

only brought to light even greater unloveliness. They were skillful in derision and mimicry, and, despising men who, they said, spent their time in looking at a piece of paper, or scratching it with a feather, they did not study gentle modes of giving expression to their feelings. It was still worse when they pretended interest in the truth before the missionary, and then mocked and mimicked him with their companions. They wanted nothing but plenty of souls, and as for the fires of hell, that, they said, would be a pleasant contrast to their terrible cold. And when the missionary urged them to deal truly with God, they asked him in reply when he had seen him last.

The cold in winter was terrific. The missionary made a fire in every room, carefully closed every cranny and wore a suit of fur, yet the eider down pillows stiffened with frost under his head, the hear frost extended even to the mouth of the stove, and alcohol froze upon the table. The cold was most unendurable where the surface of the water did not freeze, for then a thin smoke arose from it that cut like a knife, and none could stand before it. The sun was invisible for two months. There was no change in the dreary night. What wonder if people in such cold grew slothful! Even our daintiest housekeepers, under such an ordeal, would abate somewhat of their punctilio.

It is not strange that in such a climate and among such a people, when the traders found there was no trade, and provisions began to run low, his associates began to murmur when the expected store ship did not appear in the spring, and resolved to go back. In vain Egede pleaded with them. They would only consent to remain till June. As the time drew near he was in agony; he could not desert his post; at the same time he could not stay alone and see his wife and children perish. He had yielded to the demand for returning had not his wife nobly refused to abandon the work God had given them to do. Even when the men began to tear down the buildings she expressed her firm conviction that the ship was near, and on June 27 it arrived, bringing news that the merchants promised to persevere in spite of their ill-success, and that the King had even laid an assessment on his subjects to sustain the mission.

On his first arrival Egede had gone among the people, as soon as he had learned to ask the question, "What is this?" and wrote down their answers to his inquiries. Now, in the winter of 1722, both he and his two sons took up their abode in the winter quarters of the people, despite their filth and stench, in order to learn their language, and in summer he explored a valley in Amaralik Bay, where, amid grass and wild flowers and low thickets of birch, willow and juniper, he found the ruins of one of the settlements that he had read about at home. Here in the fallen church he felt that his countrymen once sang their Norwegian hymns and offered prayers which he knew would be answered by Him who never forgets.