

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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THE VICTIMS OF THE ARCTIC SEAS.

(See Engraving.)

ALL the world is ringing with the fame of the survivors of the ill-fated *Jeannette* expedition. We, therefore, give the readers of *PLEASANT HOURS* a brief account of their adventures.

The *Jeannette*—a name that will never be forgotten while history records the deeds of brave men—sailed from San Francisco on July 8th, 1879, with a crew of thirty-three men all told. About the end of September the party had really entered upon the dangers and difficulties of arctic exploration. They were in the midst of great fields of ice, which drifted with the varying winds and currents, so that, although the ship was itself inactive, it was carried over great distances.

In January, however, the ship sprang a leak, and all hands were kept busy at the pumps to keep the water down, and for eighteen months the pumps never ceased working. At last, however, the fight could be kept up no longer. On June 13th, the *Jeannette* sank, and the crew were left encamped upon the ice, and no other hope of return than that which their three boats afforded.

Thus left almost destitute, Commander DeLong had no other course opened to him than to retreat. And what a gallant movement that was!

The three boats were two cutters and a whale-boat. The first, commanded by DeLong, was twenty feet in length and carried fourteen persons; the second, under Lieut. Chipp, measured sixteen feet, and carried eight persons, and the whale-boat, which was larger than either of the others, twenty-five feet long, was accompanied by eleven persons, under command of Engineer Melville. But though they had the boats, the gallant party could not launch them. They were in the midst of a sea, indeed, but it was a sea of solid ice, and for weeks the boats did not touch water, except for a short ferrage here and there where a break in the ice left a narrow strip of open sea.

The boats were placed upon rudely built sleds, and for fifty-three weary days the resolute men dragged them over the ice. Some days they would make a mile, or others scarcely more

than half that distance. Great hillocks of ice were to be surmounted and cracks to be crossed, nearly every one of these being so wide that the sleds had to be let down into them and then hauled up on the other side.

whole party had to be carried help-less on sleds, while almost all were suffering, either from frost-bite, or from the effects of the ice upon their eyes.

At last the retreating company reached comparatively open water.

The cold was still as great as that which they had previously encountered, and it made itself more intensely felt now that the men were confined within the limits of small boats and deprived of the active exercise which alone had

kept the warmth in their bodies. The food supply was running so short that but scanty fare could be allowed, and the danger of drowning was added to that of perishing by cold and hunger.

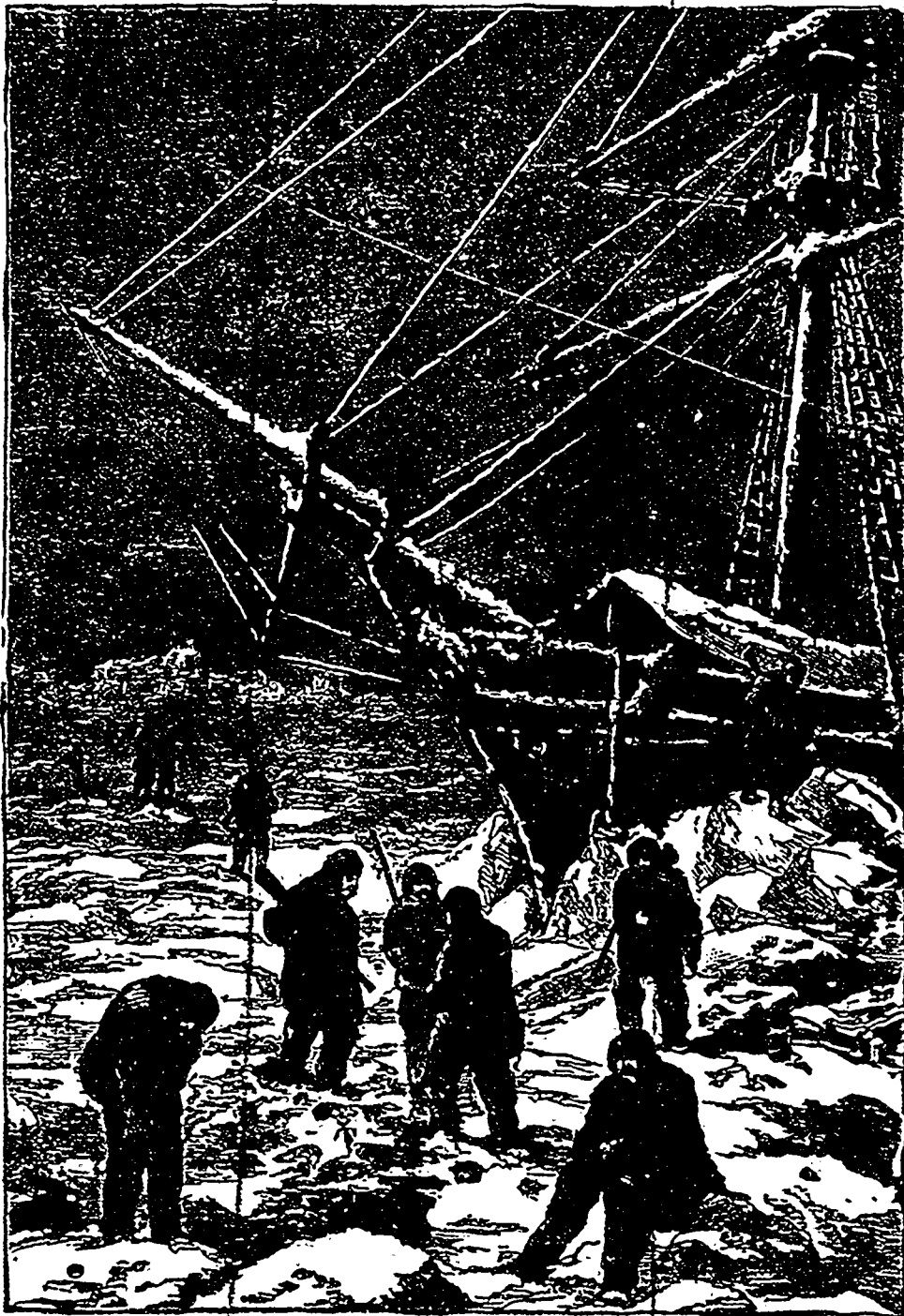
For a few days all went fairly well, but during a gale that arose in the night the boats became separated, and in the morning the company on board the whale-boat scanned the dreary waters in vain for the sails of the boats manned by the crews of Commander DeLong, and Lieut. Chipp. Engineer Melville's boat touched land on the delta of the Lena—a river which, flowing northward through Siberia, discharges itself into the arctic seas. Here the boat's crew met with hospitable treatment by the natives of those bleak and barren shores, and were all saved.

Not so, however, the occupants of the two cutters. Lieut. Chipp's boat has not since been heard of. It was a smaller boat than either of the others, and though commanded by a young officer, who enjoyed in an unusual degree the confidence and love of his men, it is not probable that he was able to bring his crew to a place of safety, even though he succeeded in making the land.

The sad story of the fate of DeLong and his companions was told several months later by two seamen, named Noros and Ninderman, both of whom had served on board the *St. Mary's* school-ship.

On September 13th, Capt. DeLong's boat, although its mast had been carried away, got within two miles of the Siberian coast, when it struck ground, and the captain ordered the men to get into the water, so as to lighten the load, and tow the boat ashore. Only half of the distance, however, had been traversed when it was found to be impossible to bring the boat nearer, and so they collected the food, arms, ammunition, and papers and waded ashore.

Having rested for two days the party started southward, each man carrying heavy burdens, though all but the most important articles had been abandoned.



CAUGHT IN THE ICE.

H. J. S. Jan 25 1888

Nor were these the only hardships the retreating band had to encounter. The cold was intense, as may be imagined. Short rations and their fearful labour had reduced the strength of the men, so that one quarter of the

The boats were launched, and the party set sail for what they hoped would be a milder climate and a more hospitable shore.

Now, however, the perils by which they had been beset were increased.