

down the river by the tide, past the landing place on the other side. A sort of channel was found, and through that we went, having on each side a threatening wall of crashing ice. Suddenly an open space appeared, and a sail was immediately set and we skimmed quietly over the lake-like surface without the aid of paddles. In a few minutes we were among the ice floes again, paddling through a channel; but this gradually closed, till the danger of the canoe being crushed like an eggshell, compelled the crew and the working passengers to leap out and haul the lightened vessel over the ice; this was not unaccompanied by danger, for every now and then some of them slipped into the water between the pieces of ice and wet themselves to the waist in the horridly cold river. Then followed a respite, for another small sheet of clear water brought the sail again into requisition. Another immense mass of ice was before us with a welcome channel, and into that we glided; but not for a great distance, for in a short time we became ice-locked; the channel behind us had become closed, and we drifted helplessly down with the floating mass. It was impossible to drag the canoe from its dangerous position, as on each side the ice was more than ten feet high, piled up like jagged rocks. The crew for a time seemed paralyzed; but one of them, more active than the rest, climbed up on one of the ice mountains to discover a means of escape; he soon returned with the disheartening news that he saw none. Swiftly we were carried down the stream, dreading each moment to be crushed to atoms. Two hours passed and our position was unaltered. At last a movement of the ice filled us with horror; the channel was gradually closing. All had to leave the canoe and gain the icy barriers. The man said that the ice had become jammed in front, and that the canoe would be broken to pieces if it could not be lifted from its position; but while he was speaking the disaster

occurred, and we saw canoe, luggage and freight reduced to atoms by the irresistible ice floes. Far away in the distance we saw the shining roofs and church steeples of Quebec; to the north was the Island of Orleans, between which and ourselves was a narrow strip of the blue waters of the St. Lawrence. Within half a mile to the south was the Beaumont shore, seven miles below Levis; but, between us and that shore, was a disheartening prospect. Rocks and mountains of dangerous ice appeared in every direction, and over it was no road but what we ourselves must make. The poor bride was terrified and sick with fear, and her husband almost wild with distraction; but the danger had to be faced, for to remain where we were was certain death. The captain of the canoe took the lead, and our weary, perilous march commenced. Half a mile—not a long walk through country fields—not a long stroll on a level sidewalk—not a long promenade in a fashionable resort—not very tiresome on a seaside beach—not very distressing in the heat of summer, quite exhilarating on a winter's day; but when that half mile is over slippery piles of ice, across dangerous crevices, down which may be seen rushing the cruel, cold river, ready to engulf you; over treacherous and dangerous new-formed ice; when a false step plunges you into a watery tomb; when every few feet a heavy fall renders you almost senseless, and tears the skin off your hands and legs, notwithstanding the protection of your clothes; when your limbs become almost powerless with the penetrating cold; when the eyes become dim with the rays of the dazzling sun and the glare of the bright snow; when a hopelessness and despair take possession of you, and your senses become paralyzed, and a heedlessness and recklessness of life add to your miseries,—then a half mile seems an interminable distance. Poor bride! even amid my own suffering I could not help pitying and being