

hapless colonists had yet another blow in store for them: the speed on which they counted was now to fail them, as everything else had done.

During the night of the 26th May, the orientation of the island changed once more; and this time the results of the displacement were extremely serious. The island turned half round, and the icebergs still remaining of the huge ice-wall, which had shut in the northern horizon, were now on the south.

In the morning the shipwrecked travellers—what name could be more appropriate?—saw the sun rise above Cape Esquimaux instead of above Port Barnett.

Hardly a hundred yards off rose the icebergs, rapidly melting, but still of a considerable size, which till then had driven the island before them. The southern horizon was now partly shut in by them.

What would be the consequences of this fresh change of position? Would not the icebergs now float away from the island, with which they were no longer connected?

All were oppressed with a presentiment of some new misfortune, and understood only too well what Kellet meant when he exclaimed—

“This evening we shall have lost our ‘screw!’”

By this Kellet meant that the icebergs, being before instead of behind the island, would soon leave it, and as it was they which imparted to it its rapid motion, in consequence of their very great draught of water—their volume being six or seven feet below the sea level for every one above—they would now go on without it, impelled by the submarine current, whilst Victoria Island, not deep enough in the water to come under the influence of the current, would be left floating helplessly on the waves.

Yes! Kellet was right; the island would then be like a vessel with disabled masts and a broken screw.

No one answered the soldier's remark, and a quarter of an hour had not elapsed before a loud cracking sound was heard. The summits of the icebergs trembled, large masses broke away, and the icebergs, irresistibly drawn along by the submarine current, drifted rapidly to the south.