

HAPPY DAYS

Vol. XVII.

TORONTO, JULY 5, 1902.

No. 14.

THE VICTIMS OF THE ARCTIC OCEAN.

The *Jeanette*—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 *Jeanette* sank, and the crew were left encamped upon the ice, with 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.

There were in the midst of the sea, indeed, but it was a sea of solid ice; and for weeks the boats did not touch water, except for a short ferriage 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

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 shores, and were all saved.



CAUGHT IN THE ICE.

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 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.

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