


CHAPTER XXI.

THE ISLAND BECOMES AN ISLET.

HREE hours later the last relics of the ice-wall had disappeared, proving that the island now remained stationary, and that all the force of the current was deep down below the waves, not on the surface of the sea.

The bearings were taken at noon with the greatest care, and twenty-four hours later it was found that Victoria Island had not advanced one mile.

The only remaining hope was that some vessel should sight the poor shipwrecked creatures, either whilst still on the island, or after they had taken to their raft.

The island was now in $54^{\circ} 33'$ latitude, and $177^{\circ} 19'$ longitude, several hundred miles from the nearest land, namely, the Aleutian Islands.

Hobson once more called his comrades together, and asked them what they thought it would be best to do.

All agreed that they should remain on the island until it broke up, as it was too large to be affected by the state of the sea, and then take to the raft when the dissolution actually commenced. Once on the frail vessel, they must wait.

Still wait!

The raft was now finished. Mac-Nab had made one large shed or cabin big enough to hold every one, and to afford some little shelter from the weather. A mast had been prepared, which could be put up if necessary, and the sails intended for the boat had long been ready. The whole structure was strong, although clumsy; and if the wind were favourable, and the sea not too rough, this rude assortment of planks and timbers might save the lives of the whole party.

"Nothing," observed Mrs Barnett,—"nothing is impossible to Him who rules the winds and waves."