

ICEBERGS.

I dare say you have heard, even in your short life, of some brave ship which sailed proudly out to sea, in the month of May or June, (1856,) and which was last seen nobly riding over the waves, on its way across the wide Atlantic. And when a long, long time had elapsed, and no news had ever come of the brave ship, and those who had friends on board had waited and hoped, and hoped and waited, till their hearts were weary, I dare say you have heard some wise old man say, shaking his head mournfully, "Ah! she must have met with the ice, and gone down bow foremost, with all on board."

A very terrible thing to think of, but it is the history of the ill-fated Pacific, and many a brave ship besides. I mean, now, to tell you something about this ice, which is so terrible an enemy to meet with.

Far away, in the north, where the summer lasts only six weeks, where the long winter night is from November to February, without a single ray of sunshine, and the cold is so severe that no trees grow, and very few animals can live, the water freezes into lumps like mountains. Near the shore, where it is shallow, the sea is frozen solid from the bottom. Sometimes, where the beach is shelving, the tide and the wind leave a narrow opening between the land and the ice, which grounds in twenty and thirty feet water; this sailors call "the land-water." In other places, where the shore is abrupt, the large ice clings to the rocks. When spring and summer come, and the snow melts on shore, streams of water pour upon these ice-masses. Freeze, and increase their bulk. When it blows, the waves dash up against them, throwing their spray over their sides, and swelling them prodigiously. There are places in the Arctic regions where the beach deepens so gradually that the ice is always aground. That ice never moves. The weak sun just melts the top of it, and makes little pools of water, which soon freeze solid once more; when winter returns, the snows, and rains, and damp winds go to work again to build the mass higher and higher. In one place, the same masses of ice have been known to sailors for twenty years; for aught we know, they may have been there since the creation of the world.

In other places, again, where the water is deep, the ice-lumps float about with the tide and wind. Sometimes they form part of the great continent of ice which covers the polar seas, and which sailors call "the pack," where ships are sometimes caught and held fast for months and months. But often, the greatest and largest of these lumps will break loose from the smaller ice, and sail away on their own account, always making for the southern latitudes, just as a moth makes for a candle. These are called icebergs,

which means, in English, ice mountains. Mountains, indeed, they are. Some of them are more than a mile wide at the water line, and rise into the air far higher than our church steeples. We know, from calculation, that the part of them that is under water is larger than that which is above the surface. They are of all shapes and sizes. Some of them resemble pretty islands, with green slopes and purple hills—for the sun's rays color the ice most beautifully—and even village-like clusters of little mounds and terraces. Others look like grand cathedrals, with lofty towers and spires, and gloomy aisles, and grim windows, with blue gleams of light now and then glancing through them. Others, again, remind you of old turreted castles, with watch-towers, and stern battlements, and port-holes for guns, and a draw-bridge, which the lord of the castle might almost be expected to let down at any moment. And some of them take the shape of monsters, men with scores of hands and a gigantic head, raised fiercely out of the freezing water, and weeping tears of icy spray at being disturbed from their repose; or huge brutes, with a ridge of rough ice by way of mane, and paws on which a man-of-war might conveniently rest.

When icebergs are loose, they move steadily southward. Down past the ice-bound coast of Greenland they sail, buffeted and battered by the waves, which dash their spray insultingly over the mountain monsters, and vainly try to toss them from side to side. They have no rest. Night and day they sail southward, southward; and, when they clear the cape of Greenland, and creep into the warm waters of the Atlantic, oh! then the proud bergs begin to suffer. All day long the sun pours his fiercest rays upon their head, which rups in torrents; the warm ocean water eats its way slowly and treacherously into their base. The sun is no match for the water, though he makes so much more show. Some day, the noiseless, gnawing waves cut off so much of that part of the berg which is under water, that it loses its balance, and topples over with a crash that is heard miles away. Sometimes, two great bergs, sailing southward in company, fall upon each other in their rage, and grind and tear each other with a clatter like thunder. Sometimes—I am afraid—poor, miserable ships, sailing peaceably over the ocean, have been caught between two of these monsters, and crunched in a second.

Other bergs, working out their destiny and sailing slowly and noiselessly to the south, have lain like traitors in a brave ship's path. It is a foggy night; from the stern you cannot see the bowsprit; all the air around is white, and thick, and dull, and sounds can hardly be heard. On the ship goes, through the mist and darkness, the cruel wind driving her smartly

through the water, and the passengers and crew idly counting how many days more of such a breeze would take them to land. All at once, in the muffled stillness, a sailor shrieks. Men look up hurriedly; see, right before them, a great white mass, wrapped in a hazy shroud; the captain shouts; there is a rush—the crash comes, awful, irresistible; the good ship parts, recoils from the berg (which has hardly trembled at so puny a shock), and goes down directly with all hands to the bottom.

MAKE A GEOGRAPHY.

"Can't do it?" Neither could you walk until you had learned how. We know of a boy but little more than twelve years old who has made a Geography. It is not printed, and probably never will be. It is written, and the maps are drawn on a few sheets of foolscap paper. Any one of you can do the same thing, perhaps as well or better than this lad. He did not like this branch of study, and very often neglected his lessons in it, until an ingenious teacher showed him how to make a geography for himself. Then he became much interested, and at this time knows more on the subject than many men who have a college education.

His plan of working was this: At his teacher's request he first made a "geography of the house he lived in—that is, he drew on his slate a plan of the house, showing where the parlour, the sitting-room, kitchen, bed-rooms, &c. were situated. The places for the doors and windows were all marked, and also the situation of the principal articles of furniture of the room. After the plan was drawn, the boy wrote a short description of the principal rooms. He mentioned on which side of the house each was, its size, general appearance, &c. Then his teacher questioned him upon it, just as if it had been a lesson in a book. The little fellow was greatly pleased, and did not miss a single answer.

The next exercise was with a lead pencil upon paper. He drew a plan or map of the yard. The place occupied by each building was shown, and marks were made to represent where each flower-bed and tree stood. The points of the compass were marked, and the pupil thought it real sport to tell in what direction the bee-hives were from the pig-pen, and which way from the pear-tree the quince bush was situated. He was also required to describe the different objects as well as he could, and to speak of the neighbouring fields by which the yard was surrounded. This completed his geography of the yard.

The young student was now ready for a more extensive work. He undertook to draw a map of his father's whole farm, showing its boundaries and how the different fields were located. This caused