

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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AMONG ICEBERGS.

AMONG the perils encountered by ships sailing in the north Atlantic Ocean is that of running into the great floating masses of ice, called icebergs. In the northern regions where it is very cold, great mountains of ice form in the winter season, and when the spring draws near and the weather becomes warmer, large portions of ice become loosened from the mainland and are carried southward by the currents of the ocean. Vessels in passing, even as far south as the line between New York and England, are in danger of running into them.

Our cut shows a vessel passing one of these mountains of ice during a snow-storm at night. It is having a very narrow escape, but fortunately the berg was discovered in time to put on a full head of steam, and, by running the vessel as fast as possible, she passed just as the huge sea monster crashed across her stern.

There are many thrilling incidents of narrow escapes from being crushed by icebergs. We will relate a few. We will first quote from Dr. Kane's Explorations in the Arctic Ocean:

"But a new enemy came in sight ahead. Directly in our way, just beyond the line of floe-ice against which we were alternately sliding and thumping, was a group of bergs. We had no power to avoid them; and the only question was, whether we were to be dashed in pieces against them, or whether they might not offer us some providential nook of refuge from the storm. But, as we neared them, we perceived that they were at some distance from the floe-edge and separated from it by an interval of open water. Our hopes rose, as the gale drove us toward this passage, and into it; and we were ready to exult, when, from some unexplained cause,—probably an eddy of the wind against the lofty ice-walls,—we lost our headway.

Almost at the same moment, we saw that the bergs were not at rest; that with a momentum of their own they were bearing down upon the other ice, and that it must be our fate to be crushed between the two.

"Just then, a broad scone-piece or low water-washed berg came driving up from the southward. The thought flashed upon me of one of our escapes in Melville Bay; and as the scone moved rapidly close alongside us, McGary managed to plant an anchor on its slope and hold on to it by a

whale-line. It was an anxious moment. Our noble tow-horse, whiter than the pale horse that seemed to be pursuing us, hauled us bravely on, the spray dashing over his windward flanks, and his forehead ploughing up the lesser ice as if in scorn. The bergs encroached upon us as we advanced: our channel narrowed to a width of perhaps forty feet: we braced the yards to clear the impending ice-walls. We passed clear; but it was a close shave,—so

close that our port quarter-boat would have been crushed if we had not taken it in from the davits,—and found ourselves under the lee of a berg, in a comparatively open lead. Never did heart-tried men acknowledge with more gratitude their merciful deliverance from a wretched death."

A thrilling adventure with an iceberg is related of a vessel on its way from Australia to Liverpool, England.



AMONG ICEBERGS.

"It was about midnight, and we were running at eleven knots an hour. We had been sailing for eighteen days, and had on board a cargo of wool and gold. Our ship, the *Indian*, a three master, was apparently well manned and officered. We had experienced much gloomy weather, for some days past, and the fog made it impossible to take observations, and it was plainly to be seen that officers and crew were anxious.

"There were but three ladies among the passengers, and these were persons of wealth and refinement. They were possessed of a cheerful and pious turn of mind, and read their Bibles from time to time, conversing pleasantly; although the continued gloom and the uneasy motion of the vessel were anything but conducive to study or the pleasant interchange of thought.

"Our ship was a large one and strongly built; and in this there was much to solace us. Sturdy as her timbers were, however, they were now beginning to groan audibly, and as the wind had been freshening since night had set in, those with indifferent sea-legs were constrained to keep below.

"About midnight, then, and while we were running at the speed already mentioned, we were aroused by a violent shock, succeeded by the crash of falling spars, and a grinding sound along our starboard side. We hurried on some clothes and got to the poopdeck, when a dismal sight presented itself. The ship was lying broadside on to an immense iceberg, which towered like a mountain over our heads. All her spars and sails above the lower masts were gone over the starboard side. The foremast was also broken close to the deck, and hanging at an angle, still held by the rigging. The mainyard was hanging broken over the side, and only the mizzenmast perfect. The mizzen topmast was standing, the top-sail yard hanging from it broken in the slings. The bowsprit hung broken alongside, and the ship, a short

time before bounding along under studding sails and everything set to royals, was now a complete wreck. The night was dark and rainy, with strong northwest breeze. We saw that the port life-boat had been lowered, and no one was at the wheel, nor could we see any officer or sailor on the poop; and we soon discovered that the captain, the first mate, and most of the seamen had deserted the ship. Those remaining encouraging one another, we