

The White or Polar Bear.

This great prowler of the Arctic snows attains to a higher latitude than any other known quadruped, and inhabits the Arctic circles of both hemispheres. Its southern limit appears to be somewhere about the fifty fifth parallel. It is well known at York Factory, on the southern shore of Hudson's Bay, more especially during the autumn season, to which it is liable to be drifted during summer from the northward on the ice. The Polar Bear is a truly ice haunting and maritime species, and occurs along a vast extent of shore over the Arctic regions, never entering into wooded countries except by accident during the prevalence of great mists, nor showing itself at more than a hundred miles distance from the sea. Indeed, it rarely travels inland more than a few miles, because it is a strong and persevering swimmer, and probably feels conscious that when removed from its accustomed element it loses the advantage of its own peculiar and most powerful locomotive energies. The animal is well known in Greenland, Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla, and was met with by Captain Parry among the North Georgian Islands. It seems, however, to decrease in numbers to the westward of Melville Island. In proof of this it may be mentioned that Dr. Richardson met with none between the mouths of the Mackenzie and Coppermine Rivers, and the Esquimaux informed Captain Franklin

that white bears very rarely visited the coast to the westward of the Mackenzie River. Along the Asiatic shores, on the other hand, they are not recorded as occurring to the westward of the *Tschukotzkoi Noss*. Neither were they seen by Capt. Beechy during his recent voyage to the "Icy Cape," although their skins appear to have been procured among other from the natives on the coast of Hotham's Inlet, Kotzebue's Sound. It thus appears that this great maritime species occurs very generally along all the frozen shores within the Arctic circle, with the exception of about thirty-five degrees of longitude on either side of Point Beechy, on which it is comparatively rare; and that in Hudson's Bay, and along the northern coast of Labrador and the nearer portions of East and West Greenland, it occurs not unfrequently six or eight degrees to the south of the Arctic circle.

The Polar Bear is about eight feet in length (slightly varying) and weighs from 1,000 to 1,500 pounds.

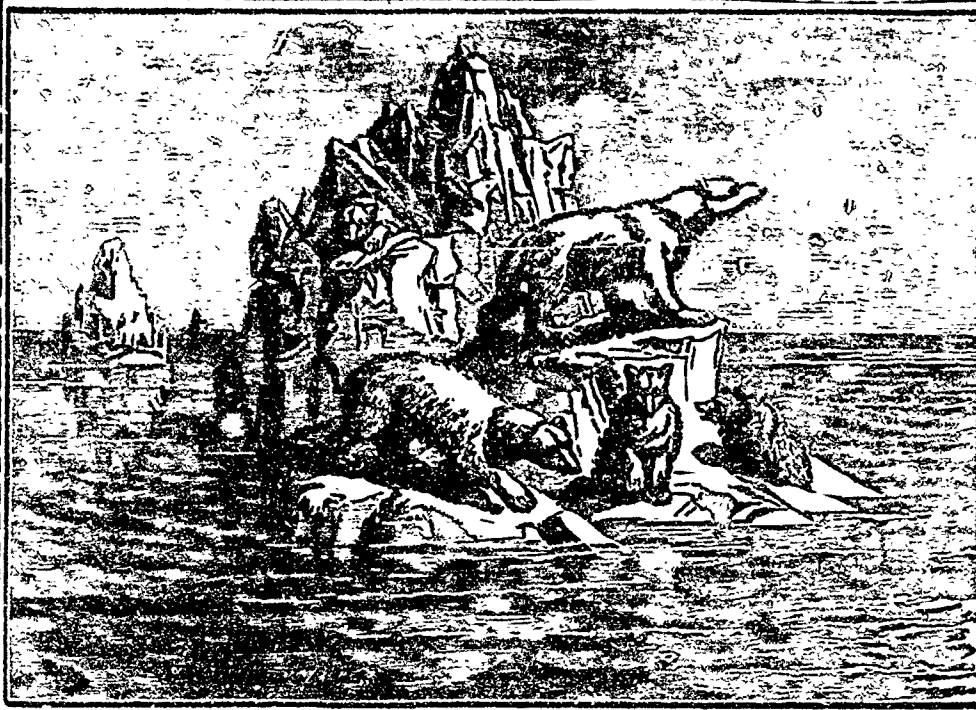
System of Prediction.

—"That Canadian Astrologer" does not pretend to be any wiser than his fellow-men, but, perhaps, to have observed more closely than the majority of people the dissimilarity and similarity of seasons. This has led to the institution of comparisons for different sections of country and this again to establishment of a most remarkable system of *weather relationships* between widely separated stations. This discovery was, at first, handled with caution, until, as year after year fresh evidence of its reliability was added to earlier dates, sufficient confidence was given to make use of it as a most important key to the weather. Let it, however, be clearly understood that the one great aim is the general reading of seasons for the benefit of the people, and after this, and supplementary to it, the attempt to arrive at the general characters of the months and weeks; in which, again, likely dates for storms and changes may be set forth.

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their common characteristic of capriciousness and instability. Its influence in some shape or other is unceasing, for it works upon us through the air, which of all the details of creation is the one with which we are in the most intimate relations. And yet, though almost every other form of matter has become, in some manner or degree, subjected to our will, and can be directed, modified, or used by us, more or less, as we like, and when we like, the air remains mercilessly our master; it imposes itself on us, according to its own fancies only, everywhere and always, sleeping or waking. We cannot do without it, but we can in noway control it; life, heat and sound come to us through it alone; without it we could neither smell the flowers, nor listen to the birds. Our food depends upon it, for abundance or starvation are its children, and, finally, we ourselves are materially composed of it, for one, and all the animals and vegetables around us, are in reality, as Thales wisely said, made up of condensed, woven air. But yet, notwithstanding all these relationships, the atmosphere keeps us off at arms-length and will not permit us to use it in any ways but

its own. This is vexing, but nothing whatever is to be gained by losing our temper about it. It would be altogether futile to imitate Voltaire, and to scornfully call the air "a blue and white heap of exhalations," that would in no way help us. It was observed just now that weather has no visible motives for its actions, and that it therefore merits to be called an idiot. But, though it has no motives it has cause. Like a bucket which goes up and down in a well, it has no will of its own, but it obeys impulses which it cannot resist. The causes are some what various, and are even occasionally conflicting; but yet they all have one common origin, they all result mainly from the fact that the atmosphere



"POLAR BEARS ON AN ICEBERG."

The Weather and Climate.

We have plenty of weather just now, but as far as Canada is concerned, not much of a climate of late years. A writer in *Blackwood* once wrote, "Climate is Dignity; weather is Impudence." Just exactly so; the thought was a happy one. That man must have tried his hand at predicting. What is more talked about than the weather? At present, perhaps, the "Great North-West" is, but this will not be so long, we have got to come back to "the weather." As bread is the "staff of life" just so is weather the back-bone of conversation, at home and abroad, on the sea and on the land, in the Royal Palace and in the husbandman's cot. Everywhere. The prosperity of a country is dependent upon the tiller of the soil, and he again depends entirely upon the weather for good returns. The weather itself—though apparently fickle—is governed by fixed laws, which are yet but imperfectly understood. "Weather includes every modification of the atmosphere by which our organs are sensibly affected. Each one of its agents is a power by itself, exerting a special action of its own upon us, but resembling all its fellows in

rests on a mixed floor. If all the air reposed exclusively on water or on earth alone, there would be no weather; of course there would be climates, but they probably would be very nearly free from accidents or changes, for the reason that no sufficient agent would be at work to upset their regularity as weather does. It is the division of the earth into sea and land, it is the joint, though separate, acting on the atmosphere of those two bases, which create weather; it is the counter-working of these two pavements on the air above them which provokes its good or bad behavior; it is the contrast and the clashing between evaporation and precipitation; between the uplifting and the downpouring of the waters, according to the variety of topographic influences, which bring about the wild uncertainties of weather, and destroy the peaceful unities of climate.

The two coldest spots on the earth are not its poles. One is north-eastern Siberia, the other is the Archipelago north of the North American coast line. Their average January temperature is 55° below zero, F.

given the Almanac for 1883, when issued, about 1st Sept.