

Esquimaux also kept up their spirits, and even Kassigiak, though a wild heathen, declared, that it was proper to be thankful that they were still alive; adding, that if they had remained a little longer on the ice yesterday all their bones would have been broken in a short time.

Towards noon of the 13th, the weather cleared up, and the sea was seen as far as the eye could reach, quite clear and free from ice; but the weather being very stormy, the Esquimaux could not quit the snow-house, which made them very low-spirited and melancholy. They, however, possess one advantage, namely, the power of going to sleep when they please, and if need be, they will sleep for days and nights together.

In the evening of the 15th, the sky became clear, and their hopes revived. Mark and Joel went out to reconnoitre, and reported that the ice had acquired a considerable degree of solidity, and might soon afford a safe passage. The poor dogs had now nearly fasted four days, but in the prospect of a speedy release, the missionaries allowed to each a few morsels of food. The temperature of the air having been rather mild, it occasioned a new source of distress, for, from the warmth of the inhabitants, the roof of the snow-house began to melt, which occasioned a continual dropping, and by degrees made everything soaking wet. The missionaries considered this the greatest hardship they had to endure, for they had not a dry thread about them, nor a dry place to lie in.

On the 16th, early, the sky cleared, but the fine particles of snow were driven about like clouds. Their present distress dictated the necessity of venturing something to reach the habitations of men, and yet they were rather afraid of passing over the newly frozen sea, and could not determine what to do. Brother Turner went again with Mark to examine the ice, and both seemed satisfied that it had acquired sufficient strength. They therefore came to a final resolution to return to Nain, committing themselves to the protection of the Lord.

Notwithstanding the wind had considerably increased, accompanied with heavy showers of snow and sleet, they ventured to set off at half-past ten o'clock in the forenoon of the 19th. Mark ran all the way round Kiglapeit before the sledge, to find a good track, and about one o'clock,