

which they had just made their escape, burst asunder, and the water forced itself from below. In an instant the whole frozen mass, in the wildest imaginable ruin, broke loose. The vast surface as far as the eye could reach, was crumbling, crushing, piling and tossing itself madly, amidst a clamor utterly indescribable, and through which the braying of a thousand trumpets could no more have been heard than the puny voice of a child.

The missionaries were overwhelmed with amazement at their marvellous escape, and even the pagan Esquimaux expressed gratitude to God on account of their deliverance. Their first care was to build a snow-house about thirty paces from the beach, and very glad were they to creep into its shelter, thanking God for this place of refuge from the stormy wind and cold, which were so violent as to almost deprive them of breath and vital warmth. Having sung a hymn, the whole party lay down, and composed themselves to rest. The natives were all soon asleep, but the missionary Liebisch could not repose, owing, in part, to the dreadful roaring and tumult, and also because he suffered severe pain from sore throat. His wakefulness saved the whole party from death in another form.

About two o'clock in the morning he perceived salt water dropping from the snow roof. He was just about to give the alarm, when a tremendous surf broke close to the hut, and carried away the slab of snow placed before the entrance. He instantly awoke the sleepers. One of the Esquimaux with his knife, cut a passage through the side of the house, and each of the others, seizing a part of the baggage rushed out. The poor woman with her child fled in terror to a neighbouring eminence, whither they all followed, and took shelter behind a rock, which they had scarcely done, when a second wave swept away the snow hut. Cutting holes in the snow, they tried to find a partial coveret, but during the remainder of the night, they suffered much on account of the wind, sleet, and snow. As soon as the miserable hours of darkness were passed, they gazed around, and saw not a vestige of ice remaining. All before them was the

open sea. As soon as possible, the Esquimaux built a second hut, eight feet square, and six feet high; but now another calamity pressed upon them. Famine, a fiercer enemy than cold, came on apace; their slender stock of provisions, though doled out in pitances, could not possibly last long, and there was no prospect of their being able soon to quit this dreary place and reach the home they had left.

Only two ways were left for escape—either to attempt the passage over the wild and unfrequented mountain, Kig-lapeit, or wait for the sea to freeze again; a biscuit and a half a day was the allowance for each. The poor natives were soon so sorely pinched with hunger that they devoured an old sack made of fish skins. While they were at this strange meal, they kept singing in a low tone—"You were a sack but a little while ago, and now you are food for us." Their spirits, too, began to sink, but happily they found refuge from their miseries in sleep, as they possess the convenient faculty of being able to go to rest whenever they please, and can, if necessary, sleep for days and nights together. Meanwhile, the Moravians kept sad and anxious watch, looking forth wistfully from their snowy shelter over the wide waste around. The poor dogs had now fasted four days; and another source of disquiet was occasioned by the mildness of the air, which thawed the roof so that their clothes were thoroughly soaked, and they had not a dry place to lie on. At length, after remaining six days in this miserable place, they resolved to attempt to return to Nain. There was no way to effect this but one, and their Esquimaux driver ran forward as a sort of pioneer to find the track. The brethren followed with their sledge. It was a weary, fearful journey. They made a last meal of the remainder of their provisions, and by dint of boldness and skill, arrived at length in Nain, to the great joy of the whole settlement, and especially of their own families, who had been reduced almost to despair of ever seeing them again. This is but one of the numerous perils and escapes of which the Moravians speak in the annals of their mission to Labrador.