of the cat; and it was idle to expect any concessions from him on a subject like that. Nevertheless, necessity is a hard master; and if the question were narrowed down to one of burning the materials of a vessel that was in the water, and in good condition, and of burning those of one that was out of the water, with holes cut through her bottom in several places, and otherwise so situated as to render repairs extremely difficult, if not impossible, even Daggett would be compelled to submit to circumstances.

It was accordingly suggested to the people of the Vineyard Lion that they could do no better than to begin at once to remove everything they could come at, and which could be transported from the wreck to the house. As there was little to do on board the vessel afloat, her crew cheerfully offered to assist in this labour. The days were shortening sensibly and fast, and no time was to be lost, the distance being so great as to make two trips a day a matter of great labour. No sooner was the plan adopted, therefore, than steps were taken to set about its execution.

It is unnecessary for us to dwell minutely on everything that occurred during the succeeding week or ten days. The wind shifted to south−west the very day that the Sea Lion got back into her little harbour; and this seemed to put a sudden check on the pressure of the vast floe. Nevertheless, there was no counter−movement, the ice remaining in the Great Bay seemingly as firmly fastened as if it had originally been made there. Notwithstanding this shift of the wind to a cold point of the compass, the thermometer rose, and it thawed freely about the middle of the day, in all places to which the rays of the sun had access. This enabled the men to work with more comfort

than they could have done in the excessively severe weather; as it was found that respiration became difficult when it was so very cold.

Access was now obtained to the wreck by cutting a regular passage to the main hatch through the ice. The schooner stood nearly upright, sustained by fragments of the floe; and there were extensive caverns all around her, produced by the random manner in which the cakes had come up out of their proper element like so many living things. Among these caverns one might have wandered for miles without once coming out into the open air, though they were cold and cheerless, and had little to attract the adventurer after the novelty was abated. In rising from the water, the schooner had been roughly treated; but once sustained by the ice, her transit had been easy and tolerably safe. Several large cakes lay on or over her, sustained more by other cakes that rested on the rocks than by the timbers of the vessel herself. These cakes formed a sort of roof, and as they did not drip, they served to make a shelter against the wind; for, at the point where the wreck lay, the south−west gales came howling round the base of the mountain, piercing the marrow itself in the bones. At the hut it was very different. There the heights made a lee that extended all over the cape, and for some distance to the westward; while the whole power the sun possessed in that high latitude was cast, very obliquely it is true, but clearly, and without any other drawback than its position in the ecliptic, fairly on the terrace, the hut above, and the rocks around it. On the natural terrace, indeed, it was still pleasant to walk and work, and even to sit for a few hours in the middle of the day; for winter was not yet come in earnest in that frozen world.

One of Roswell's first objects was to transport most of the eatables from the wreck; for he foresaw the need there would be for everything of the sort. Neither vessel had laid in a stock of provisions for a longer period than about twelve months, of which nearly half were now gone. This allowance applied to salted meats and bread, which are usually regarded as the base of a ship's stores. There were several barrels of flour, a few potatoes, a large quantity of onions, a few barrels of corn−meal, or `injin,' as it is usually termed in American parlance, an entire barrel of pickled cucumbers, another about half full of cabbage preserved in the same way, and an entire barrel of molasses. In addition, there was a cask of whiskey, a little wine and brandy to be used medicinally, sugar, brown, whitey−brown and browny−white, and a pretty fair allowance of tea and coffee; the former being a Hyson−skin, and the latter San Domingo of no very high quality. Most of these articles were transported from the wreck to the house, in the course of the few days that succeeded, though Daggett insisted on a certain portion of the supplies being left in his stranded craft. Not until this was done would Roswell listen to any proposal of Daggett's to transfer the skins. Twice during these few days, indeed, did the Vineyard master come to a pause in his proceedings, as the weather grew milder, and gleams of a hope of being able yet to get away that season crossed his mind. On the last of these occasions of misgiving, Roswell was compelled to lead his brother master up on the plain of the island, to an elevation of some three hundred feet above the level of the ocean, and more than half that distance higher than the house, and point out to him a panorama of field−ice that the eye could not command. Until that vast plain opened, or became riven by the joint action of the agitated ocean and the warmth of a sun from which the rays did not glance away from the frozen surface, like light obliquely received, and as obliquely reflected from a mirror, it was useless to think of releasing even the uninjured vessel; much less that which lay riven and crushed on the rocks.

"Were every cake of this ice melted into water, Daggett," Roswell continued, "it would not float off your schooner. The best supplied ship−yard in America could hardly furnish the materials for ways to launch her; and I never knew of a vessel's being dropped into the water some twenty feet nearly perpendicular."

"I don't know that," answered Daggett, stoutly. "See what they're doing now−a−days, and think nothing of it. I have seen a whole row of brick houses turned round by the use of jack−screws; and one building actually taken down a hill much higher than the distance you name. Commodore Rodgers has just hauled a heavy frigate out of the water, and means to put her back again, when he has done with her. What has been done once can be done twice. I do not like giving up 'till I'm forced to it."

"That is plain enough, Captain Daggett," returned Roswell, smiling. "That you are game, no one can deny; but it will all come to nothing. Neither *C*ommodore Rodgers nor Commodore anybody else could put your craft into the water again without something to do it with."

"You think it would be asking too much to take your schooner, and go across to the main next season a'ter timber to make ways?" put in Daggett, inquiringly. "She stands up like a church, and nothing would be easier than to lay down ways under her bottom."

"Or more difficult than to make them of any use, after you had put them there. No, no, my good sir, you must think no more of this; though it may be possible to make a cover for the cargo, and return and recover it all, by freighting a craft from Rio, on our way north."

Daggett gave a quick, inquisitive glance at his companion, and Roswell's colour mounted to his cheeks; for, while he really thought the plan just mentioned quite feasible, he was conscious of foreseeing that it might be made the means of throwing off his troublesome companion, as he himself drew near to the West Indies and their keys.

This terminated the discussion for the time. Both of the masters busied themselves in carrying on the duty which had now fallen into a regular train. As much of the interest of what is to be related will depend on what was done in these few days, it may be well to be a little more explicit in stating the particulars.

The reader will understand that the house, of which so much had already been made by our mariners, was nothing but a shell. It had a close roof, one that effectually turned water, and its siding, though rough, was tight and rather thicker than is usual; being made of common inch boards, roughly planed, and originally painted red. There were four very tolerable windows, and a decent substantial floor of planed plank. All this had been well put together, rather more attention than is often bestowed on such structures having been paid by the carpenter to the cracks and joints on account of the known sharpness of the climate, even in the warm months. Still, all this made a mere shell. The marrow−freezing winds which would soon come — had indeed come — might be arrested by such a covering, it is true; but the little needle−like particles of the frost would penetrate such a shelter, as their counterparts of steel pierce cloth. It was a matter of life and death, therefore, to devise means to exclude the cold, in order that the vital heat might be kept in circulation during the tremendous season that was known to be approaching.

Stimson had much to say on the subject of the arrangements taken. He was the oldest man in the two crews, and the most experienced sealer. It happened that he had once passed a winter at Orange Harbour, in the immediate vicinity of Cape Horn. It is true, that is an inhabited country, if the poor degraded creatures who dwell there can be termed inhabitants; and has its trees and vegetation, such as they are. The difference between Orange Harbour and Sealer's Land, in this respect, must be something like that which all the travelling world knows to exist between a winter's residence at the Hospital of the Great St. Bernard, and a winter's residence at one of the villages a few leagues lower down the mountain. At Sealer's Land, if there was literally no vegetation, there was so little as scarcely to deserve the name. Of fuel there was none, with the exception of that which had been brought there. Nevertheless, the experience of a winter passed at such a place as Orange Harbour, must count for a great deal. Cape Horn is in nearly 56°, and Sealer's Land—we may as well admit this much — is, by no means, 10° to the southward of that. There must be a certain general resemblance in the climates of the two places; and he who had gone through a winter at one of them, must have had a very tolerable foretaste of what was to be suffered at the other. This particular experience, therefore, added to his general knowledge, as well as to his character, contributed largely to Stephen's influence in the consultations that took place between the two masters, at which he was usually present.

"It's useless to be playing off, in an affair like this, Captain Gar'ner," said Stephen, on one occasion. "Away from this spot all the navies of the 'arth could not now carry us, until God's sun comes back in his course, to drive the winter away afore it. I have my misgivin's, gentlemen, touching this great floe that has got jammed in among these islands, whether it will ever move ag'in; for I don't think its coming in here is a common matter."

"In which case, what would become of us, Stephen?"

"Why, sir, we should be at God's marcy, then, jist as we be now; or would be, was we on the east eend itself. I won't say that two resolute and strong arms might not cut a way through for one little craft like ourn, if they had summer fully afore 'em, and know'd they was a−workin' towards a fri'nd instead of towards an inimy. There's a great deal in the last; every man is encouraged when he thinks he's nearer to the eend of his journey a'ter a hard day's work, than he was when he set out in the mornin'. But to undertake sich an expedition at this season, would be sartain destruction. No, sir; all we can do, now, is to lay up for the winter, and that with great care and prudence. We must turn ourselves into so many ants, and show their forethought and care."

"What would you recommend as our first step, Stimson?" asked Daggett, who had been an attentive listener.

"I would advise, sir, to begin hardening the men as soon as I could. We have too much fire in the stove, both for our stock of wood and for the good of the people. Make the men sleep under fewer clothes, and don't let any

on 'em hang about the galley fire, as some on 'em love to do, even now, most desperately. Them 'ere men will be good for nothin' ten weeks hence, unless they're taken off the fires, as a body would take off a pot or a kettle, and are set out to harden."

"This is a process that may be easier advised than performed, perhaps," Roswell quietly observed.

"Don't you believe that, Captain Gar'ner. I've known the most shiverin', smoke−dried hands in a large crew, hardened and brought to an edge, a'ter a little trouble, as a body would temper an axe with steel. The first thing to be done is to make 'em scrub one another every mornin' in cold water. This gives a life to the skin that acts much the same as a suit of clothes. Yes, gentlemen; put a fellow in a tub for a minute or two of a mornin', and you may do almost anything you please with him all day a'terwards. One pail of water is as good as a pee−jacket. And above all things, keep the stoves clear. The cooks should be told not to drive their fires so hard; and we can do without the stove in the sleeping−room a great deal better now than most on us think. It will help to save much wood, if we begin at once to caulk and thicken our siding, and make the house warmer. Was the hut in a good state, we might do without any other fire than that in the camboose for two months yet."

Such was the general character of Stephen's counsel, and very good advice it was. Not only did Roswell adopt the scrubbing process, which enabled him to throw aside a great many clothes in the course of a week, but he kept aloof from the fires, to harden, as Stimson had called it. That which was thus enforced by example was additionally enjoined by precept. Several large, hulking, idle fellows, who greatly loved the fire, were driven away from it by shame; and the heat was allowed to diffuse itself more equally through the building.

Any one who has ever had occasion to be a witness of the effect of the water−cure process in enabling even delicate women to resist cold and damp, may form some notion of the great improvement that was made among our sealers, by adopting and rigidly adhering to Stimson's cold water and no−fire system. Those who had shivered at the very thoughts of ice−water, soon dabbled in it like young ducks; and there was scarcely an hour in the day when the half−hogshead, that was used as a bath, had not its tenant. This tub was placed on the ice of the cove, with a tent over it; and a well was made through which the water was drawn. Of course, the axe was in great request, a new hole being required each morning, and sometimes two or three times in the course of the day. The effect of these ablutions was very soon apparent. The men began to throw aside their pee−jackets, and worked in their ordinary clothing, which was warm and suited to a high latitude, with a spirit and vigour at which they were themselves surprised. The fire in the camboose sufficed as yet; and, at evening, the pee−jacket, with the shelter of the building, the crowded rooms, and the warm meals, for a long time enabled them to get on without consuming anything in the largest stove. Stimson's plans for the protection of the hut, moreover, soon began to tell. The skins, sails, and much of the rigging, were brought over from the wreck; by means of the carts, so long as there was no snow, and by means of sledges when the snow fell and rendered wheeling difficult. Luckily, the position of the road along the rocks caused the upper snow to melt a little at noon−day, while it froze again, firmer and firmer, each night. The crust soon bore, and it was found that the sledges furnished even better means of transportation than the wheels.

There was a little controversy about the use of the skins, Daggett continuing to regard them as cargo. Necessity and numbers prevailed in the end, and the whole building was lined with them, four or five deep, by placing them inside of beckets made of the smaller rigging. By stuffing these skins compactly, within ropes so placed as to keep all snug, a very material defence against the entrance of cold was interposed. But this was not all. Inside of the skins Stimson got up hangings of canvass, using the sails of the wreck for that purpose. It was not necessary to cut these sails—Daggett would not have suffered it — but they were suspended, and crammed into openings, and otherwise so arranged as completely to conceal and shelter every side, as well as the ceilings of both rooms. Portions were fitted with such address as to fall before the windows, to which they formed very warm if not very ornamental curtains. Stephen, however, induced Roswell to order outside shutters to be made and hung; maintaining that one such shutter would soon count as a dozen cords of wood.

Much of the wood, too, was brought over from the wreck; and that which had been carelessly abandoned on the rocks was all collected and piled carefully and conveniently near the outer door of the hut; which door, by the way, looked inward, or towards the rocks in the rear of the building, where it opened on a sort of yard, that Roswell hoped to be able to keep clear of ice and snow throughout the winter. He might as well have expected to melt the glaciers of Grindewald by lighting a fire on the meadows at their base!

Stephen had another project to protect the house, and to give facilities for moving outside, when the winter

should be at the hardest. In his experience at Orange Harbour, he had found that great inconvenience was sustained in consequence of the snow's melting around the building he inhabited, which came from the warmth of the fire within To avoid this, a very serious evil, he had spare sails of heavy canvass laid across the roof of the warehouse, a building of no great height, and secured them to the rocks below by means of anchors, kedges, and various other devices; in some instances, by lashings to projections in the cliffs. Spare spars, leaning from the roof, supported this tent−like covering, and props beneath sustained the spars. This arrangement was made on only two sides of the building, one end, and the side which looked to the north; materials failing before the whole place was surrounded. The necessity for admitting light, too, admonished the sealers of the inexpediency of thus shrouding all their windows. The bottom of this tent was only ten feet from the side of the house, which gave it greater security than if it had been more horizontal, while it made a species of verandah in which exercise could be taken with greater freedom than in the rooms. Everything was done to strengthen the building in all its parts that the ingenuity of seamen could suggest; and particularly to prevent the tent−verandah from caving in.

Stephen intimated that their situation possessed one great advantage, as well as disadvantage. In consequence of standing on a shelf with a lower terrace so close as to be within the cast of a shovel, the snow might be thrown below, and the hut relieved. The melted snow, too, would be apt to take the same direction, under the law that governs the course of all fluids. The disadvantage was in the barrier of rock behind the hut, which, while it served admirably to break the piercing south winds, would very naturally tend to make high snow−banks in drifting storms.

CHAPTER IX.

"My foot on the ice−berg has lighted,
When hoarse the wild winds veer about;
My eye when the bark is benighted,
Sees the lamp of the light−house go out.
I'm the sea−bird, sea−bird, sea−bird,
Lone looker on despair;
The sea−bird, sea−bird, sea−bird,
The only witness there."
Brainard.

Two months passed rapidly away in the excitement and novelty of the situation and pursuits of the men. In that time, all was done that the season would allow; the house being considered as complete, and far from uncomfortable. The days had rapidly lessened in length, and the nights increased proportionably, until the sun was visible only for a few hours at a time, and then merely passing low along the northern horizon. The cold increased in proportion, though the weather varied almost as much in that high latitude as it does in our own. It had ceased to thaw much, however; and the mean of the thermometer was not many degrees above zero. Notwithstanding this low range of the mercury, the men found that they were fast getting acclimated, and that they could endure a much greater intensity of cold than they had previously supposed possible. As yet, there had been nothing to surprise natives of New York and New England, there rarely occurring a winter in which weather quite as cold as any they had yet experienced in the antarctic sea, does not set in, and last for some little time. Even while writing this very chapter of our legend, here in the mountains of Otsego, one of these Siberian visits has been paid to our valley. For the last three days the thermometer has ranged, at sunrise, between 17° and 22° below zero; though there is every appearance of a thaw, and we may have the mercury up to 40° above, in the course of the next twenty−four hours. Men accustomed to such transitions, and such extreme cold, are not easily laid up or intimidated.

A great deal of snow fell about this particular portion of the year; more, indeed, than at a later period. This snow produced the greatest inconvenience; for it soon became so deep as to form high banks around the house, and to fill all the customary haunts of the men. Still, there were places that were in a great measure exempt from this white mantle. The terrace immediately below the hut, which has so often been mentioned, was one of these bare spots. It was so placed as to be swept by both the east and the west winds, which generally cleared it of everything like snow, as fast as it fell; and this more effectually than could be done by a thousand brooms. The level of rock usually travelled in going to or from the wreck, was another of these clear places. It was a sort of shelf, too narrow to admit of the snow's banking, and too much raked by the winds that commonly accompanied snow, to suffer the last to lodge to any great depth. Snow there was, with a hard crust, as has already been mentioned; but it was not snow ten or fifteen feet deep, as occurred in many other places. There were several points, however, where banks had formed, even on this ledge, through which the men were compelled to cut their way by the use of shovels; an occupation that gave them exercise, and contributed to keep them in health, if it was of no other service. It was found that the human frame could not endure one−half the toil, in that low state of the mercury, that it could bear in one a few degrees higher.

Daggett had not, by any means, abandoned his craft, as much as he had permitted her to be dismantled. Every day or two he had some new expedient for getting the schooner off in the spring; though all who heard them were perfectly convinced of their impracticableness. This feeling induced him to cause his own men to keep open the communication; and scarce a day passed in which he did not visit the poor unfortunate craft. Nor was the place without an interest of a very peculiar sort. It has been said that the fragments of ice, some of which were more than a hundred feet in diameter, and all of which were eight or ten feet in thickness, had been left on their edges, inclining in a way to form caverns that extended a great distance. Now, it so happened, that just around the wreck the cakes were so distributed as to intercept the first snows which filled the outer passages, got to be hardened, and covered anew by fresh storms, thus interposed an effectual barrier to the admission of any more of the frozen

element within the ice. The effect was to form a vast range of natural galleries amid the cakes, that were quite clear of any snow but that which had adhered to their surfaces, and which offered little or no impediment to motion — nay, which rather aided it, by rendering the walking less slippery. As the deck of the schooner had been cleared, leaving an easy access to all its entrances, cabin, hold, and forecastle, this put the Vineyard Lion under cover, while it admitted of all her accommodations being used. A pontion of her wood had been left in her, it will be remembered, as well as her camboose. The last was got into the cabin, and Daggett, attended by two or three of his hands, would pass a good deal of his time there. One reason given for this distribution of the forces, was the greater room it allowed those who remained at the hut for motion. The deck of this vessel being quite clear, it offered a very favourable spot for exercise; better, in fact, than the terrace beneath the hut, being quite sheltered from the winds, and much warmer than it had been originally, or ever since the heavy fall of snows commenced. Daggett paced his quarter−deck hour after hour, almost deluding himself with the expectation of sailing for home as soon as the return of summer would permit him to depart.

Around the hut the snow early made vast embankments. Every one accustomed to the action of this particular condition of one of the great elements, will understand that a bend in the rocks outward, or a curve inward, must necessarily affect the manner in which these banks were formed. The wind did not, by any means, blow from any one point of the compass; though the south−western cliffs might be almost termed the weather−side of the island, so much more frequently did the gales come from that quarter than from any other. The cape where the cove lay, and where the house had been set up, being at the north−eastern point, and much protected by the high table−land in its rear, it occupied the warmest situation in the whole region. The winds that swept most of the north shore, but which, owing to a curvature in its formation, did not often blow home to the hut, even when they whistled along the terrace only a hundred feet beneath and more salient, were ordinarily from the south−west outside; though they got a more westerly inclination by following the land under the cliffs.

A bank of snow may be either a cause of destruction or a source of comfort. Of course, a certain degree of cold must exist wherever snow is to be found; but, unless in absolute contact with the human body, it does not usually affect the system beyond a certain point. On the other hand, it often breaks the wind, and it has been known to form a covering to flocks, houses, &c., that has contributed essentially to their warmth. We incline to the opinion that if one slept in a cavern formed in the snow, provided he could keep himself dry, and did not come in absolute contact with the element, he would not find his quarters very uncomfortable, so long as he had sufficient clothing to confine the animal warmth near his person. Now, our sealers enjoyed some such advantage as this; though not literally in the same degree. Their house was not covered with snow, though a vast bank was already formed quite near it, and a good deal had begun to pile against the tent. Singular as it may seem, on the east end of the building, and on the south front, which looked in towards the cliff next the cove, there was scarcely any snow at all. This was in part owing to the constant use of the shovel and broom, but more so to the currents of air, which usually carried everything of so light a nature as a flake to more quiet spots, before it was suffered to settle on the ground.

Roswell early found, what his experience as an American might have taught him, that the *melting* of the snow, in consequence of the warmth of the fires, caused much more inconvenience than the snow itself. The latter, when dry, was easily got along with; but, when melted in the day, and converted into icicles at night, it became a most unpleasant and not altogether a safe neighbour; inasmuch as there was really danger from the sort of damp atmosphere it produced.

The greatest ground of Roswell Gardiner's apprehensions, however, was for the supply of fuel. Much of that brought from home had been fairly used in the camboose, and in the stove originally set up in the hut. Large as that stock had been, a very sensible inroad had been made upon it; and, according to a calculation he had made, the wood regularly laid in would not hold out much more than half the time that it would be indispensable to remain on the island. This was a grave circumstance, and one that demanded very serious consideration. Without fuel it would be impossible to survive; no hardening process being sufficient to fortify the human frame to a degree that would resist the influence of an antarctic winter.

From the moment it was probable the party would be obliged to pass the winter at Sealer's Land, therefore, Roswell had kept a vigilant eye on the wood. Stimson had, more than once, spoken to him on the subject, and with great prudence.

"Warmth must be kept among us," said the old boat−steerer, "or there will be no hope for the stoutest man in either crew. We've a pretty good stock of coffee, and that is better, any day, than all the rum and whiskey that was

ever distilled. Good hot coffee of a morning will put life into us the coldest day that ever come out of either pole; and they do say the south is colder than the north, though I never could understand why it should be so."

"You surely understand the reason why it grows warmer as we approach the equator, and colder as we go from it, whether we go north or south?"

Stimson assented; though had the truth been said, he would have been obliged to confess that he knew no more than the facts.

"All sailors know sich things, Captain Gar'ner; though they know it with very different degrees of exper'ence. But few get as far south as I have been, to pass a winter. A good pot of hot coffee of a morning will go as far as a second pee−jacket, if a man has to go out into the open air when the weather is at the hardest."

"Luckily, our small stores are quite abundant, and we are better off for coffee and sugar than for anything else. I laid in of both liberally when we were at Rio."

"Yes, Rio is a good place for the articles. But coffee must be *hot* to do a fellow much good in one of these highlatitude winters; and to be hot there must be fuel to heat it."

"I am afraid the wood will not hold out much more than half the time we shall be here. Fortunately, we had a large supply; but the other schooner was by no means as well furnished with fuel as she ought to have been for such a voyage."

"Well, sir, I suppose you know what must be done next in such a case. Without *warm* food, men can no more live through one of these winters, than they can live without food at all. If the Vineyard craft has no proper fuel aboard her, we must make fuel of her."

Roswell regarded Stephen with fixed attention for some time. The idea was presented to his mind for the second time, and he greatly liked it.

"That might do," he said; "though it will not be an easy matter to make Captain Dagget consent to such a thing."

"Let him go two or three mornings without his warm meal and hot coffee," answered Stimson, shaking his head, "and he will be glad enough to come into the scheme. A man soon gets willing to set fire to anything that will burn in such a climate. A notion has been floating about in my mind, Captain Gar'ner, that I've several times thought I would mention to you. D'ye think, sir, any benefit could be made of that volcano over the bay, should the worst get to the worst with us?"

"I have thought of the same thing, Stephen; though I fear in vain. I suppose no useful heat can be given out there, until one gets too near the bad air to breathe it. What you say about breaking up the other schooner, however, is worthy of consideration; and I will speak to Captain Daggett about it."

Roswell was as good as his word; and the Vineyard mariner met the proposal as one repels an injury. Never were our two masters so near a serious misunderstanding, as when Roswell suggested to Daggett the expediency of breaking up the wreck, now that the weather was endurarable, and the men could work with reasonable comfort and tolerable advantage.

"The man who puts an axe or a saw into that unfortunate craft," said Daggett, firmly, "I shall regard as an enemy. It is a hard enough bed that she lies on, without having her ribs and sides torn to pieces by hands."

This was the strange spirit in which Daggett continued to look at the condition of the wreck! It was true that the ice prevented his actually seeing the impossibility of his ever getting his schooner into the water again; but no man at all acquainted with mechanics, and who knew the paucity of means that existed on the island, could for a moment entertain the idle expectation that seemed to have got into the Vineyard−master's mind, unless subject to a species of one−idea infatuation. This infatuation, however, existed not only in Daggett's mind, but in some degree in those of his men. It is said that "in a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom;" and the axiom comes from an authority too venerable to be disputed. But it might, almost with equal justice, be said, that "in a multitude of counsellors there is folly;" for men are quite as apt to sustain each other in the wrong as in the right. The individual who would hesitate about advancing his fallacies and mistakes with a single voice, does not scruple to proclaim them on the hill−tops, when he finds other tongues to repeat his errors. Divine wisdom, foreseeing this conseqence of human weakness, has provided a church−catholic, and proceeding directly from its Great Head on earth, as the repository of those principles, facts, and laws, that it has deemed essential to the furtherance of its own scheme of moral government on earth; and yet we see audacious imitators starting up on every side, presuming in their ignorance, longing in their ambition, and envious in these longings, who do not

scruple to shout out upon the house−tops crudities over which knowledge wonders as it smiles, and humility weeps as it wonders. Such is man, when sustained by his fellows, in every interest of life; from religion, the highest of all, down to the most insignificant of his temporal concerns.

In this spirit did Daggett and his crew now feel and act. Roswell had early seen, with regret, that something like a feeling of party was getting up among the Vineyarders, who had all along regarded the better fortune of their neighbours with an ill−concealed jealousy. Ever since the shipwreck, however, this rivalry had taken a new and even less pleasant aspect. It was slightly hostile, and remarks had been occasionally made that sounded equivocally; as if the Vineyarders had an intention of separating from the other crew, and of living by themselves. It is probable, however, that all this was the fruit of disappointment; and that, at the bottom, nothing very serious was in contemplation. Daggett had permitted his people to aid in transporting most of the stores to the house; though a considerable supply had been left in the wreck. This last arrangement was made seemingly without any hostile design, but rather in furtherance of a plan to pass as much time as circumstances would allow, on board the stranded vessel. There was, in truth, a certain convenience in this scheme, that commended it to the good sense of all. So long as any portion of the Vineyarders could be made comfortable in the wreck, it was best they should remain there; for it saved the labour of transporting all the provisions, and made more room to circulate in and about the house. The necessity of putting so many casks, barrels and boxes within doors, had materially circumscribed the limits; and space was a great desideratum for several reasons, health in particular.

Roswell was glad, therefore, when any of the Vineyarders expressed a wish to go to the wreck, and to pass a few days there. With a view to encourage this disposition, as well as to ascertain how those fared who chose that abode, he paid Daggett a visit, and passed a night or two himself in the cabin of the craft. This experiment told him that it was very possible to exist there when the thermometer stood at zero; but, how it would do when ranging a great deal lower, he had his doubts. The cabin was small, and a very moderate fire in the camboose served to keep it reasonably warm; though Daggett, at all times a reasonable and reasoning man, when the "root of all evil" did not sorely beset him, came fully into his own views as to the necessity of husbanding the fuel, and of hardening the men. None of that close stewing over stoves, which is so common in America, and which causes one−half of the winter diseases of the climate, was tolerated in either gang. Daggett saw the prudence of Roswell's, or rather of Stimson's system, and fell into it freely, and with hearty good−will. It was during Gardiner's visit to the wreck that our two masters talked over their plans for the winter, while taking their exercise on the schooner's deck, each well muffled up, to prevent the frost from taking hold of the more exposed parts. Every one had a seal−skin cap, made in a way to protect the ears and most of the face; and our two masters were thus provided, in common with their men.

"I suppose that we are to consider this as pleasant winter weather," Roswell remarked, "the thermometer being down only at zero. Stimson tells me that even at Orange Harbour, the season he was there, they paid out mercury until it all got into the ball. A month or two hence, we may look out for the season of frosts, as the Injins call it. You will hardly think of staying out here, when the really hard weather sets in."

"I do not believe we shall feel the cold much more than we do now. This daily washing is a capital stove; for I find all hands say that, when it is once over, they feel like new men. As for me, I shall stick by my craft while there is a timber left in her to float!"

Roswell thought how absurd it was to cling thus to a useless mass of wood, and iron, and copper; but he said nothing on that subject.

"I am now sorry that we took over to the house so many of our supplies," Daggett continued, after a short pause. "I am afraid that many of them will have to be brought back again."

"That would hardly quit cost, Daggett; it would be better to come over and pass the heel of the winter with us, when the supplies get to be short here. As we eat, we make room in the hut, you know; and you will be so much the more comfortable. An empty pork−barrel was broken up for the camboose yesterday morning."

"We shall see — we shall see, Gar'ner. My men have got a notion that your people intend to break up this schooner for fuel, should they not keep an anchor−watch aboard her."

"Anchor−watch!" repeated Roswell, smiling. "It is well named—if there ever was an anchor−watch, you keep it here; for no ground−tackle will ever hold like this."

"We still think the schooner may be got off," Daggett said, regarding his companion inquiringly.

While the Vineyard−man had a certain distrust of his brother−master, he had also a high respect for his

fair−dealing propensities, and a strong disposition to put confidence in his good faith. The look that he now gave was, if possible, to read the real opinion of the other, in a countenance that seldom deceived.

"I shall be grateful to God, Captain Daggett," returned Roswell, after a short pause, "if we get through the long winter of this latitude, without burning too much of *both* craft, than will be for our good. Surely it were better to begin on that which is in the least serviceable condition?"

"I have thought this matter over, Gar'ner, with all my mind—have dreamt of it—slept on it—had it before me at all hours, and in all weathers; and, look at it as I will, it is full of difficulties. Will you agree to take in a half−cargo of my skins and iles next season, and make in all respects a joint v'y'ge of it, from home, home ag'in, if we'll consent to let this craft be burned?"

"It exceeds my power to make any such bargain. I have an owner who looks sharply after his property, and my crew are upon lays, like the people of all sealers. You ask too much; and you forget that, should I assume the same power over my own craft, as you still claim in this wreck, you might never find the means of getting away from the group at all. We are not obliged to receive you on board our schooner."

"I know you think, Gar'ner, that it will be impossible for us ever to get our craft off; but you overlook one thing that we may do—what is there to prevent our breaking her up, and of using the materials to make a smaller vessel; one of sixty tons say — in which we might get home, besides taking most of our skins?"

"I will not say *that* will be impossible; but I do say it will be very difficult. It would be wiser for you, in my judgment, to leave your cargo in the house, under the keeping of a few hands if you see fit, and go off with me. I will land you at Rio, where you can almost always find some small American craft to come south in, and pick up your leavings. If you choose that the men left behind should amuse themselves in your absence, by building a small craft, I am certain they will meet with no opposition from me. There is but one place where a vessel can be launched, and that is the spot in the cove where we beached your schooner. There it might possibly be done, though I think not without a great deal of trouble, and possibly not without more means than are to be picked up along shore in this group. But there is a very important fact that you overlook, Daggett, which it may be as well to mention here, as to delay it. *Your* craft, or *mine*, must be used as fuel this winter, or we shall freeze to death to a man. I have made the calculations closely; and, certain as our existence, there is no alternative between such a death and the use of the fuel I have mentioned."

"Not a timber of mine shall be touched. I do not believe one−half of these stories about the antarctic winter, which cannot be much worse than what a body meets with up in the Bay of Fundy."

"A winter in the Bay of Fundy, without fuel, must be bad enough; but it is a mere circumstance to one here. I should think that a man who has tasted an antarctic *sum mer* and *autumn*, must get a pretty lively notion of what is to come after them."

"The men can keep in their berths much of the time, and save wood. There are many other ways of getting through a winter than burning a vessel. I shall never consent to a stick of this good craft's going into the galley−fire as long as I can see my way clear to prevent it. I would burn *cargo* before I would burn my *craft*."

Roswell wondered at this pertinacity; but he trusted to the pressure of the coming season, and changed the subject. Certainly the thought of breaking up his own craft did not cross his mind; though he could see no sufficient objection to the other side of the proposition. As discussion was useless, however, he continued to converse with Daggett on various practical subjects, on which his companion was rational and disposed to learn.

It had been ascertained by experiment that the water, at a considerable depth, was essentially warmer beneath the ice, than at its surface. A plan had been devised by which the lower currents of the water could be pumped up for the purposes of the bath; thus rendering the process far more tolerable than it had previously been. Bathing in extremely cold weather, however, is not as formidable a thing as is generally supposed, the air being at a lower temperature than the water. As the greatest importance was attached to these daily ablutions, the subject was gone over between the two masters in all its bearings. There were no conveniences for the operation at the wreck; and this was one reason why Roswell suggested that a residence there ought to be abandoned. Daggett dissented, and invited his companion to take a walk in his caverns.

A promenade in a succession of caves formed of ice, with the thermometer at zero, would naturally strike one as a somewhat chilling amusement. Gardiner did not find it so. He was quite protected from the wind, which gives so much pungency to bitter cold, rendering it insupportable. Completely protected from this, and warmed by the exertion of clambering among the cakes, Roswell's blood was soon in a healthful glow; and, to own the truth,

when he left the wreck, it was with a much better opinion of it, as a place of residence, than when he had arrived to pay his visit.

As there was now nothing for the men to do in the way of preparation, modes of amusement were devised that might unite activity of body with that of the mind. The snows ceased to fall as the season advanced; and there were but few places on which heavy burthens might not have been transported over their crusts. It was, indeed, easier moving about on the surface of the frozen snow, than it had been on the naked rocks; the latter offering obstacles that no longer showed themselves. Sliding down the declivities, and even skating, were practised; few northern Americans being ignorant of the latter art. Various other sources of amusement were resorted to; but it was found, generally, that very little exercise in the open air exhausted the frame, and that a great difficulty of breathing occurred. Still, it was thought necessary to health that the men should remain as much as possible out of the crowded house; and various projects were adopted to keep up the vital warmth while exposed. Ere the month of July had passed, which corresponds to our January, it had been found expedient to make dresses of skins; for which fortunately the materials abounded.

As the season advanced, the idea of preserving more than the lives of his men was gradually abandoned by Gardiner; though Daggett still clung to his wreck, and actually had wood transported back to it, that he might stay as much as possible near his property. There was no longer any thawing, though there were very material gradations in the intensity of the frosts. Occasionally, it was quite possible to remain in the open air an hour or two at a time; then, again, there were days in which it exceeded the powers of human endurance to remain more than a few minutes removed to any distance from heat artificially procured. On the whole, however, it was found that the comparatively moderate weather predominated; and it was rare indeed that all the people did not pursue their avocations and amusements outside, at what was called the middle of the day.

And what a meridian it was! The shortest day had passed some time, when Roswell and Stimson were walking together on the terrace, then, as usual, as clear from snow as if swept by a broom; but otherwise wearing the aspect of interminable winter, in common with all around it. They were conversing, as had been much their wont of late, and were watching the passage of the sun as he stole along the northern horizon; even at high noon rising but a very few degrees above it!

"It has a cold look, sir, but it does give out some heat," said Stephen, as he faced the luminary, in one of his turns. "I can feel a little warmth from it just now, sheltered as we are here under the cliffs, and with a back−ground of naked rock to throw back what reaches us. To me, all these changes in the movements of the sun seem very strange, Captain Gar'ner; but I know I'm ignorant, and that others may well know all about what I do not understand."

Here Gardiner undertook to explain the phenomena that have been slightly treated on in our own pages. There are few Americans so ignorant as not to be fully aware that the sun has no sensible motion, or any motion that has an apparent influence on our own planet; but fewer still clearly comprehend the reasons of those very changes that are occurring constantly before their eyes. We cannot say that Captain Gardiner succeeded very well in his undertaking, though he imprinted on the old boat−steerer's mind the fact that the sun would not be seen at all were they only a few degrees farther south than they actually were.

"And now, sir, I suppose he'll get higher and higher every day," put in Stephen, "until he comes quite up above our heads?"

"Not exactly that at noon; though abeam, as it might be, mornings and evenings."

"Still, the coldest of our weather is yet to come, or I have no exper'ence in such things. Why does not the heat come back with the sun — or what seems to be the sun coming back? though, as you tell me, Captain Gar'ner, it's only the'arth sheering this−a−way and that−a−way in her course."

"One may well ask such a question—but cold produces cold, and it takes time to wear it out. February is commonly the coldest month in the year, even in America; though days occur in other months that may be colder than any one in February. March, and even April, are months I dread here; and that so much the more, Stephen, because our fuel goes a good deal faster than I could wish."

"What you say is very true, sir. Still, the people must have fire. I turned out this morning, while all hands were still in their berths, and looked to the stove, and it was as much as human natur' could bear to be about without my cap and skin−covering; though in−doors the whole time. If the weather goes on as it has begun, we shall have to keep a watch at the stove; nor do I think one stove will answer us much longer. We shall want another in the

sleeping−room."

"Heaven knows where the wood is to come from! Unless Captain Daggett gives up the wreck, we shall certainly be out long before the mild season returns."

"We must keep ourselves warm, sir, by reading the bible," answered Stimson, smiling; though the glance he cast at his officer was earnest and anxious. "You must not forget, Captain Gar'ner, that you've promised one who is praying for you daily, to go through the chapters she has marked, and give the matter a patient and attentive thought. No sealin', sir, can be half as important as this reading of the good book in the right spirit."

"So you believe that Jesus was the Son of God!" exclaimed Roswell, half inquiringly, and half in a modified sort of levity.

"As much as I believe that we are here, sir. I wish I was half as certain of our ever getting away."

"What has caused you to believe this, Stimson? — reason, or the talk of your mother and of the parson?"

"My mother died afore I could listen to her talk, sir: and very little have I had to do with parsons, for the want of being where they are to be found. *Faith* tells me to believe this; and Faith comes from God."

"And I could believe it, too, were Faith imparted to me from the same source. As it is, I fear I shall never believe in what appears to me to be an impossibility."

Then followed a long discussion, in which ingenuity, considerable command of language, human pride and worldly sentiments, contended with that clear, intuitive, deep conviction, which it is the pleasure of the Deity often to bestow on those who would otherwise seem to be unfitted to become the repositories of so great a gift. As we shall have to deal with this part of our subject more particularly hereafter, we shall not enlarge on it here; but pursue the narrative as it is connected with the advance of the season, and the influence the latter exerted over the whole party of the lost sealers.

CHAPTER X.

"Beyond the Jewish ruler, banded close;
A company full glorious, I saw
The twelve apostles stand. O, with what looks
Of ravishment and joy, what rapturous tears;
What hearts of eestacy, they gazed again
On their beloved Master"_____

Hillhouse's Judgment.

It has become necessary to advance the season to the beginning of the month of October, which corresponds to our own April. In a temperate climate, this would mark the opening of spring; and the reviving hopes of a new and genial season would find a place in every bosom. Not so at Sealer's Land. So long as the winter was at its height, and the clear, steady cold continued, by falling into a system so prepared as to meet the wants of such a region, matters had gone on regularly, if not with comfort; and, as yet, the personal disasters were confined to a few frozen cheeks and noses, the results of carelessness and wanton exposure, rather than of absolute necessity. But one who had seen the place in July, and who examined it now, would find many marks of change, not to say of deterioration.

In the first place, a vast deal of snow had fallen; fallen, indeed, to such a degree, as even to cover the terrace, block up the path that communicated with the wreck, and nearly to smother the house and all around it. The winds were high and piercing, rendering the cold doubly penetrating. The thermometer now varied essentially, sometimes rising considerably above zero, though oftener falling far below it. There had been many storms in September, and October was opening with a most blustering and wintry aspect. In one sense, however, the character of the season had changed; the dry, equal cold, that was generally supportable, having been succeeded by tempests that were sometimes a little moist, but oftener of intense frigidity. Of course the equinox was past, and there were more than twelve hours of sun. The great luminary showed himself well above the northern horizon; and though his circuit described an arch that did not promise soon to bring him near the zenith at meridian, it was a circuit that seemed about to enclose Sealer's Land, by carrying the orb of day so far south, morning and evening, as to give it an air of travelling round the spot.

These changes had not occurred without suffering and danger. Enormous icicles were suspended from the roof of the house, reaching to the ground, the third and fourth successions of these signs of heat and cold united, the earlier formations having been knocked down and thrown away. Mountains of drifted snow were to be seen in places, all along the shore; and wreaths that threatened fearful avalanches were suspended from the cliffs, waiting only for the increase of the warmth, to come down upon the rocks beneath. Once already had one of these masses fallen on the wreck; and the Oyster Pond men had been busy for a week digging into the pile, in order to go to the rescue of the Vineyarders. There was much generosity and charitable feeling displayed in this act; for, owing to the obstinate adherence of Daggett and his people to what they deemed their rights, Roswell had finally been compelled to cut to pieces the upper works of his own schooner to obtain fuel that might prevent his own party from freezing to death. The position of the Sea Lion of Oyster Pond was to be traced only by a high mound of snow, which had been arrested by the obstacle she presented to its drift; but her bulwarks, planks, deck, top−timbers, stern−frame—in short, nearly all of the vessel above water, had actually been taken to pieces, and carried within the covering of the verandah mentioned, in readiness for the stoves!

To render the obstinacy of the other crew more apparent, Daggett had been obliged to do the same! Much of his beloved craft had already disappeared in the camboose, and more was likely to follow. This compelled destruction, however, rather increased than lessened his pertinacity. He clung to the last chip; and no terms of compromise would he now listen to at all. The stranded wreck was his, and his people's; while the other wreck belonged to the men from Oyster Pond. Let each party act for itself, and take care of its own. Such were his expressed opinions, and on them he acted.

This state of things had not been brought about in a day. Months had passed; Roswell had seen his last billet of wood put in the camboose; had tried various experiments for producing heat by means of oil, which so far

succeeded as to enable the ordinary boiling to be done, thereby saving wood; but, when a cold turn set in, it was quickly found that the schooner must go, or all hands perish. When this decree went forth, every one understood that the final preservation of the party depended on that of the boats. For one entire day the question had been up in general council, whether or not the two whale−boats should be burnt, with their oars and appurtenances, before the attack was made on the schooner itself. Stimson settled this point, as he did so many others, Roswell listening to all he said with a constantly increasing attention.

"If we burn the boats first," said the boat−steerer, "and then have to come to the schooner a'ter all, how are we ever to get away from this group? Them boats wouldn't last us a week, even in our best weather; but they may answer to take us to some Christian land, when every rib and splinter of the Sea Lion is turned into ashes. I would begin on the upper works of the schooner first, Captain Gar'ner, resarvin' the spars, though they would burn the freest. Then I would saw away the top−timbers, beams, decks, transoms, and everything down within a foot of the water; but I wouldn't touch anything below the copper, for this here reason: unless Captain Daggett sets to work on his craft and burns her up altogether, we may find mater'als enough in the spring to deck over ag'in the poor thing down there in the cove, and fit her out a'ter a fashion, and make much better weather of it in her than in our boats. That's my opinion, sir."

It was decided that this line of conduct should be pursued. The upper works of the schooner were all taken out of her as soon as the weather permitted, and the wood was carried up and stored in the house. Even with this supply; it was soon seen that great economy was to be used, and that there might be the necessity of getting at the vessel's bottom. As for the schooner, as the people still affectionately called the hull, or what was left of the hull, everything had been taken out of her. The frozen oil was carried up to the house in chunks, and used for fuel and lights. A good deal of heat was obtained by making large wicks of canvass, and placing them in vessels that contained oil; though it was very far from sufficing to keep life in the men during the hardest of the weather. The utmost economy in the use of the fuel that had been so dearly obtained, was still deemed all−essential to eventual preservation. Happily, the season advanced all this time, and the month of October was reached. The intercourse between the crews had by no means been great during the two solemn and critical months that were just past. A few visits had been exchanged at noon−day, and when the thermometer was a little above zero; but the snow was filling the path, and as yet there were no thaws to produce a crust on which the men might walk.

About a month previously to the precise time to which it is our intention now to advance the more regular action of the legend, Macy had come over to the house, attended by one man, with a proposal on the part of Daggett for the two crews to occupy his craft, as he still persisted in calling the wreck, and of using the house as fuel. This was previously to beginning to break up either vessel. Gardiner had thought of this plan in connection with his own schooner, a scheme that would have been much more feasible than that now proposed, on account of the difference in distance; but it had soon been abandoned. All the material of the building was of pine, and that well seasoned; a wood that burns like tinder. No doubt there would have been a tolerably comfortable fortnight or three weeks by making these sacrifices; then would have come certain destruction.

As to the proposal of Daggett, there were many objections to it. A want of room would be one; want of provisions another; and there would be the necessity of transporting stores, bedding, and a hundred things that were almost as necessary to the people as warmth; and which indeed contributed largely to their warmth. In addition was the objection just mentioned, of the insufficiency of the materials of the building; an objection which was just as applicable to a residence in one vessel as a residence in the other. Of course the proposition was declined.

Macy remained a night with the Oyster Ponders, and left the house after breakfast next morning; knowing that Daggett only waited for his return with a negative, to commence breaking up the wreck. The mate was attended by the seaman, returning as he had arrived. Two days later; there having been a slight yielding of the snow under the warmth of the noon−day sun; and a consequent hardening of its crust in the succeeding night, Roswell and Stimson undertook to return this visit, with a view to make a last effort to persuade Daggett to quit the wreck and come over to the house altogether. When they had got about half−way between the two places, they found the body of the seaman, stiff, frozen hard, and dead. A quarter of a mile further on, the reckless Macy, who it was supposed greatly sustained Daggett in his obstinacy, was found in precisely the same state. Both had fallen in the path, and stiffened under the terrible power of the climate. It was not without difficulty that Roswell reached the wreck, and reported what he had seen. Even this terrible admonition did not change Daggett's purpose. He had

begun to burn his vessel, for there was now no alternative; but he was doing it on a system which, as he explained it to Roswell, was not only to leave him materials with which to construct a smaller craft in the spring, but which would allow of his inhabiting the steerage and cabin as long as he pleased.

In some respects the wreck certainly had its advantages over the house. There was more room for exercise, the caverns of the ice being extensive, while they completely excluded the wind, which was now the great danger of the season. It was doubtless owing to the wind that Macy and his companion had perished. As the spring approached, these winds increased in violence; though there had been slight symptoms of their coming more blandly, even at the time when their colder currents were really frightful.

A whole month succeeded this visit of Roswell's, during which there was no intercourse. It was September, the March of the antarctic circle, and the weather had been terrific during most of the period. It was during these terrible four weeks that Roswell completed his examination of the all−important subject Mary had marked out for him, and which Stimson had so earnestly and so often placed before his mind. The sudden fate of Macy and his companion, the condition of his crew, and all the serious circumstances with which he was surrounded, conspired to predispose him to inquiry; and what was equally important in such an investigation, to humility. Man is a very different being in high prosperity from what he becomes when the blows of an evil fortune, or the visitations of Divine Providence alight upon him. The skepticism of Roswell was more the result of human pride, of confidence in himself, than in any precept derived from others, or of any deep reasoning process whatever. He conceived that the theory of the incarnation of the Son of God was opposed to philosophy and experience, it is true; and, thus far, he may be said to have reasoned in the matter, though it was in his own way, and with a very contracted view of the subject; but pride had much more to do with even this conclusion, than a knowledge of physics or philosophy. It did not comport with the respect he entertained for his own powers, to lend his faith to an account that conflicted with so many of the opinions he had formed on evidence and practice. Credulous women might have their convictions on the truth of this history, but it was not necessary for men to be as easily duped. There was something even amiable and attractive in this weakness of the other sex, that would ill comport, however, with the greater sternness of masculine judgment. Roswell, as he once told Stimson, hesitated to believe in anything that he could not comprehend. His God must be worshipped for the obvious truth of his attributes and existence. He wished to speak with respect of things that so many worthy people reverenced; but he could not forget that Providence had made him a reasoning creature; and his reason must be convinced. Stephen was no great logician, as the reader will easily understand; but Newton possessed no clearer demonstration of any of his problems than this simple, nay ignorant, man enjoyed in his religious faith, through the divine illumination it had received in the visit of the Holy Spirit.

That gloomy month, however, had not been thrown away. All the men were disposed to be serious; and the reading of the bible, openly and aloud, soon became a favourite occupation with every one of them. Although Roswell's reading was directed by the marks of Mary, all of which had reference to those passages that touched on the Divinity of the Saviour, he made no comments that betrayed his incredulity. There is a simple earnestness in the narrative portions of the Gospel that commends its truth to every mind, and it had its effect on that of Roswell Gardiner; though it failed to remove doubts that had so long been cherished, and which had their existence in pride of reason, or what passes for such, with those who merely skim the surface of things, as they seem to exist around them.

On the evening of that particular day in October, to which we desire now to advance the time, and after the most pleasant and cheerful afternoon and sunset that any on the island had seen for many months, Roswell and Stimson ventured to continue their exercise on the terrace, then again clear of impediments, even after the day had closed. The night promised to be cold, but the weather was not yet so keen as to drive them to a shelter. Both fancied there was a feeling of spring in the wind, which was from the north−east, a quarter that brought the blandest currents of air into those seas, if any air of that region deserved such a term at all.

"It is high time we had some communications with the Vineyarders," said Roswell, as they turned at that end of the terrace which was nearest to the wreck. "A full month has passed since we have seen any of them, or have heard a syllable of their doings or welfare."

"It's a bad business this separation, Captain Gar'ner," returned the boat−steerer; "and every hour makes it worse. Think how much good might have been done them young men had they only been with us while we've been reading the book of books, night and morning, sir!"

"That good book seems to fill most of your thoughts, Stephen—I wish I could have your faith."

"It will come in time, sir, if you will only strive for it. I'm sure no heart could have been harder than mine was, until within the last five years. I was far worse as a Christian, Captain Gar'ner, than I consider you to be; for while you have doubts consarning the Divinity of our Blessed Lord, I had no thought of any one of the Trinity. My only God was the world; and sich a world, too, as a poor sailor knows. It was being but little better than the brutes."

"Of all the men with me, you seem to be the most contented and happy. I cannot say I have seen even a sign of fear about you, when things have been at the worst."

"It would be very ungrateful, sir, to mistrust a Providence that has done so much for me."

"I devoutly wish I could believe with you that Jesus was the Son of God!"

"Excuse me, Captain Gar'ner; it's jist because you do not *devoutly* wish this, that you do not believe. I think I understand the natur' of your feelin's, sir. I had some sich once, myself; though it was only in a small way. I was too ignorant to feel much pride in my own judgment, and soon gave up every notion that went ag'in Scriptur'. I own it is not accordin' to natur', as we know natur', to believe in this doctrine; but we know too little of a thousand things to set up our weak judgments in the very face of revelation."

"I am quite willing to believe all I can understand, Stephen; but I find it difficult to credit accounts that are irreconcilable with all that my experience has taught me to be true."

"They who are of your way of thinkin', sir, do not deny that Christ was a good man and a prophet; and that the apostles were good men and prophets; and that they all worked miracles."

"This much I am willing enough to believe; but the other doctrine seems contrary to what is possible."

"Yet you have seen, sir, that these apostles believed what you refuse. One thing has crossed my mind, Captain Gar'ner, which I wish to say to you. I know I'm but an ignorant man, and my idees may be hardly worth your notice; but sich as they be, I want to lay 'em afore you. We are told that these apostles were all men from a humble class in life, with little l'arnin', chosen, as it might be, to show men that faith stood in need of no riches, or edication, or worldly greatness, of any sort. To me, sir, there is a wholesome idee in that one thing."

"It gives us all a useful lesson, Stephen, and has often been mentioned, I believe, in connection with the doctrines of Christianity."

"Yes, sir—so I should think; though I don't remember ever to have heard it named from any pulpit. Well, Captain Gar'ner, it does not agree with our notions to suppose that God himself, a part of the Ruler and Master of the Universe, should be born of a woman, and come among sinners in order to save 'em from his own just judgments."

"That is just the difficulty that I have in believing what are called the dogmas of Christianity on that one point. To me, it has ever seemed the most improbable thing in the world."

"Just so, sir — I had some sort of feelin of that natur' myself once. When God, in his goodness, put it into my heart to believe, however, as he was pleased to do in a fit of sickness from which I never expected to rise, and in which I was led to pray to him for assistance, I began to think over all these matters in my own foolish manner. Among other things, I said to myself, `is it likely that any mortal man would dream of calling Christ the Son of God, unless it was put into *his* mind to say so?' Then comes the characters of them men, who all admit were upright and religious. How can we suppose that they would agree in giving the same account of sich a thing, unless what they said had been told to them by some tongue that they believed?"

Roswell smiled at Stephen's reasoning, which was not without a certain point, but which an ingenious man might find the means of answering in various ways.

"There is another thing, sir, that I've read in a book," resumed the boat−steerer, "which goes a great way with me. Jesus allowed others to call him the Son of God, without rebuking them for doing so. It does really seem that they who believe he was a good man, as I understand is the case with you, Captain Gar'ner, must consider this as a strong fact. We are to remember what a sin idolatry is; how much all ra'al worshippers abhor it; and then set that feelin' side by side with the fact that the Son did not think it robbery to be called the equal of the Father. To me, that looks like a proof that our belief has a solid foundation."

Roswell did not reply. He was aware that it would not be just to hold any creed responsible for the manner in which a person like Stimson defended it. Still, he was struck with both of this man's facts. The last, he had often met in books; but the first was new to him. Of the two, this novel idea of the improbability of the apostles' inventing that which would seem to be opposed to all men's notions and prejudices, struck him more forcibly than

the argument adduced from the acquiescende of the Redeemer in his own divinity. The last might be subject to verbal criticism, and could possibly be explained away, as he imagined; but the first appeared to be intimately incorporated with the entire history of Christ's ministrations on earth. These were the declarations of John the Baptist, the simple and unpretending histories of the Gospels, the commentaries of St. Paul, and the venerable teachings of the church through so many centuries of varying degrees of faith and contention, each and all going to corroborate a doctrine that, in his eyes, had appeared to be so repugnant to philosophy and reason. Wishing to be alone, Roswell gave an order to Stimson to execute some duty that fell to his share, and continued walking up and down the terrace alone for quite an hour longer.

The night was coming in cold and still. It was one of those last efforts of winter in which all the terrible force of the season was concentrated: and it really appeared as if nature, wearied with its struggle to return to a more genial temperature, yielded in despair, and was literally returning backwards through the coldest of her months. The moon was young, but the stars gave forth a brightness that is rarely seen, except in the clear cold nights of a high latitude. Each and all of these sublime emblems of the power of God were twinkling like bright torches glowing in space; and the mind had only to endow each with its probable or known dimensions, its conjectural and reasonable uses, to form a picture of the truest sublimity in which man is made to occupy his real position. In this world, where, in a certain sense, he is master, where all things are apparently under his influence, if not absolutely subject to his control; where little that is distinctly visible is to be met with that does seem to be created to meet his wants, or to be wholly at his disposal, one gets a mistaken and frequently a fatal notion of his true place in the scale of the beings who are intended to throng around the footstool of the Almighty. As the animalculæ of the atmospheric air bear a proportion to things visible, so would this throng seem to bear a proportion to our vague estimates of the spiritual hosts. All this Roswell was very capable of feeling, and in some measure of appreciating; and never before had he been made so conscious of his own insignificance, as he became while looking on the firmament that night, glowing with its bright worlds and suns, doubtless the centres of other systems in which distance swallowed up the lesser orbs.

Almost every one has heard or read of that collection of stars which goes by the name of the Southern Cross. The resemblance to the tree on which Christ suffered is not particularly striking, though all who navigate the southern hemisphere know it, and recognize it by its imputed appellation. It now attracted Roswell's gaze; and coming as it did after so much reading, so many conversations with Stephen, and addressing itself to one whose heart was softened by the fearful circumstances that had so long environed the sealers, it is not surprising that it brought our young master to meditate seriously on his true condition in connection with the atonement that he was willing to admit had been made for him, in common with all of earth, at the very moment he hesitated to believe that the sufferer was, in any other than a metaphorical sense, the Son of God.

It is not our intention to describe more of the religious feelings of Mary and her suitor, or to enter farther into any disquisition on subjects of this nature, than may be absolutely necessary to elucidate the facts of our history. In order to do the last distinctly, however, we shall endeavour to make a very brief analysis of the process of reasoning, and we may add of feeling too, that was at work in Roswell Gardiner's mind and heart, as he paced the terrace that night, after Stimson had left him.

We suppose that a sense of humility is the first healthful symptom that shows itself in every man's moral regeneration. A meek appreciation of his own station and character disposes him to receive revelation with respect, and to have faith in things that are not seen. Perhaps no one over whom the sword of fate was not actually suspended by a hair, was ever better placed to admit the lessons of humility than was Roswell Gardiner at that very moment. Modest he always was, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, and this without professions or grimaces; but he had a high idea of the human understanding, and revolted at believing that which did violence to all his experience and preconceived opinions. This was the weak spot in his character, which time, with an increasing knowledge of men and things, or some merciful teaching of Divine Providence, could alone remove.

Roswell certainly did not converse with Stimson in the expectation of being much instructed; but the humble and uneducated boat−steerer had been at a school that raises the dullest intellect far above all the inferences of philosophy. He had faith, without which no man is truly wise; no man learned, in the highest interest of his being. Under the guidance of this leader, Stephen occasionally threw out an idea that struck the mind of his officer by its simplicity and force, and helped to complete that change for which circumstances, reading, and reflection had now been many months preparing the way. The day preceding this walk on the terrace, Roswell observed to

Stimson that he had difficulty in believing in a Deity he could not comprehend; meaning merely that his reason must be satisfied in a doctrine like that of the incarnation.

"Well, sir, that's not my feelin'," answered Stephen, earnestly. "A Deity I could understand would be no God for me. Where there is the same knowledge, there is too much companionship, like, for worship and reverence."

"But we are told that man was created after the image of God."

"In his likeness, Captain Gar'ner — with *some* of the Divine Spirit, but not with all. That makes him different from the brutes, and immortal. I have convarsed with a clergyman who thinks that the angels, and archangels, and other heavenly beings, are far before even the Saints in Heaven, such as have been only men on 'arth."

The idea of not having a Deity that he could not comprehend had long been one of Roswell Gardiner's favourite rules of faith. He did not understand by this pretending dogma, that he was, in any respect, of capacity equal to comprehend with that of the Divine Being, but simply that he was not to be expected or required to believe in any theory which manifestly conflicted with his knowledge and experience, as both were controlled by the powers of induction he had derived directly from his Creator. In a word, his exception was one of the most obvious of the suggestions of the pride of reason, and just so much in direct opposition to the great law of regeneration, which has its very gist in the converse of this feeling— Faith.

As our young master paced the terrace alone, that idea of the necessity of the Creator's being incomprehensible to the created, recurred to him. The hour that succeeded was probably the most important in Roswell Gardiner's life. So intense were his feelings, so active the workings of his mind, that he was quite insensible to the intensity of the cold; and his body keeping equal motion with his thoughts, if one may so express it, his frame actually set at defiance a temperature that might otherwise have chilled it, warmly and carefully as it was clad.

Truly there were many causes existing at that time and place, to bring any man to a just sense of his real position in the scale of created beings. The vault above Roswell was sparkling with orbs floating in space, most of them far more vast than this earth, and each of them doubtless having its present or destined use. What was that light, so brilliant and pervading throughout space, that converted each of those masses of dark matter into globes clothed with a glorious brightness? Roswell had seen chemical experiments that produced wonderful illuminations; but faint, indeed, were the most glowing of those artificial torches, to the floods of light that came streaming out of the void, on missions of millions and millions of miles. Who, and what was the Dread Being—dread in his Majesty and Justice, but inexhaustible in Love and Mercy — who used these exceeding means as mere instruments of his pleasure? and what was he himself, that he should presume to set up his miserable pride of reason, in opposition to a revelation supported by miracles that must be admitted to come through men inspired by the Deity, or rejected altogether?

In this frame of mind Roswell was made to see that Christianity admitted of no half−way belief; it was all true, or it was wholly false.

And why should not Christ be the Son of God, as the Fathers of the Church had perseveringly, but so simply proclaimed, and as that church had continued to teach for eighteen centuries? Roswell believed himself to have been created in the image of God; and his much−prized reason told him that he could perpetuate himself in successors; and that which the Creator had given *him* the power to achieve, could he not in his own person perform? For the first time, an inference to the contrary seemed to be illogical.

Then the necessity for the great expiation occurred to his mind. This had always been a stumbling−block to Roswell's faith. He could not see it; and that which he could not see he was indisposed to believe. Here was the besetting weakness of his character; a weakness which did not suffer him to perceive that could he comprehend so profound a mystery, he would be raised far above that very nature in which he took so much pride. As he reflected on this branch of the subject, a thousand mysteries, physical and moral, floated before his mind; and he became aware of the little probability that he should have been endowed with the faculties to comprehend this, the greatest of them all. Had not science gradually discovered the chemical processes by which gases could be concentrated and disengaged, the formation of one of those glittering orbs above his head would have been quite as unintelligible a mystery to him, as the incarnation of the Saviour. The fact was, that phenomena that were just as mysterious to the human mind as any that the dogmas of Christianity required to be believed, exist hourly before our eyes without awakening skepticism, or exciting discussion; finding their impunity in their familiarity. Many of these phenomena were strictly incomprehensible to human understandings, which could reason up to a fountain−head in each case; and there it was obliged to abandon the inductive process, purely for the want of

power to grapple with the premises which control the whole demonstration.

Could Mary Pratt have known what was going on in Roswell Gardiner's soul that night, her happiness would have been as boundless as her gratitude to God. She would have seen the barrier that had so long interposed itself to her wishes broken down; not by any rude hand, but by the influence of those whisperings of the Divine Spirit, which open the way to men to fit themselves for the presence of God.

CHAPTER XI.

"Let winter come! let polar spirits sweep
The darkening world, and tempest−troubled deep!"
Campbell.

While the bosom of Roswell was thus warming with the new−born faith, of which the germ was just opening in his heart, Stimson came out upon the terrace to see what had become of his officer. It was much past the hour when the men got beneath the coverings of their mattresses; and the honest boat−steerer, who had performed the duty on which he had been sent, was anxious about Roswell's remaining so long in the open air, on this positively the severest night of the whole−season.

"You stand the cold well, Captain Gar'ner," said Stephen, as he joined his officer; "but it might be prudent, now, to get under cover."

"I do not feel it cold, Stephen" — returned Roswell — "on the contrary, I'm in a pleasant glow. My mind has been busy, while my frame has kept in motion. When such are the facts, the body seldom suffers. But, hearken—does it not seem that some one is calling to us from the direction of the wreck?"

The great distance to which sounds are conveyed in intensely cold and clear weather, is a fact known to most persons. Conversations in the ordinary tone had been heard by the sealers when the speakers were nearly a mile off; and, on several occasions, attempts had been made to hold communications, by means of the voice, between the wreck and the hut. Certain words *had* been understood; but it was found impossible to hold anything that could be termed conversation. Still, the voice had been often heard, and a fancy had come over the mind of Roswell that he heard a cry like a call for assistance, just as Stimson joined him.

"It is so late, sir, that I should hardly think any of the Vineyarders would be up," observed the boat−steerer, after listening some little time in the desire to catch the sound mentioned. "Then it is so cold, that most men would like to get beneath their blankets as soon as they could."

"I do not find it so very cold, Stephen. Have you looked at the thermometer lately?"

"I gave it a look in coming out, sir; and it tells a terrible story to−night! The marcury is all down in the bali, which is like givin' the matter up, I do suppose, Captain Gar'ner."

"'Tis strange! I do not *feel* it so very cold! The wind seems to be getting round to north−east, too; give us enough of that, and we shall have a thaw. Hark! there is the cry again."

This time there could be no mistake. A human voice had certainly been raised amid the stillness of that almost polar night, clearly appealing to human ears, for succour. The only word heard or comprehended was that of "help;" one well enough adapted to carry the sound far and distinctly. There was a strain of agony in the cry, as if he who made it uttered it in despair. Roswell's blood seemed to flow back to his heart; never had he before felt so appalling a sense of the dependence of man on a Divine Providence, as at that moment.

"You heard it?" he said, inquiringly, to Stephen, after an instant of silent attention, to make sure that no more was to reach his ears just then.

"Sartain, sir—no man could mistake *that*. It was the voice of the nigger, Joe; him that Captain Daggett has for a cook."

"Think you so, Stephen? The fellow has good lungs, and they may have set him to call upon us in their distress. What can be the nature of the assistance they ask?"

"I've been thinking of that, Captain Gar'ner; and a difficult p'int it is to answer. Food they must have still; and was they in want of their rations, hands would have been sent across to get 'em. They may have let their fire go out, and be without the means to re−light it. I can think of nothing else that is likely to happen to men so sarcumstanced."

The last suggestion struck Roswell as possible. From the instant he felt certain that he was called on for aid, he had determined to proceed to the wreck, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, and the intense severity of the weather. As he had intimated to Stephen, he was not at all conscious how very cold it was; exercise and the active workings of his mind having brought him to an excellent condition to resist the sternness of the season. The appeal had been so sudden and unexpected, however, that he was at first somewhat at a loss how to proceed. This

matter was now discussed between him and Stimson, when the following plan was adopted:—

The mates were to be called, and made acquainted with what had occurred, and put on their guard as to what might possibly be required of them. It was not thought necessary to call any of the rest of the men. There was always one hand on the watch in the house, whose duty it was to look to the fires, for the double purpose of security against a conflagration, and to prevent the warmth within from sinking too near to the cold without. It had often occurred to Roswell's mind that a conflagration would prove quick destruction to his party. In the first place, most of the provisions would be lost; and it was certain that, without a covering and the means of keeping warm within it, the men could not resist the climate eight−and−forty hours. The burning of the hut would be certain death.

Roswell took no one with him but Stimson. Two were as good as a hundred, if all that was asked were merely the means to re−light the fire. These means were provided, and a loaded pistol was taken also, to enable a signal−shot to be fired, should circumstances seem to require further aid. One or two modes of communicating leading facts were concerted, when our hero and his companion set forth on their momentous journey.

Taking the hour, the weather, and the object before him into the account, Roswell Gardiner felt that he was now enlisted in the most important undertaking of his whole life, as he and Stephen shook hands with the two mates, and left the point. The drifts rendered a somewhat circuitous path necessary at first; but the moon and stars shed so much of their radiance on the frozen covering of the earth, that the night was quite as light as many a London day. Excitement and motion kept the blood of our two adventurers in a brisk circulation, and prevented their becoming immediately conscious of the chill intensity of the cold to which they were exposed.

"It is good to think of Almighty God, and of his many marcies," said Stephen, when a short distance from the house, "as a body goes forth on an expedition as serious as this. We may not live to reach the wrack, for it seems to me to grow colder and colder!"

"I wonder we hear no more of the cries," remarked Roswell, who was thinking of the distress he was bent on relieving. "One would think that a man who could call so stoutly would give us another cry."

"A body can never calcilate on a nigger," answered Stephen, who had the popular American prejudice against the caste that has so long been held in servitude in the land. "They call out easily, and shut up oncommon quick, if there's nothin' gained by yelling. Black blood won't stand cold like white blood, Captain Gar'ner, any more than white blood will stand heat like black blood."

"I have heard this before, Stephen; and it has surprised me that Captain Daggett's cook should be the only one of that party who seems to have had any voice to−night."

Stimson had a good deal to say now, as the two picked their way across the field of snow, always walking on the crust, which in most places would have upheld a loaded vehicle; the subject of his remarks being the difference between the two races as respects their ability to endure hardships. The worthy boat−steerer had several tales to relate of cases in which he had known negroes freeze when whites have escaped. As the fact is one pretty well established, Roswell listened complacently enough, being much too earnest in pressing forward toward his object, to debate any of his companion's theories just then. It was while thus employed that Roswell fancied he heard one more cry, resembling those which had brought him on this dangerous undertaking, on a night so fearful. This time, however, the cry was quite faint; and what was not so easily explained, it did not appear to come from the precise direction in which the wreck was known to lie, but from one that diverged considerably from that particular quarter. Of course, the officer mentioned this circumstance to the boat−steerer; and the extraordinary part of the information caused some particular discussion between them.

"To me that last call seemed to come from up yonder, nearer to the cliffs than the place where we are, and not at all from down there, near to the sea, where the wrack is," said Stimson, in the course of his remarks. "So sartain am I of this, that I feel anxious to change our course a little, to see if it be not possible that one of the Vineyarders has got into some difficulty in trying to come across to us."

Roswell had the same desire, for he had made the same conjecture; though he did not believe the black would be the person chosen to be the messenger on such an occasion.

"I think Captain Daggett would have come himself, or have sent one of his best men," he observed, "in preference to trusting a negro with a duty so important."

"We do not know, sir, that it was the nigger we heard. Misery makes much the same cries, whether it comes from the throat of white or black. Let us work upward, nearer to the cliffs, sir; I see something dark on the snow,

hereaway, as it might be on our larboard bow."

Roswell caught a glimpse of the same object, and thither our adventurers now bent their steps, walking on the crust without any difficulty, so long as they kept out of the drifts. One does not find it as easy to make any physical effort in an intensely cold atmosphere, as he does when the weather is more moderate. This prevented Roswell and his companion from moving as fast as they otherwise might have done; but they got along with sufficient rapidity to reach the dark spot on the snow in less than five minutes after they had changed their course.

"You are right, Stephen," said Gardiner, as he came up to this speck, amid the immensity of the white mantle that covered both sea and land, far as the eye could reach; "it is the cook! The poor fellow has given out here, about half−way between the two stations."

"There must be life in him yet, sir — nigger as he is. It's not yet twenty minutes since he gave that last cry. Help me to turn him over, Captain Gar'ner, and we will rub him, and give him a swallow of brandy. A little hot coffee, now, might bring the life back to his heart."

Roswell complied, first firing his pistol as a signal to those left behind. The negro was not dead, but so near it, that a very few more minutes would have sealed his fate. The applications and frictions used by Gardiner and the boat−steerer had an effect. A swallow of the brandy probably saved the poor fellow's life. While working on his patient, Captain Gardiner found a piece of frozen pork, which, on examination, he ascertained had never been cooked. It at once explained the nature of the calamity that had befallen the crew of the wreck.

So intent were the two on their benevolent duty, that a party arrived from the house in obedience to the signal, in much less time than they could have hoped for. It was led by the mate, and came provided with a lamp burning beneath a tin vessel filled with sweetened coffee. This hot drink answered an excellent purpose with both well and sick. After a swallow or two, aided by a vigorous friction, and closely surrounded by so many human bodies, the black began to revive; and the sort of drowsy stupor which is known to precede death in those who die by freezing, having been in a degree shaken off, he was enabled to stand alone, and by means of assistance to walk. The hot coffee was of the greatest service, every swallow that he got down appearing to set the engine of life into new motion. The compelled exercise contributed its part; and by the time the mate, to use his own expression, "had run the nigger into dock," which meant when he had got him safe within the hut, his senses and faculties had so far revived as to enable him to think and to speak. As Gardiner and Stimson returned with him, everybody was up and listening, when the black told his story.

It would seem that, during the terrible month which had just passed, Daggett had compelled his crew to use more exercise than had been their practice of late. Some new apprehension had come over him on the subject of fuel, and his orders to be saving in that article were most stringent, and very rigidly enforced. The consequence was, that the camboose was not as well attended to as it had been previously, and as circumstances required, indeed, that it should be. At night, the men were told to keep themselves warm with bed−clothes, and by huddling together; and the cabin being small, so many persons crowded together in it, did not fail to produce an impression on its atmosphere.

Such was the state of things, when, on going to his camboose, in order to cook the breakfast, this very black found the fire totally extinguished! Not a spark could he discover, even among the ashes; and, what was even worse, the tinder−box had disappeared. As respects the last, it may be well to state here, that it was afterwards discovered carefully bestowed between two of the timbers of the wreck, with a view to a particular safe−keeping; the person who had made this disposition of it, forgetting what he had done. The loss of the tinder−box, under the circumstances, was almost as great a calamity as could have befallen men, in the situation of the Vineyarders. As against the cold, by means of bed−clothes, exercise, and other precautions, it might have been possible to exist for some time, provided warm food could be obtained; but the frost penetrated the cabin, and every one soon became sensitively alive to the awkwardness, not to say danger, of their condition. A whole day was passed in fruitless attempts to obtain fire, by various processes. Friction did not succeed; it probably never does with the thermometer at zero. Sparks could be obtained, but by this time everything was stiff with the frost. The food already cooked was soon as hard as bullets, and it was found that, on the second night, brandy that was exposed was converted into a lump of ice. Not only did the intensity of the cold increase, but everything, even to the human system, seemed to be gradually congealing, and preparing to become converted into receptacles for frost. Several of the men began to suffer in their ears, noses, feet and other extremities, and the bunks were soon the only places in which it was found possible to exist in anything like comfort. No less than three men had been sent,

at intervals of a few hours, across to the house, with a view to obtain fire, or the means of lighting one, along with other articles that were considered necessary to the safety of the people. The cook had been the third and last of these messengers. He had passed his two shipmates, each lying dead on the snow, — or, as he supposed, lifeless; for neither gave the smallest sign of vitality, on an examination. It was in the agony of alarm produced by these appalling spectacles, that the negro had cried aloud for help, sending the sounds far enough to reach the ears of Roswell. Still he had persevered; until chilled, as much with terror, as with the cold and the want of warm nourishment, the cook had sunk into what would have soon proved to be his last long sleep, when the timely succour arrived.

It was some two hours after the black had been got into the hut, and was strengthened with a good hot supper, ere he had communicated all the facts just related. Roswell succeeded, however, in getting a little at a time from him; and when no more remained to be related, the plan was already arranged for future proceedings. It was quite clear no unnecessary delay should be permitted to take place. The cold continued to increase in intensity, notwithstanding it was the opinion of the most experienced among the men that a thaw, and a great spring thaw, was approaching. It often happens, in climates of an exaggerated character, that these extremes almost touch each other, as they are said to meet in man.

Roswell left the house, for the second time that eventful night, just at the hour of twelve. He now went accompanied by the second mate and a foremast−hand, as well as by his old companion, the boat−steerer. Each individual drank a bowl of hot coffee before he set out, and a good warm supper had also been taken in the interval between the return and this new sortie. Experience shows that there is no such protector against the effect of cold as a full stomach, more especially if the food be warm and nourishing. This was understood by Roswell; and not only did he cause the whole party that set forth with him at that late and menacing hour to receive this sustenance, but he ordered the kettle of boiling coffee to be carried with them, and kept two lamps burning, for the double purpose of maintaining the heat, and of having a fire ready on reaching the wreck. The oil of the sea−elephant, together with pieces of canvass prepared for the purpose, supplied the necessary materials.

So intensely severe was the weather, that Roswell had serious thoughts of returning when he reached the spot where the black had been found. But the picture of Daggett's situation that occurred to his mind, urged him on, and he proceeded. Every precaution had been taken to exclude the cold, as it is usually termed, which, as it respects the body, means little else than keeping the vital heat in, and very useful were these provisions found to be. Skins formed the principal defence, though the men had long adopted the very simple but excellent expedient of wearing two shirts. Owing to this, and to the other measures taken, neither of the four was struck with a chill, and they all continued on.

At the place mentioned by the black, the body of one of Daggett's best men, a boat−steerer, was found. The man was dead, of course, and the corpse was as rigid as a billet of wood. Every particle of moisture in it had congealed, until the whole of what had been a very fine and manly frame, lay little more than a senseless lump of ice. A few degrees to the southward of the spot where it was now seen, it is probable that this relic of humanity would have retained its form and impression, until the trump sounded to summon it to meet its former tenant, the spirit, in judgment.

No time was lost in useless lamentations over the body of this man, who was much of a favourite among the Oyster Ponders. Twenty minutes later, the second corpse was found; both the bodies lying in what was the customary track between the house and the wreck. It was the last that had died; but, like that of the unfortunate man just described, it was in a state to be preserved ten thousand years, without the occurrence of a thaw. Merely glancing at the rigid features of the face, in order to identify the person, Roswell passed on, the chill feelings of every individual of his party now admonishing them all of the necessity of getting as soon as possible to some place where they could feel the influence of a fire. In ten minutes more, the whole were in the caverns of the ice, and, presently, the cabin of the wreck was entered. Without turning to the right hand or to the left, without looking for one of the inmates of the place, every man among the new−comers turned his attention instantly to getting the fire lighted. The camboose had been filled with wood, and it was evident that many efforts had been made to produce a blaze, by those who had put it there. Splinters of pine had been inserted among the oak of the vessel, and nothing was wanting but the means of kindling. These, most fortunately for themselves, the party of Roswell had, and eagerly did they now have recourse to their use.

There was not a man among the Oyster Ponders who did not, just at that moment, feel his whole being

concentrated in that one desire to obtain warmth. The cold had slowly, but surely, insinuated itself among their garments, and slight chills were now felt even by Roswell, whose frame had been most wonderfully sustained that night, through the force of moral feeling. Stimson was the individual who was put forward at the camboose, others holding the lamps, canvass saturated with oil, and some prepared paper. It was found to be perceptibly warmer within the cabin, with its doors closed, and the external coverings of sails, &c., that had been made to exclude the air, than without; nevertheless, when Roswell glanced at a thermometer that was hanging against the bulk−head, he saw that all the mercury was still in the ball!

The interest with which our party now watched the proceedings of Stephen, had much of that intensity that is known to attend any exhibition of vital importance. Life and death were, however, to be dependent on the issue; and the manner in which every eye was turned on the wood, and Stephen's mode of dealing with it, denoted how completely the dread of freezing had got possession of the minds of even these robust and generous men. Roswell alone ventured, for a single moment, to look around the cabin. Three of the Vineyarders only were visible in it; though it struck him that others lay in the berths, under piles of clothes. Of the three who were up, one was so near the lamp he held in his hand, that its light illumined his face, and all that could be seen of a form enveloped in skins. This man sat leaning against a transom. His eyes were open, and glared on the party around the camboose; the lips were slightly parted, and, at first, Roswell expected to hear him speak. The immovable features, rigid muscles, and wild expression of the eyeballs, however, soon told him the melancholy truth. The man was dead. The current of life had actually frozen at his heart. Shuddering, as much with horror as with a sharp chill that just then passed through his own stout frame, our young master turned anxiously to note the success of Stimson, in getting the wood of the camboose in a blaze.

Every one, in the least accustomed to a very severe climate, must have had frequent occasions to observe the reluctance with which all sorts of fuel burn, in exceedingly cold weather. The billet of wood that shall blaze merrily, on a mild day, moulders and simmers, and seems indisposed to give out any heat at all, with the thermometer at zero. In a word, all inanimate substances that contain the elements of caloric appear to sympathize with the prevailing state of the atmosphere, and to contribute to render that which is already too cold for comfort, even colder. So it was now; notwithstanding the preparations that had been made. Baffled twice in his expectations of procuring a blaze, Stephen stopped and took a drink of the hot coffee. As he swallowed the beverage, it struck him that it was fast losing its warmth.

A considerable collection of canvass, saturated with oil, was now put beneath the pile, in the midst of splinters of pine, and one of the lamps was forced into the centre of the combustibles. This expedient succeeded; the frosts were slowly chased out of the kindling materials; a sickly but gradually increasing flame strove through the kindling stuff and soon began to play among the billets of the oak, the only fuel that could be relied on for available heat. Still there was great danger that the lighter wood would all be consumed ere this main dependence could be aroused from its dull inactivity. Frost appeared to be in possession of the whole pile; and it was expelled so slowly, clung to its dominion with so much power, as really to render the result doubtful, for a moment or two. Fortunately, there was found a pair of bellows; and by means of a judicious use of this very useful implement, the oak wood was got into a bright blaze, and warmth began to be given out from the fire. Then came the shiverings and chills, with which intense cold consents even to abandon the human frame; and, by their number and force, Roswell was made to understand how near he and his companions had been to death. As the young man saw the fire slowly kindle to a cheerful blaze, a glow of gratitude flowed towards his heart, and mentally he returned thanks to God. The cabin was so small, had been made so tight by artificial means, and the camboose was so large, that a sensible influence was produced on the temperature, as soon as the wood began to burn a little freely. As none of the heat was lost, the effect was not only apparent, but most grateful. Roswell had looked into the vessels of the camboose while the fire was gathering head. One, the largest, was filled, or nearly so, with coffee frozen to a solid mass! In the other, beef and pork had been set over to boil, and there the pieces now were, embedded in ice, and frozen to blocks. It was when these two distinct masses of ice began to melt, that it was known the fire was beginning to prevail, and hope revived in the bosoms of the Oyster Ponders. On taking another look at the thermometer, it was found that the mercury had so far expanded as to be leaving the ball. It soon after ascended so high as to denote only forty degrees below zero!

Every thing, even to life, depending on maintaining and increasing the power of the fire, the men now looked about them for more fuel. There was an ample stock in the cabin, however, the fire having become extinguished,

not for want of wood, but in the usual way. It were needless to describe the manner in which those who stood around the stove watched the flames, or how profound was their satisfaction when they saw that Stimson had finally succeeded.

"God be praised for this and for all his mercies!" exclaimed Stephen, laying aside the bellows, at last. "I can feel warmth from the fire, and that will save such of us as have not yet been taken away." He then lifted the lids, and looked into the different vessels that were on. The ice was melting fast, and the steams of coffee became apparent to the senses. It was at this instant that a feeble voice was heard issuing from beneath the coverings of a berth.

"Gar'ner," it said, imploringly, "if you have any feelin' for a fellow−creatur' in distress, warm me up with one swallow of that coffee! Oh! how pleasantly it smells, and how good it must be for the stomach! For three days have I tasted nothing—not even water."

This was Daggett, the long−tried sealer; the man of iron nerves and golden longings; he who had so lately concentrated within himself all that was necessary to form a pertinacious, resolute, and grasping seeker after gain. How changed, now, in all this! He asked for the means of preserving life, and thought no more of skins, and oils, and treasures on desert keys.

Roswell was no sooner apprised of the situation of his brother−master, than he bestowed the necessary care on his wants. Fortunately, the coffee brought by the Oyster Ponders, and which retained some of its original warmth, had been set before the fire, and was now as hot as the human stomach could bear it. Two or three swallows of this grateful fluid were given to Daggett, and his voice almost instantaneously showed the effect they produced.

"I'm in a bad way, Gar'ner," resumed the vineyard−master; "I fear we're all in a bad way, that are here. I held out ag'in the cold as long as human natur' could bear it, but was forced to give in at last."

"How many of your people still remain, Daggett? tell us, that we may look for them, and attend to their wants."

"I'm afraid, Gar'ner, they'll never want anything more in this life! The second mate and two of the hands were sitting in the cabin when I got into this berth, and I fear 't will be found that they're dead. I urged them to turn in, too, as the berths were the only place where anything like warmth was to be found; but drowsiness had come on 'em, and, when that is the case, freezin' soon follows."

"The three men in the cabin are past our assistance, being actually frozen into logs; but there must be several more of you. I see the signs of two others in the berths— ah! what do you say to that poor fellow, Stephen?"

"The spirit is still in the body, sir, but about to depart. If we can get him to swallow a little of the coffee, the angel of death may yet loosen his hold on him."

The coffee was got down this man's throat, and he instantly revived. He was a young man named Lee, and was one of the finest physical specimens of strength and youth in the whole crew. On examining his limbs, none were found absolutely frozen, though the circulation of the blood was so near being checked that another hour of the great cold which had reigned in the cabin, and which was slowly increasing in intensity, must have destroyed him. On applying a similar process to Daggett, Roswell was startled at the discovery he made. The feet, legs, and forearms of the unfortunate Vineyarder were all as stiff and rigid as icicles. In these particulars there could be no mistake, and men were immediately sent for snow, in order to extract the frost by the only safe process known to the sealers. The dead bodies were carried from the cabin, and laid decently on the ice, outside, the increasing warmth within rendering the removal advisable. On glancing again at the thermometer, now suspended in a remote part of the cabin, the mercury was found risen to two above zero. This was a very tolerable degree of cold, and the men began to lay aside some of their extra defences against the weather, which would otherwise be of no service to them when exposed outside.

The crew of the Vineyard Lion had consisted of fifteen souls, one less than that of her consort. Of these men, four had lost their lives between the wreck and the house; two on a former, and two on the present occasion. Three bodies were found sitting in the cabin, and two more were taken out of the berths, dead. The captain, the cook and Lee, added to these, made a dozen, leaving but three of the crew to be accounted for. When questioned on the subject, Lee said that one of those three had frozen to death in the caverns, several days before, and the other two had set out for the hut in the last snow−storm, unable to endure the cold at the wreck any longer. As these two men had not arrived at the house when Gardiner and his companions left it, they had perished, out of all doubt. Thus, of the fifteen human beings who had sailed together from Martha's Vineyard, ready to encounter every hazard in order to secure wealth, or what in their estimation was wealth, but three remained; and of these,

two might be considered in a critical condition. Lee was the only man of the entire crew who was sound and fit for service.

CHAPTER XII.

"Bid *him* bow down to that which is above him,—
The overruling Infinite,—the Maker,—
Who made him not for worship,—let him kneel,
And we will kneel together."

Byron.

When the bodies had been removed from the cabin, and the limbs of Daggett were covered with snow, Roswell Gardiner took another look at the thermometer. It had risen already to twenty degrees above zero. This was absolutely warmth, compared with the temperature from which the men had just escaped, and it was felt to be so, in their persons. The fire, however, was not the only cause of this most acceptable change. One of the men who had been outside soon came back and reported a decided improvement in the weather. The wind, which had been coquetting with the north−east point of the compass for several hours, now blew steadily from that quarter. An hour later it was found, on examination, that a second thermometer, which was outside, actually indicated ten above zero! This sudden and great change came altogether from the wind, which was now in the warm quarter. The men stripped themselves of most of their skins, and the fire was suffered to go down, though care was taken that it should not again be totally extinguished.

We have little pleasure in exhibiting pictures of human suffering; and shall say but little of the groans and pains that Daggett uttered and endured, while undergoing that most agonizing process of having the frost taken out of his system by cold applications. It was the only safe way of treating his case, however, and as he knew it, he bore his sufferings as well as man could bear them. Long ere the return of day he was released from his agony, and was put back into his berth, which had been comfortably arranged for him, having the almost unheard−of luxury of sheets, with an additional mattress.

As Stephen remarked, when the men were told to try and get a little sleep, "There's plenty of berths empty, and each on us can have as many clothes and as warm a bed as he can ask for, now that so many have hastened away to their great account, as it might be, in the pride of their youth and strength."

Activity, the responsibility of command, and the great necessity there had been for exertion, prevented Roswell from reflecting much on what had happened, until he lay down to catch a little sleep. Then, indeed, the whole of the past came over him, in one sombre, terrible picture, and he had the most lively perception of the dangers from which he had escaped, as well as of the mercy of God's Providence. Surrounded by the dead, as it might be, and still uncertain of the fate of the living, his views of the past and future became much lessened in confidence and hope. The majesty and judgment of God assumed a higher place than common in his thoughts, while his estimate of himself was fast getting to be humble and searching. In the midst of all these changes of views and feelings, however, there was one image unaltered in the young man's imagination. Mary occupied the back−ground of every picture, with her meek, gentle, but blooming countenance. If he thought of God, *her* eyes were elevated in prayer; if the voyage home was in his mind, and the chances of success were calculated, *her* smiles and anxious watchfulness stimulated him to adventure; if arrived and safe, her downcast but joyful looks betrayed the modest happiness of her in−most heart. It was in the midst of some such pictures that Roswell now fell asleep.

When the party turned out in the morning, a still more decided change had occurred in the weather. The wind had increased to a gale, bringing with it torrents of rain Coming from the warm quarter, a thaw had set in with a character quite as decided as the previous frost. In that region, the weather is usually exaggerated in its features, and the change from winter to spring is quite as sudden as that from autumn to winter. We use the terms "spring" and "autumn" out of complaisance to the usages of men; but, in fact, these two seasons have scarcely any existence at all in the antarctic seas. The change, commonly, is from winter to summer, such as summer is, and from summer back to winter.

Notwithstanding the favourable appearances of things, when Roswell walked out into the open air next morning, he well knew that summer had not yet come. Many weeks must go by ere the ice could quit the bay, and even a boat could put to sea. There were considerations of prudence, therefore, that should not be neglected, connected with the continuance of the supplies and the means of subsistence. In one respect the party now on the

island had been gainers by the terrible losses it had sustained in Daggett's crew. The provisions of the two vessels might now, virtually, be appropriated to the crew of one; and Roswell, when he came to reflect on the circumstances, saw that a Providential interference had probably saved the survivors from great privations, if not from absolute want.

Still there was a thaw, and one of that decided character which marks a climate of great extremes. The snows on the mountain soon began to descend upon the plain, in foaming torrents; and, increased by the tribute received from the last, the whole came tumbling over the cliffs in varions places in rich water−falls. There was about a mile of rock that was one continuous cataract, the sheet being nearly unbroken for the whole distance. The effect of this deluge from the plain above was as startling as it was grand. All the snow along the rocky shore soon disappeared; and the fragments of ice began rapidly to diminish in size, and to crumble. At first, Roswell felt much concern on account of the security of the wreck; his original apprehension being that it would be washed away. This ground of fear was soon succeeded by another of scarcely less serious import— that of its being crushed by the enormous cakes of ice that made the caverns in which it lay, and which now began to settle and change their positions, as the water washed away their bases. At one time Roswell thought of setting the storm at defiance, and of carrying Daggett across to the house by means of the hand−barrow; but when he came to look at the torrents of water that were crossing the rocks, so many raging rivulets, the idea was abandoned as impracticable. Another night was therefore passed in the midst of the tempest.

The north−east wind, the rain, and the thaw, were all at work in concert, when our adventurers came abroad to look upon the second day of their sojourn in the wreck. By this time the caverns were dripping with a thousand little streams, and every sign denoted a most rapid melting of the ice. On carrying the thermometer into the open air it stood at sixty−two; and the men found it necessary to lay aside their second shirt, and all the extraordinary defences of their attire. Nor was this all; the wind that crosses the salt water is known to have more than the usual influence on the snows and ice; and such was the effect now produced by it on Sealer's Land. The snow, indeed, had mostly disappeared from all places but the drifts; while the ice was much diminished in its size and outlines. So grateful was the change from the extreme cold that they had so lately endured, that the men thought nothing of the rain at all; they went about in it just as if it did not stream down upon them in little torrents. Some of them clambered up the cliffs, and reached a point whence it was known that they could command a view of the house. The return of this party, which Roswell did not accompany, was waited for with a good deal of interest. When it got back, it brought a report that was deemed important in several particulars. The snow had gone from the plain, and from the mountain, with the exception of a few spots where there had been unusual accumulations of it. As respected the house, it was standing, and the snow had entirely disappeared from its vicinity. The men could be seen walking about on the bare rocks, and every symptom was that of settled spring.

This was cheering news; and the torrents having much diminished in size, some having disappeared altogether, Roswell set out for the cape, leaving the second mate in charge of the wreck. Lee, the young Vineyarder, who had been rescued from freezing by the timely arrival of our hero, accompanied the latter, having joined his fortunes to those of the Oyster Ponders. The two reached the house before dark, where they found Hazard and his companions in a good deal of concern touching the fate of the party that was out. A deep impression was made by the report of what had befallen the other crew; and that night Roswell read prayers to as attentive a congregation as was ever assembled around a domestic hearth. As for fire, none was now needed, except for culinary purposes, though all the preparations to meet cold weather were maintained, it being well known that a shift of wind might bring back the fury of the winter.

The following morning it was clear, though the wind continued warm and balmy from the north. No such weather, indeed, had been felt by the sealers since they reached the group; and the effect on them was highly cheering and enlivening. Before he had breakfasted, Roswell was down in the cove, examining into the condition of his vessel, or what remained of her. A good deal of frozen snow still lay heaped on the mass, and he set the hands at work to shovel it off. Before noon the craft was clear, and most of the snow was melted, it requiring little more than exposure to the air in order to get rid of it.

As soon as the hulk was clear, Roswell directed his men to take everything out of it; the remains of cargo, water−casks, and some frozen provisions, in order that it might float as light as possible. The ice was frozen close to every part of the vessel's bottom to a depth of several feet, following her mould, a circumstance that would necessarily prevent her settling in the water below her timbers; but, as there was no telling when this ice might

begin to recede by melting, it was deemed prudent to use this precaution. It was found that the experiment succeeded, the hulk actually rising, when relieved from the weight in it, no less than four inches.

A consultation was held that night, between Gardiner, his officers, and the oldest of the seamen. The question presented was whether the party should attempt to quit the group in the boats, or whether they should build a little on the hulk, deck her over, and make use of this altered craft, to return to the northward. There was a good deal to be said on both sides. If the boats were used, the party might leave as soon as the weather became settled, and the season a little more advanced, by dragging the boats on sledges across the ice to the open water, which was supposed to be some ten or twenty miles to the northward, and a large amount of provisions might thus be saved. On the other hand, however, as it regarded the provisions, the boats would hold so little, that no great gain would be made by going early in them, and leaving a sufficient supply behind to keep all hands two or three months. This was a consideration that presented itself, and it had its weight in the decision. Then there was the chance of the winter's returning, bringing with it the absolute necessity of using a great deal more fuel. This was a matter of life and death. Comparatively pleasant as the weather had become, there was no security for its so continuing. One entire spring month was before the sealers, and a shift of wind might convert the weather into a wintry temperature. Should such be the case, it might become indispensable to burn the very materials that would be required to build up and deck over the hulk. There were, therefore, many things to be taken into the account; nor was the question settled without a great deal of debate and reflection.

After discussing all these points, the decision was as follows. It was at least a month too soon to think of trusting themselves in that stormy ocean, on the high seas and in the open boats; and this so much the more because nature, as if expressly to send back a reasonable amount of warm air into the polar regions, with a view to preserve the distinction of the seasons, caused the wind to blow most of the time from the northward. As this month, in all prudence, must be passed on the island, it might as well be occupied with building upon the hulk, as in any other occupation. Should the cold weather return, the materials would still be there, and might be burned, in the last extremity, just as well, or even with greater facility, after being brought over to the cove, as if left where they then were, or at the wreck. Should the winter not return, the work done on the vessel would be so much gained, and they would be ready for an earlier start, when the ice should move.

On this last plan the duty was commenced, very little interrupted by the weather. For quite three weeks the wind held from points favourable to the progress of spring, veering from east to west, but not once getting any southing in it. Occasionally it blew in gales, sending down upon the group a swell that made great havoc with the outer edges of the field−ice. Every day or two a couple of hands were sent up the mountain to take a look−out, and to report the state of matters in the adjacent seas. The fleet of bergs had not yet come out of port, though it was in motion to the southward, like three−deckers dropping down to outer anchorages, in roadsteads and bays. As Roswell intended to be off before these formidable cruisers put to sea, their smallest movement or change was watched and noted. As for the field−ice, it was broken up, miles at at a time, until there remained very little of it, with the exception of the portion that was wedged in and jammed among the islands of the group. From some cause that could not be ascertained, the waves of the ocean, which came tumbling in before the northern gales, failed to roll home upon this ice, which lost its margin, now it was reduced to the limits of the group, slowly and with great resistance. Some of the sealers ascribed this obstinacy in the bay−ice to its greater thickness; believing that the shallowness of the water had favoured a frozen formation below, that did not so much prevail off soundings. This theory may have been true, though there was quite as much against it, as in its favour, for polar ice usually increases above and not from below. The sea is much warmer than the atmosphere, in the cold months, and the ice is made by deposites of snow, moisture and sleet, on the surfaces of the fields and bergs.

In those three weeks, which carried forward the season to within ten days of summer, a great deal of useful work was done. Daggett was brought over to the house, on a handbarrow, for the second time, and made as comfortable as circumstances would allow. From the first, Roswell saw that his state was very precarious, the frozen legs, in particular, being threatened with mortification. All the expedients known to a sealer's *materia medica* were resorted to, in order to avert consequences so serious, but without success. The circulation could not be restored, as nature required it to be done, and, failing of the support derived from a healthful condition of the vital current, the fatal symptoms slowly supervened. This change, however, was so gradual, that it scarce affected the regular course of the duty.

It was a work of great labour to transport the remaining timbers and plank of the wreck to the cove. Without

the wheels, indeed, it may be questioned whether it could have been done at all, in a reasonable time. The breaking up of the schooner was, in itself, no trifling job, for fully one half of the frame remained to be pulled to pieces. In preparing the materials for use, again, a good deal of embarrassment was experienced in consequence of the portions of the two vessels that were left being respectively their lower bodies, all the upper works of each having been burned, with the exception of the after part of Daggett's craft, which had been preserved on account of the cabin. This occasioned a good deal of trouble in moulding and fitting the new upper works on the hulk in the cove. Roswell had no idea of rebuilding his schooner strictly in her old form and proportions; he did not, indeed, possess the materials for such a reconstruction. His plan was, simply, to raise on the hulk as much as was necessary to render her safe and convenient, and then to get as good and secure a deck over all as circumstances would allow.

Fortunately for the progress of the work, Lee, the Vineyard man, was a ship−carpenter, and his skill essentially surpassed that of Smith, who filled the same station on board the Oyster Pond craft. These two men were now of the greatest service; for, though neither understood drafting, each was skilful in the use of tools, and had a certain readiness that enabled him to do a hundred things that he had never found it necessary to attempt on any former occasion. If the upper frame that was now got on the Sea Lion was not of faultless mould, it was securely fastened, and rendered the craft even stronger than it had been originally. Some regard was had to resisting the pressure of ice, and experience had taught all the sealers where the principal defences against the effects of a "nip" ought to be placed. The lines were not perfect, it is true; but this was of less moment, as the bottom of the craft, which alone had any material influence on her sailing, was just as it had come from the hands of the artizan who had originally moulded her.

By the end of a fortnight, the new top−timbers were all in their places, and secured, while a complete set of bends were brought to them, and were well bolted. The caulking−irons were put in requisition as soon as a streak was on, the whole work advancing, as it might be, *pari passu*. Planks for the decks were much wanted, for, in the terrible strait for fuel which had caused the original assault on the schooner, this portion of the vessel had been the first burned, as of the most combustible materials. The quarter−deck of the Vineyard craft, luckily, was entire, and its planks so far answered an excellent purpose. They served to make a new quarter−deck for the repairs, but the whole of the main−deck and forecastle remained to be provided for. Materials were gleaned from different parts of the two vessels, until a reasonably convenient, and a perfectly safe deck was laid over the whole craft, the coamings for the hatches being taken from Daggett's schooner, which had not been broken up in those parts. It is scarcely necessary to say that the ice had early melted from the rocks of the coast. The caverns all disappeared within the first week of the thaw, the attitudes into which the cakes had been thrown greatly favouring the melting process, by exposing so much surface to the joint action of wind, rain, and sun. What was viewed as a favourable augury, the seals began to reappear. There was a remote portion of the coast, from which the ice had been driven by the winds around the north−west cape, that was already alive with them. Alas! these animals no longer awakened cupidity in the breasts of the sealers. The last no longer thought of gain, but simply of saving their lives, and of restoring themselves to the humble places they had held in the world, previously to having come on this ill−fated voyage.

This re−appearance of the seals produced a deep impression on Roswell Gardiner. His mind had been much inclined of late to dwell more and more on religious subjects, and his conversations with Stephen were still more frequent than formerly. Not that the boat−steerer could enlighten him on the great subject, by any learned lore, for in this Stimson was quite deficient; but his officer found encouragement in the depth and heartiness of his companion's faith, which seemed to be raised above all doubts and misgivings whatever. During the gloomiest moments of that fearful winter, Stephen had been uniformly confiding and cheerful. Not once had he been seen to waver, though all around him were desponding and anticipating the worst. His heart was light exactly in proportion as his faith was strong.

"We shall neither freeze nor starve," he used to say, "unless it be God's will; and, when it is his pleasure, depend on it, friends, it will be for our good." As for Daggett, he had finally given up his hold on the wreck, and it seemed no longer to fill his thoughts. When he was told that the seals had come back, his eye brightened, and his nature betrayed some of its ardent longings. But it was no more than a gleaming of the former spirit of the man, now becoming dim under the darkness that was fast encircling all his views of this world.

"It's a pity, Gar'ner, that we have no craft ready for the work," he said, under the first impulse of the

intelligence.

"At this early time in the season, a large ship might be filled!"

"We have other matters on our hands, Captain Daggett," was the answer; "they must be looked to first. If we can get off the island at all and return safe to those who, I much fear, are now mourning us as dead, we shall have great reason to thank God."

"A few skins would do no great harm, Gar'ner, even to a craft cut down and reduced."

"We have more cargo now than we shall be able to take with us. Quite one half of all our skins must be left behind us, and all of the oil. The hold of the schooner is too shallow to carry enough of anything to make out a voyage. I shall ballast with water and provisions, and fill up all the spare room with the best of our skins. The rest of the property must be abandoned."

"Why abandoned? Leave a hand or two to take care of it, and send a craft out to look for it, as soon as you get home. Leave me, Gar'ner, I am willing to stay."

Roswell thought that the poor man would be left, whether he wished to remain or not, for the symptoms that are known to be so fatal in cases like that of Daggett's, were making themselves so apparent as to leave little doubt of the result. What rendered this display of the master−passion somewhat remarkable, was the fact that our hero had, on several occasions, conversed with the invalid, concealing no material feature of his case, and the latter had expressed his expectation of a fatal termination, if not an absolute willingness to die. Stimson had frequently prayed with Daggett, and Roswell had often read particular chapters of the bible to him, at his own request, creating an impression that the Vineyarder was thinking more of his end than of any interests connected with this life. Such might have been, probably *was*, the case, until the seeming return of what had once been deemed good luck awakened old desires, and brought out traits of character that were about to be lost in the near views of a future world. All this Roswell saw and noted, and the reflections produced by his own perilous condition, the certain loss of, so many companions, the probable death of Daggett, and the humble but impressive example and sympathy of Stimson, were such as would have delighted the tender spirit of Mary Pratt, could she have known of their existence.

But the great consideration of the moment, the centre of all the hopes and fears of our sealers, was the rebuilding of the mutilated Sea Lion. Although the long thaw did so much for them, the reader is not to regard it as such a spell of warm weather as one enjoys in May within the temperate zone. There were no flowers, no signs of vegetation, and whenever the wind ceased to blow smartly from the northward, there was frost. At two or three intervals cold snaps set in that looked seriously like a return to winter, and, at the end of the third week of pleasant weather mentioned, it began to blow a gale from the southward, to snow, and to freeze. The storm commenced about ten in the forenoon; ere the sun went down, the days then being of great length, every passage around the dwelling was already blocked up with banks of snow. Several times had the men asked permission to remove the sails from the house, to admit air and light; but it was now found that the tent−like verandah they formed was of as much use as it had been at any time during the season. Without it, indeed, it would not have been possible for the people to quit their dwelling during three entire days. Everything like work was, of course, suspended during this tempest, which seriously menaced the unfortunate sealers with the necessity of again breaking up their schooner, now nearly completed, with a view again to keep themselves from freezing. The weather was not so intensely cold as it had been, continuously, for months during the past winter; but, coming as it did, after so long a spell of what might be considered as a balmy atmosphere in that region, it found the people unbraced and little prepared for it. At no time was the thermometer lower than twenty degrees below zero; this was near morning, after a sharp and stinging night; nor was it for any succession of hours much below zero. But zero was now hard to bear, and fires, and good fires too, were absolutely necessary to keep the men from suffering, as well as from despondency. Perhaps the spectacle of Daggett, dying from the effects of frost before their eyes, served to increase the uneasiness of the people, and to cause them to be less sparing of the fuel than persons in their situation ought to have been. It is certain that a report was brought to Roswell, in the height of the tempest, and when the thermometer was at the lowest, that there was not wood enough left from the plunder of the two vessels, exclusively of that which had been worked up in the repairs, to keep the fires going eight−and−forty hours longer! It was true, a little wood, intended to be used in the homeward passage, enough to last as far as Rio possibly, had been used in stowing the hold; and that might be got at first, if it ever ceased to snow. Without that addition to the stock in the house, it would not be within the limits of probability to suppose the people could hold out against the

severity of such weather a great while longer.

Every expedient that could be devised to save wood, and to obtain warmth from other sources, was resorted to, of course, by Roswell's orders. Lamps were burned with great freedom; not little vessels invented to give light, but such torches as one sees at the lighting up of a princely courtyard on the occasion of a *fête*, in which wicks are made by the pound, and unctuous matter is used by the gallon. Old canvass and elephants' oil supplied the materials; and the spare camboose, which had been brought over to the house to be set up there, while the other galley was being placed on board, very well answered the purpose of a lamp. Some warmth was obtained by these means, but much more of a glaring and unpleasant light.

It was during the height of this tempest that the soul of Daggett took its flight towards the place of departed spirits, in preparation for the hour when it was to be summoned before the judgment−seat of God. Previously to his death, the unfortunate Vineyarder held a frank and confidential discourse with Roswell. As his last hour approached, his errors and mistakes became more distinctly apparent, as is usual with men, while his sins of omission seemed to crowd the vista of by−gone days. Then it was that the whole earth did not contain that which, in his dying eyes, would prove an equivalent for one hour passed in a sincere, devout, and humble service of the Deity!

"I'm afraid that I've loved money most too well," he said to Roswell, not an hour before he drew his last breath; "but I hope it was not so much for myself, as for others. A wife and children, Gar'ner, tie a man to 'arth in a most unaccountable manner. Sealers' companions are used to hearing of misfortunes, and the Vineyard women know that few on 'em live to see a husband at their side in old age. Still, it is hard on a mother and wife, to l'arn that her chosen friend has been cut off in the pride of his days, and in a distant land. Poor Betsey! It would have been better for us both, had we been satisfied with the little we had; for now the good woman will have to look to all matters for herself."

Daggett now remained silent for some time, though his lips moved, most probably in prayer. It was a melancholy sight to see a man in the vigour of his manhood, whose voice was strong, and whose heart was still beating with vigour and vitality, standing, as it were, on the brink of a precipice, down which all knew he was to be so speedily hurled. But the decree had gone forth, and no human skill could arrest it. Shortly after the confession and lamentation we have recorded, the decay reached the vitals, and the machine of clay stopped. To avoid the unpleasant consequences of keeping the body in so warm a place, it was buried in the snow at a short distance from the house, within an hour after it had ceased to breathe.

When Roswell Gardiner saw this man, who had so long adhered to him, like a leech, in the pursuit of gold, laid a senseless corpse among the frozen flakes of the antarctic seas, he felt that a lively admonition of the vanity of the world was administered to himself. How little had he been able to foresee all that had happened, and how mistaken had been his own calculations and hopes! What, then, was that intellect of which he had been so proud, and what reason had he to rely on himself in those matters that lay equally beyond the cradle and the grave — that incomprehensible past, and the unforeseen future, towards which all those in existence were hastening! Roswell had received many lessons in humility, the most useful of all the lessons that man can receive in connection with the relation that really exists between the Deity and himself. Often had he wondered, while reading the Bible Mary Pratt had put into his hand, at the stubborn manner in which the chosen people of God had returned to their "idols," and their "groves," and their "high places;" but he was now made to understand that others still erred in this great particular, and that of all the idols men worship, that of self was perhaps the most objectionable.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Long swoln in drenching rains, seeds, germs, and buds
Start at the touch of vivifying beams.
Moved by their secret force, the vital lymph
Diffusive runs, and spreads o'er wood and field
A flood of verdure."

Wilcox.

At length it came to be rumoured among the sealers that the fires must be permitted to go out, or that the materials used for making the berths, and various other fixtures of the house, must be taken to supply the stove. It was when it got to be known that the party was reduced to this sad dilemma, that Roswell broke through the bank of snow that almost covered the house, and got so far into the open air as to be able to form some estimate of the probable continuance of the present cold weather. The thermometer, within the bank of snow, but outside of the building, then stood at twenty below zero; but it was much colder in the unobstructed currents of as keen and biting a south wind as ever came howling across the vast fields of ice that covered the polar basin. The snow had long ceased, but not until an immense quantity had fallen; nearly twice as much, Roswell and Hazard thought, as they had seen on the rocks at any time that winter.

"I see no signs of a change, Mr. Hazard," Roswell remarked, shivering with the intensity of the cold. "We had better go back into the house before we get chilled, for we have no fire now to go to, to warm ourselves. It is much warmer within doors, than it is in the open air, fire or no fire."

"There are many reasons for that, Captain Gar'ner," answered the mate. "So many bodies in so small a space, the shelter from the wind and outer air, and the snow banks, all help us. I think we shall find the thermometer indoors at a pretty comfortable figure this morning."

On examining it, it was found to stand at only fifteen below zero, making a difference of five degrees in favour of the house, as compared with the sort of covered gallery under the tent, and probably of five more, as compared with the open air.

On a consultation, it was decided that all hands should eat a hearty meal, remove most of their clothes, and get within the coverings of their berths, to see if it would not be possible to wear out the cold spell, in some tolerable comfort, beneath rugs and blankets. On the whole, it was thought that the berths might be made more serviceable by this expedient, than by putting their materials into the stoves. Accordingly, within an hour after Roswell and his mate had returned from their brief out−door excursion, the whole party was snugly bestowed under piles of rugs, clothes, sails, and whatever else might be used to retain the animal heat near the body, and exclude cold. In this manner, six−and−thirty hours were passed, not a man of them all having the courage to rise from his lair, and encounter the severity of the climate, now unrelieved by anything like a fire.

Roswell had slept most of the time, during the last ten hours, and in this he was much like all around him. A general feeling of drowsiness had come over the men, and the legs and feet of many among them, notwithstanding the quantity of bed−clothes that were, in particular, piled on that part of their person, were sensitively alive to the cold. No one ever knew how low the thermometer went that fearful night; but a sort of common consciousness prevailed, that nothing the men had yet seen, or felt, equalled its chill horrors. The cold had got into the house, converting every article it contained into a mass of frost. The berths ceased to be warm, and the smallest exposure of a shoulder, hand, or ears, soon produced pain. The heads of very many of the party were affected, and breathing became difficult and troubled. A numbness began to steal over the lower limbs; and this was the last unpleasant sensation remembered by Roswell, when he fell into another short and disturbed slumber. The propensity to sleep was very general now, though many struggled against it, knowing it was the usual precursor of death by freezing.

Our hero never knew how long he slept in the last nap he took on that memorable occasion. When he awoke, he found a bright light blazing in the hut, and heard some one moving about the camboose. Then his thoughts reverted to himself, and to the condition of his limbs. On trying to rub his feet together, he found them so nearly without sensation as to make the consciousness of their touching each other almost out of the question. Taking the

alarm at once, he commenced a violent friction, until by slow degrees he could feel that the nearly stagnant blood was getting again into motion. So great had been Roswell's alarm, and so intent his occupation, that he took no heed of the person who was busy at the camboose, until the man appeared at the side of his berth, holding a tin pot in his hand. It was Stimson, up and dressed, without his skins, and seemingly in perfect preservation.

"Here's some hot coffee, Captain Gar'ner," said the provident boat−steerer, "and then turn out. The wind has shifted, by the marcy of God, and it has begun to rain. *Now*, I think we may have summer in 'arnest, as summer comes among these sealin' islands."

Roswell took six or eight swallows of the coffee, which was smoking hot, and instantly felt the genial influence diffused over his whole frame. Sending Stephen to the other berths with this timely beverage, he now sat up in his berth, and rubbed his feet and legs with his hands. The exercise, friction, and hot coffee, soon brought him round; and he sprang out of his berth, and was quickly dressed. Stimson had lighted a fire in the camboose, using the very last of the wood, and the warmth was beginning to diffuse itself through the building. But the change in the wind, and the consequent melioration of the temperature, probably alone saved the whole of the Oyster Pond crew from experiencing the dire fate of that of the Vineyard craft.

Stephen got man after man out of his berth, by doses of the steaming coffee; and the blood being thus stimulated, by the aid of friction, everybody was soon up and stirring. It was found, on inquiry, that all three of the blacks had toes or ears frozen, and with them the usual application of snow became necessary; but the temperature of the house soon got to be so high as to render the place quite comfortable. Warm food being deemed very essential, Stephen had put a supply of beans and pork into his coppers; and the frost having been extracted from a quantity of the bread by soaking it in cold water, a hearty meal of good, hot, and most nourishing food, was made by all hands. This set our sealers up, no more complaints of the frost being heard.

It was, indeed, no longer very cold. The thermometer was up to twenty−six above zero in the house when Roswell turned out; and the cooking process, together with Stephen's fires and the shift of wind, soon brought the mercury up to forty. This was a cheering temperature for those who had been breathing the polar air; and the influence of the north−east gale continued to increase. The rain and thaw produced another deluge; and the cliffs presented, for several hours, a sight that might have caused Niagara to hide her head in mortification. These sublime scenes are of frequent occurrence amid the solitudes of the earth; the occasional phenomena of nature often surpassing in sublimity and beauty her rarest continued efforts.

The succeeding day the rain ceased, and summer appeared to have come in reality. It is true that at mid−day the thermometer in the shade stood at only forty−eight; but in the sun it actually rose to seventy. Let those who have ever experienced the extremes of heat and cold imagine the delight with which our sealers moved about under such a sun! All excess of clothing was thrown aside; and many of the men actually pursued their work in their shirt−sleeves.

As the snow had vanished quite as suddenly as it came, everything and everybody was now in active motion. Not a man of the crew was disposed to run the risk of encountering any more cold on Sealer's Land. Roswell himself was of opinion that the late severe weather was the dying effort of the winter, and that no more cold was to be expected; and Stimson agreed with him in this notion. The sails were taken down from around the house, and those articles it was intended to carry away were transferred to the schooner as fast as the difficulties of the road would allow. While his mates were carrying on this duty, our young master took an early occasion to examine the state of matters generally on the island. With this view he ascended to the plain, and went half−way up the mountain, desiring to get a good look into the offing.

It was soon ascertained that the recent deluge had swept all the ice and every trace of the dead into the sea. The body of Daggett had disappeared, with the snow−bank in which it had been buried; and all the carcases of the seals had been washed away. In a word, the rocks were as naked and as clean as if man's foot had never passed over them. From the facts that skeletons of seals had been found strewed along the north shore, and the present void, Roswell was led to infer that the late storm had been one of unusual intensity, and most probably of a character to occur only at long intervals.

But the state of the ice was the point of greatest interest. The schooner could now be got ready for sea in a week, and that easily; but there she lay, imbedded in a field of ice that still covered nearly the whole of the waters within the group. As Roswell stood on the cliffs which overlooked the cove, he calculated the distance it would be necessary to take the schooner through the ice by sawing and cutting, and that through a field known to be some

four feet thick, at five good miles at least. So Herculean did this task appear to be, that he even thought of abandoning his vessel altogether, and of setting out in the boats, as soon as the summer was fairly commenced. On reflection, however, this last plan was reserved as a *dernier ressort*, the danger of encountering the tempests of those seas in a whale−boat, without covering or fire, being much too great to be thought of, so long as any reasonable alternative offered.

The bergs to the southward were in motion, and a large fleet of them was putting to sea, as it might be, coming in from those remote and then unknown regions in which they were formed. From the mountain, our hero counted at least a hundred, all regularly shaped, with tops like that of table−land, and with even, regular sides, and upright attitudes. It was very desirable to get ahead of these new maritime Alps, for the ocean to the northward was unusually clear of ice of all kinds, that lodged between the islands excepted.

So long as it was safe to calculate on the regular changes of the seasons, Roswell knew that patience and vigilance would serve his turn, by bringing everything round in its proper time and place. But it was by no means certain that it was a usual occurrence for the Great Bay to be crammed with field−ice, as had happened the past winter; if the actual state of the surrounding waters were an exception instead of the rule. On examining the shores, however, it was found that the rain and melted snow had created a sort of margin, and that the strong winds which had been blowing, and which in fact were still blowing, had produced a gradually increasing attrition, until a space existed between the weather−side of the field and the rocks that was some thirty fathoms wide. This was an important discovery, and brought up a most grave question for decision.

Owing to the shape of the surrounding land, it would not be possible for the ice to float out in a body, for two or three months to come; or until so much had melted as to leave room for the field to pass the capes and head−lands. It never could have entered the bay for the same reason, but for the resistless power of a field that extended leagues out into the ocean, where, acted on jointly by wind and tide, it came down with a momentum that was resistless, ripping and tearing the edges of the field as if they had been so much freshly turned up mould. It was, then, a question how to get the schooner out of her present bed and into clear water.

The reader will probably remember that, on her first arrival at the group, the Sea Lion had entered the Great Bay from the southward; while, in her subsequent effort to get north, she had gone out by the opposite passage. Now, it occurred to Roswell that he might escape by the former of these routes more readily than by the latter, and for the following reasons: — No field−ice had ever blocked up the southern passage, which was now quite clear, though the approach to it just then was choked by the manner in which the north−east gale that was still blowing, pressed home against the rocks the field that so nearly filled the bay. A shift of wind, however, must soon come; and when that change occurred, it was certain that this field would move in an opposite direction, leaving the margin of open water, that has already been mentioned, all along the rocks. The distance was considerable, it is true—not less than fifteen miles—and the whole of it was to be made quite close to sharp angular rocks that would penetrate the schooner's sides almost as readily as an axe, in the event of a nip; but this danger might be avoided by foresight, and a timely attention to the necessities of the case. Seeing no more available plan to get the vessel out of her present duresse, the mates came readily into this scheme, and preparations were made to carry it out. As the cove was so near the north−east end of Sealer's Land, it may be well to explain that the reason this same mode of proceeding could not be carried out in a northern direction, was the breadth of the field seaward, and the danger of following the north shore when the solid ice did leave it, on account of the quantities of broken fragments that were tossing and churning in its front, far as the eye could reach from the cliffs themselves.

The third day after the commencement of the thaw, the wind came round again from the south−west, blowing heavily. As was expected, this soon began to set the field in motion, driving it over towards the volcano, and at the same time northerly. About six in the morning, Hazard brought a report to Roswell that a margin of open water was beginning to form all along under the cliffs, while there was great danger that the channel which had been cut from the schooner to the nearest point beneath the rocks, in readiness for this very contingency, might be closed by the pressure of the ice without, on that within the cove. No time was to be lost, therefore, if it was intended to move the craft on this shift of wind. The distance that had been sawed through to make the channel just named, did not exceed a hundred yards. The passage was not much wider than the schooner's breadth; and it will be easily understood that it was to the last degree important to carry her through this strait as soon as possible. Although many useful articles were scattered about on the ice, and several remained to be brought over the rocks from the house, the order was given to get out lines, and to move the vessel at once, the men set to work

with hearty good will, another glimpse of home rising before their imaginations; and, in five minutes after Hazard had made his communication, the Sea Lion had gone six or eight times her length towards the cliffs. Then came the pinch! Had not the ice been solid between the cape and the berth just before occupied by the schooner, she would have been hopelessly nipped by the closing of the artificial channel. As it was, she was caught, and her progress was arrested; but the field took a cant, in consequence of the resistance of the solid ice that filled the whole cove to the eastward of the channel; and, before any damage was done, the latter began to open even faster than it had come together. The instant the craft was released the sealers manned their hauling lines again, and ran her up to the rocks with a hurrah! The margin of water was just opening, but so prompt had been the movement of the men that it was not yet wide enough to permit the vessel to go any further; and it was found necessary to wait until the passage was sufficiently wide to enable her to move ahead. The intervening time was occupied in bringing to the craft the articles left behind.

By nine o'clock everything was on board; the winding channel that followed the sinuosities of the coast could be traced far as the eye could see; the lines were manned; and the word was again given to move. Roswell now felt that he was engaged in much the most delicate of all his duties. The desperate run through the fleet of bergs, and the second attempt to get to sea, were not in certain particulars as hazardous as this. The field had been setting back and forth now, for several weeks; the margin of clear water increasing by the attrition at each return to the rocks; and it was known by observation that these changes often occurred at very short notices. Should the wind haul round with the sun, or one of the unaccountable currents of those seas intervene before the south−east cape was reached, the schooner would probably be broken into splinters, or ground into powder, in the course of some two or three hours. It was all−important, therefore, to lose not a moment.

Several times in the course of the first hour, the movement of the schooner was arrested by the want of sufficient room to pass between projecting points in the cliffs and the edge of the ice. On two of these occasions passages were cut with the saw, the movement of the field not answering to the impatience of the sealers. At the end of that most momentous hour, however, the craft had been hauled ahead a mile and a half, and had reached a curvature in the coast where the margin of open water was more than fifty fathoms wide, and the tracking of the vessel became easy and rapid. By two o'clock the Sea Lion was at what might be called the bottom of the Great Bay, some three or four leagues from the cove, and at the place where the long low cape began to run out in a south−easterly direction. As the wind could now be felt over the rocks, the foretopsail was set, as well as the lower sails, the latter being mainly becalmed, however, by the land; when the people were all taken on board, the craft moving faster under her canvass than by means of the hauling lines. The wind was very fresh, and in half an hour more the south−east cape came in sight, close as were the navigators to the rocks. Ten minutes later, the Sea Lion was under reefed sails, stretching off to the southward and eastward, in perfectly clear water!

At first, Roswell Gardiner was disposed to rejoice, under the impression that his greatest labour had been achieved. A better look at the state of things around him, however, taught the disheartening lesson of humility, by demonstrating that they had in truth but just commenced.

Although there was scarcely any field−ice to the southward of the group, and in its immediate neighbourhood, there was a countless number of bergs. It is true, these floating mountains did not come very near the passage, for the depth of water just there usually brought them up ere they could get into it; nevertheless, a large fleet of them was blockading the entire group, far as the eye could reach, looking east, west and south, or along the whole line of the southern coast. It was at first questionable whether, and soon after it became certain, that the schooner could never beat through such dangers. Had the wind been fair, the difficulty would have been insurmountable; but ahead, and blowing a little gale, the matter was out of the question. Some other course must be adopted.

There was a choice of alternatives. One was to go entirely round the whole group, passing to the eastward of the volcano, where no one of the party had ever been; and the other was to follow the eastern margin of the bay, keeping inside of it, and trusting to finding some opening by which the schooner could force her way into clear water to the northward. After a very brief consultation with his mates, Roswell decided on attempting the last.

As the course now to be steered was almost dead before the wind, the little craft, lightened of so much of her upper works, almost flew through the water. The great source of apprehension felt by our young men in attempting this new expedient, was in the probability that the field would drift home to the rocks in the north−east quarter of the bay, which, with a south−west wind, was necessarily a quarter to leeward. Should this prove to be the case, it might be found impossible to pass ahead, and the schooner would be caught in a *cul de sac;* since it

would not be in the power of her people to track her back again in the teeth of so strong a wind. Notwithstanding these probabilities, on Roswell went; for he saw plain enough that at such a moment almost anything was better than indecision.

The rate at which the little craft was flying before a fresh gale, in perfectly smooth water, soon put our sealers in a better condition to form closer estimates of their chances. The look−outs aloft, one of whom was Hazard, the first officer, sent down on deck constant reports of what they could see.

"How does it look ahead, now, Mr. Hazard?" demanded Roswell, about five in the afternoon, just as his schooner was coming close under the smoking sides of the volcano, which had always been an object of interest to him, though he had never found time to visit it before. "Is there no danger of our touching the ground, close in as we are to this island?"

"I think not, sir; when I landed here, we kept the lead going the whole time, and we got two fathoms quite up to the shore. In my judgment, Captain Gar'ner, we may run down along this land as bold as lions."

"And how does it look ahead? I've no wish to get jammed here, close aboard of a volcano, which may be choking us all with its smoke before we know where we are."

"Not much danger of that, sir, with this wind. These volcanoes are nothin' but playthings, a'ter all. The vapour is driving off towards the north−east_____That was a crack, with a vengeance!"

Just as Hazard was boasting of the innocuous character of a volcano, that near them fired a gun, as the men afterwards called it, casting into the air a large flight of cinders and stones, accompanied by a sharp flash of flame. All the lighter materials drove away to leeward, but the heavier followed the law of projectiles, and scattered in all directions. Several stones of some size fell quite close to the schooner, and a few smaller actually came down on her decks.

"It will never do to stop here to boil our pot," cried Roswell to the mate. "We must get away from this, Mr. Hazard, as fast as the good craft can travel!"

"Get away it is, sir. There is nothing very near ahead to stop us; though it does look more toward the east cape as if the field was jammed in that quarter."

"Keep all your eyes about you, sir; and look out especially for any opening among the smaller islands ahead. I am not without hope that the currents which run among them may give us a clear passage in that quarter."

These words explain precisely that which did actually occur. On went the schooner, almost brushing the base of the volcano, causing Roswell many a bound of the heart, when he fancied she must strike; but she went clear. All this time, it was crack, crack, crack, from the crater, rumbling sounds and heavy explosions; the last attended by flames, and smoke of a pitchy darkness. A dozen times the Sea Lion had very narrow escapes when nearest to the danger, stones of a weight to pass through her decks and bottom falling even on the ice outside of her; but that hand which had so benevolently stayed various other evils, was stretched forth to save, and nothing touched the schooner of a size to do any injury. These escapes made a deep impression on Roswell. Until the past winter he had been accustomed to look upon things and events as matters of course. This vacant indifference, so common to men in prosperity, was extended even to the sublimest exhibition of the Almighty power; our hero seeing nothing in the firmament of heaven, of a clear night, but the twinkling lights that seemed to him to be placed there merely to garnish and illumine the darkness of this globe. Now, how differently did he look upon natural objects, and their origin! If it were only an insect, his mind presented its wonderful mechanism, its beauty, its uses. No star seemed less than what science has taught us that it is; and the power of the Dread Being who had created all, who governed all, and who was judge of all, became an inseparable subject of contemplation, as he looked upon the least of his works. Feelings thus softened and tempered by humility, easily led their subject to the reception of those leading articles of the Christian faith which have been consecrated by the belief of the church catholic since the ages of miraculous guidance, and which are now venerable by time. Bold and presuming is he who fancies that his intellect can rectify errors of this magnitude and antiquity, and that the church of God has been permitted to wallow on in a most fatal idolatry for centuries, to be extricated by the pretending syllogisms of his one−sided and narrow philosophy!

The people of the Sea Lion were less affected by what they saw than their young commander. Their hearts were light with the prospect of a speedy release from the hardships and dangers they had undergone; and, at each explosion of the volcano, as soon as out of reach of the falling stones, they laughed, and asserted that the mountain was firing a salute in honour of their departure. Such is the difference between men whose hearts and

spirits have submitted to the law of faith, and those who live on in the recklessness of the passing events of life!

The schooner was racing past a rocky islet, beginning to haul more on a wind, as she made the circuit of the bay, just as Hazard came to the conclusion that the field had drifted home on the outer island of the group, and that it would be impossible to pass into clear water by going on. Turning his head in quest of some bay, or other secure place in which the craft might wait for a favourable change, he saw a narrow opening to leeward of the islet he had passed but a minute before; and, so far as he could perceive, one that led directly out to sea.

It was too late to keep away for the entrance of the passage, the ice being too close at hand to leeward; but, most fortunately, there was room to tack. A call to Roswell soon caused the schooner to be close on a wind; down went her helm, and round she came like a top. Sail was shortened in stays, and by the time the little craft was ready to fall off for the passage, she had nothing on her but a foretopsail, jib, and a close−reefed mainsail. Under this canvass she glided along, almost brushing the rocks of the islet, but without touching. In twenty minutes more she was clear of the group altogether, and in open water!

That night some embarrassment was encountered from broken field−ice, of which the ocean was pretty full; but by exercising great vigilance, no serious thump occurred. Fortunately the period of darkness was quite short, the twilight being of great length both mornings and evenings; and the re−appearance of the sun cast a cheerful glow on the face of the troubled waters.

The wind held at south−west for three days, blowing heavily the whole time. By the second night−fall the sea was clear of ice, and everything was carried on the schooner that she could bear. About nine o'clock on the morning of the fourth day out, a speck was seen rising above the ragged outline of the rolling waves; and each minute it became higher and more distinct. An hour or two later, the Sea Lion was staggering along before a westerly gale, with the Hermit of Cape Horn on her larboard beam, distant three leagues. How many trying scenes and bitter moments crowded on the mind of young Roswell Gardiner, as he recalled all that had passed in the ten months which intervened since he had come out from behind the shelter of those wild rocks! Stormy as was that sea, and terrible as was its name among mariners, coming, as he did, from one still more stormy and terrible, he now regarded it as a sort of place of refuge. A winter there, he well knew, would be no trifling undertaking; but he had just passed a winter in a region where even fuel was not to be found, unless carried there. Twenty days later the Sea Lion sailed again from Rio, having sold all the sea−elephant oil that remained, and bought stores; of which, by this time, the vessel was much in want. Most of the portions of the provisions that were left had been damaged by the thawing process; and food was getting to be absolutely necessary to her people, when the schooner went again into the noble harbour of the capital of Brazil. Then succeeded the lassitude and calms that reign about the imaginary line that marks the circuit of the earth, at that point which is ever central as regards the sun, and where the days and nights are always equal. No inclination of the earth's axis to the plane of its orbit affected the climate there, which knew not the distinctions of summer and winter; or which, if they did exist at all, were so faintly marked as to be nearly imperceptible.

Twenty days later the schooner was standing among some low sandy keys, under short canvass, and in the south−east trades. By her movements an anchorage was sought; and one was found at last, where the craft was brought up, boats were hoisted out, and Roswell Gardiner landed.

CHAPTER XIV.

`If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them; I would have my bond."
Shakspeare.

The earth had not stopped in its swift race round the sun at Oyster Pond, while all these events were in the course of occurrence in the antarctic seas. The summer had passed, that summer which was to have brought back the sealers; and autumn had come to chill the hopes as well as the body. Winter did not bring any change. Nothing was heard of Roswell and his companions, nor *could* anything have been heard of them short of the intervention of a miracle.

Mary Pratt no longer mentioned Roswell in her prayers. She fully believed him to be dead; and her puritanical creed taught her that this, the sweetest and most endearing of all the rites of Christianity, was allied to a belief that it was sacrilege to entertain. We pretend not to any distinct impressions on this subject ourselves, beyond a sturdy protestant disinclination to put any faith in the abuses of purgatory at least; but, most devoutly do we wish that such petitions *could* have the efficacy that so large a portion of the Christian world impute to them. But Mary Pratt, so much better than we can lay any claim to be in all essentials, was less liberal than ourselves on this great point of doctrine. Roswell Gardiner's name now never passed her lips in prayer, therefore; though scarce a minute went by without his manly person being present to her imagination. He still lived in her heart, a shrine from which she made no effort to expel him.

As for the deacon, age, disease, and distress of mind, had brought him to his last hours. The passions which had so engrossed him when in health, now turned upon his nature, and preyed upon his vitals, like an ill−omened bird. It is more than probable that he would have lived some months, possibly some years longer, had not the evil spirit of covetousness conspired to heighten the malady that wasted his physical frame. As it was, the sands of life were running low; and the skilful Dr. Sage, himself, had admitted to Mary the improbability that her uncle and protector could long survive.

It is wonderful how the interest in a rich man suddenly revives among his relatives and possible heirs, as his last hour draws near. Deacon Pratt was known to be wealthy in a small way; was thought to possess his thirty or forty thousand dollars, which was regarded as wealth among the east−enders thirty years since; and every human being in Old Suffolk, whether of its overwhelming majority or of its more select and wiser minority, who could by legal possibility claim any right to be remembered by the dying man, crowded around his bed−side. At that moment, Mary Pratt, who had so long nursed his diseases and mitigated his sufferings, was compelled to appear as a very insignificant and secondary person. Others who stood in the same degree of consanguinity to the dying man, and two, a brother and sister, who were even one degree closer, had *their* claims, and were by no means disposed to suffer them to be forgotten. Gladly would poor Mary have prayed by her uncle's bed−side; but Parson Whittle had assumed this solemn duty, it being deemed proper that one who had so long filled the office of deacon, should depart with a proper attention to the usages of his meeting. Some of the relatives who had lately appeared, and who were not so conversant with the state of things between the deacon and his divine, complained among themselves that the latter made too many ill−timed allusions to the pecuniary wants of the congregation; and that he had, in particular, almost as much as asked the deacon to make a legacy that would enable those who were to stay behind, to paint the meeting−house, erect a new horse−shed, purchase some improved stoves, and reseat the body of the building. These modest requests, it was whispered—for all passed in whispers then—would consume not less than a thousand dollars of the deacon's hard earnings; and the thing was mentioned as a wrong done him who was about to descend into the grave, where nought of earth could avail him in any way.

Close was the siege that was laid to Deacon Pratt, during the last week of his life. Many were the hints given of the necessity of his making a will, though the brother and sister, estimating their rights as the law established them, said but little on the subject, and that little was rather against the propriety of annoying a man, in their brother's condition, with business of so perplexing a nature. The fact that these important personages set their faces against the scheme had due weight, and most of the relatives began to calculate the probable amount of their

respective shares under the law of distribution, as it stood in that day. This excellent and surpassingly wise community of New York had not then reached the pass of exceeding liberality towards which it is now so rapidly tending. In that day, the debtor was not yet thought of, as the creditor's next heir, and that plausible and impracticable desire of a false philanthropy, which is termed the Homestead Exemption Law— impracticable as to anything like a just and equitable exemption of equal amount in all cases of indebtedness— was not yet dreamed of. New York was then a sound and healthful community; making its mistakes, doubtless, as men ever will err; but the control of things had not yet passed into the hands of sheer political empirics, whose ignorance and quackery were stimulated by the lowest passion for majorities. Among other things that were then respected, were wills; but it was not known to a single individual, among all those who thronged the dwelling of Deacon Pratt, that the dying man had ever mustered the self−command necessary to make such an instrument. He was free to act, but did not choose to avail himself of his freedom. Had he survived a few years, he would have found himself in the enjoyment of a liberty so sublimated, that he could not lease, or rent a farm, or collect a common debt, without coming under the harrow of the tiller of the political soil.

The season had advanced to the early part of April, and that is usually a soft and balmy month on the sea−shore, though liable to considerable and sudden changes of temperature. On the day to which we now desire to transfer the scene, the windows of the deacon's bed−room were open, and the soft south wind fanned his hollow and pallid cheek. Death was near, though the principle of life struggled hard with the King of Terrors. It was now that that bewildered and Pharasaical faith which had so long held this professor of religion in a bondage even more oppressive than open and announced sins, most felt the insufficiency of the creed in which he had rather been speculating than trusting all his life, to render the passing hour composed and secure. There had always been too much of self in Deacon Pratt's moral temperament, to render his belief as humble and devout as it should be. It availed him not a hair, now, that he was a deacon, or that he had made long prayers in the market−places, where men could see him, or that he had done so much, as he was wont to proclaim, for example's sake. All had not sufficed to cleanse his heart of worldly−mindedness, and he now groped about him, in the darkness of a faith obscured, for the true light that was to illumine his path to another world.

The doctor had ordered the room cleared of all, but two or three of the dying man's nearest relatives. Among these last, however, was the gentle and tender−hearted Mary, who loved to be near her uncle, in this his greatest need. She no longer thought of his covetousness, of his griping usury, of his living so much for self and so little for God. While hovering about the bed, a message reached her that Baiting Joe wished to see her, in the passage that led to the bed−room. She went to this old fisherman, and found him standing near a window that looked towards the east, and which consequently faced the waters of Gardiner's Bay.

"There she is, Miss Mary," said Joe, pointing out of the window, his whole face in a glow, between joy and whiskey. "It should be told to the deacon at once, that his last hours might be happier than some that he has passed lately. That's she — though, at first, I did not know her."

Mary saw a vessel standing in towards Oyster Pond, and her familiarity with objects of that nature was such, as to tell her at once that it was a schooner; but so completely had she given up the Sea Lion, that it did not occur to her that this could be the long−missing craft.

"At what are you pointing, Joe?" the wondering girl asked, with perfect innocence.

"At that craft—at the Sea Lion of Sterling, which has been so long set down as missing, but which has turned up, just as her owner is about to cast off from this 'arth, altogether."

Joe might have talked for an hour: he did chatter away for two or three minutes, with his head and half his body out of the window, uninterrupted by Mary, who sank into a chair, to prevent falling on the floor. At length the dear girl commanded herself, and spoke.

"You cannot possibly be certain, Joe," she said; "that schooner does not look, to me, like the Sea Lion."

"Nor to me, in some things, while in other some she does. Her upper works seem strangely out of shape, and there's precious little on 'em. But no other fore−taw−sail schooner ever comes in this−a−way, and I know of none likely to do it. Ay, by Jupiter, there goes the very blue peter I helped to make with my own hands, and it was agreed to set it, as the deacon's signal. There's no mistake, now!"

Joe might have talked half an hour longer without any fear of interruption, for Mary had vanished to her own room, leaving him with his head and body still out of the window, making his strictures and conjectures for some time longer; while the person to whom he fancied he was speaking, was, in truth, on her knees, rendering thanks

to God! An hour later, all doubt was removed, the schooner coming in between Oyster Pond and Shelter Island, and making the best of her way to the well−known wharf.

"Is n't it wonderful, Mary," exclaimed the deacon, in a hollow voice, it is true, but with an animation and force that did not appear to have any immediate connection with death—"is n't it wonderful that Gar'ner should come back, after all! If he has only done his duty by me, this will be the greatest ventur' of my whole life; it will make the evening of my days comfortable. I hope I've always been grateful for blessings, and I'm sure I'm grateful, from the bottom of my heart, for this. Give me prosperity, and I'm not apt to forget it. They've been asking me to make a will, but I told 'em I was too poor to think of any such thing; and, now my schooner has got back, I s'pose I shall get more hints of the same sort. Should anything happen to me, Mary, you can bring out the sealed paper I gave you to keep, and that must satisfy 'em all. You'll remember, it is addressed to Gar'ner. There is n't much in it, and it won't be much thought of, I fancy; but, such as it is, 'tis the last instrument I sign, unless I get better. To think of Gar'ner's coming back, after all! It has put new life in me, and I shall be about, ag'in, in a week, if he has only not forgotten the key, and the hidden treasure!"

Mary Pratt's heart had not been so light for many a weary day, but it grieved her to be a witness of this lingering longing after the things of the world. She knew that not only her uncle's days, but that his very hours, were numbered; and that, notwithstanding this momentary flickering of the lamp, in consequence of fresh oil being poured into it, the wick was nearly consumed, and that it must shortly go out, let Roswell's success be what it might. The news of the sudden and unlooked−for return of a vessel so long believed to be lost, spread like wildfire over the whole point, and greatly did it increase the interest of the relatives in the condition of the dying man. If he was a subject of great concern before, doubly did he become so now. A vessel freighted with furs would have caused much excitement of itself; but, by some means or other, the deacon's great secret of the buried treasure had leaked out, most probably by means of some of his lamentations during his illness, and, though but imperfectly known, it added largely to the expectations connected with the unlooked−for return of the schooner. In short, it would not have been easy to devise a circumstance that should serve to increase the liveliness of feeling that, just then, prevailed on the subject of Deacon Pratt and his assets, than the arrival of the Sea Lion, at that precise moment.

And arrive she did, that tempest−tossed, crippled, ice−bound, and half−burned little craft, after roaming over an extent of ocean that would have made up half a dozen ordinary sea voyages. It was, in truth, the schooner so well known to the reader, that was now settling away her mainsail and jib, as she kept off, under her fore−topsail alone, towards the wharf, on which every human being who could, with any show of propriety, be there at such a moment, was now collected, in a curious and excited crowd. Altogether, including boys and females, there must have been not less than a hundred persons on that wharf; and among them were most of the anxious relatives who were in attendance on the vessel's owner, in his last hours. By a transition that was natural enough, perhaps, under the circumstances, they had transferred their interest in the deacon to this schooner, which they looked upon as an inanimate portion of an investment that would soon have little that was animate about it.

Baiting Joe was a sort of oracle, in such circumstances. He had passed his youth at sea, having often doubled the Horn, and was known to possess a very respectable amount of knowledge on the subject of vessels of all sorts and sizes, rig and qualities. He was now consulted by all who could get near him, as a matter of course, and his opinions were received as *res adjudicata*, as the lawyers have it.

"That's the boat," said Joe, affecting to call the Sea Lion by a diminutive, as a proof of regard; "yes, that's the craft, herself; but she is wonderfully deep in the water! I never seed a schooner of her tonnage, come in from a v'y'ge, with her scuppers so near awash. Don't you think, Jim, there must be suthin' heavier than skins, in her hold, to bring her down so low in the water?"

Jim was another loafer, who lived by taking clams, oysters, fish, and the other treasures of the surrounding bays. He was by no means as high authority as Baiting Joe; still he was always authority on a wharf.

"I never seed the like on't," answered Jim. "That schooner must ha' made most of her passage under water. She's as deep as one of our coasters comin' in with a load o'brick!"

"She's deep; but not as deep as a craft I once made a cruise in. I was aboard of the first of Uncle Sam's gun−boats, that crossed the pond to Gibraltar. When we got in, it made the Mediterranean stare, I can tell you! We had furrin officers aboard us, the whull time, lookin' about, and wonderin', as they called it, if we wasn't amphibbies."

"What's that?" demanded Jim, rather hastily. "There's no sich rope in the ship."

"I know that well enough; but an amphibby, as I understand it, is a new sort of whale, that comes up to breathe, like all of that family, as old Dr. Mitchell, of Cow Neck, calls the critturs. So the furrin officers thought we must be of the amphibby family, to live so much under water, as it seemed to them. It was wet work, I can tell you, boys; I don't think I got a good breath more than once an hour, the whull of the first day we was out. One of the furrin officers asked our captain how the gun−boat steered. He wasn't a captain, at all—only a master, you see, and we all called him Jumpin' Billy. So Jumpin' Billy says, `Don't know, sir.' `What! crossed the Atlantic in her, and don't know how your craft steers!' says the furrin officer, says he—and well he might, Jim, since nothin' that ever lived could go from Norfolk to Gibraltar, without *some* attention to the helm—but Jumpin' Billy had another story to tell. `No, sir; don't know,' he answered. `You see, sir, a nor−wester took us right aft, as we cleared the capes, and down she dove, with her nose under and her starn out, and she come across without having a chance to try the rudder.' "

This story, which Joe had told at least a hundred times before, and which, by the way, is said to be true, produced the usual admiration, especially among the crowd of legatees−expectant, to most of whom it was quite new. When the laugh went out, which it soon did of itself, Joe pursued a subject that was of more interest to most of his auditors, or rather to the principal personages among them.

"Skins never brought a craft so low, that you may be sartain of!" he resumed. "I've seed all sorts of vessels stowed, but a hundred press−screws couldn't cram in furs enough to bring a craft so low! To my eye, Jim, there's suthin' unnat'ral about that schooner, a'ter all."

The study is scarce worthy of a diploma, but we will take this occasion to say, for the benefit of certain foreign writers, principally of the female sex, who fancy they represent Americanisms, that the vulgar of the great republic, and it is admitted there are enough of the class, never say "summat" or "somethink," which are low English, but not low American, dialect. The in−and−in Yankee says "suth−in." In a hundred other words have these ambitious ladies done injustice to our vulgar, who are not vulgar, according to the laws of Cockayne, in the smallest degree. "*The* Broadway," for instance, is no more used by an American than "*the* Congress," or "the United States of *North* America."

"Perhaps," answered Jim, "'tisn't the Sea Lion, a'ter all. There's a family look about all the craft some men build, and this may be a sort of relation of our missin' schooner."

"I'll not answer for the craft, though that's her blue peter, and them's her mast−heads, and I turned in that taw−sail halyard−block with my own hands.—I'll tell you what, Jim, there's been a wrack, or a nip, up yonder, among the ice, and this schooner has been built anew out of that there schooner. You see if it don't turn out as I tell you. Ay, and there's Captain Gar'ner, himself, alive and well, just comin' forrard."

A little girl started with this news, and was soon pouring it into the willing ears and open heart of the weeping and grateful Mary. An hour later, Roswell held the latter in his arms; for at such a moment, it was not possible for the most scrupulous of the sex to affect coldness and reserve, where there was so much real tenderness and love. While folding Mary to his heart, Roswell whispered in her ears the blessed words that announced his own humble submission to the faith which accepted Christ as the Son of God. Too well did the gentle and ingenuous girl understand the sincerity and frankness of her lover's nature, to doubt what he said, or in any manner to distrust the motive. That moment was the happiest of her short and innocent life!

But the welcome tidings had reached the deacon, and ere Roswell had an opportunity of making any other explanations but those which assured Mary that he had come back all that she wished him to be, both of them were summoned to the bed−side of the dying man. The effect of the excitement on the deacon was so very great as almost to persuade the expectant legatees that their visit was premature, and that they might return home, to renew it at some future day. It is painful to find it our duty to draw sketches that shall contain such pictures of human nature; but with what justice could we represent the loathsome likeness of covetousness, hovering over a grave, and omit the resemblances of those who surrounded it? Mary Pratt, alone, of all that extensive family connection, felt and thought as Christianity, and womanly affection, and reason, dictated. All the rest saw nothing but the possessor of a considerable property, who was about to depart for that unknown world, into which nothing could be taken from this, but the divine and abused spirit which had been fashioned in the likeness of God.

"Welcome, Gar'ner—welcome home, ag'in!" exclaimed the deacon, so heartily as quite to deceive the young man as to the real condition of his owner; a mistake that was, perhaps, a little unfortunate, as it induced him to be

more frank than might otherwise have been the case. "I couldn't find it in my heart to give you up, and have, all along, believed that we should yet have good news from you. The Gar'ners are a reliable family, and that was one reason why I chose you to command my schooner. Them Daggetts are a torment, but we never should have known anything about the islands, or the key, hadn't it been for one one 'em!"

As the deacon stopped to breathe, Mary turned away from the bed, grieved at heart to see the longings of the world thus clinging to the spirit of one who probably had not another hour to live. The glazed but animated eye, a cheek which resembled a faded leaf of the maple laid on a cold and whitish stone, and lips that had already begun to recede from the teeth, made a sad, sad picture, truly, to look upon at such a moment; yet, of all present, Mary Pratt alone felt the fullness of the incongruity, and alone bethought her of the unreasonableness of encouraging feelings like those which were now uppermost in the deacon's breast. Even minister Whittle had a curiosity to know how much was added to the sum−total of Deacon Pratt's assets, by the return of a craft that had so long been set down among the missing. When all eyes, therefore, were turned in curiosity on the handsome face of the fine manly youth who now stood at the bed−side of the deacon, including those of brother and sister, of nephews and nieces, of cousins and friends, those of this servant of the most high God was of the number, and not the least expressive of solicitude and expectation. As soon as the deacon had caught a little breath, and had swallowed a restorative that the hired nurse had handed to him, his eager thoughts reverted to the one engrossing theme of his whole life.

"These are all friends, Gar'ner," he said; "come to visit me in a little sickness that I've been somewhat subject to, of late, and who will all be glad to hear of our good fortune. So you've brought the schooner back, a'ter all, Gar'ner, and will disapp'int the Sag Harbour ship−owners, who have been all along foretelling that we should never see her ag'in:—brought her back—ha! Gar'ner?"

"Only in part, Deacon Pratt. We have had good luck and bad luck since we left you, and have only brought home the best part of the craft."

"The best part—" said the deacon, gulping his words, in a way that compelled him to pause; "The best part! What, in the name of property, has become of the rest?"

"The rest was burned, sir, to keep us from freezing to death." Roswell then gave a brief, but very clear and intelligible account of what had happened, and of the manner in which he had caused the hulk of the deacon's Sea Lion to be raised upon by the materials furnished by the Sea Lion of the Vineyard. The narrative brought Mary Pratt back to the side of the bed, and caused her calm eyes to become riveted intently on the speaker's face. As for the deacon, he might have said, with Shakspeare's Wolsey,

"Had I but served my God with half the zeal I served my king, he would not, in mine age, Have left me naked to mine enemies."

His fall was not that of a loss of power, it is true, but it was that of a still more ignoble passion, covetousness. As Roswell proceeded, his mind represented one source of wealth after another released from his clutch, until it was with a tremulous voice, and a countenance from which all traces of animation had fled, that he ventured again to speak.

"Then I may look upon my ventur' as worse than nothing?" he said. "The insurers will raise a question about paying for a craft that has been rebuilt in this way, and the Vineyard folks will be sartain to put in a claim of salvage, both on account of two of their hands helping you with the work, and on account of the materials — and we with no cargo, as an offset to it all!"

"No, deacon, it is not quite as bad as that," resumed Roswell. "We have brought home a good lot of skins; enough to pay the people full wages and to return you every cent of outfit, with a handsome advance on the venture. A sealer usually makes a good business of it, if she falls in with seals. Our cargo, in skins, can't be worth less than $20,000; besides half a freight left on the island, for which another craft may be sent."

"That is suthin', the Lord be praised!" ejaculated the deacon. "Though the schooner is as bad as gone, and the outlays have been awfully heavy, I'm almost afraid to go any further. Gar'ner, — did you — I grow weak very fast — did you stop — Mary, I wish *you* would put the question."

"I am afraid that my uncle means to ask if you stopped at the Key, in the West Indies, according to your instructions, Roswell?" the niece said, and most reluctantly, for she plainly saw it was fully time her uncle ceased to think of the things of this life, and to begin to turn all his thoughts on the blessed mediation, and another state of being.

"I forgot no part of your orders, sir," rejoined Roswell. "It was my duty to obey them, and I believe I have done so to the letter—"

"Stop, Gar'ner," interrupted the dying man — "one question, while I think of it. Will the Vineyard men have any claim of salvage on account of them skins?"

"Certainly not, sir. These skins are all our own—were taken, cured, stowed, and brought home altogether by ourselves. There is a lot of skins belonging to the Vineyarders, stowed away in the house, which is yours, deacon, and which it would well pay any small craft to go and bring away. If anybody is to claim salvage, it will be ourselves. No salvage was demanded for the loss off Cape Henlopen, I trust?"

"No, none—Daggett behaved what I call *liberal* in that affair,"—half the critics of the day would use the adjective instead of the adverb here, and why should Deacon Pratt's English be any better than his neighbours?—"and so I've admitted to his friends over on the Vineyard. But, Gar'ner, our great affair still remains to be accounted for. Do you wish to have the room cleared before you speak of that — shall we turn the *key* on all these folks, and then settle accounts—he! he! he!"

The deacon's facetiousness sounded strangely out of place to Roswell; still, he did not exactly know how to gainsay his wishes. There might be an indiscretion in pursuing his narrative before so many witnesses, and the young man paused until the room was cleared, leaving no one in it but the sick man, Mary, himself, and the nurse. The last could not well be gotten rid of on Oyster Pond, where her office gave her an assumed right to know all family secrets; or, what was the same thing to her, to *fancy* that she knew them. Among all the sayings which the experience of mankind has reduced to axioms, there is not one more just than that which says, "There are secrets in all families." These secrets the world commonly affects to know all about, but we think few will have reached the age of threescore without becoming convinced of how much pretending ignorance there is in this assumption of the world. "*Tot ou tard tout se scait*," is a significant saying of our old friends, the French, who know as much of things in practice as any other people on the face of the earth; but "*tot ou tard tout ne se scait pas*."

"Is the door shut?" asked the deacon, tremulously, for eagerness, united to debility, was sadly shaking his whole frame. "See that the door is shut tight, Mary; this is our own secret, and nurse must remember that."

Mary assured him that they were alone, and turned away in sorrow from the bed.

"Now, Gar'ner," resumed the deacon, "open your whole heart, and let us know all about it."

Roswell hesitated to reply; for he, too, was shocked at witnessing this instance of a soul's clinging to mammon, when on the very eve of departing for the unknown world. There was a look in the glazed and sunken eyes of the old man, that reminded him unpleasantly of that snapping of the eyes which he had so often seen in Daggett.

"You did n't forget the key, surely, Gar'ner?" asked the deacon, anxiously.

"No, sir; we did our whole duty by that part of the voyage."

"Did you find it—was the place accurately described?"

"No chart could have made it better. We lost a month in looking for the principal land−mark, which had been altered by the weather; but, that once found, the rest was easy. The difficulty we met with in starting, has brought us home so late in the spring."

"Never mind the spring, Gar'ner; the part that is past is sartain to come round ag'in, in due time. And so you found the very key that was described by Daggett?"

"We did, sir; and just where he described it to be."

"And how about the tree, and the little hillock of sand, at its foot?"

"Both were there, deacon. The hillock must have grown a good deal, by reason of the shifting sand; but, all things considered, the place was well enough described."

"Well — well — well — you opened the hillock, of course?"

"We did, sir; and found the box mentioned by the pirate."

"A good large box, I'll warrant ye! Them pirates seldom do things by halves—he! he! he!"

"I can't say much for the size of the box, deacon — it looked to me as if it had once held window−glass, and that of rather small dimensions."

"But, the contents—you do not mention the contents."

"They are here, sir," taking a small bag from his pocket, and laying it on the bed, by the deacon's side. "The pieces are all of gold, and there are just one hundred and forty−three of them. — Heavy doubloons, it is true, and I dare say well worth their 16 dollars each."

The deacon gave a gulp, as if gasping for breath, at the same time that he clutched the bag. The next instant he was dead; and there is much reason to believe that the demons who had watched him, and encouraged him in his besetting sin, laughed at this consummation of their malignant arts! If angels in heaven did not mourn at this characteristic departure of a frail spirit from its earthly tenement, one who had many of their qualities did. Heavy had been the load on Mary Pratt's heart, at the previous display of her uncle's weakness, and profound was now her grief at his having made such an end.

CHAPTER XV.

4 *Cit.* We'll hear the will: Read it, Mark Antony. *Cit.* The will, the will; we will hear Cæsar's will. *Ant.* Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it; It is not meet you know how Cæsar loved you.

Julius Cæsar.

There is usually great haste, in this country, in getting rid of the dead. In no other part of the world, with which we are acquainted, are funerals so simple, or so touching; placing the judgment and sins which lead to it, in a far more conspicuous light than rank, or riches, or personal merits. Scarfs and gloves are given in town, and gloves in the country, though scarfs are rare; but, beyond these, and the pall, and the hearse, and the weeping friends, an American funeral is a very unpretending procession of persons in their best attire; on foot, when the distance is short; in carriages, in wagons, and on horseback, when the grave is far from the dwelling. There is, however, one feature connected with a death in this country, that we could gladly see altered. It is the almost indecent haste, which so generally prevails, to get rid of the dead. Doubtless the climate has had an effect in establishing this custom; but the climate, by no means, exacts the precipitancy that is usually practised.

As there were so many friends from a distance present, some of whom took the control of affairs, Mary shrinking back into herself, with a timidity natural to her sex and years, the moment her care could no longer serve her uncle, the funeral of the deacon took place the day after that of his death. It was the solemn and simple ceremony of the country. The Rev. Mr. Whittle conceived that he ought to preach a sermon on the occasion of the extinguishment of this "bright and shining light," and the body was carried to the meeting−house, where the whole congre−gation assembled, it being the Sabbath. We cannot say much for the discourse, which had already served as eulo giums on two or three other deacons, with a simple substi tution of names. In few things are the credulous more imposed on than in this article of sermons. A clergyman shall preach the workings of other men's brains for years, and not one of his hearers detect the imposition, purely on account of the confiding credit it is customary to yield to the pulpit. In this respect, preaching is very much like reviewing,— the listener, or the reader, being too complaisant to see through the great standing mystifications of either. Yet preaching is a work of high importance to men, and one that doubtless accomplishes great good, more especially when the life of the preacher corresponds with his doctrine; and even reviewing, though infinitely of less moment, might be made a very useful art, in the hands of upright, independent, intelligent, and learned men. But nothing in this world is as it should be, and centuries will probably roll over it ere the "good time" shall really come!

The day of the funeral being the Sabbath, nothing that touched on business was referred to. On the following morning, however, "the friends" assembled early in the parlour, and an excuse for being a little pressing was made, on the ground that so many present had so far to go. The deacon had probably made a remove much more distant than any that awaited his relatives.

"It is right to look a little into the deacon's matters before we separate," said Mr. Job Pratt, who, if he had the name, had not the patience of him of old, "in order to save trouble and hard feelings. Among relatives and friends there should be nothing but confidence and affection, and I am sure I have no other sentiments toward any here. I suppose"—all Mr. Job Pratt knew, was ever on a supposition—"I suppose I am the proper person to administer to the deacon's property, though I don't wish to do it, if there's the least objection."

Every one assented that he was the most proper person, for all knew he was the individual the surrogate would be the most likely to appoint.

"I have never set down the deacon's property as anything like what common report makes it," resumed Mr. Job Pratt; "though I do suppose it will fully reach ten thousand dollars."

"La!" exclaimed a female cousin, and a widow, who had expectations of her own, "I'd always thought Deacon Pratt worth forty or fifty thousand dollars! Ten thousand dollars won't make much for each of us, divided up among so many folks!"

"The division will not be so very great, Mrs. Martin," returned Mr. Job, "as it will be confined to the next of kin and their representatives. Unless a will should be found — and, by all I can learn, there is *none*" — emphasizing the last word with point — "unless a will be found, the whole estate, real and personal, must be divided into just five shares; which, accordin' to my calculation, would make about two thousand dollars a share.

No great fortin, to be sure; though a comfortable addition to small means. The deacon was cluss (Anglice, close); yes, he was cluss— all the Pratts are a little given to be cluss; but I don't know that they are any the worse for it. It is well to be curful (careful) of one's means, which are a trust given to us by Divine Providence."

In this manner did Mr. Job Pratt often quiet his conscience for being as "curful" of his own as of other person's assets. Divine Providence, according to his morality, made it as much a duty to transfer the dollar that was in his neighbour's pocket to his own, as to watch it vigilantly after the transposition has been effected.

"A body should be curful, as you say, sir," returned the Widow Martin; "and for that reason I should like to know if there isn't a will. I *know* the deacon set store by me, and I can hardly think he has departed for another world without bethinking him of his cousin Jenny, and of her widowhood."

"I'm afraid he has, Mrs. Martin — really afraid he has. I can hear of no will. The doctor says he doubts if the deacon could ever muster courage to write anything about his own death, and that he has never heard of any will. I understand Mary, that she has no knowledge of any will; and I do not know where else to turn, in order to inquire. Rev. Mr. Whittle thinks there *is* a will, I ought to say."

"There *must* be a will," returned the parson, who was on the ground again early, and on this very errand; "I feel certain of that from the many conversations I have held with the deceased. It is not a month since I spoke to him of divers repairs that were necessary to each and all of the parish buildings, including the parsonage. He agreed to every word I said — admitted that we could not get on another winter without a new horse−shed; and that the east end of the parsonage ought to be shingled this coming summer."

"All of which may be very true, parson, without the deacon's making a will," quietly, and we may now add *patiently*, observed Mr. Job.

"I don't think so," returned the minister, with a warmth that might have been deemed indiscreet, did it not relate to the horse−shed, the parsonage, and the meeting−house, all of which were public property, rather than to anything in which he had a more direct legal interest. "A pious member of the church would hardly hold out the hopes that Deacon Pratt has held out to me, for more than two years, without meaning to make his words good in the end. I think all will agree with me in that opinion."

"Did the deacon, then, go so far as to promise to do any thing?" asked Mr. Job, a little timidly; for he was by no means sure the answer might not be in the affirmative, in which case he anticipated the worst.

"Perhaps not," answered Minister Whittle, too conscientious to tell a downright lie, though sorely tempted so to do. "But a man may promise indirectly, as well as directly. When I have a thing much at heart, and converse often about it with a person who can grant all I wish, and that person listens as attentively as I could wish him to do, I regard that as a promise; and, in church matters, one of a very solemn nature."

All the Jesuits in the world do not get their educations at Rome, or acknowledge Ignatius Loyola as the great founder of their order. Some are to be found who have never made a public profession of their faith and zeal, have never assumed the tonsure, or taken the vows.

"That's as folks think," quietly returned Mr. Job Pratt, though he smiled in a manner so significant as to cause Mrs. Martin a new qualm, as she grew more and more apprehensive that the property was, after all, to go by the distribution law. "Some folks think a promise ought to be expressed, while others think it may be understood. The law, I believe, commonly looks for the direct expression of any binding promise; and, in matters of this sort, one made in writing, too, and that under a seal, and before three responsible witnesses."

"I wish a full inquiry might be made, to ascertain if there be no will;" put in the minister, anxiously.

"I'm quite willing so to do," returned Mr. Job, whose confidence and moral courage increased each instant. "Quite willing; and am rather anxious for it, if I could only see where to go to inquire."

"Does no one present know of any will made by the deceased?" demanded Minister Whittle, authoritatively.

A dead silence succeeded to the question. Eye met eye, and there was great disappointment among the numerous collaterals present, including all those who did not come in as next of kin, or as their direct representatives. But the Rev. Mr. Whittle had been too long and too keenly on the scent of a legacy, to be thrown out of the hunt, just as he believed the game was coming in sight.

"It might be well to question each near relative directly," he added. "Mr. Job Pratt, do *you* know nothing of any will?"

"Nothing whatever. At one time I did think the deacon meant to make his testament; but I conclude that he must have changed his mind."

"And you, Mrs. Thomas," turning to the sister — "as next of kin, I make the same inquiry of you!"

"I once talked with brother about it," answered this relative, who was working away in a rocking−chair as if she thought the earth might stop in its orbit, if she herself ceased to keep in motion; "but he gave me no satisfactory answer — that is, nothin' that I call satisfactory. Had he told me he *had* made a will, and given me a full shear, (share), I should have been content; or, had he told me that he had *not* made a will, and that the law would give me a full shear, I should have been content. I look upon myself as a person easily satisfied."

This was being explicit, and left little more to be obtained from the deacon's beloved and only surviving sister.

"And you, Mary; do you know anything of a will made by your uncle?"

Mary shook her head; but there was no smile on her features, for the scene was unpleasant to her.

"Then no one present knows of any paper that the deacon left specially to be opened after his death?" demanded Rev. Mr. Whittle, putting the general question pretty much at random.

"A paper!" cried Mary, hastily. "Yes, I know something of a *paper* —I thought you spoke of a will."

"A will is commonly written on paper, now−a−days, Miss Mary—but, you have a *paper?*"

"Uncle gave me a *paper*, and told me to keep till Roswell Gardiner came back; and, if he himself should not then be living, to give it to him"—The colour now mounted to the very temples of the pretty girl, and she seemed to speak with greater deliberation and care. "As I was to give the paper to Roswell, I have always thought it related to him. My uncle spoke of it to me as lately as the day of his death."

"That's the will, beyond a doubt!" cried Rev. Mr. Whittle, with more exultation than became his profession and professions — "Do you not think this may be Deacon Pratt's will, Miss Mary?"

Now Mary had never thought any such thing. She knew that her uncle much wished her to marry Roswell, and had all along fancied that the paper she held, which indeed was contained in an envelop addressed to her lover, contained some expression of his wishes on this to her the most interesting of all subjects, and nothing else. Mary Pratt thought very little of her uncle's property, and still less of its future disposition, while she thought a great deal of Roswell Gardiner and of his suit. It was, consequently, the most natural thing in the world that she should have fallen into some such error as this. But, now that the subject was brought to her mind in this new light, she arose, went to her own room, and soon re−appeared with the paper in her hand. Both Mr. Job Pratt and Rev. Mr. Whittle offered to relieve her of the burthen; and the former, by a pretty decided movement, did actually succeed in getting possession of the documents. The papers were done up in the form of a large business letter, was duly sealed with wax, and was addressed to "Mr. Roswell Gardiner, Master of the Schooner Sea Lion, now absent on a voyage." The superscription was read aloud, a little under the influence of surprise; notwithstanding which, Mr. Job Pratt was very coolly proceeding to open the packet, precisely as if it had been addressed to himself. In this decided step, Mrs. Martin, and Mrs. Thomas, and Rev. Mr. Whittle, might be set down as accessories before the act; for each approached; and so eager were the two women, that they actually assisted in breaking the seal.

"If that letter is addressed to me," said Roswell Gardiner, with firmness and authority, "I claim the right to open it myself. It is unusual for those to whom a letter is *not* addressed to assume this office."

"But, it comes *from* Deacon Pratt," cried the widow Martin, "and may contain his will."

"In which case, a body would think I have some rights concerned," said Mr. Job Pratt, a little more coolly, but with manifest doubts.

"Sartain!" put in Mrs. Thomas. "Brothers and sisters, and even cousins, come before strangers, any day. Here we are, a brother and sister of the deacon, and we ought to have a right to read his letters."

All this time Roswell had stood with an extended arm, and an eye that caused Mr. Job Pratt to control his impatience. Mary advanced close to his side, as if to sustain him, but she said nothing.

"There is a law, with severe penalties, against knowingly opening a letter addressed to another," resumed Roswell, steadily; "and it shall be enforced against any one who shall presume to open one of mine. If that letter has my address, sir, I demand it; and I will have it, at every hazard."

Roswell advanced a step nearer Mr. Job Pratt, and the letter was reluctantly yielded; though not until the widow Martin had made a nervous but abortive snatch at it.

"At any rate, it ought to be opened in our presence," put in this woman, "that we may see what is in it."

"And by what right, ma'am? Have I not the privilege of others, to read my own letters when and where I please? If the contents of this, however, do really relate to the late Deacon Pratt's property, I am quite willing they should be made known. There is nothing on this superscription to tell me to open the packet in the presence of

witnesses; but, under all the circumstances, I prefer it should be done."

Hereupon Roswell proceeded deliberately to look into the package. The seal was already broken, and he exhibited it in that state to all in the room, with a meaning smile, after which he brought to light and opened some written instrument, that was engrossed on a single sheet of foolscap, and had the names of several witnesses at its bottom.

"Ay, ay, that's it," said Baiting Joe, for the room was crowded with all sorts of people; "that's the dockerment. I know'd it as soon as I laid eyes on it!"

"And what do *you* know about it, Josy?" demanded the widow, eagerly. "Cousin Job, this man may turn out a most important and considerable witness!"

"What do I know, Mrs. Martin? Why I seed the deacon sign for the seals, and exercute. As soon as I heard Squire Craft, who was down here from Riverhead on that 'ere very business, talk so much about seals, I know'd Captain Gar'ner must have suthin' to do with the matter. The deacon's very heart was in the schooner and her v'y'ge, and I think it was the craft that finished him, in the end."

"Won't that set aside a codicil, cousin Job, if so be the deacon has r'ally codicilled off Captain Gar'ner and Mary?"

"We shall see, we shall see. So you was present, Josy, at the making of a will?"

"Sartain—and was a witness to the insterment, as the squire called it. I s'pose he sent for me to be a witness, as I am some acquainted with the sealin' business, having made two v'y'ges out of Stunnin'tun, many years since. Ay, ay; that's the insterment, and pretty well frightened was the deacon when he put his name to it, I can tell you!"

"Frightened!" echoed the brother—"that's ag'in law, at any rate. The instrument that a man signs because he's frightened, is no instrument at all, in law. As respects a will, it is what we justices of the peace call `dies non,' or, don't die; that is, in law."

"Can that be so, squire Job?" asked the sister, who had said but little hitherto, but had thought all the more.

"Yes, that's Latin, I s'pose, and good Latin, too, they tell me. A man may be dead in the flesh, but living in law."

"La! how cur'ous! Law is a wonderful thing, to them that understands it."

The worthy Mrs. Thomas expressed a much more profound sentiment than that of which she was probably aware, herself. Law *is* a wonderful thing, and most wonderful is he who can tell what it is to−day, or is likely to be to−morrow. The law of testamentary devises, in particular, has more than the usual uncertainty, the great interest that is taken by the community in the large estates of certain individuals who are placed without the ordinary social categories by the magnitude of their fortunes, preventing anything from becoming absolutely settled, as respects *them*. In Turkey, and in America, the possession of great wealth is very apt to ruin their possessors; proscription, in some form or other, being pretty certain to be the consequences. In Turkey, such has long and openly been the fact, the bow−string usually lying at the side of the strong box; but, in this country, the system is in its infancy, though advancing towards maturity with giant strides. Twenty years more, resembling the twenty that are just past, in which the seed recently sown broadcast shall have time to reach maturity, and, in our poor opinion, the great work of demoralization, in this important particular, will be achieved. We are much afraid that the boasted progress, of which we hear so much, will resemble the act of the man who fancied he could teach his horse to live without food—just as he believed the poor beast was perfect, it died of inanition!

Roswell read Baiting Joe's `insterment' twice, and then he placed it, with manly tenderness, in the hands of Mary. The girl read the document, too, tears starting to her eyes; but, a bright blush suffused her face, as she returned the will to her lover.

"Ah! do not read it now, Roswell," she said, in an under tone; but the stillness and expectation were so profound, that every syllable she uttered was heard by all in the room.

"And why not read it now, Miss Mary!" cried the Widow Martin. "Methinks *now* is the proper time to read it. If I'm to be codicilled out of that will, I want to know it."

"It is better, in every respect, that the company present should know all that is to be known, at once," observed Mr. Job Pratt. "Before the will is read, if that be the will, Captain Gar'ner—"

"It is the will of the late Deacon Pratt, duly signed, sealed, and witnessed, I believe, sir."

"One word more, then, before it is read. I think you said, Josy, that the deceased was *frightened* when he signed that will? I do not express any opinion until I hear the will; perhaps a'ter it is read, I shall think or say

nothin' about this fright; though the instrument that a man signs because he is frightened, if the fright be what I call a legal fright, is no instrument at all."

"But such was not the deacon's case, Squire Job," put in Baiting Joe, at once. "He did not sign the insterment because he was frightened, but was frightened because he signed the insterment. Let the boat go right eend foremost, squire."

"Read the will, Captain Gar'ner, if you have it," said Mr. Job Pratt, with decision. "It is proper that we should know who is executor. Friends, will you be silent for a moment?"

Amid a death−like stillness, Roswell Gardiner now read as follows:—

"In the name of God, amen. I, Ichabod Pratt, of the town of Southold, and county of Suffolk, and state of New York, being of failing bodily health, but of sound mind, do make and declare this to be my last will and testament.

"I bequeath to my niece, Mary Pratt, only child of my late brother, Israel Pratt, all my real estate, whatsoever it may be, and wheresoever situate, to be held by her, her heirs and assigns, for ever, in fee.

"I bequeath to my brother, Job Pratt, any horse of which I shall die possessed, to be chosen by himself, as a compensation for the injury inflicted on a horse of his, while in my use.

"I bequeath to my sister, Jane Thomas, the large looking−glass that is hanging up in the east bed−room of my house, and which was once the property of our beloved mother.

"I bequeath to the widow Catherine Martin, my cousin, the big pin−cushion in the said east chamber, which she used so much to praise and admire.

"I bequeath to my said niece, Mary Pratt, the only child of my late brother, Israel Pratt, aforesaid, all of my personal estate, whether in possession or existing in equity, including money at use, vessels, stock on farm, all other sorts of stock, furniture, wearing apparel, book−debts, money in hand, and all sorts of personal property whatever.

"I nominate and appoint Roswell Gardiner, now absent on a sealing voyage, in my employment, as the sole executor of this my last will, provided he return home within six months of my decease; and should he not return home within the said six months, then I appoint my above−mentioned niece and heiress, Mary Pratt, the sole executrix of this my will.

"I earnestly advise my said niece, Mary Pratt, to marry the said Roswell Gardiner; but I annex no conditions whatever to this advice, wishing to leave my adopted daughter free to do as she may think best."

The instrument was, in all respects, duly executed, and there could not be a doubt of its entire validity. Mary felt a little bewildered, as well as greatly embarrassed. So perfectly disinterested had been all her care of her uncle, and so humble her wishes, that she did not for some time regard herself as the owner of a property that she had all her life been accustomed to consider as a part of her late uncle. The heirs expectant, "a'ter reading the insterment," as Baiting Joe told his cronies, when he related the circumstances over a mug of cider that evening, "fore and aft, and overhauling it from truck to keelson, give the matter up, as a bad job. They couldn't make nawthin' out of oppersition," continued Joe, "and so they tuck the horse, and the looking−glass, and the pin−cushion, and cleared out with their cargo. You could n't get one of that breed to leave as much as a pin behind, to which he thought the law would give him a right. Squire Job went off very unwillingly; for so strong was his belief in his claim, that he had made up his mind, as he told me himself, to break up the north meadow, and put it in corn this coming season."

"They say that Minister Whittle took it very hard that nawthin' was said about him, or about meetin', in the deacon's will," observed Jake Davis, one of Baiting Joe's cronies.

"That he did; and he tuck it so hard that everybody allows the two sermons he preached the next Sabba' day to be the very two worst he ever *did* preach."

"They must have been pretty bad, then," quaintly observed Davis; "I've long set down Minister Whittle's discourses as being a *leetle* the worst going, when you give him a chance."

It is unnecessary to relate any more of this dialogue, nor should we have given the little we have, did it not virtually explain what actually occurred on the publication of the contents of the will. Roswell met with no opposition in proving the instrument, and the day after he was admitted to act as executor he was married to Mary Pratt, and became tenant, by the courtesy, to all her real estate; such being the law *then*, though it is so no longer. *Now*, a man and his wife may have a very pretty family quarrel about the ownership of a dozen tea−spoons, and the last, so far as we can see, may order the first out of one of her rocking chairs, if she see fit! Surely domestic

peace is not so trifling a matter that the law should seek to add new subjects of strife to the many that seem to be nearly inseparable from the married state.

Let this be as it may, no such law existed when Roswell Gardiner and Mary Pratt became man and wife. One of the first acts of the happy young couple, after they were united, was to make a suitable disposition of the money found buried at the foot of the tree, on the so−much−talked−of key. Its amount was a little more than 2000 dollars, the pirate who made the revelation to Daggett having, in all probability, been ignorant himself of the real sum that had been thus secreted. By a specific bargain with the crew, all this money belonged to the deacon; and, consequently, it had descended to his niece, and through her was now legally the property of Roswell. The young man was not altogether free from scruples about using money that had been originally taken as booty by pirates, and his conscientious wife had still greater objections. After conferring together on the subject, however, and seeing the impossibility of restoring the gold to those from whom it had been forced in the first place, the doubloons were distributed among the families of those who had lost their lives at Sealer's Land. The shares did not amount to much, it is true; but they did good, and cheered the hearts of two or three widows and dependent sisters.

Nor did Roswell Gardiner's care for their welfare stop here. He had the Sea Lion put in good order, removed her decks, raised upon her, and put her in her original condition, and sent her to Sealer's Land, again, under the orders of Hazard, who was instructed to take in all the oil and skins that had been left behind, and to fill up, if he could, without risking too much by delay. All this was successfully done, the schooner coming back, after a very short voyage, and quite full. The money made by this highly successful adventure, had the effect to console several of those who had great cause to regret their previous losses.

As to Roswell and Mary, they had much reason to be content−with their lot. The deacon's means were found to be much more considerable than had been supposed. When all was brought into a snug state, Roswell found that his wife was worth more than thirty thousand dollars, a sum which constituted wealth on Oyster Pond, in that day. We have, however, already hinted that the simplicity, and we fear with it the happiness, of the place has departed. A railroad terminates within a short distance of the deacon's old residence, bringing with it the clatter, ambition, and rivalry, of such a mode of travelling. What is even worse, the venerable and expressive name of "Oys−ter Pond," one that conveys in its very sound the idea of savoury dishes, and an abundance of a certain and a very agreeable sort, has been changed to "Orient," Heaven save the mark! Long Island has, hitherto, been famous, in the history of New York, for the homely piquancy of its names, which usually conveyed a graphic idea of the place indicated. It is true, "Jerusalem" cannot boast of its Solomon's Temple, nor "Babylon" of its Hanging Gardens; but, by common consent, it is understood that these two names, and some half−a−dozen more of the same quality, are to be taken by their opposites.

Roswell Gardiner did not let Stimson pass out of his sight, as is customary with seamen when they quit a vessel. He made him master of a sloop that plied between New York and Southold, in which employment the good old man fulfilled his time, leaving to a widowed sister who dwelt with him, the means of a comfortable livelihood, for life.

The only bit of management of which Mary could be accused, was practised by her shortly after Stimson's death, and some six or eight years after her own marriage. One of her school friends, and a relative, had married a person who dwelt `west of the bridge,' as it is the custom to say of all the counties that lie west of Cayuga Lake. This person, whose name was Hight, had mills, and made large quantities of that excellent flour, that is getting to enjoy its merited reputation even in the old world. He was disposed to form a partnership with Roswell, who sold his property, and migrated to the great west, as the country `west of the bridge' was then termed, though it is now necessary to go a thousand miles farther, in order to reach what is termed "the western country." Mary had an important agency in bringing about this migration. She had seen certain longings after the ocean, and seals, and whales, in her husband; and did not consider him safe, as long as he could scent the odours of a salt marsh. There is a delight in this fragrance that none can appreciate as thoroughly as those who have enjoyed it in youth; it remains as long as human senses retain their faculties. An increasing family, however, and el dorado of the west, which, in that day, produced wheat, were inducements for a removal there, and, aided by Mary's gentle management, produced the desired effect; and for more than twenty years Roswell Gardiner has been a very successful miller, on a large scale, in one of the western counties of what is called "the Empire State." We do not think the *sobriquets* of this country very happy, in general, but shall quarrel less with this, than with the phrase of

"commercial emporium," which is much as if one should say "a townish town."

Roswell Gardiner has never wavered in his faith, from the time when his feelings were awakened by the just view of his own insignificance, as compared to the power of God! He then learned the first, great lesson in religious belief, that of humility; without which no man can be truly penitent, or truly a Christian. He no longer thought of measuring the Deity with his narrow faculties, or of setting up his blind conclusions, in the face of positive revelations. He saw that all must be accepted, or none; and there was too much evidence, too much inherent truth, a morality too divine, to allow a mind like his to reject the gospel altogether. With Mary at his side, he has continued to worship the Trinity, accepting its mysteries in an humble reliance on the words of inspired men. THE END.