

to his bitter disappointment, Hemskerk began to perceive there was no hope of his being able to carry out the commission which had been entrusted to him, of finding a north-east passage to India and China, and he began to think of the quickest and easiest way of getting back to Holland, the more especially as his men, sick and exhausted from the hardships they had gone through, were beginning to exhibit a spirit of discontent and insubordination.

Strenuous were the efforts they now made to cleave for themselves a pathway through the barrier of ice. Three of the strongest and most energetic of the crew set to work for this purpose with axes and other tools, but whilst thus occupied, the piece of ice on which they were standing broke loose and floated away with them upon it. The wind tossed the waves with violence, so that it was with the utmost difficulty those on board the ship were saved from perishing. But the Almighty Himself steered the course of the vessel and brought it to the help of the men upon the ice, drifting it to where the chill raft had floated. They were all rescued, one of them getting in to the hinder part of the ship, and a second planting his foot into the middle round of the rope ladder, while the third contrived to climb up by means of a cable hanging from the stern. Most heartily did they all render thanks to their heavenly Father, who had saved their lives. But the efforts made by the crew