

masses far and wide. Presently those on board fancied that they saw a small flag fluttering on the top of a hummock, at the distance of a quarter of a mile. The ship was put about and bore down upon it, under the impression that it might be a piece of floating wreck. As the *Tigress* neared the object, the Stars and Stripes were made out; then human voices were heard uttering feeble cheers, and guns were fired. On coming close to the floe on which the flag was fluttering, a strange sight was disclosed. On it were seen nineteen human beings, ten of them white men and nine Esquimaux. Of the latter two were men, two were women, one of whom carried a baby eight months old in her arms, and five were children. They had a boat with them on the ice, on the stern of which was painted the name "*Polaris*." The party presented a most forlorn appearance, and had evidently been long exposed to the weather, though not one of them appeared to be sick or disabled. Before leaving the ice, they gave three hearty cheers, such as men utter who have been delivered from impending death.

When taken on board, the tale they told was marvellous beyond anything invented by the wildest romancer, illustrating once more the old saying that "truth is stranger than fiction." The purport of their wonderful story was that they were part of the crew of the *S. S. Polaris* of the United States Arctic expedition; that when in lat. $77^{\circ} 35'$ N. they were accidentally separated from their ship by the sudden breaking up of an ice-floe to which she was moored, on October 15th, 1872, and that ever since they had been drifting on the ice, till now, rescued by the *Tigress* off the coast of Labrador, six months and a half afterwards, on April 30th, 1873. Thus they had drifted on the ice over twenty-four degrees of latitude, or one thousand four hundred and forty miles in a direct line; but allowing for the sinuosities of their course, caused by varying winds, they must have voyaged on their cheerless ice-raft more than two thousand miles. Their supply of food, when they started, was not more than sufficient for one month's consumption, and they had lived chiefly on seals and the flesh of a Polar bear. They had no shelter, but the snow huts which in Esquimaux fashion they built on the ice, and, in addition to the clothes they wore, they had only a few skins to protect them from the fierce cold. They had passed the gloomy Arctic night in the snow-huts without seeing the sun for eighty-five days. Again and