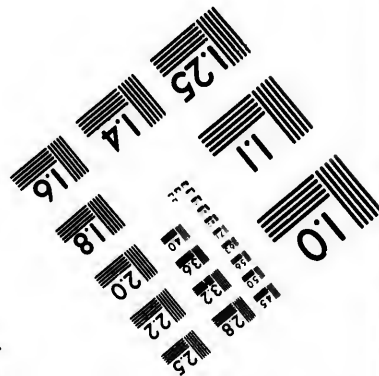
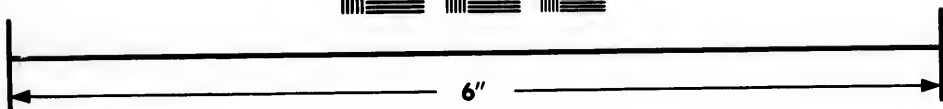
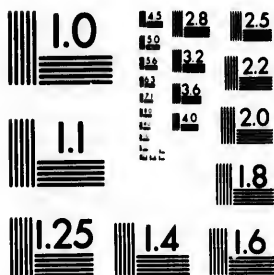


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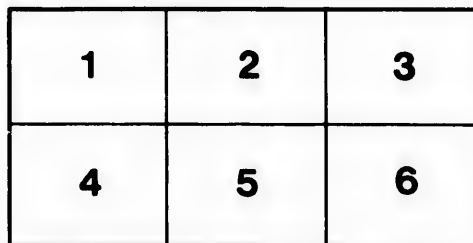
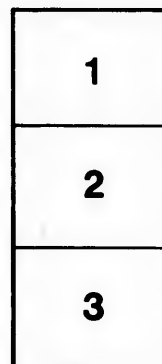
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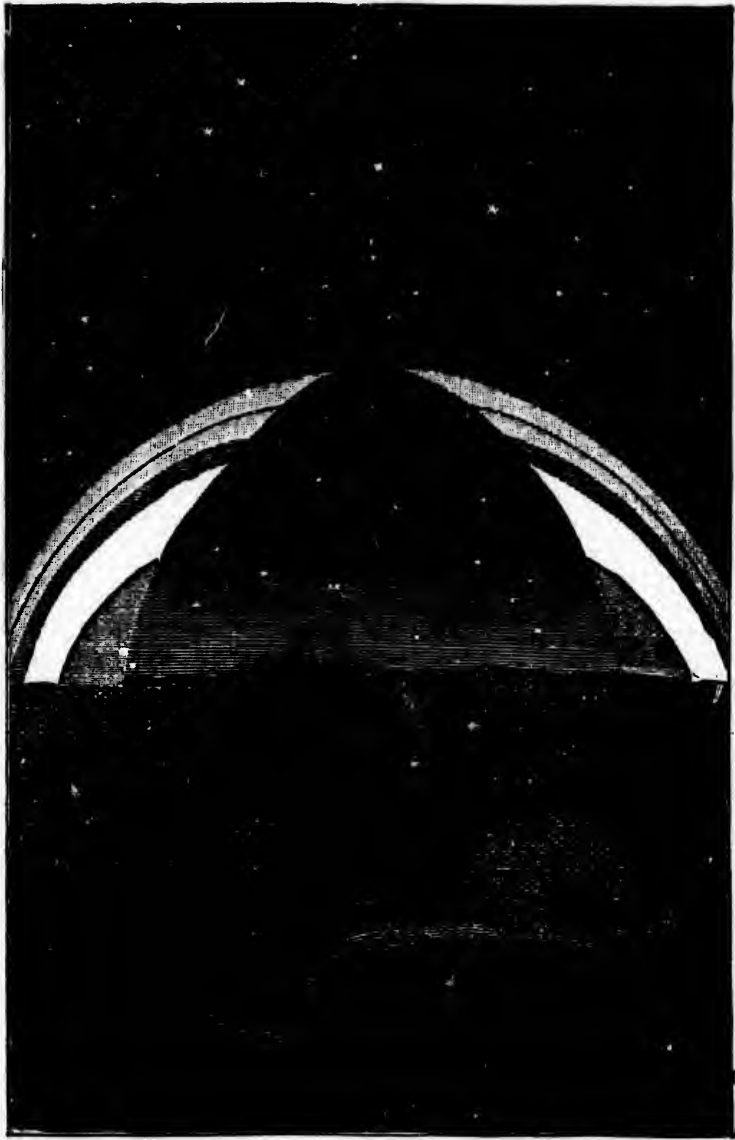
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# AMONG THE POLAR BEARS.

The Adventures of Captain Hemskerk  
and his Crew.

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*A TRUE NARRATIVE FROM THE GERMAN.*

—o—

London :

JAMES B. KNAPP, 6, SUTTON STREET,  
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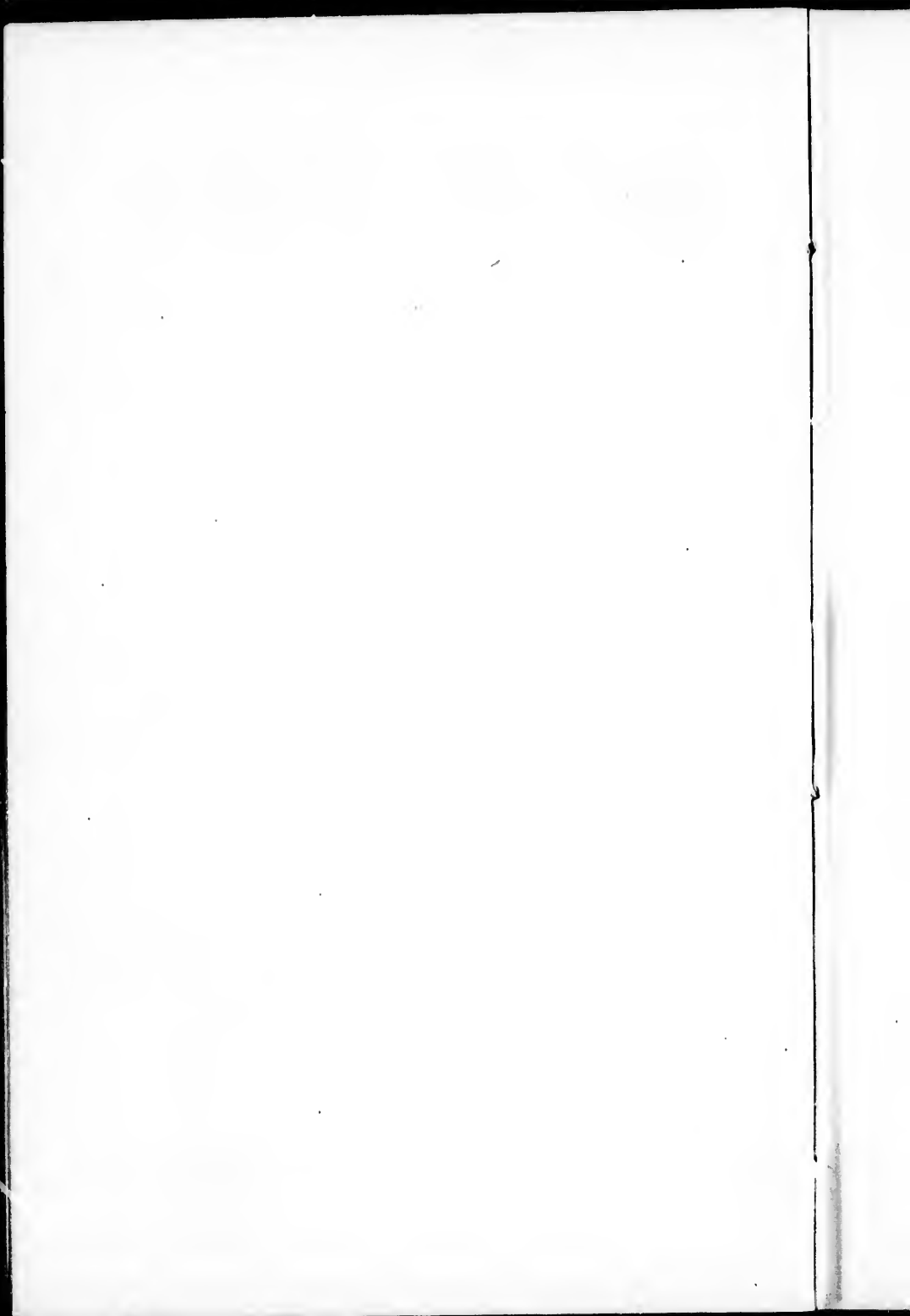
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AMONG THE POLAR BEARS:  
THE ADVENTURES OF  
CAPT. HEMSKERK AND HIS CREW.



CHAPTER I.

THE FAR NORTH.



PREVIOUS to the formation of the Suez Canal, which connects the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, all ships from Europe to India and China had to proceed round the Cape of Good Hope. This was a long and tedious route for vessels on their way to Northern Asia, and three hundred years ago it would have been both difficult and dangerous to send merchandise by way of Russia. It was in consequence of this that the maritime nations of Northern Europe early endeavoured to discover a passage for their vessels

through the Northern Ocean, the Dutch being foremost in this attempt. In the year 1596, two ships were, for this purpose, sent north from the port of Amsterdam.

Of these two vessels, one was commanded by Captain Jacob Hemskerk with Wilhem Barendz for his first mate, and the other by Cornelius Ryp, Barendz and Ryp having formerly sailed far up into the Arctic Ocean.

In the hope of great commercial success, both vessels carried large cargoes, which the city of Amsterdam permitted to be taken free of toll or dues of any kind. The sailors were promised high wages, and with all on board full of hopeful expectation, the good ships weighed anchor, under a favourable breeze, on May 10th, 1596.

One slight mishap, which occurred at the commencement of the voyage, might have been considered a bad omen—on the first day Ryp's vessel struck upon a sand-bank, where it remained fixed for several days, but as soon as it was extricated the two ships sailed rapidly north, finding themselves towards the end of the month at 64 north latitude.

On the first of July they saw, for the first time, the sun remaining motionless on the horizon. Our young readers have doubtless learned at school the cause of this phenomenon, and why it is that in the far north

there is, for many months, scarcely any daylight in the winter, or any darkness in the summer. The voyagers enjoyed at the same time, another strange and beautiful spectacle. It appeared to them as if there were four suns in the sky, an appearance which is seen when the light passes from a thinner to a thicker stratum of air, or out of the air into the water. The light becomes broken and a deceptive appearance is produced, such as may be illustrated by a very simple experiment—putting a small piece of wood into a glass filled with water. This refraction from the passing of the rays of light from the rarified air into the denser atmosphere which surrounds our earth, is the cause of our ‘mock suns,’ and ‘mock moons,’ of which we hear from time to time, and which appeared, as we have seen, to our Arctic voyagers.

At length they arrived as far north as lat. 71 north of the equator, and now some decided resolution had to be arrived at with regard to future proceedings. Unfortunately, as it happened, the two commanders differed as to the best route, and their disputes on the subject proved a great obstacle to their arriving at a wise decision. On the fifth of June they saw in the distance what looked like wild swans, but which, to their dismay, proved to be icebergs, between which they had to keep passing for four

days and nights in succession, until at length they reached an island covered with snow, whose only inhabitants appeared to be sea-gulls. The sailors eagerly collected the eggs of these birds, as a wholesome and agreeable change from their coarse ship diet. Soon after this they managed to catch a fine Polar bear, which came swimming towards them over the water, as if he were master of the island. They ultimately shot him, though they found him at first a powerful antagonist, breaking their rudders like twigs. The animal's skin was twelve feet long, his flesh they roasted and ate, but it proved so indigestible that those who partook of it became sick.

They soon quitted the island, on which they bestowed the name of 'Bear Isle,' and continued to thread their way between formidable icebergs. Some of these bergs were very large, but the violence of the storm-tossed sea soon split them into fragments, which becoming piled one upon another, formed mountains of ice, sunk deep in the waters below, and towering high into the air. Loud is the thundering and crashing produced by the winds and waves, tearing them violently apart, and throwing them one upon another, and a ship passing between two of these bergs runs serious risk of being crushed like an egg. Our voyagers were in great peril, even the small fragments that came to them from the icebergs giving

their ships sufficiently disagreeable knocks. Happily on the eighteenth of July they reached land at latitude 80 north. The shores were covered with grass and foliage, and deer and other grass-eating animals were seen. They found also numerous eggs of the eider-goose. On account of the steep hills in this newly-discovered country, they bestowed upon it the name of Spitzbergen, *i.e.*, 'Peak Hills.'

During the rest of the month, however, they got no further, and on July 1st, they saw 'Bear Isle' again lying straight before them. Another dispute now arose between Captains Hemskerk and Ryp, and as each of the men remained obstinate in his own opinion, it was finally decided that the ships should go on independently of each other. Ryp steered his very badly forward, taking a course due north, but afterwards bearing west, in a direction where it had already been guessed a passage was to be found. Hemskerk, on the contrary, took the Caristien route, between Nova Zembla and the island of Waigatsch, a route which would undoubtedly have brought them by the Sea of Corea to China, had it not been for the ice which in many places blocked it up. But in this matter the captain and his brave but self-willed pilot had to find by experience that even with the best intentions one may miss the right way, and fail to do the right thing.



## CHAPTER II.

### ARRIVAL AT NOVA ZEMBLA.



ON July 11th, Hemskerk's ship came into open and navigable waters, though not wholly free from icebergs, some of which rose to a height of about ninety fathoms. Much knocked about and damaged, the ship arrived on the sixteenth of the month at the north coast of Nova Zembla, the largest of the, as yet discovered, islands of the Polar Sea, between 70 and 78, north latitude. The island is from four to fifty-eight square miles in diameter. It consists, in fact, of two islands, divided by a narrow channel. On the north this strait is surrounded by icebergs, which render landing difficult. The west coast is but little known; to the east the Kara Sea lies between it and Asia, and to the south, beyond the bay and island of Waigatsch, is the Russian province of Archangel. Nova Zembla belongs also to Russia. The greater portion of it is always covered with ice and snow, it

contains several salt-water lakes and rivers, its vegetation is that of the Polar regions, marshberries and bilberries, reindeer-moss, and the like. During the summer months it is frequently visited by Russian hunters and fishermen, who come down for the swans, geese, fish, wolves, bears, reindeer, otters, whales, ermines, seals, sea-cows, walruses, and other animals plentiful in Nova Zembla and the adjacent waters. In winter, however, darkness reigns there for nearly five months, and few sounds are heard save the cracking of ice, and the growling of hungry animals.

Here, on the sixteenth of August, the Dutch sailors landed, after a voyage of four weeks. The more energetic of them climbed a hill near the coast, in order to discover whether they could see in the distance any termination to the barrier of ice, but it was in vain. Here also they had to encounter a Polar bear sixteen feet in length, which happily they were able to master.

On the twentieth of August they proceeded to Cross Island, so named from two crosses standing there. Hemskerk landed with seven of his sailors, but while they were resting and examining the crosses, two Polar bears came right up to them on their hind legs, sniffed at and examined them and finally ran at them, which so alarmed the men that they would have immediately fled for refuge to their boat had



not the captain absolutely compelled them to remain. To frighten away the animals the sailors gave a loud shout, and were at length able to get back safe and sound to the ship.

The crew then set to work hard to make a wider passage between the icebergs, but a thick mist coming on, they threw the anchor on to one of these blocks of ice, in order that it might hold the ship fast or draw it along with it, so long as the iceberg itself held together. A slight thaw coming on, however, several large masses detached themselves from the block and fell with a loud crash into the water. The ship rocked and reeled, and was several times near being crushed. On one occasion the anchor loosened from the berg, and the ship was driven some distance forward; and scarcely had this taken place ere the whole iceberg broke up and burst in enormous masses into the sea, producing a din terrible to hear. There were not many visits from bears at this time, though one foggy night Bruin did nearly succeed in climbing up into the ship, but fled at the sound of the sailors' firing.

Several days after this the sailors effected a landing in a bay on the south side of the island. Entering this harbour, they saw masses of ice rising up like walls before them, and their efforts to cut through produced no other result than that the rudder broke and one of the boats went to the bottom. And now,

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

to extricate themselves from their icy prison were not yet successful, for though now and again there arose a soft wind which appeared likely to open for them a passage, a keen south-easter from Siberia would soon render their exertions fruitless, by filling up the mouth of the bay with huge blocks of ice. 'We must leave all to God and await His help,' wrote Hemskerk in his diary.

The last day of August arrived, a day of much anxiety. With greater violence than ever came the ice-blocks against the side of the ship, piling themselves one upon another, till the vessel was raised by their force full ten feet above the water. To the sailors in their anguish a speedy death seemed inevitable. But marvellous to relate, at the expiration of about four hours, the ice disappeared of itself, and they began to think the time for their return to their own country had at length arrived.

But God willed otherwise. The first of September was a Sunday, and the captain and crew had divine service on board, and prayed most fervently to Him who heareth and answereth prayer. Their petitions *were* answered, though not in the way they had hoped. They thought to return to Holland immediately, but had they attempted to do so they would have perished in the winter ice of the Arctic Ocean, and therefore God in His providence obliged them to remain where they were for a time. They did not,



THE ICE RAISING THE SHIP (*page 16*).

indeed, as yet discern His guiding hand, and had to be awakened from their deceptive hopes by a great alarm at the very time when they were praying. Such huge masses of ice collected round the ship, that they found themselves compelled to abandon it and return to Nova Zembla in a boat which they stored with provisions. After the lapse of some hours, the ice having partly disappeared, they paid a visit to the ship, but found it lying so much on one side that all hope of reaching in it even the nearest Asiatic Coast, to say nothing of their own country, had immediately to be relinquished.





### CHAPTER III.

#### A WINTER RESIDENCE IN NOVA ZEMBLA.

**T**HE first thing our voyagers did on landing at Nova Zembla, was to construct, out of an old sail-cloth, a tent, which they made as habitable as possible, and in which they laid up tools, weapons, and provisions. In the meantime, some of the sailors, who set out to explore the country, discovered about three leagues from the coast, a fresh-water river. On the bank of this river lay some large trunks of drift wood, such as is often found in the Arctic Ocean, and which, probably had been drifted from the vast forests of North America, where it is carried down by the great rivers to the sea. On the sandy bed of the river they also came upon traces of the reindeer or eland, but did not catch sight of any of the animals themselves. The drift wood appeared to them nothing less than a God-send, for they would now be able to build themselves a log-house, and directly they joined their

companions began its erection, fearing lest, if they delayed, the wood might be snowed over, and anxious to make certain of a warm shelter from the cold. First of all, however, they made a sledge, and on it an officer and five men, all armed with guns and hatchets, placed themselves, each man also providing himself with a sabre for fear of bears. These animals, desperately hungry from the effect of the cold in diminishing their provisions, could smell the Europeans at a distance, and left them no peace day or night. No sooner had the sailors commenced the work of building than they had to wage a pretty tough combat with these ferocious animals.

So enfeebled had the sailors become that the house they were building proceeded but slowly, and many of the shortening days had passed before it had risen much above the snowy surface of the ground. The cold, meanwhile, had become indescribably severe, the men's hands froze upon their tools, and when one of them forgot for a moment what he was doing and put a nail in his mouth, he found his flesh and blood adhering to it. In order to force into the frozen ground the boards which they took from the ship's sides, they tried to render them less stiff by firing them, but without success. To add to their misfortunes they lost the ship's carpenter, their most skilful helper in the work. He died on the twenty-third of September.

It sometimes pleases God to remove our most useful friend just at the time when his aid and presence appear most indispensable, in order that we might learn to place our entire trust in God.

Although the ship had been so severely injured by the ice-blocks, our voyagers made use of it as a temporary lodging place until such time as they had finished building their log-hut. But now the northern winter had fairly set in with all its severity. The sea froze to the depth of many feet, while the snow drifted so thickly, the wind blew so violently, and the temperature was so low, that no one could expose himself in the open air without great danger. There was the chance, also, of being smothered by the snow and then immediately buried beneath it. Many such snowy days had our explorers to spend in the cabin of their vessel, smoky with the coal fires, which, however, scarcely sufficed to keep the vital warmth in their bodies. At last one day, when the severity of the weather had a little mitigated, one man *did* venture out to see what progress was being made with the house. But death nearly met him in the form of a Polar bear, which approached him through the soft snow without being heard. The sailor ran as fast as he could, but a somewhat ailing man was no match for the strong animal, and would soon have been overtaken had it not stopped to examine and



sniff at the carcase of another bear which had been placed there as a trophy. This diversion gave the pursued man time to get back to the ship, before any one on board knew the danger he had incurred.

On October 12th, half the crew went into residence in the log-hut. The cold had become so intense that several casks of beer were frozen, while others which had been secured with iron hoops burst. Great exertion were necessary in order to bring the boat into a place of safety.

In the first month of winter, one half of the sun's disc was already above the horizon, and its sickly yellow glimmer made the snow look like a vast winding sheet, under which all nature appeared to be sleeping the sleep of death, and which, as the sun became gradually less and less visible, seemed as if threatening to bury the voyagers beneath its snowy mantle. So dark had it become that it was now necessary to keep a lamp constantly burning, for which purpose large use was made of melted bear's fat. So cold was it that when the men drew their feet to the fire in the hut they were not aware that the soles of their stockings had got burnt till they perceived it by the smell. The poor fellows began to feel great apprehension as to their fate, and whether they would ever get back to Europe in safety. Anxious were the looks they cast upon one another, conveying

more than words could have done, the uneasiness they felt. Their physical sufferings too, were sometimes extreme. One night, after they had, by dint of great exertion, succeeded in getting some coals out of the ship, they became so warm as to be able to get comfortably to bed, but they soon began to experience such a feeling of giddiness and stupefaction coming over them that they could scarcely move. Two of their number happily managed to get to the door, which they burst open, and the rushing in of fresh air and letting out of smoke, saved their lives.

The experience and power of endurance possessed by the captain, proved of immense help to his crew in this hour of need. He was, indeed, a true father to his men during this enforced residence in the inhospitable north. As the ship had not been provisioned for so long an absence, he had to be most economical in eking out the fast diminishing stores. Each man had dealt out to him as his daily ration, four pounds of bread, (no longer good) with the addition of some salt meat, while snow had to be melted for them to drink. The contents of the wine and beer casks were now completely frozen, and when melted, were found to have lost their flavour. A welcome change in their scanty bill of fare was from time to time furnished by the flesh of the Arctic fox, which they occasionally managed to snare. This

animal, sometimes also called the stone-fox, is found on the shores of the Arctic Ocean—it is about twenty-two inches in length—not including the twelve inches long tail. The short, thick head bears a resemblance to that of the dog, while the fur, generally bluish-white, but occasionally of an ashen grey colour, is much prized. One variety of this species, known as 'the cross-fox,' is distinguished by being marked with a cross upon the back and shoulders. Cunning and fierce as is the Arctic fox, its small size prevents its being a formidable antagonist, especially to me accustomed to contend with the gigantic Polar bear. But hunting in that rigorous climate was no agreeable pastime, each animal caught generally costing the hunter a pair of frost-bitten ears, and it took, moreover, some time to become accustomed to fox flesh as an article of food—but hunger is not fastidious. The fur, too, was a great boon to men starved with cold—the cloth they had brought from Holland to be sold had been divided among the crew, but wraps in addition were indispensably necessary, and the skins of the foxes and bears they had killed, were worn by the men (who did not concern themselves whether it was fashionable or no), with the hair inside. Our Dutchmen in this dress must have looked rather grotesque, especially as, owing to the smoky atmosphere in which they constantly lived, the fur became, on the outside, perfectly black.

Notwithstanding all these precautions against the cold, the temperature was so low as to oblige the men to keep constantly close to the fire. They employed themselves as tailors, cooks, and furriers, until the ever increasing cold put a stop to all employment, except such as was absolutely indispensable. The great exertions these brave fellows had sustained upon poor and scanty food, and the continued and exhausting anxiety they endured, had, by the end of November, worn out the strength of the most vigorous among them. Every one complained of feeling unwell, and some were seriously ill. The surgeon recommended vapour baths, and for this purpose an empty wine cask was converted into a bathroom. By means of hot water poured into it, it soon became filled with steam; the patient, creeping in through the little door, was soon in a profuse perspiration, and was then well rubbed. This mode of treatment cured many of severe and obstinate disorders; but fresh hardships brought fresh illness.

By this time, too, their hut had become buried under the drifted snow, so that for the sake of air as well as in order to procure the necessaries of life, a tunnel and a staircase had to be dug out of the snow into the daylight. This severe labour and the close air they breathed, made many of the men ill again, and it is scarcely to be wondered that some of them

were so terribly disheartened as to think it scarcely worth while to make any exertion for the purpose of prolonging so wretched an existence a few days longer. Owing to the cold the pendulum-clock stopped, and the hour-glass had to be continually shaken. Watches were at that time rare and costly, and it does not seem that any of our Arctic voyagers possessed one.

On the sixth of December, the weather began to improve a little, the sky became less cloudy, and the moon and stars were to be seen, enabling the men better to take count of time, as well as cheering their spirits. It was also an advantage that the Northern Lights were very bright, shedding sufficient light for them to work and even read by. But afterwards it again became colder, and so low did the temperature fall that the Spanish wine, which had hitherto served as a cordial for the sick, froze to ice, and had to be dealt out in pieces by weight.

The men's shoes froze to their feet, and though when brought to the fire they became soft again, the sailors were sure, when they woke from sleep, to find them covered with ice, and as hard as horn. They were accustomed to wrap their feet when they retired to rest in five or six pieces of fur, and Captain Hemskerk set to work to manufacture fur shoes for his men.

Great, too, was the difficulty they encountered in procuring fuel, and the men had in turn to become

wood-cutters, fox-hunters, cooks, and stokers. The deadly cold penetrated through the thickest fur wraps, and any one who remained out of doors, was sure of frost bites. A second time they were threatened with suffocation from coal-smoke, and a second exit through the snow-wall had to be effected with spade and pick-axe, owing to the drifting snow having again imprisoned them. The north wind blew with terrible force, every one's head was white with hoarfrost and vapour, and all hearts sunk to the lowest ebb of discouragement. Some of the men cursed the day of their setting out on the expedition, but the wiser among them suffered in silence, confident that their sighs and the mute utterances of their hearts would enter into the ears of the merciful and loving Father of men.

The last day of the year 1596 was the saddest of all. In trouble and sorrow they retired to rest; with tears in their eyes they fell asleep, and on the morning of New Year's Day they awoke with an overpowering sense of anxiety. The only gleam of hope in their dark prospect arose from the knowledge that the period of the sun's greatest distance was at length over. And, in fact, on the thirteenth of January the weather became sensibly milder. A soft west wind came blowing over the fields of snow and ice, and the men no longer ran the risk of being frozen to death every time they stepped out of the block-house. Their

house was at the same time becoming easier to warm, and it was possible to ward off chilblains and frost-bites without the aid of so large a number of wraps. In order to exercise their limbs, which were beginning to grow stiff and lame, the Dutchmen made a skittle ground upon the snow.

As spring drew nearer one herald after another announced its approach. The two first signs of its coming, indeed, were by no means agreeable ones: the Polar bears came nearer, and the foxes kept away. But when, on the twenty-fourth of January, Hemskerk and Barendz went down to the shore, a far more welcome indication of spring greeted their eyes; it was the blessed sun, which they had never seen since the third of November, but which was once again beginning to peep over the horizon. The captain went back at once to his men to tell them the good news, but he could not get them to believe him, and even Barendz distrusted the evidence of his own senses, affirming that it could not have been the sun they saw, because, as he tried to prove from his knowledge of Astronomy it would not be visible for another fortnight. Hemskerk, however, preferred believing his own eyes rather than the calculations of his pilot, and on the twenty-seventh of January he proved to be in the right. That day, however, was to bring an event less cheering to the voyagers than the appearance of the sun. One

of the sailors had sunk under his long protracted hardships and sufferings, and was on this day laid to rest amid the snows of Nova Zembla, in a grave they dug with much difficulty, and with prayers and the singing of psalms. A short address was delivered beside the new-made grave, and as they returned in sadness to their temporary and inhospitable home, each thought within himself, 'Who knows whether I may not soon be carried to my grave.' But soon their hearts began to exult with joy, for the sun, the glorious sun, arose; not merely showing part of his orb, but in his full beauty, though but for a short time. Bright as on the morning of the resurrection did he shine upon the grave of their departed friend, bright also into their dark hearts. Cries of joy echoed from the snowy hills of that desolate region, and almost forgetting the grave, they returned to the snow-house, and in true Dutch fashion (though certainly a fashion that strikes us as somewhat incongruous,) they spent the rest of the day in skating and running races on the ice.

At the same time they were as yet far from having reached the end of their troubles, for on the sixth of February they found themselves buried under fresh masses of snow. It is true that when the weather became finer again and the sun shone, they felt somewhat warmer, but they were still unable to get the frost melted from their beards and hair.





## CHAPTER IV.

### HOPES OF SPRING, AND DEPARTURE FROM NOVA ZEMBLA.

**I**T was not until March that the day fully broke in that desolate region, but on the fourth of that month the sun rose six degrees above the horizon. The sick men were now able, from time to time, to take a few steps into the open air, and rejoiced that they were permitted once more to behold the spring. Such of them as were able to manage longer rambles were gratified by a most delightful prospect. Far as the eye could reach, they beheld a sea completely free from ice. This glimpse was, no doubt, granted them that they might not sink into despair; but, alas! on the following morning they again beheld the ocean covered with icy hills and valleys. It became as cold as ever, and on the twelfth of March, the weather was as terribly severe as on any day in the stormiest December. Until the fourteenth of April, the cold continued unabated, and in the meantime no other

messenger of spring appeared for their consolation than a solitary bird, which they saw diving in the water, but to them it was as welcome a sight as was that of the dove with the olive leaf to Noah, and hungry, well nigh starving as they were,—for the daily rations were becoming scantier and scantier,—they could not find it in their hearts to kill it. At the same time their contests with the bears had not ceased ; one of these animals managed to get into the snow-house over the roof and down the chimney, but took itself off as quickly as it had come. When on the fifteenth of April, some of the sailors paid a visit to the ship, (which had long been forsaken by them all) they found that it had been converted into a barrack for bears, and that empty casks and other utensils had been crushed by the huge creatures.

With the last day of April came full daylight ; even at midnight the sun shone with unbroken splendour. The weather had now become beautiful, but the ice had not yet begun to give way, and Captain Hemskerk was not provided with sufficient food to last his crew more than three weeks longer. The ship had drifted away among the ice fields, and was now as much as eight hundred paces from the Nova Zembla shore, liable at any time to be carried yet further away by the winds and waves. Those in command felt it to be their bounden duty to endeavour

to save, not only the crew, but, if possible, the ship also,—and for this purpose they patiently awaited a thaw. At length the captain saw that longer to wait would be impossible, the crew were growing impatient, the thaw had not come, and on the twentieth of May he yielded to the urgent entreaties of his men, and gave orders to prepare for departure. This order revived the spirits of the sailors to energetic action, and even the sick exerted their feeble strength to the utmost.

The two boats, large and small, were put in readiness to convey the men across the sea, the ship being so fast lodged in the ice that it appeared probable she might never be extricated. They made haste to get from on board everything they were likely to require, using more especially every exertion to dig the sloop, or larger boat, from under the snow; but the exhausted powers of the poor seamen were inadequate for such severe labour as this required, and although they worked hard at it for many days, almost ready to weep from disappointment and vexation, they saw there was nothing to be done but to try and render the smaller boat seaworthy by heightening its sides. Their hut which was already doomed to be broken up, served to furnish materials for this purpose. The work, however, came to a standstill for a time, owing to a fresh outbreak of sickness among the men. The want of adequate

provisions had rendered them imprudent in what they ate, and among other things they roasted and partook of the liver of a bear they had killed. The last morsels of this singular dish were scarcely in the sailor's mouths when they all begun to feel ill, and the captain threw away what was yet left of the unwholesome dainty. Three, however, of those who had eaten it became dangerously ill, and among other painful effects it caused the skin to peel off from head to foot. They all recovered, however, without having recourse to any medicine.

Meantime, June had arrived. The ship was thoroughly ransacked, every nook and corner, carefully searched in the hope that perhaps some articles of food might still be left, and when, at length, they did manage to discover a small cask of salt fish, every one heartily thanked God. The cargo was carefully secured, but in the way of provisions nothing more was now left but thirteen casks of ship biscuits and one keg of wine, frozen to perhaps ten degrees of frost. At length the boat was made ready, and to every one's delight, the sloop was got out of the ice, but to steer both these small craft along the edge of the uneven ice was a task requiring such exertions, that had it not been for the untiring patience and inexhaustible courage which God had given these men, they would have sunk under it.

The long-looked for day of departure arrived but to damp their satisfaction Barendz, the pilot, a man whose endurance, and wisdom, and experience, had rendered invaluable service to both captain and crew, became so seriously ill that he had to be taken on board in a sledge. Another sailor was also ill. Three papers were drawn up containing the names of the crew, with a short account of the hardships they had undergone, and the reasons for their return without fulfilling the object for which they had embarked on their expedition. These lists were written out and enclosed in boxes or flasks, one of them being placed in each boat, and the third in the chimney of the block-house for the information of such as at any future time, might chance to come there.

On the fourteenth of June, just ten months from the time of their leaving Amsterdam, both vessels put to sea. 'With God,' Hemskerk had written in his diary, 'did we set forth on our voyage full of cheerfulness and contentment.' But what a voyage was before them. At least eight hundred leagues to be traversed amid the storms of the Arctic Ocean in two miserable boats, by voyagers already weakened by ill-health and privations of all kinds. But God had prepared better things for them.

The same route was followed on this return voyage which had been taken on their way out. They doubled

the northernmost point of Nova Zembla, and on the same evening reached the promontory which they named 'Cape Hemskerk.' It was a spot ever memorable to the Dutch sailors, as it was there that they had first begun to suffer the hardships they had been so long experiencing, and which, happily were over now. At least they were not again to endure them to the same extent. On the third day of their homeward voyage they landed on an island to which they gave the name of 'Orange,' (the royal title of Holland), and here they found a most welcome change of diet, both for the sick and the healthy, in the shape of sea birds and their eggs ; food as nourishing as it proved palatable. Ten more leagues brought them to the Ice Cape, where Barendz seemed to revive a little, though he knew that he was looking for the last time at the dreary part of the world he had so often visited before.

On the eighteenth of June, after they had come about sixty miles, some of the men were obliged to land for the purpose of repairing one of the boats which had become leaky. 'God providentially enabled us to find some wood,' Hemskerk wrote in his journal, and with it they were able to fill up the fissures, with the tar they melted for caulking. For some days longer they had to sail between icebergs, and on one occasion it was only the presence of mind of one of the sailors which saved one of the boats from destruc-

tion. Holding in his hand one end of a stout rope, he sprang from one block of ice to another, till the rope, and with it the boat, could be fastened to a large iceberg, in the shelter of which it was able to proceed safely, spite of the violent current which was hurrying it along. It was an anxious voyage to perform in so small and crazy a craft through the wastes of ocean and the crashing ice. God enabled many of the men, however, to keep up their hope and courage to a wonderful extent, and the example of these had upon the minds of the others the effect of spring, rain, and sunshine upon drooping flowers. Their very expression of countenance, cheerful and bright in the midst of all they had to endure, shamed the more timid and downcast, and so joyfully and confidingly did they praise the mercy of God that the most desponding of the crew took courage to endure all and dare all.

Barendz was not the only person of the party who was sick unto death. Andris, one of the seamen, lay worn and emaciated, but patient as a lamb, rocking in the rough sea-cradle, and frequently did he speak of his approaching departure. Barendz himself was in the other boat, friendly and heart-cheering were the messages he sent to his dying mess-mate, adding to his farewell the words 'It will not last much longer with me, either.'

And so out of the floods and deep waters of misery,

did Andris ascend to the peaceful shores of the everlasting home. Barendz lingered for a short time longer. Knowing that he himself was to arrive at the end of the toilsome voyage so much before the others, he endeavoured to trace upon a chart which lay before him, the further route his companions should take. He then asked for something to drink, but immediately afterwards fell into convulsions, and when they had passed off, he slept peacefully away. With many tears the survivors gathered round his remains and reverently committed them to that unknown sea, which several times traversed by him before, was thus destined to be his grave.

After having, with considerable difficulty, got the boats across the vast fields of ice (the two vessels losing sight of one another on the stormy waters between the ice-masses), Hemskerk and his men at length found themselves in safety at their former landing place. From thence, on the twenty-second of June, they again set sail, and being favoured by wind and weather, they hoped to reach Cape Nassau the same day, but God willed otherwise. They managed to get within a few leagues of the Cape, but found it impossible to land, owing to the enormous heaps of ice which lay piled up around it, and to a violent storm which arose, and which lasted all night, tearing their sails, and setting at naught all the cal-



culations and exertions of the now exhausted sailors. In their mortal anguish these poor fellows could only sigh and pray, but their prayers were heard, for He who calmed the wind and waves on the sea of Galilee did the same on the Arctic Ocean now, and saved their lives from destruction. As they coasted the shores of this frozen sea they came in sight of enormous herds of walruses. These animals measure from eighteen to twenty feet in length, the skin alone being some four hundred pounds in weight. In the under jaw they have two tusks turned downwards, about two feet long, and weighing several pounds, which yield a beautiful species of ivory. The flesh of the young is eaten, the old ones are generally caught for the train oil they yield. The walruses are dangerous to Polar bears, and are courageous enough to attack whales with great ferocity, that is to say when they are asleep. Our Dutchmen did not venture to attack them, but a couple of shots brought down a dozen sea-fowl, which procured for them just the nourishing food which they were at the time especially needing. Their boat had again become leaky, and had to be repaired afresh, for which purpose they unloaded it and drew it up to an ice-field, while the exhausted sailors laid themselves down to rest under the shelter of a sail. But they had not long enjoyed their much-needed repose ere they were awakened by

a cry from one of their companions, 'Three Polar bears!' Guns were speedily loaded, and in a minute's time one of the three bears lay prostrate at their feet. The two others managed to escape, but returned at the same hour of the following day, when they threw themselves upon the body of their former companion, which they dragged, heavy as was its weight, over the sharp peaks of ice, and then devoured hair and skin, every part being eaten. In these circumstances dawned the first day of July on our voyagers. A milder and softer air was all that told of summer, and even this change, welcome as it might have seemed, brought them, during the night of the first of July, nearer to destruction than all the furious storms of winter had done. The island of ice on which they had landed their damaged vessel, broke to pieces under the thaw, and floated away in huge fragments. One of the boats, in which a sick sailor was lying, fell into the water, while on the other side the money chest, two casks of bread, and a chest full of weapons, mathematical instruments, so necessary in navigation, all sank in the dark abyss.

In one place there was a cry for the wine keg, while in another the thirsty might be seen eagerly gulping down the bitter sea water. The fine cloth and other valuable wares from Holland lay strewn upon the water and on the neighbouring icebergs, as if upon a

Jew dealer's booth, and old ocean took them off, not only without paying, but with a threat that he would devour any venturesome sailor who put forth his hand to rescue the property.

But by God's mercy the boat on board which the invalid was lying, was saved, and the voyagers, weaker in body, poorer in goods and provisions, and with diminished courage and dimmed hopes, had again to seek some shore to encamp on. They found in time a place of shelter, but it was a perilous one. The men were wet through, and terribly short of provisions, so much so that bread had now to be dealt out to the starving men by ounces. On the fifth they lost another of their number, Zoon, the sick sailor of whom we have already spoken, and who was related to Andris, the other man who had died.

On the ninth of July, they found themselves able to leave their camping place, but they were obliged to drag their boat, with much difficulty, more than three thousand paces over the ice, and when they imagined themselves to have reached the open water, they found themselves upon another ice-field, upon which as on a raft, boat, sailors and cargo floated across the sea, happily, in the direction they wished to take. The same thing befel them again on the following day, when, for a second time, they were obliged, after a short voyage in open water, to unload upon an ice-field.



FIGHT WITH BEARS (*page 42*).

On the eleventh of the month, these much-tired men arrived at Cross Island, but in vain did they look out over sea and land from a lofty eminence, in the hope of catching sight of some ship that might chance to pass here in summer. Among the cliffs of the island, however, they made a most fortunate discovery, namely a quantity of sea-fowls' nests, out of which they collected a large store of eggs. One of the sailors drew off his long trousers, fastened the legs together, and filled them with eggs to the number of seventy, two men carrying this singular egg basket to the boat upon a stick. The last of the wine was now divided between the men, and they were all regaled on this (supposed to be) strengthening repast. They kept the day as a sort of holiday, enjoying the unwonted feast, and glad of the rest, enforced though it was, for until the nineteenth of the month they were prevented by ice and storms from proceeding further on their way. Part of their idle time was spent in looking for crystals, and so fine were the specimens they found, that some of the men persuaded themselves that they had found diamonds. They also had the excitement of another encounter with bears.



## CHAPTER V.

SHIPS AT LAST, BUT NO GOOD SAMARITANS ON BOARD.



TO the great delight of Captain Hemskerk and his men they at length succeeded in reaching the open sea, and found themselves able to continue their voyage. Another ice-field, six hundred feet wide, had, indeed to be passed, but a favourable wind soon carried them to Admiral's Isle and its neighbouring headlands. Here they managed to secure as many as one hundred and twenty sea-fowl, some with the hand, some by throwing stones at them. On the twenty-fifth of the month, to their great delight they saw in St. Laurence roadsteads, two ships lying at anchor on the desert coast. 'We are saved! God has sent us help!' they thought, and with the last remains of strength their weakened arms possessed they rowed to shore. There approached them from the land as many as thirty Russian sailors, no very encouraging sight to the Dutchmen, who knew that the Russians saw with no

favourable eyes the advance of the Dutch commerce in the north. However, they were permitted to land without opposition and the representatives of the two nations approached one another, touching their caps amid many courteous gesticulations. But neither understood the language of the other, and signs were their only mode of testifying friendliness. But the Russian commander touched Hemskerk on the shoulder in a familiar manner, and the two captains recollected that they had met many years before in these same Polar regions. The Russians gave the Dutchmen some brandy, but it was very bad, and to their questions about the direction in which they should steer their vessel, they merely replied with another question 'Krabble! Krabble!' (your ship). When it was explained to them by signs that the ship was sunk in the Polar Sea, their sole reply was 'Krabble propal,' (ship is lost.) But Hemskerk and his men were not satisfied with this sort of attempted conversation, when they were in a starving condition and beginning to suffer from scurvy, so they put their hands to their mouths. The scurvy is a complaint which is apt to show itself in damp localities, especially on the sea-coast and in the Polar regions, and is a disease that frequently attacks sailors. The gums become covered with burning spots, the teeth decay and fall out, extreme weakness, breathless-

ness, pains in the limbs, hæmorrhage, and at last swellings all over the body, and powerlessness in all the limbs, are the symptoms that follow, and if want of proper remedies or bad food cause the disease to proceed unchecked, death is the result. But God in His providence has so ordered, that in the cold climates where this disease is especially violent, an infallible remedy is to be found for it in the shape of a plant called the cochlearia. Failing this, mustard, radishes, cresses, the acid of lemons, and vinegar, are good remedies. The Russians, however, did not understand what it was their guests wanted, they had no idea they were ill, (though their faces testified plainly to it,) and only thought they were hungry. They brought them a loaf but it was perfectly stale, as hard and as coarse as sand, and great was the torture it caused to the mouths of the sick men. The Russians perceiving this, then softened some meal and bread in water for the Dutchmen, but this food proved not much better than the other, and tasted like bookbinders' size. Nevertheless, the hungry voyagers thanked God for this poor provision with heart-felt gratitude, feeling as thankful for it as do those who in hotels or palaces sit down to splendid repasts. But the Russians did nothing more for them, and they had to sail away without gaining any more information as to the route they ought to take. Thus



does it often happen that those very things on which we have built most hope deceive us.

The Russians steering their course in the direction of Waigatsch, Hemskerk followed them, in hopes of finding the way, by so doing, to some place already known to his crew. But a thick fog hanging over the sea, the Russians were soon out of sight, and the Dutch sailors found themselves on the third day sailing in unknown waters. As they proceeded hunger and scurvy increased, while their strength and their store of provisions daily diminished. Hour by hour death seemed to be stealthily approaching nearer to them, but 'the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save.' On the third of August the southernmost point of Nova Zembla came in sight, and though nothing was to be procured to eat there, they found a good deal of cochlearia, that health-giving herb, which the whole crew devoured with loud and hearty thanksgivings, and through God's blessing upon which they all speedily recovered. In the meantime they steered past the island of Waigatsch towards the mainland, which they reached on the following day. Here again they found the healing plant, and this second curative process completely restored them to health. But with their delight at recovered strength mingled anxiety as to how to procure the means of life, for all their bread had become mouldy. Two

ounces of ship-biscuit a day, with water from melted snow could do but little to appease their gnawing hunger. And as they continued their voyage, ice was still everywhere to be seen, though it was the month of August.

As well as they could in their exhausted condition, they rowed forward, but after making forty leagues they did not reach land, and had already begun to despair, when at last a low-lying shore became visible. It was, however, a place where to land would have been impossible, and they were obliged to sail past it. But just at the edge of the horizon, where sea and sky appeared to be touching, they thought they beheld something in motion and drawing nearer and nearer to them. The Dutchmen steered towards this object, and discovered it to be a Russian ship. Hemskerk did not as yet exactly know his whereabouts, but hoped that at least he was not far from Kanin Noss, the north-western cape of the peninsula of Kanin, which lay between Iseheskaja Bay and the White Sea. In a loud voice he called out to the Russians as they sailed past, 'Kanin Noss? Kanin Noss?' but their answer was 'Petschora' (the name of a spacious bay at the south of Nova Zembla). Their thoughts travelled much further than did the boat, and the most dangerous part of their voyage seemed to be still before them.

The Russian, whose answer 'Petschora' had so alarmed them, did, indeed, indicate to them which way they ought to have taken, but then coolly left them to their fate.

Following the direction indicated by the compass, the voyagers continued their way, but soon discovered that they were taking a wrong course. The needle of the compass was carefully examined, but not the slightest defect was to be found in it. At last, however, it was discovered that by accident the needle had been placed upon a chest fastened with iron clasps, and that these had drawn the needle slightly sideways from the north. This apparently trifling circumstance had proved sufficient to lead them wrong, for while they were intending to go south-west they were really taking a northerly direction. Wandering over the sea in the darkness of night, tossed to and fro by the waves, and still more so by a multitude of terrible apprehensions, the unfortunate men found themselves in a condition that tempted them to despair. But they knew the feeling was a temptation, and leaned with all their might upon the invisible Helper.

At the dawn of day the sailors again took to their oars. They sighted some land, the shores of which were clothed in green, but they found nothing growing on it which could supply their wants. They were prevented, too, by violent winds from getting out of

the bay in which they had landed, the waves perpetually driving them back. Strength, hope, and courage forsook the hearts of the strongest among them, even as the oars slipped out of their hands, and when at last the wild waves of the sea helped them out of the bay, there was rain falling from the sky, water in the boat, lack of necessary food, failing strength, above all, failing faith, for their misery and distress had reached such a point that many of them wished themselves dead.

When at night we lay ourselves down in a good bed in a comfortable room, after having all day long enjoyed the various gifts of Providence, we should not forget, as we express our gratitude for our own happy lot, to lift up a prayer for those who, amid the storms of the sea and of life, have to struggle with suffering, want, and anxiety. We should never forget that we enjoy an easier lot, a more comfortable existence, not because we deserve it, but owing to His grace and goodness who 'hath not dealt with us after our sins,' and Whose will is that we should ever be mindful in our prosperity of those who are less highly favoured.

Just when some of the crew were beginning to reproach God by saying, 'He has forgotten us,' He was about to interpose for their rescue. A ship, with all her sails set, came towards the disheartened

voyagers. Every heart now beat with expectation, as they hailed the coming rescuers, on board whose ship *Hemskerk* went immediately. They were also Russians, and their knowledge of the Dutch language does not seem to have been much more extensive than that of their countrymen whom he had previously met, for they only answered his questions by signs. In reply to *Hemskerk's* enquiry 'Kanin Noss,' each of the Russians held out five fingers. What could this possibly mean? It seemed utterly incomprehensible, and *Hemskerk* was about to leave the ship when his eyes lighted upon a cask of fish. With one hand he pointed to it, and with the other showed the Russians some money. This universal language opened their hearts at once, the chink and glitter of his Dutch ducats spoke with more force to their imaginations than did the sight of men whose appearance bore unmistakable evidence of the misery and hardships they had undergone. Such love of money is not unusual in others beside Russians, and it is not only in the far north, nor in the hot south alone, that the heart is kindled into warmth by the sight of gold.

It was with great delight that *Hemskerk* brought back to his starving crew some hundreds of delicious fish, nor would it be possible to estimate the boon this proved to these starving men, who, amid all their hard work and pressing anxiety had, during the previous

twenty-four hours tasted nothing beyond four ounces of six-months-old biscuit, washed down with a scanty allowance of water. Cheered up and strengthened, they proceeded on their way, and on the following day they again sighted land, a wild shore upon which lay a stranded ship, with a house and an oven close beside it, both empty. They sailed along the projecting shore which bended towards the south, and supposed that they would soon be in the White Sea. In the middle of the night, however, there arose a violent storm, in which the two little vessels became separated from each other. Hemskerk and those on board his boat gave up the sloop for lost ; both, however, were saved, and every one on board exclaimed,—

‘ If those in the other boat are still alive, we must hope that the day when we are rescued will bring us all together again.’

The men on board the smaller boat met in the meantime six more Russian ships, from the crews of which they gained the unwelcome tidings that they had not yet reached the peninsula of Kanin, to say nothing of its northernmost point, and they denied the possibility of their being able to get through the White Sea, so ill-provisioned as they were, and in so miserable a vessel. In spite of this the Russians had not sufficient humanity to invite the poor fellows on board their ships—even bread had to be begged for by the starving Dutchmen.



## CHAPTER VI.

' FRIENDS IN NEED ARE FRIENDS INDEED.'

**O**N the 16th of August the smaller boat, now separated from the sloop, was lying in a bay, apparently on the north side of the peninsula of Kanin, but before her arrival those whom God had designed to be the guides of her crew were already there. They, too, were Russians, but unlike those whom they had previously met, proved to be true friends. Hems-kerk, still under the delusion that they were already upon the White Sea, enquired if they were nearing Kildnin, but the only response he met was a discouraging shake of the head. He bought some fish of the Russians, but went away from them anxious and down-hearted, and, with his crew, arrived at the determination of striking out a path according to their own Judgment. But as soon as the kind Russians perceived that the Dutchmen were rowing in a wrong direction, they sent out at once from the ship a boat

with the sailors on board, to supply them with bread and show them the right way. They gave them the bread first, as if they wished, by a kind deed, to earn the right of turning them aside from their wrong course.

It was not till after much persuasion that Hemskerk and his men allowed themselves to be set right. The captain gave the Russian sailors some money and linen cloth for their trouble, and wanted to send them away ; but these brave fellows had nobler ideas on the subject, and begged, with every gesture of entreaty, that Hemskerk would return to them with his boat. They accepted the invitation, and the hospitable foreigners again and again handed to them down the ship's side meat and other provisions. Compass and charts had to take the place of words, the two crews being ignorant of one another's language. Hemskerk and his men discovered, however, that they were only now beginning to have the White Sea before them. But the White Sea is, in point of fact, only a vast bay in the Arctic Ocean, and, owing to the strong current prevailing at the Pole, the irregularity of ebb and flow, and the periodical winds, is very stormy and difficult to navigate. Even large ships have been driven about and thrown out of their course on this voyage ; how then could so miserable a craft as this poor little boat live in such a sea ? How could Hemskerk venture upon such a voyage



when he had not even provisions, except of the very scantiest? This latter difficulty, however, he managed to overcome, by purchasing victuals from the kind-hearted Russians, but other troubles pressed sufficiently hard upon him from the dangers that still lay before him and the loss of so many of his companions.

On the 17th of August the hearts of the Dutch sailors were again cheered by the sight of friendly Russians. Like those whom they had just parted with, however, these men could only talk with their fingers, but this time with two more, for they kept holding up seven fingers, and, at the same time pointing to the boat. Hemskerk's men kept guessing first one thing and then another as to what this could mean. The Russians then produced a compass, which the Dutchmen immediately recognised as the same which their seven mess-mates had had with them on board the sloop. They must, therefore, have fallen in with the Russian sailors, and were consequently themselves somewhere to be met with. Thus another weight was lifted from the hearts of Hemskerk and his companions.

On the following day the long-sought-for Kanin Noss was reached—at least, it lay but a short distance off. On the steep cliff which rose before them, five crosses were standing. The Russians, when questioned respecting this locality, had held out two fingers,

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THE VOYAGERS PUT INTO A BAY (*page 56*).

and our voyagers, by this time quite accustomed to the language of signs, understood this, and knew that there lay before them a dangerous voyage across the White Sea. Their minds, depressed by the discomforts they had already endured, began sadly and distrustfully to anticipate new misfortunes. But, strange to say, they were able, within the space of thirty hours, to traverse as much as eighty leagues over the White Sea without the least hindrance from violent winds, or the strong high waves their open boat had previously encountered. And thus it is that a kind and watchful Providence rebukes, not by harshness, but by mercy, our distrustful anxieties.

The northern coast of Lapland was now soon reached, and the voyagers put in to a bay, and found that, without knowing it, they had reached what was a most suitable place for landing. Some crosses and casks served as guiding posts to the best place for getting on shore between the rocks, and some kindly, good-natured Russian fishermen were ready with offers of hospitality.

These men, fifteen in number (two of them being in a position of command over the others) subsisted entirely upon the ocean's larder, dried fish serving them for bread, and fish having also to take the place of butcher's meat, poultry, eggs, vegetables, fruit, puddings, and pastry.

Two poor Laplanders, who accompanied these men in the capacity of servants, had no other food than the heads of the fish which their masters threw to them ; but the gratitude of the poor creatures for this miserable fare, so contemptuously bestowed on them, might shame thousands of Christians, who every day of their lives, without prayer or thanksgiving, abuse God's good gifts.

These men, from whom Hemskerk experienced more kindness than he had met with during his whole voyage, set before the Dutchmen the best food they had to give, dried their dripping clothes, and brought them into well-warmed rooms.





## CHAPTER VII.

### MEETING AGAIN.

**I**N order to obtain the health-bringing cochlearia our voyagers went inland, and while there espied, upon a steep rising-ground, some men who were evidently trying to descend from the rock, apparently a feat neither easy nor safe. So strangely muffled up were they in furs and various kinds of wraps that recognition seemed impossible in such disguise, especially at a distance. Two of them however, ran down to the boat that was moored to the shore, and on reaching it gave such cries of delight as of men bereft of their senses. They proved to be two of the party belonging to the sloop which, on the night of the tempest, had been separated from the other boat.

In describing their adventures they related how they had been wrecked on the opposite side of the narrow coast; had endeavoured to barter some of their numerous furs and other wraps for provisions; had espied the Russian ships after they had succeeded in scaling the rock, and had at length recognised from

thence the little boat of their companions, whom they had so long believed to be lost.

Great was the rejoicing on both sides, each wishing to be the first to announce to the other the dangers they had gone through, and the wonderful help which God had sent them. On the following day quite a festival was held on board Captain Hemskerk's ship, with the rescued ones and his other men. The Russian commander, too, though unable to understand a word that was said, rejoiced with them and did all in his power to supply the needs of the Dutchmen.

On the 24th of August they again made for the open sea, the kindly Russians having given them some gunpowder as a parting gift. At 'the Seven Islands' Hemskerk enquired of some fishermen how they could get past Kildnin, and were glad to find, from their answers, that they were on the right tack. The fishermen, for corroboration of their statement, throwing a fine large dried codfish into the boat. At the last island of the group the boat stopped, and when the islanders, making use of the Russ word 'crabble,' 'ship,' enquired concerning the other vessel, the reply made was 'Crabble propal' (the ship is lost). These two words, which during this voyage our friends had learnt from the Russians, proved, through God's providence, the means of saving their lives, for the fishermen called to them in reply, 'Kola Brabant crabble' (at Kola there is a ship of Brabant, *i.e.*, Holland).

Welcome, indeed, was this intelligence; it was more

than either Hemskerk or any of his men had dared even to hope. And when, on the following day, they had succeeded in actually effecting a landing on the Island of Kildnin, they were again received with the exclamation, 'Kola Brabant crabble.'

However, as the political relations between Holland and Russia were at that time somewhat disturbed, Hemskerk determined that he would not put into any Russian port, but would make for the Danish harbour of Oardoshus, in Northern Norway. Seldom, however, do men take the shortest way out of trouble, either temporal or spiritual—self-will inducing them to some circuitous course of their own devising. Such was the case on this occasion. Hemskerk and his crew steered, not according to the directions they had received, but straight for the mouth of the Kola river. Scarcely had they started, however, before their vessel was caught in a violent storm, and forced back again to the shore. Though it was not of their own will, they returned. They thanked God for their preservation, and disembarked, climbing up the steep shore, and, getting under the shelter of a projecting rock, like children who know they have been naughty and try to hide from fear of punishment. But the sight, first of a dog, then of a cottage, and after that of three Russians, brought comfort to their hearts by proving them to be in an inhabited part of the island, and they found that in the rude huts of the poor Russian settlers there dwelt virtues not always to be found in the elegant mansion or the splendid palace—hospitality, true sympathy, cordial friendship. Here also

they were met with the exclamation, 'Kola Brabant crabble.'

The Russians being themselves unable to quit their posts, despatched a Lapp to show one of the sailors the way to Kola. While these two were speeding on their way the two vessels were, to avoid danger from the storm to crew and cargo, drawn up against the shore.

On the third day, as after anxious waiting, two of the crew were on a rising ground looking out, and trying to find out whether their companion and the Lapp had returned, they caught sight of the latter running towards them and perceived that he had a letter in his hand. He had spent forty-eight hours with the Dutchman, whose exhausted powers were scarce equal to the exertion of this long expedition, but had accomplished the return voyage in a much shorter space of time and had managed to shoot a partridge. Further intelligence—for which the good-natured Lapp had not sufficient Dutch at his command to convey--was given in the letter, which he handed to Hemskerk. The captain read it aloud to his men, who, unused to correspondence, were greatly astonished at their own language in written words, and surprised at the expressions of joy it contained. The main topic of the letter was astonishment at hearing that Hemskerk and his men, so long supposed to be dead, were still alive and shortly coming to their help. The letter concluded with the words—'Truly yours, J. K. RYP.'

'Who can this be?' was the surprised exclamation.



'Surely not the pilot Ryp, who came with us from Holland, and with his ship parted from us at Spitzbergen. Impossible, for he must have long ago died of his hardships, as he went further north even than we did.'

But it so happened that Hemskerk possessed some handwriting of this Ryp—a letter the pilot had written to him before—and, by comparing the two, and seeing the writing in both to be exactly alike, he felt convinced that the man he had believed dead was still alive.

'Yes, it is his own handwriting. He is still living,' he exclaimed, in a tone of the greatest delight. The men shouted for joy, and the Laplander was richly rewarded.

On the following morning, that of the 30th of August, while the whole ship's company were still gazing in eager hopeful expectation towards the sea and the River Kola, they saw a barque gliding towards them down-stream. She lay to, and several men disembarked, shouting for joy. The poor sailors had been so long accustomed to trouble that they could scarcely bring themselves to believe that these shouts and this gladness could have anything to do with them, but the new-comers rushed with open arms to their astonished messmates. Yes, it was Cornelius Ryp himself waiting in readiness to meet his companions and bear them home safely to their native land. Never could he have deemed it possible that Providence had chosen him to be their deliverer. Hemskerk said in his diary, 'It seemed to us all as if we had been raised from the dead.'

Ryp had brought plenty of provisions with him, and, at a cheerful meal, they united together to thank God heartily for all His goodness. With gifts and warm expressions of gratitude they took leave of the kind Russians, and, on the 2nd of September, reached Kola safely on board Ryp's vessel, eagerly awaited and welcomed with great delight by the other sailors.

The two damaged boats were willingly accepted by the officials stationed there, to be kept in the warehouse as curiosities, which indeed they were, for they had been God's instruments for bringing them more than eight hundred leagues across the Arctic Ocean and the White Sea.

On the 18th of September all the collected remnants of Hemskerk's crew set out from Kola for their native shores in a good, well-provisioned ship. At the end of October, 1597, after a prosperous voyage, they safely reached Amsterdam harbour.

Thus ended one of the earliest voyages of discovery undertaken from Western Europe to the Arctic regions of the far North-east. The sight of the crew, in the fur garments and caps they had brought from Nova Zembla, excited universal interest. Large wages were paid them for the trying service in which they had been engaged; and they were glad, after all they had gone through, and the effect it had had upon their constitution in the form of frost-bitten limbs and impaired health, to bid farewell to the hard life of the mariner. Every one was anxious to see them, and the richest and most distinguished people invited them to their tables in order to hear from their own

lips their thrilling adventures. And many were stirred up, by their simple unadorned tale, to admire and praise more than they had ever before done the power, wisdom, and love of God, and were encouraged to put in Him their hope and confidence. And you, too, my young readers, you have before you a long and dangerous voyage—I mean the voyage of life. You do not know how long it will last, when and where the end will be, nor what will occur during its course. May you learn from this true history that God is strong enough to order all our ways according to His will, and that this will of God alone is holy, wise, and good. So may you, like the voyagers in our story, recognise, through the long windings of your course, the love and grace of Him who is training you for heaven.

And just as the Russian sailors in the far north erected here and there, upon islands and promontories, crosses to serve as guides, to enable them to find their way over that stormy sea, so, before your eyes rises that Cross upon which died the only One who perfectly fulfilled the will of His heavenly Father, and by whose life and death we are saved.

O then, receive Him into your ship as did the fishermen on the Sea of Galilee, and let His holy Word be your chart and compass, and so He will bring you to the desired haven. Through all the storms and waves of life's voyage He will bear you safely to your everlasting home, to your heavenly fatherland where the voyage of life will at length find a good and blessed

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