

looking like a great white snowball, cowered motionless at the very edge of the strip of ice.

This night also passed away without any incident to modify the situation. The grey morning dawned in the east, and the sun rose and dispersed the shadows of the night.

The Lieutenant's first care, as soon as it was light, was to examine the piece of ice. Its perimeter was still more reduced, and, alas! its mean height above the sea level had sensibly diminished. The waves, quiet as they were, washed over the greater part of it; the summit of the little hill alone was still beyond their reach.

Long, too, saw the changes which had taken place during the night, and felt that all hope was gone.

Mrs Barnett joined Lieutenant Hobson, and said to him—

"It will be to-day then?"

"Yes, madam, and you will keep your promise to Kellet!"

"Lieutenant Hobson," said the lady solemnly, "have we done all in our power?"

"We have, madam."

"Then God's will be done!"

One last attempt was, however, made during the day. A strong breeze set in from the offing, that is to say, a wind bearing to the south-east, the direction in which were situated the nearest of the Aleutian Islands. How far off no one could say, as without instruments the bearings of the island could not be taken. It was not likely to have drifted far, however, unless under the influence of the current, as it gave no hold to the wind.

Still it was just possible that they might be nearer land than they thought. If only a current, the direction of which it was impossible to ascertain, had taken them nearer to the much-longed-for Aleutian Islands, then, as the wind was bearing down upon those very islands, it might drive the strip of ice before it if a sail of some kind could be concocted. The ice had still several hours to float, and in several hours the land might come in sight, or, if not the land, some coasting or fishing vessel.

A forlorn hope truly, but it suggested an idea to the Lieutenant which he resolved to carry out. Could not a sail be contrived on the islet as on an ordinary raft? There could be no difficulty in that; and when Hobson suggested it to Mac-Nab, he exclaimed—

"You are quite right, sir;" adding to his men, "bring out all the canvas there is!"