

One alone remained: it crept for food into a little hollow of the ice, where I followed and secured it. I tore it with my nails, and devoured it. Refreshed, but not half satisfied, I arose and looked again upon the ocean. A white speck appeared on the horizon: it grew it increased, it approached—I saw it—a sail—one, two, three, four—oh, heaven! a gallant fleet, rising white and glorious from the blue waters. Onward and onward they came their sails set, and their prows dashed up the dark element in clouds of snowy foam. Hope gave me supernatural strength; I climbed an icy peak, and stretched forth my arms to them. I shouted to them, til my voice hollow and broken dwindled into a feeble whisper. The foremost of them was now within a mile of me. I could see men thronging the decks, and methought even at that distance I could distinguish them, all with their eyes fixed on me, and some surveying me through glasses. But they did not deviate from their course—they seemed passing me; I tore the garments from my back, and waved them in the air. They passed on in their course. The second came, and the third—all—all—they passed me and replied not to my signals. The seventh and last, the convoy of the squadron, now appeared. The starry flag of my country fluttered from her peak. My gestures and cries were now like those of a madman. I flung my neckcloth high in the air, and the wind swept it from me into the sea.

But they saw it—they saw it! They fired a gun, and I looked for them to lay to. I watched for the launching of the boat. I deceived myself. It was a signal for the squadron to vary their course; and squadron and convoy soon vanished from my eyes.

This second dreadful disappointment to my hopes may be more easily conceived than described. The sun was setting. I crawled to a brink of the ice, fully resolved to throw myself into the sea. A dark object presented itself to my eyes, lying immediately under the island, and night had not so far advanced as to prevent me from recognising in this singular apparition, a wreck, water-logged and without masts, rolling heavily in the sea.

Something moved on the stern. Oh, happiness, was it a human being—one like myself spared to be mocked as I had been? I endeavored to call aloud, but my previous exertions had left me voiceless. I presented myself on the cliff, and this miserable creature now appeared to me a dog, which, seeing me, set up a loud howl. It was not the plaintive cry we so often hear uttered by this animal; not the animated yelp of recognition; no—hunger had changed its nature, as it had changed mine—it was the howl of a famished fiend, the screams of a beast of prey. This also disappeared, and night was again upon the ocean.

The morning came; I cared not for it. The sun was melting my island under me and must soon mingle it with the waters; I cared not for that. I was resigned to my fate the pangs of hunger were now unfelt. I was happy, for I knew I was dying; but death came slowly, my constitution resisted him. I lay in a horrid stupor.

From this state I was roused by a human voice—yes, many voices shouting and calling aloud. I crawled from my cave—I rose feebly to my feet. A ship with her sails backed, lay a few furlongs to windward of me. They had described my handkerchief, which I had hung upon a branch of the pine, and stuck in one of the most elevated parts of the island.

They saw me, and shouted cheerily and triumphantly. They put out a boat, which approached the ice; but its sharp and upright sides rendered it impossible for them to land on it. I succeeded in crawling to a part of the berg, where it inclined shelvingly to the water, and as a last effort, slid myself down into the sea.

I was taken up, and found myself fostered among the rude but good-hearted tars of my own country.

Amid the sublime scenery of the Alps, a wretch had the hardihood to write over against his name, in the Album kept for visitors, "An Atheist." It caught the eye of a minister who followed, when he at once wrote under it, "If an atheist, a fool; if not, a liar."