

are all numbered," and not only so, but each hair, if examined with a powerful magnifying glass shows peculiarities as strong as the trees of the forest. No two are exactly alike. Every thing, from the smallest to the greatest, is impressed with a specific character and individuality. The Creator's invention is exhaustless, and he no more repeats himself in the geography of a thumb than in the geography of a continent. Now if anybody doubts this, let him take a little black or aniline color and try it. He will acquire an acquaintance with his thumb and a respect for it that will be quite interesting.—*Baptist Weekly*.

### A Mother's Gift.

The following lines were written by a mother inside a Bible which she gave her boy when he left home:

REMEMBER, love, who gave you this,  
When other days shall come;  
When she who had thy earliest kiss  
Sleeps in her narrow home.  
Remember, 'twas a mother gave  
The gift to one she'd die to save.

That mother sought a pledge of love,  
The holiest, for her son;  
And from the gifts of God above  
She chose a goodly one;  
She chose for her beloved boy,  
The guide to light, and life, and joy;

And bade him keep the gift—that when  
The parting hour should come,  
They might have hope to meet again  
In the eternal home.  
She said his faith in this would be  
Sweet incense to her memory.

And should the scoffer, in his pride,  
Laugh that fond gift to scorn,  
And bid him cast that gift aside,  
That he from youth had borne—  
She bade him pause, and ask his 'reast  
If he or she had loved him best?

A parent's blessing on her son  
Goes with this holy thing;  
The love that would retain the one  
Must to the other cling.  
Remember, 'tis no idle toy;  
A mother's gift. Remember, boy!

### Life on an Ice-Field.

BY GEO. E. WALSH.

THE Northern Seas are scenes of great animal conflicts, and, like the tropical forests of the torrid zone, they abound in an endless variety of animal life. The ice-cold waters are swarming with both large and small creatures; and the snowy summits of islands, mountains, and headlands are the homes of innumerable sea-birds, which form colonies in those cold regions so vast that, when they rise in a flock to begin one of their migratory journeys, they resemble dense clouds of rain above the horizon. Even the temporary icefields, that form glistening floors many miles in extent, become inhabited by the birds and animals soon after their formation, and not until the warm breath of summer melts the ice, and the strong oceanic currents break the fields up, and carry huge cakes into warmer seas, do the animals retire to more secure places.

During the cold winter days, the seals come out of the water to sport around on the ice-fields. Sometimes they are chased out by sharks and sword-fish, and then they make a commotion in the water that can be heard a long distance away. When one of these ravenous creatures appears among a flock of seals, the helpless members of the colony start pell-mell for the ice, barking and lashing the water with a frenzy of despair. Usually, however, one or more of the flock is captured by the enemy.

The sword fish, it robbed of its prey, becomes furious in its anger, and will frequently crash against the edge of the ice-field with terrific force, merely to vent its spite. Instances are on record where they have split huge cakes of ice from the field by their sword, and they have even leaped out of the water to pierce one of the seals with their deadly weapon.

The ice-fields are generally secure places of refuge for the seals, so far as the blood-thirsty inhabitants of the deep are concerned; but they meet with other dangers on the ice that often prove as fatal.

If a harp-seal is chased out of the water by a ferocious enemy, it will lie panting on the ice field for hours at a time, not daring to venture again into its element. If it is late in the spring, and the sun's rays are beating down warmly upon the ice, the back of the seal will soon become dry and blistered. Like other blisters made by the sun, those on the seal's back are painless during their formation, but they soon become so tender that even to touch them excites fearful agony. The cold water causes intense suffering, and when the animal is in this condition nothing can induce it to return to the sea. If shoved into the water by sailors, it will bark and make such cries of appeal that the hardest heart will be touched, and in the face of the sealer's up-raised club it will scramble up on the ice-field again, and calmly submit to death by clubbing.

On the whole, the seals seem to fear the sealers less than many other dangers. A sealer once told the story of his experience with a small harp-seal. The men had knocked over a great many of the creatures with clubs, and had nearly cleared the ice-field of the innocent animals, when suddenly a commotion in the waters attracted the sailors' attention. A small seal that they had driven into the sea scrambled upon the ice again, and started directly toward one of the sealers. The next moment a huge sword-fish leaped half-way out of the water, and struck the edge of the ice-field a terrible blow just where the seal had climbed up. The ice trembled and cracked under the force of the blow, and the frightened seal sent forth a series of terrified barks, and hurried toward the foremost sealer. Although the creature had seen the same man kill many of its comrades with his club, it did not hesitate to crawl close up to him, and place its head appealingly between his knees. Apparently it expected death, but it preferred the club to the cruel sword of the ocean monster. The sailor was so touched by the creature's actions that he would not kill it, but, after stroking its back tenderly, he left it alone on the field of ice.

Of course animals that can live in the water, or birds that can fly in the air, do not stay on the ice-fields for any great length of time, and when the ice begins to break up they return to their particular element. But occasionally there are other creatures imprisoned on great floating ice-fields that can save themselves neither by mounting into the air nor by swimming in the water.

A few years ago, a party of three sailors was lost on one of these detached ice-fields. They were exploring the country for bears, and after having travelled around for several hours without any luck, they suddenly struck what appeared to be the trail of a large white one. The imprints of the animal's feet were clearly discernible in the half-frozen snow, and they followed the trail without much difficulty. So intent were they on the chase, that they did not notice the direction they were pursuing. Night was rapidly approaching, and they increased their pace in order to catch the bear and reach the ship again before darkness hid the trail from their sight.

The excitement of a bear chase would usually make one forget everything else, and the distance one might travel in a few hours at such a time would scarcely be noticed. It was so with the sailors, and it was not until they came close to the edge of the ocean that they stopped, and began to look around them. They had followed the bear far out on an ice-field that penetrated into the ocean like a small peninsula. The ocean currents were washing fiercely around the outer end of the field, threatening to carry it away from the mainland every moment. The spring thaw was in full progress, and the turbulent waters of the northern seas were already filled with huge icebergs and floating cakes of snow and ice.

The sailors immediately recognized the danger of their position; but, before they could turn about, a long, deep, rumbling noise seemed suddenly to break out right beneath their feet, and lose itself gradually in the distance. It was a peculiar quaking noise, and only those acquainted with the northern seas would have interpreted its meaning. The sailors understood at once that it was the ice breaking up.

They stood still for a moment in breathless astonishment, and then they saw their field of ice—probably half-a-mile across in either direction—swing around into the ocean, and float away with the tide. At first a narrow channel of water separated them from the mainland; then it increased gradually until it was the size of a large river, and then they were far out into the ocean. The land disappeared from their sight, and their queer ship floated along on the broad bosom of the ocean, following the tides and winds toward the warmer seas, where the hot breath of the sun would melt their raft from under their feet.

Near the centre of the island of ice, huge cakes had been piled up in irregular forms, until they resembled a small iceberg. Toward this icy elevation the sailors retreated, knowing that it would be the last place to melt. When they reached the summit of the ice, they were astonished to meet their white bear, that had been imprisoned on the cake of ice with them. This was joyful news to them, for the question of food had already presented itself to their minds.

Bruin, as soon as he discovered his enemies, started toward them with a growl. He felt that there could be no compromise in the matter, for one party or the other had to die. But it was an easy matter for the sailors to dispatch the beast with their three rifles.

For three days they subsisted on bears' meat, eating it without the use of fire. To build a fire on the ice would be only to hasten their end, as the cake was already melting rapidly. Every few hours a portion of their icy island would break off and float away. Gradually their queer raft contracted from half-a-mile to one hundred feet in diameter. Then the work of wearing away became less perceptible. The island was now a small iceberg, and the water was washing away the foundation of the island which floated beneath the waves. When this was sufficiently accomplished, the iceberg would topple over, and bury the unfortunate sailors in the cold waters.

On the third day a wind blew up, and wafted the solitary iceberg rapidly through the sea. As night came on, the wind increased in violence, and the sailors expected every moment to have their insecure raft blown over into the turbulent ocean. The night was intensely dark, and every extra blast of wind made them tremble with fear. Suddenly there was a loud crash of crumbling ice, and the sailors sprang up to save themselves by swimming as the berg toppled over. But all was quiet, and only the howling of the wind seemed to disturb the