

THE

# CANADIAN GEM

## AND FAMILY VISITOR.

VOL. II.


TORONTO, SEPTEMBER, 1849.

No. IX.

### THE ICE ISLAND.

BY DR. R. M. BIRD.

Continued from page 196.

 BURNING, excruciating fire was in my stomach; and although I drank copiously of the melted ice, the feverish agony increased, till at last even this grew nauseous, and my stomach revolted at it. Then I began to sicken and swoon, and lie for hours in a state of stupefaction, insensible to every thing but a dull gnawing pain in my stomach. Rains would pour down upon me, and beat in my face unregarded; and once there happened another storm, almost as violent as those I have described, which I listened to with indifference. I cared not—nay, I rather desired that some friendly billow might wash me away, and make an end of my miseries. But they disturbed me not; and still I lay by my pine-tree, unmindful of the joyous sun that burst out after the gale.

Once too, as I lay in that state of fearful stupefaction, my ears were suddenly invaded with the shrill cries of birds. I started up and looking around, I beheld myself within a few leagues of land. Was that an illusion of madness? Did I dream? Were these glorious blue hills that rose before my eyes merely a

phantom paradise made up of delusive fogs?—an airy nothing, conjured up to mock me in my misery? My soul was filled with transport: the vision grew in my eyes, and as the current bore me nearer and nearer to it, it increased in beauty, magnificence, and reality. Alas, my floating prison was carried past the projecting shore by the impetuous current.—The disappointment was too much for my weakened senses. I fell into a swoon, and that blissful shore, that Eden of the waters was lost to me for ever.

I awoke from my trance—I cast my eye back to the land; it lay like a blue cloud on the horizon, sinking and sinking in the distance and the twilight, until it vanished, and I was again sent out into the wide ocean.

Famine, fatigue, suffering and disappointed hope, had done their work; and the afternoon of another day saw me reclining on a fragment of rock, watching with a voracious eye flocks of sea-birds skimming and eddying above me. They flew all around me, croaking and screaming; nay they flapped their wings in my face, as if impatient of the hour which was to give them a banquet upon human flesh. I waved my hand; I shouted, and the hoarse sound frightened them from me.