

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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THE VICTIMS OF THE ARCTIC OCEAN.

The Jeannette—a name that will never be forgotten while history records the deeds of brave men—sailed from San Francisco on July 8th, 1879, with a crew of thirty-three men, all told. About the end of September the party had really entered upon the dangers and difficulties of arctic exploration. They were in the midst of great fields of ice, which drifted with the varying winds and currents, so that, although the ship was itself inactive, it was carried over great distances.

In January, however, the ship sprang a leak, and all hands were kept busy at the pumps to keep the water down, and for eighteen months the pumps never ceased working. At last however, the fight could be kept up no longer. On June 13th, the Jeannette sank, and the crew were left encamped upon the ice, and no other hope of return than that which their three boats afforded.

Thus left almost destitute, Commander DeLong had no other course open to him than to retreat.

They were in the midst of a sea, indeed, but it was a sea of solid ice, and for weeks the boats did not touch water, except for a short forage here and there, where a break in the ice left a narrow slip of open sea. The boats were placed upon rudely-built sleds and for fifty-three weary days the resolute men dragged them over the ice.

Some days they would make a mile, on others scarcely more than half that distance. Great hillocks of ice were to be surmounted and cracks to be crossed, nearly every one of these being so wide that the sleds had to be let down into them and then hauled up on the other side.

Nor were these the only hardships the retreating band had to encounter. The cold was intense, as may be imagined. Short rations and their fearful labour had reduced the strength of the men, so that one-quarter of the whole party had to be carried helpless on sleds, while almost all were suffering either from frost-bite or from the effects of the ice upon their eyes.

At last the retreating company reached comparatively open water. The boats were launched, and the party set sail for what they hoped would be a milder climate and a more hospitable shore.

Now, however, the perils by which they had been beset were increased. The cold was still as great as that which they had previously encountered, and it made itself more intensely felt now that the men were confined within the limits of small boats, and deprived of the active exercises which alone had kept the warmth in their bodies. The food supply was running so short that but scanty fare could be allowed, and the danger of drowning was added to that of perishing by cold and hunger.

For a few days all went fairly well, but during a gale that arose in the night, the boats became separated, and in the morning the company on board the whale-boat scanned the dreary waters in vain for the sails of the boats manned by the crews of Commander DeLong and Lieutenant Chipp. Engineer Melville's boat touched land on the delta of the Lena—a river which, flowing northward through Siberia, discharges itself into the arctic seas. Here the boat's crew met with hospitable treatment by the natives of those bleak and barren shores, and were all saved.

Not so, however, the occupants of the two cutters. Lieutenant Chipp's boat has not since been heard of. It was a smaller boat than either of the others; and though commanded by a young officer who enjoyed in an unusual degree the confidence and love of his men, it is not probable that he was able to bring his crew to a place of safety, even though he succeeded in making the land.

The sad story of the fate of DeLong and his companions was told several months later, by two seamen, named Noros and Ninderman, both of whom had served on board the St. Mary's school-ship.

On September 13th, Captain DeLong's boat, although its mast had been carried away, got within two miles of the Siberian coast, when it struck ground, and the captain ordered the men to get into the water, so as to lighten the load, and tow the boat ashore. Only half of

saw again until, nearly six months later, Mr. Melville found their dead bodies.

"The Captain," says Noros, "read divine service before we left. All the men shook hands with us; and Collins, as if knowing that their doom was sealed, said simply, 'Noros, when you get to New York remember me.' They seemed to have lost hope, but, as we left, they gave us three cheers. That was the last we saw of them."

Wholly without food—for the supply they had saved from the boat was ex-

sult of his search was told briefly in a despatch, dated March 24th, and received in New York on May 6th: "I have found DeLong and his party—all dead."

Thus ends the first chapter of this melancholy story of arctic peril. The last chapter may never be told, and the fate of Lieutenant Chipp and his crew never revealed.

A STAMPEDE.

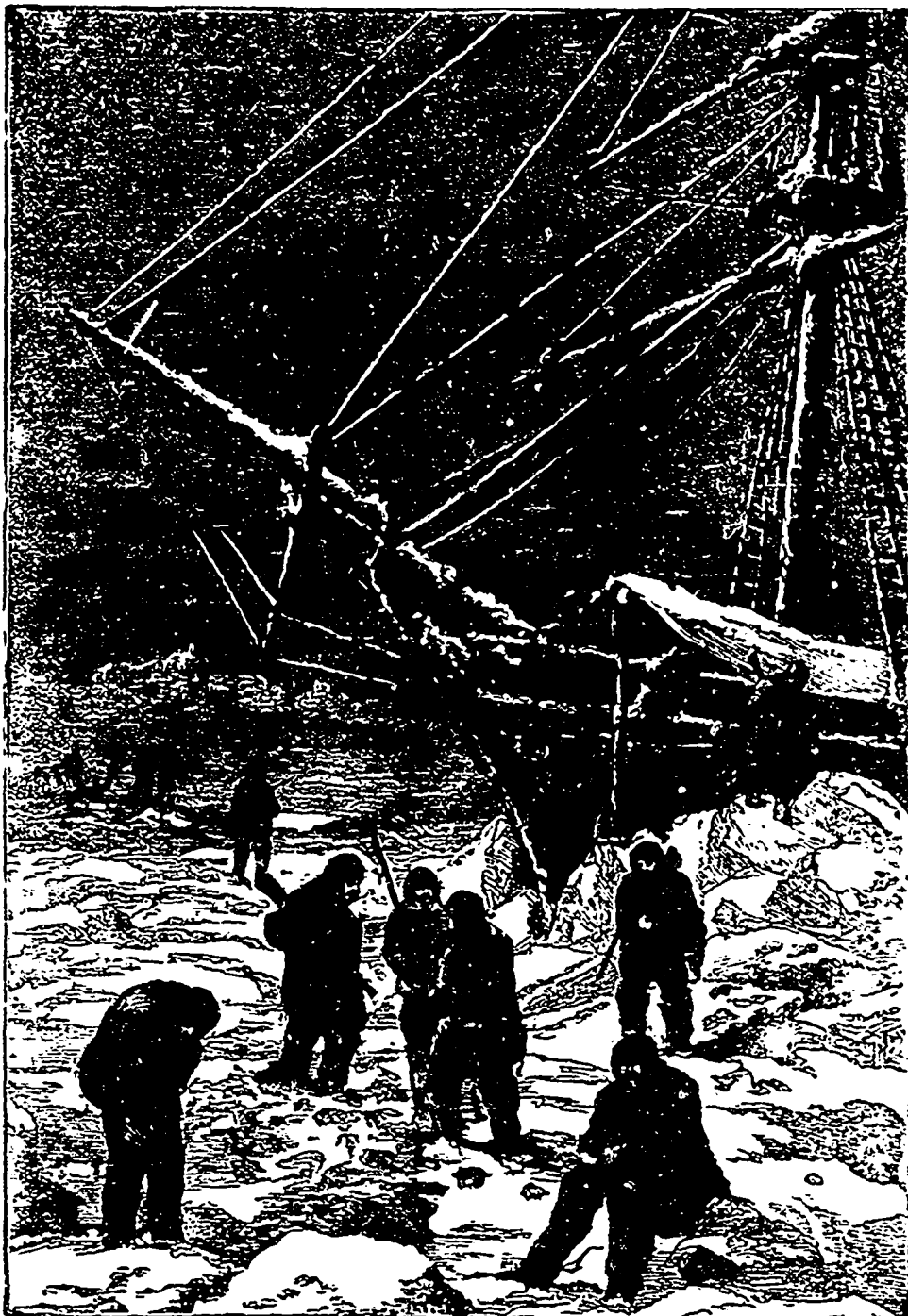
Do you know what a stampede is? Out on the Western plains, where there are great droves of cattle, the cattlemen watch constantly lest the cattle should be frightened, for if they are frightened they begin to run and plunge and jump, and cannot be controlled, that is what a stampede is.

Out in the great prairies, where these cattle range and feed, there are few fences, miles and miles of the prairie land is unfenced. The cattle travel slowly, the cowboys watch them so that they may not scatter and stray away. When night comes, the cattle rest. The cowboys, as the twilight deepens, and the stars come one by one into the sky, ride their horses outside the drove and begin to sing. The cattle stop to listen, first one, then a group, then another group, and at last all the drove stand still. Then the cowboys drop their voices a little, riding more slowly round the drove. Now a steer drops on to the soft turf to sleep, then another, then another. The voices became softer and softer, and at last all the drove are lying down ready for sleep. This is a critical moment. If you have watched your mamma rocking the baby to sleep, you have seen how careful she is that no sound should be made to rouse the baby. She knows that if she is roused it will be much harder to get her asleep again. So the cowboys know that if an unusual sound were made now it would be hours before the cattle could be stilled again. They ride slowly and very carefully, and they sing low, sweet songs, like lullabies, and the great herd are at last asleep. All night the cowboys ride and sing softly.

A stampede on the plains means that some of the cattle will be killed, and that when they are controlled it will be days before they are really quiet again.

The other day there was a horse sale in New York, and somebody touched a horse with a whip and frightened him. He was tied in a string with several other horses, and his plunging and jumping frightened a string of other horses and there was danger for a while.

Animals, most of them, have nerves and can be frightened, and that is why we should treat them carefully.



CAUGHT IN THE ICE.

the distance, however, had been traversed when it was found to be impossible to bring the boat nearer, and so they collected the food, arms, ammunition, and papers, and waded ashore.

Having rested for two days, the party started southward, each man carrying heavy burdens, though all but the most important articles had been abandoned. In the first ten days' march, the travelers made no more than twenty miles, so difficult was the country; but during those days they enjoyed the luxury of a meal of deer's flesh, which, but for the crippled condition of several of the men, would have put new life into the party.

Then Captain DeLong determined to send Ninderman and Noros ahead, for they were in better condition than any others of the party; and when they left on their perilous mission they bade a sad farewell to a gallant, yet almost helpless band of men, whom no one ever

hausted, and the fresh meat which had been procured was soon consumed—the two brave seamen pushed on. They supported life by chewing their leather moccasins and breeches; and after a few days they came upon two deserted huts, in which they found some mouldy fish, which they ate with relish. Here in these huts they rested for three days, when a native found them; but they were unable to make him understand that they had left eleven starving comrades behind.

At length the governor of the province, who lived at a town called Bulun, arrived—but he did not understand their sign language, and so he sent no aid.

He cared for the two seamen, however, and sent them to Bulun, and there it was that they fell in with Engineer Melville, whose boat's crew were by this time in safety. Melville at once started out in search of the ill-fated crew, and the re-

PRIMITIVE METHODS IN WESTMINSTER COLLEGE HALL.

Not far from the Jerusalem Chamber is the College Hall. This lofty room, of noble proportions, was the refectory of the abbot's house, and now is used as a dining-room for the boys at Westminster School. This is a famous old school, supported by the funds of the Abbey, and directed by the officers connected with that institution. The massive tables which are ranged about the room, and from which the boys still eat, are made of heavy chestnut planks taken out of the Spanish Armada, and two of them still show deep dents made in them by English cannon-balls. It was only under the management of Dean Buckland, who died as lately as 1856, that a stove was put into this hall to heat it. Up to that time the primitive method which had been in vogue for centuries was adhered to, and the smoke from a huge open brazier, which stood in the centre of the room, curled up among the rafters and found its way, if it could, out through an opening in the roof.