

A WINTER'S SOJOURN IN THE ICE.

Translated expressly for The Evening Telegraph.

By William Struthers.

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I.

THE BLACK FLAG

The curé of the old church of Dunkirk awoke at five o'clock on the 12th of May, 18—, to say, according to his custom, the first low mass, at which a few pious fishermen assisted.

Arrayed in his sacerdotal vestments, he was about to betake himself to the altar, when a man entered the sacristy who was at once joyous and bewildered. He was a sailor of some sixty years, but still vigorous and firm, with a good and honest countenance.

“Monsieur Curé,” cried he, “stop there, if you please!”

“What has got into you so early, Jean Cornbutte?” the Curé answered.

“What has got into me? A strong fancy to squeeze you about the neck, just so!”

“Well, after the mass at which you are going to assist.”

“The mass!” responded the old seaman, laughing. “Do you believe you're going to say your mass now, and that I'm going to let you?”

“And why should I not say my mass?” asked the priest. “Explain yourself! The third bell has sounded.”

“Let it, or let it not sound!” replied Jean Cornbutte. “Many more shall ring to-day, Monsieur Curé, for you have promised me to bless with your own hands the marriage of my son Louis and my niece Marie.”

“Has he then arrived?” joyously exclaimed the priest.

“Very nearly,” returned Cornbutte, rubbing his hands. “At sunrise, the look-out signalled our brig, which you christened yourself by the pretty name of the *Jeune Hardie!*”

“I congratulate you from the bottom of my heart, my old Cornbutte,” said the Curé, divesting himself of chasuble¹ and stole². “I know our arrangement. The vicar is to replace me, and I will be in readiness for the arrival of your dear son.”

“And I promise you that he shall not make you fast long!” responded the seaman. “The bans have already been published by yourself, and you will have nothing to do but to absolve the sins that one can commit between the sky and the water on the seas of the North. That was a fine idea of mine, to want the wedding consummated on the very day of the arrival, and my son Louis to quit the brig only to go to the church!”

“Go and arrange everything, Cornbutte.”

“I hasten, Monsieur Curé. Soon then!”

The seaman strode back to his house, situated on the quay of the merchant’s port, and whence he could perceive the North Sea, of which he appeared so proud.

Jean Cornbutte had amassed some wealth in his occupation. After having for a long while commanded the

¹ Sleeveless vestment of celebrant at Mass or Eucharist with colour regulated by feast of the day. COED

² Ecclesiastical vestment: a strip of of silk or other material hanging from back of neck over shoulders and down to knees. COED

vessels of a rich ship-owner of Havre, he had settled down in his native town, where he had built for his own use the brig *Jeune Hardie*. Several voyages to the North were successful, and the ship always found a ready market, at a fair price, for her cargoes of wood, iron, and tar. Jean Cornbutte then yielded the command to his son Louis, a brave seaman of thirty years, who, according to the report of all the coasting captains, was the most valiant sailor of Dunkirk.

Louis Cornbutte had set forth, with a strong attachment for Marie, his father's niece, to whom the days of his absence seemed very long. Marie was hardly twenty. She was a handsome Flemish girl, with some Dutch blood in her veins. Her mother, in dying, had confided her to her brother, Jean Cornbutte. Besides, that brave seaman loved her as his own daughter, and beheld in the projected union a source of true and lasting happiness.

The arrival of the brig, lighted in the open sea beyond the channel, terminated an important commercial operation from which John Cornbutte expected a heavy profit. The *Jeune Hardie*, which had been gone for three months, was returning from Bodoë, her last stopping place, on the western coast of Norway, and she had made quick time on her voyage.

Entering into his lodgings, Jean Cornbutte found all the household astir. Marie, with radiant brow, was apparelling herself in bridal habiliments.

“Provided the brig does not arrive before us!” said she.

“Hurry, little one,” replied Jean Cornbutte, “for the wind is from the north, and the *Jeune Hardie* runs well when she goes with a quartering breeze.”

“Are our friends apprised, my uncle?” asked Marie.

“They are!”

“And the notary and the curé?”

“Be easy! Thou art the only one to make us wait!”

At this moment the gossip Clerbaut entered.

“Well! my old Cornbutte,” said he, “see the luck. The ship arrives precisely at the time when the Government has just awarded a great supply of wood to the navy.”

“What is that to me?” responded Jean Cornbutte. “It is, verily, a question of government!”

“Without doubt, Monsieur Clerbaut,” said Marie, “there is but one thing taking our attention; that is Louis’ return.”

“I will not dispute that,” the gossip answered. “But finally those supplies——”

“And you will be at the wedding,” replied Jean Cornbutte, interrupting the trader, and squeezing his hand as though he would crush it.

“Those supplies of wood——”

“And with all our friends on land and sea, Clerbaut. I have already warned my acquaintances, and I will invite the whole crew of the brig!”

“And we will go and wait for him on the palisade?” asked Marie.

“I verily think so,” responded Jean Cornbutte. “We will defile¹ two by two, with the violins in front!”

Jean Cornbutte’s guests arrived without delay. Although it was very early, not one failed to answer the call. All emulously felicitated² the brave seaman whom they loved. During this time, Marie, on her knees, transformed before God her prayers into thanks. She soon

¹ To march in files or collumns—AHD

² to wish happiness in a manner actuated by a spirit of rivalry. COED, AHD

re-entered, lovely and adorned, the living-room, and she had her cheek kissed by all the housewives and her hand pressed by all the men; then Jean Cornbutte gave the signal for departure.

It was a curious spectacle to see that joyous troop at sunrise taking their way to the sea. The news of the brig's arrival had run over the port, and many a night-capped head appeared at the windows and slightly-opened doors. From each and every side proceeded an honest compliment or a flattering salutation.

The wedding procession attained the palisade, through the midst of a concert of praises and blessings. The weather was superb, and the sun seemed disposed to share in the rejoicings. A fine north wind made the billows foam, and a few fishermen's shallops, trimmed sharp fore and aft to set from port, streaked the sea, with their rapid furrows, between the palisades.

The two jetties of Dunkirk which lengthen the wharf of the harbor, advance far into the sea. The wedding gathering occupied the entire breadth of the northern jetty, and soon reached a small structure situated at its extremity in which the Master of the Port kept watch.

Jean Cornbutte's brig was becoming more and more visible. The breeze freshened and the *Jeune Hardie* ran rapidly under her topsails, foresail, spanker-boom, topgallants, and royals. Joy was evidently holding sway on shipboard as well as on land. Jean Cornbutte, spy-glass in hand, rollickingly answered his friend's questions.

"See, it is my handsome brig!" ejaculated he. "Clean and ordered as if it was setting sail from Dunkirk! Not one damage! Not a bit of cordage missing!"

"Do you see your son, the Captain?" some one asked of him.

“No, not yet. Ah! it is because he is attending to his duties.”

“Why does he not hoist his flag?” asked Clerbaut.

“I hardly know, my old friend; but he doubtless has a reason.”

“Your spy-glass, Uncle,” said Marie, extracting the instrument from his hands; “I want to be the first to perceive him.”

“But he is my son, Miss.”

“Yes, for thirty years he has been your son,” answered the young girl laughing, “and for two only has he become betrothed!”

The *Jeune Hardie* was entirely visible. Already the crew were preparing to anchor. The topsails had been clewed. The sailors, slipping about in the rigging, could be recognized. But neither Marie nor Jean Cornbutte had been able as yet to kiss their hands to the brig’s captain.

“My faith, there is the mate, Andrew Vasling!” cried Clerbaut.

“There is Fidele Misonne, the carpenter,” returned one of the company.

“And our friend, Penellan!” said another, saluting a seaman thus designated.

The *Jeune Hardie* was at three cable lengths from the port, when a black flag mounted the point of the spanker-boom. There was mourning on board!

A feeling of terror penetrated all hearts, and ran through the breast of the young bride-to-be.

The brig sadly arrived at the port, an icy silence reigning on its deck. Soon the extremity of the palisade was passed. Marie, Jean Cornbutte, and all the friends

hurried towards the wharf that the ship was about to touch, and in an instant were on board.

“My son!” said Jean Cornbutte, who could only articulate those words.

The seamen of the brig, with uncovered head, showed him the flag of mourning.

Marie sent up a cry of distress and fell into old Cornbutte’s arms.

Andrew Vasling had brought the *Jeune Hardie* back; but Louis Cornbutte, Marie’s intended, was no more on board.

II.

JEAN CORNBUTTE’S PLAN

Just as soon as the young girl, under the care of charitable friends, had quitted the brig, the mate, Andrew Vasling, apprised Jean Cornbutte of the frightful events which had deprived him of beholding his son, and which the log-book reported in these terms:—

“In the latitude of the Maelstrom, on the 26th of April, the ship being brought to by foul weather and winds from the southwest, perceived signals of distress, made to it by a schooner to leeward. This schooner, dismantled of its foresail, was running towards the whirlpool, without canvas. Captain Louis Cornbutte, seeing this ship moving towards imminent destruction, resolved to go aboard it. Despite the representations of his crew, he caused the shallop to be lowered and entered it with the sailor Costroes and Peter Nouquet, the helmsman. The crew followed them with their eyes until the moment when they disappeared in the midst of the fog. Night came. The sea grew more and more tempestuous. The *Jeune Hardie*, drawn by the currents that lie close to those shores, ran a risk of being engulfed in the Maelstrom. She was com-

pelled to fly with the wind right aft. In vain did she cruise for several days about the place of the disaster; the brig's shallop, the schooner, Captain Louis, and the two sailors did not reappear. Andrew Vasling then assembled the crew, took command of the vessel and made sail for Dunkirk."

Jean Cornbutte, after having read the recital, curt as any simple incident occurring on board, wept a long time, and if he had any consolation, it was in the thought that his son had met death while desirous of aiding his fellow-creatures. Then the poor father left the brig, the sight of which was harrowing to him, and again entered his desolated home.

This bad news spread immediately throughout Dunkirk. The old man's numerous friends came to proffer him their lively and sincere sympathy. And then the sailors of the *Jeune Hardie* gave the most complete details of the event, and Andrew Vasling had to recount to Marie the devotedness of her intended in all its bearings.

After weeping, Jean Cornbutte reflected, and the very day subsequent to the anchorage, seeing Andrew Vasling entering his house, he said to him:—

"Are you quite sure, Andrew, that my son has perished?"

"Alas! yes, Jean!" responded Andrew Vasling.

"And did you make all the search that could be desired to find him again?"

"All, without exception, Monsieur Cornbutte! But it is only too unhappily certain that he and his two sailors have been swallowed up by the whirlpool of the Maelstrom."

"Would you be willing, Andrew, to retain the mate's command of the ship?"

"That will depend on the captain, Monsieur Cornbutte."

“The captain will be myself, Andrew,” replied the old seaman; “I am going to unload my ship rapidly, make up my crew, and hasten on a search for my son!”

“Your son is dead!” insisted Andrew Vasling, responding.

“It is possible, Andrew,” answered Jean Cornbutte sharply, “but it is also possible that he has escaped. I wish to search thoroughly all the Norwegian harbors into which he may have been thrust, and when I shall have a certainty of never more seeing him, then only will I come back to die here!”

Andrew Vasling, comprehending that this decision was unshakable, insisted no more, and withdrew.

Jean Cornbutte immediately informed his niece of his plan, and beheld a few gleams of hope glisten through her tears. It had not yet entered into the girl’s mind that her intended’s death might be doubtful; but scarcely was this new hope cast upon her heart ere she abandoned herself to it unreservedly.

The old seaman decided that the *Jeune Hardie* should at once put to sea again. The brig, solidly constructed, had no injuries to need repairing. Jean Cornbutte made known that if it pleased his sailors to re-embark, nothing should change the arrangement of the crew. Only he should replace his son in the command of the vessel.

Not a single companion of Louis Cornbutte’s failed to respond to the appeal, and amongst them there were come bold seamen: Alain Turquette; the carpenter, Fidele Misonne; the Breton; Penellan who took Peter Nouquet’s place as steersman of the *Jeune Hardie*; and then Gradlin, Aupic, Gervique, experienced and courageous sailors, all of them.

Jean Cornbutte proposed anew to Andrew Vasling to retake his rank on ship-board. The brig’s mate was a

skilful manoeuverer, who had given proof of it by bringing the *Jeune Hardie* safely into port. Nevertheless, for what reason was not known, Andrew Vasling offered some objections, and asked for time to reflect.

“As you wish, Andrew Vasling,” responded Cornbutte; “only remember that, should you accept, you shall be welcomed among us.”

Jean Cornbutte had a devoted fellow in the Breton Penellan, who had been a long time his companion in voyages. The little Marie, in other days, had spent the long winter evenings in the arms of the steersman, while the latter was on land. Moreover, he had preserved for her a father’s fondness, that the young girl responded to by a filial love. Penellan hurried, with all speed, the armament of the brig, so much the more earnestly since, according to him, Andrew Vasling had not, mayhap, made all the search possible to discover the shipwrecked ones, although he could be excused, seeing the responsibility that weighed on him as captain.

Eight days had scarcely slipped by ere the *Jeune Hardie* was ready to put to sea once more. In the place of merchandise, she was completely stocked with salted meat, biscuit, barrels of flour, potatoes, pork, wine, brandy, coffee, tea, and tobacco. The start was fixed for the 22d of May. The evening of the night before, Andrew Vasling, who had not yet returned an answer to Jean Cornbutte, betook himself to the latter’s lodgings. He was still undecided, and knew not what resolution to come to.

Jean Cornbutte was not within, although the door of his house was open. Andrew Vasling advanced into the living-room, adjoining the young girl’s chamber, and there the sound of an animated conversation struck his ear. He listened attentively, and recognized the voices of Penellan and Marie.

Without doubt the discussion had already been of long continuance, for the young girl seemed to be opposing an unfaltering firmness to the Breton seaman's observation.

"How old is my Uncle Cornbutte?" said Marie.

"Somewhere near sixty," answered Penellan.

"Well! Is he not about to face dangers to find his son again?"

"Our captain is a solid man yet," the seaman replied. "He has a body like oak, and muscles as hard as a span-tiller! Moreover, I am not frightened to see him taking to the sea again!"

"My good Penellan," Marie rejoined, "one is strong when one loves! Besides, I have full confidence in Heaven's support. You comprehend, and you will help me!"

"No!" said Penellan, "it is impossible, Marie! Who knows where we may wander to, or what evils we may be compelled to suffer! How many vigorous men have I seen lay down their lives in those seas!"

"Penellan," returned the young girl, "there shall be no more or no less by it; and if you refuse me, I will believe that you love me no more!"

Andrew Vasling had comprehended the young girl's resolution. He reflected an instant, and his determination was taken.

"Jean Cornbutte," he said, "advancing to the old seaman who was entering, "I am yours. The reasons that prevented my embarking have disappeared, and you can rely on my devotedness."

"I have never doubted you, Andrew Vasling," responded Jean Cornbutte, taking him by the hand.

"Marie! my child!" said he, in a loud voice. Marie and Penellan immediately appeared. "We set sail to-morrow at

day-break, with the falling tide," said the old seaman. "My poor Marie, this is the last evening that we shall pass together!"

"My uncle," exclaimed Marie, falling into Jean Cornbutte's arms.

"Marie, God helping, I will bring back thy betrothed to thee!"

"Yea, we will find Louis again:" added Andrew Vasling.

"Then you are one of us?" sharply demanded Penellan.

"Yes, Penellan, Andrew Vasling will be my mate," replied Jean Cornbutte.

"Oh! oh!" remarked the Breton, with a singular air.

"And his counsels will be useful to us, for he is skilful and venturesome."

"But you yourself, Captain," answered Andrew Vasling, "will advise us in all, for you still have as much vigor as knowledge."

"Well, my friends, to-morrow then. Go on board and make the last preparation. Farewell, Andrew and Penellan, till we meet again!"

The mate and the sailor went out together. Jean Cornbutte and Marie remained in each other's presence. Many tears were shed that sad evening. Jean Cornbutte, seeing Marie so inconsolable, resolved to cut short the separation by quitting the house the next day without letting her know. So that very evening he gave her his last kiss, and at three o'clock in the morning he was bestirring.

This departure had drawn all the friends of the old seaman on to the palisade. The Curé, who was to have blessed the union of Marie and Louis, came to give the ship a last benediction. Rough hand-grasps were silently exchanged, and Jean Cornbutte mounted on board.

The crew had its full complement. Andrew Vasling gave the last orders. The sails were loosed, and the brig rapidly withdrew in a good northwest breeze, while the Curé, erect in the midst of the kneeling spectators, committed the ship into the hands of God.

Where goeth that ship? It follows the perilous route on which are lost so many of the wrecked! It has no certain destination. It has to expect all perils, and how to brave them unhesitatingly! God alone knoweth where it may be allowed to come to shore. May God conduct it!

III.

A GLEAM OF HOPE

At that period of the year the season was favorable, and the crew might hope to arrive promptly at the locality of the shipwreck.

Jean Cornbutte's plan was naturally traced out. He intended to put in at the Faroe Isles, whither the north wind could have borne the castaways; and then, if he became sure that they had not been picked up in any haven of those shores, he was to carry his researches beyond the North Sea, make a close scrutiny of the whole western coast of Norway, even to Bodoë, the nearest place to the shipwreck, and even go further, if it should be needful.

Andrew Vasling thought, contrary to the captain's opinion, that the coasts of Iceland should first be explored; but Penellan observed that, at the time of the catastrophe, the storm was coming from the west, which, while offering a hope that the unfortunates had not been drawn into the Maelstrom, allowed the supposition that they had been lost on the Norwegian coast.

It was, therefore, resolved upon that the coast should be followed as closely as possible, in order to discover traces of their passage.

The day after the departure, Jean Cornbutte, his head bending over a chart, was sunk in his meditations, when a small hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a soft voice said in his ear:— “Have good courage, my uncle!” He turned around, and remained stupified. Marie put her arms about him.

“Marie, my daughter, on board!” exclaimed he.

“The wife can certainly go to seek her husband, when the father has embarked to save his child!”

“Unhappy Marie! How wilt thou support our fatigues? Dost thou know that thy presence can harm our searches?”

“No, uncle, for I am strong!”

“Who knows where we shall be drawn, Marie. See this chart! We approach those latitudes so dangerous, even for us mariners, hardened to all the fatigues of the sea. And thou, a feeble child!”

“But, uncle, I belong to a family of seamen!. I am used to recitals of combats and tempests! I am close to you and my old friend Penellan!”

“Penellan! It was he who hid thee on board.”

“Yes, uncle, but only when he saw that I was determined to do so without his help.”

“Penellan!” cried out Jean Cornbutte. Penellan entered.

Penellan, we cannot retrieve what has been done, but recollect that you are responsible for Marie’s existence!”

“Be calm, Captain,” Penellan replied. “The little one has strength and courage, and shall be as a guardian angel to us. And besides, Captain, you are acquainted with my ideas; all is for the best in this world.”

The young girl was installed in a cabin that the sailors arranged for her in a few moments, and was made as comfortable as possible.

Eight days later the *Jeune Hardie* put in at the Faroe Isles; but the most minute explorations remained fruitless. No castaway, no remnants of the ship had been picked up on those shores. Even the news of the event was entirely unknown thereabout. On the 10th of June, therefore, after a ten-days stoppage, the brig again started on her voyage. The condition of the sea was fair; winds steady. The ship was rapidly run toward the coast of Norway, which it explored without results.

Jean Cornbutte resolved to make for Bodoë. Perhaps there he might learn the name of the wrecked vessel to whose aid Louis Cornbutte and his two sailors had rushed.

On the 30th of June the brig cast anchor in that port.

There the authorities remitted to Jean Cornbutte a bottle found on the shore, in which a document thus conceived was enclosed:—

“This 26th of April, on board the *Froöern*, after having been accosted by the shallop of the *Jeune Hardie*, we are being drawn by the currents towards the ice! May God have pity on us!”

Jean Cornbutte’s first impulse was to thank Heaven. He believed that he was on his son’s track. This *Froöern* was a Norwegian schooner, of which nothing more had been heard, but which had evidently been borne away to the North.

There was not a day to be lost. The *Jeune Hardie* was at once put in a condition to face the perils of the Polar seas. Fidele Misonne, the carpenter, examined it scrupulously, and made certain that its solid construction could resist the shock of the ice-cakes.

By the care of Penellan, who had already been whaling in the Arctic seas, woollen blankets, furred garments, numbers of sealskin moccasins, and supplies of wood needful for the building of sledges for running over the icy plains, were placed on board. The stock of brandy and coal was augmented in a degree, for it was possible that the brig might be forced to winter on some point of the Greenland coast. A certain quantity of lemons, that were destined to prevent or cure scurvy, that terrible malady which decimates crews in the regions of ice, was likewise procured, at a high figure, and with much trouble. All the provisions of salted meat, biscuits, and brandy increased in a prudent measure, began to fill up a part of the brig's hold, for the steward's room could no longer suffice for them. A great quantity of pemmican, an Indian preparation that concentrates a great many nutritive elements in one volume, was likewise furnished.

In pursuance of Jean Cornbutte's orders a number of saws were placed aboard the *Jeune Hardie*, that were to be used in cutting the ice-fields, as well as some pikes and wedges suitable for separating the same. The captain reserved the taking of a supply of dogs, needful to pull the sledges, for the Greenland coast.

The whole crew was employed in these preparations, and displayed great activity. The sailors, Aupic, Gervique, and Gradlin, followed with eagerness the counsels of Penellan, the steersman, who, even then, engaged them not to get used to woollen garments, although the temperature was already low in those latitudes, situated above the Polar circle.

Penellan, without saying anything, observed the least of Andrew Vasling's actions. This man, Dutch by origin, had come from one knew not where, and besides, being a good sailor, had made two voyages aboard the *Jeune Hardie*. Penellan could not yet bring anything against him except

being too officious about Marie, but he watched him closely.

Thanks to the crew's activity, the brig was prepared about the 16th of July, fifteen days subsequent to its arrival at Bodoë. It was then the proper time to attempt explorations in the Arctic seas. The thaw had been taking place for two months, and researches could be pushed further forward. The *Jeune Hardie* set sail, therefore, and directed her course towards Cape Brewster, situated on the eastern coast of Greenland, under the seventieth degree of latitude.

IV.

IN THE PASSES

About the 23d of July a reflection raised above the sea announced the first icebergs, which then, coming forth from Davis Strait, were rushing into the ocean. From that moment forward the look-out was recommended to keep a very active watch, for it was extremely important not to strike against these enormous masses.

The crew was divided into two watches; the first was composed of Fidele Misonne, Gradlin, and Gervique; the second of Andrew Vasling, Aupic, and Penellan. These divisions of three were only to keep at their post for two hours, for in these cold regions a man's strength is diminished by half. Although the *Jeune Hardie* was as yet but in latitude sixty-three, the thermometer already marked 9° Centigrade below zero (about 16° Fahrenheit above zero).

Rain and snow frequently fell in abundance. During the clear intervals, when the wind did not blow too violently, Marie remained on deck, and her eyes became accustomed to the rude scenery of the Polar seas.

The 1st of August she was promenading on the brig's stern and chatting with her uncle, Andrew Vasling, and Penellan. The *Jeune Hardie* was then entering a channel

three miles wide, through which trains of ice-cakes were swiftly descending southward.

“When shall we sight land?” asked the young girl.

“In three or four days at the latest,” responded Jean Cornbutte.

“But shall we find there any new traces of my poor Louis’ passage?”

“Perhaps, my daughter; but I deeply fear that we are still far from the end of our voyage. It is to be feared that the *Froöern* has been drawn more to the north!”

“That must be so,” Andrew Vasling added, “for that violent squall which separated us from the Norwegian ship lasted three days, and in three days a ship makes a good run, when she is disabled to such an extent as not to be in a state to resist the wind!”

“Permit me to say to you, Mr. Vasling,” quickly replied Penellan, “that it was in the month of April; that the thaw had not then begun; and that consequently the *Froöern* must have been promptly stopped by the ice.”

“And without doubt crushed into a thousand pieces,” responded the mate, “since its crew could no longer direct it.”

“But these fields of ice,” answered Penellan, “offered an easy way of reaching land, which could not have been distant.”

“Let us hope,” said Jean Cornbutte, interrupting a discussion that was daily renewed between the mate and the steersman. “I believe that we will see land before long.”

“There it is!” exclaimed Marie. “See those mountains!”

“No, my child,” Jean Cornbutte replied. “Those are mountains of ice, the first that we shall encounter. They would grind us up as glass if we were to let ourselves be

caught amongst them. Penellan and Vasling, have a care how you manoeuvre.”

Those floating masses, of which more than fifty appeared on the horizon, little by little neared the brig. Penellan took the helm, and Jean Cornbutte, mounting on the cross tree of the foretopmast, indicated the route to be pursued.

Towards evening, the brig was quite drawn in among those moving reefs, whose crushing force is irresistible. The question was then how to traverse that fleet of mountains, for prudence dictated a forward course. Another difficulty was subjoined to these perils. The direction of the ship could not be determined in a manner to be of use, for all the surrounding points kept being displaced incessantly, and offered no steady perspective. The darkness was soon augmented by a fog. Marie descended to her cabin, and, at the captain's order, the eight men forming the crew remained on deck. They were armed with long boat hooks, furnished with iron tips, to prevent the ship from receiving the shock of the ice.

The *Jeune Hardie* soon entered a pass so narrow that often the extremities of her sail-yards were rubbed by the wandering mountains, and her outworks had to be pulled in. They were even obliged to trim the mainyard so as to touch the shrouds. Fortunately, this measure did not cause the brig to lose in swiftness, for the wind could only strike the topsails, and these sufficed to bear it along rapidly.

Thanks to the narrowness of its hull it pushed itself forward into the valleys that whirlwinds of rain filled up, while the ice cakes collided with sinister crackings.

Jean Cornbutte went down again on to the deck. His glance could not penetrate the encircling darkness. It became necessary to clew the high sails, for the ship

threatened to touch, and in that case it would have been lost.

“A cursed voyage!” mumbled Andrew Vasling, among the sailors at the prow, who, boat-hooks in hand, kept clear of the most menacing collisions.

“The fact is, that if we escape, we shall owe a handsome candle to Our Lady of the Ice!” responded Aupic.

“Who knows what floating mountains there are still to be traversed?” added the mate.

“And who has doubts of what we should find behind us?” returned the sailor.

“Don’t talk so much, babbler,” said Gervique, “and watch your side. When we have passed through, it will be time to grunt! Look out for your boat-hook!”

At that moment an enormous block of ice, drawn into the contracted channel which the *Jeune Hardie* followed, was moving rapidly against the brig, and it seemed impossible to avoid it, for it barred the whole breadth of the channel, and the brig could not turn.

“Does the helm answer?” asked Jean Cornbutte of Penellan.

“No, Captain, the ship will not steer any more!”

“Ahoy! boys,” cried the captain to his crew; “don’t be afraid, and prop your gaffs firmly against the gunwale.”

The block was very nearly sixty feet high, and should it fall on the brig, it would be crushed to nothing. There was a moment of indefinable anguish, and the crew fled towards the stern, abandoning their post despite the Captain’s orders.

But at the moment when that block was only about a half-cable’s length from the *Jeune Hardie*, a dull roar was heard and a veritable waterspout fell at first on the ship’s

prow, which arose afterwards on the back of a monstrous wave.

A yell of terror burst from all the sailors; but when they looked forward the block had disappeared, the pass was free, and, beyond, an immense sheet of water, lighted by the last day gleams, assured an easy navigation.

“All is for the best,” cried out Penellan. “Let us trim the topsails and the foresail.”

A phenomenon extremely common in those latitudes had just been produced when those floating masses become detached from each other at the epoch of the thaws, they float in perfect equilibrium; but arriving at the ocean, where the water is relatively warm, they do not have to wait long to have their bases undermined, which little by little melt, and are moreover shaken by other icebergs. Therefore a moment arrives when the centre of gravity in those masses is displaced, and then they are entirely overturned. Only, if that block had fallen over two minutes later, it would have precipitated itself upon the brig, which it would have dragged down in its fall.

V.

LIVERPOOL ISLAND

The brig floated then in an almost entirely unobstructed sea. On the horizon alone, a whitish gleam, this time motionless, indicated the presence of immovable plains.

Jean Cornbutte made head for Cape Brewster, and already was approaching regions where the temperature is exceedingly cold, for the sun’s rays arrive there only greatly weakened by their obliquity.

The 3d of August the brig found itself in the presence of the movable and united icepacks. The passes were often but a cable’s length in width, and the *Jeune Hardie* was

compelled to make a thousand curves, which sometimes presented her head to the wind.

Penellan was occupied with a parental care of Marie, and, despite the cold, he obliged her to come on deck every day and spend two or three hours, for exercise became one of the indispensable conditions for health.

Marie's courage, moreover, did not grow faint. She even put spirit into the sailors of the brig by her words, and all hands had a veritable adoration for her. Andrew Vasling showed himself more forward than ever, and he sought every occasion to hold conversation with her; but the young girl, by a species of presentiment, welcomed his attentions only with a certain coldness. It could plainly be comprehended that the future more than the present was the object of Andrew Vasling's conversations, and that he did not conceal the little probability there was of the rescue of the castaways. In his mind their destruction was an accomplished fact, and henceforth the young girl should remit into the hands of some one else the care of her existence.

Nevertheless, Marie had not yet guessed Andrew Vasling's schemes; for, to the great disgust of the said Andrew, those talks could not be prolonged. Penellan always discovered a way to intervene and destroy the effect of Andrew Vasling's speeches by the words of hope that he uttered.

Besides, Marie did not remain unoccupied. Following the counsels of the helmsman, she prepared her winter clothes, and it was needful for her to change her garb entirely. The cut of her feminine garments was not suitable in those frigid latitudes. She, therefore, made herself a kind of furred, pantaloons, with seal-skin shoes added, and her scanty petticoats descended no further than the knee, in order not to come in contact with the beds of snow with which the winter was about to cover the icy

plains. A fur mantle, closely fitted to her form, and garnished by a hood, protected the upper part of her body.

During the intervals of their labors, the men of the crew also made ready garments capable of shielding them from the cold. They manufactured a great supply of high seal-skin boots, which would permit them to traverse the snows with impunity during their journeys of exploration. They labored thus during all the time consumed in the navigation of the passes.

Andrew Vasling, who was a clever marksman, on several occasions brought down aquatic birds, innumerable flocks of which whirled around the vessel. A species of eider-duck and some ptarmigans furnished the crew with excellent flesh food, which was a refreshing change from the salted meats.

Finally the brig, after a thousand windings, arrived in sight of Cape Brewster. A shallop was let down, and Jean Cornbutte and Penellan reached the shore, which was an absolute desert.

The brig at once made for Liverpool Island, which was discovered in 1824, by Captain Scoresby, and, beholding the natives hasten on to the beach, the crew sent forth shouts. Communication was immediately established, thanks to the few words that Penellan possessed of their tongue, and to some customary phrases that they themselves had learned from the whalers who frequented those shores.

These Greenlanders were short and thick set, their stature not exceeding four feet ten inches; they had reddish skins, round faces, and low foreheads; their hair, black and flattened, fell down their backs; they had bad teeth, and seemed affected by that sort of leprosy which is peculiar to tribes whose diet consists of fish.

In exchange for bits of iron and copper for which they were very eager, these poor creatures brought the skins of bears, sea-calves, sea-dogs, sea-wolves, and of all those animals generally comprised under the name of seal. Jean Cornbutte obtained these articles, which were to be of so great use to him, at an extremely low price.

The Captain then made the natives comprehend that he was seeking a wrecked vessel, and asked, whether they had received any information respecting it. One of them immediately traced a kind of ship on the snow, and indicated that a vessel of that sort had been, three months before, carried away in a northerly direction; he also indicated that the thaw and breaking up of the ice-fields had prevented them from going to discover its whereabouts; and, in fact, their extremely light canoes, which they managed with paddles, could not, under such conditions, have kept the sea.

This news, although unsatisfactory, put fresh hopes into the sailors' hearts, and Jean Cornbutte had no trouble in drawing them on further into the Polar Sea.

Before quitting Liverpool Island the Captain made the purchase of a team of six Esquimaux dogs that soon became accustomed to ship-life. The vessel weighed anchor on the morning of the 10th of August, and with a strong breeze, it bore forward into the northern passes.

The longest days of the year were then in progress; that is to say, that under those elevated latitudes the sun, which did not set, had attained the highest point of the spirals that it was describing above the horizon.

The total absence of night was, notwithstanding, little noticed, for fog, rain, and snow sometimes surrounded the ship with real darkness.

Jean Cornbutte, determined to advance as far forward as possible, began to take his hygienic measures. The

space between decks was entirely closed, and only each morning was the air within renewed by currents. The stoves were put up and the pipes from them disposed in such a manner as to radiate all the heat possible. It was recommended to the men of the crew not to wear a woollen shirt over their cotton ones, and to hermetically tighten their surtouts¹ of skin. Moreover, the fires were not yet lighted, for it was of great consequence to reserve the stock of wood and coal for the greatest cold.

Hot drinks, such as coffee and tea, were regularly distributed amongst the sailors morning and evening, and as it was best, to live upon meat, ducks and teal, which abound in those regions, were hunted.

Jean Cornbutte also set up at the summit of the main-mast a crow's-nest, which was a kind of cask, knocked open at one end, in which a lookout was constantly stationed to observe the ice-fields.

Two days subsequent to the brig's losing sight of Liverpool Island the temperature suddenly grew very cold under the influence of a dry wind. Some tokens of winter were noted. The *Jeune Hardie* had not a moment to lose, for soon the route would be absolutely closed to her. She therefore advanced through the channels, between which were fields of ice having a thickness of even thirty feet.

On the morning of the 3d of September the *Jeune Hardie* had attained the latitude of the Bay of Gael-Hamkes. Land was then found at a distance of thirty miles to leeward. Here for the first time the brig was stopped before an ice-bank that allowed of no passage, and that measured at least a mile in breadth. Then it became necessary to employ the saws in cutting the ice. Penellan, Aupic, Gradlin, and Turquette were set to oversee the working of these saws, which had been put outside the

¹ surtouts=overcoats; now rare COED.

ship. The tracing of the cuts was made in such a way that the current could bear off the lumps of ice detached from the bank. The whole crew, reunited, labored at this work for nearly twenty hours. The men found it very difficult to keep themselves upon the ice; often were they compelled to sink half into the water, and their seal-skin garments preserved them only imperfectly from being wet.

Besides, in those high latitudes all excessive labor is soon followed by absolute fatigue, for respiration quickly fails, and the most robust are forced to stop frequently.

Finally the navigation became free, and the brig was towed beyond the bank that had so long detained it.

VI.

THE RENDING OF THE ICE

For several days longer the *Jeune Hardie* wrestled with insurmountable obstacles. The crew had almost always their saws in hand, and they were even frequently forced to use powder to start up the enormous blocks of ice that interrupted the route.

On the 12th of September the sea showed nothing but a solid plain, without outlet, without channel, surrounding the vessel on every side in such a way that it could neither advance nor retreat. The medium of temperature kept at sixteen degrees below zero. The moment for taking up winter quarters had therefore come, and the winter season was approaching with its sufferings and dangers.

The *Jeune Hardie* was then almost at the twenty-first degree of west longitude, and the seventy-sixth degree of north latitude, at the entrance of the Bay of Gael-Hamkes.

Jean Cornbutte made his first winter preparations. He busied himself at first in seeking a cove, the position of which might be a protection to his ship against the blasts of the wind and the great ice thaws. The land, that was

supposed to be at a distance of ten miles to the west, and that he resolved to take a survey of, could alone offer a sure shelter.

On the 12th of September he commenced his march, accompanied by Andrew Vasling, Penellan, and the two sailors, Gradlin and Turquette. Each carried a two days' supply of provisions, for it was not probable that their excursion would be prolonged beyond that period; and they were also provided with buffalo skins on which they were to sleep.

The snow, which had fallen in great abundance, and whose surface was not frozen, hindered them considerably. They sunk down in it often to the middle of their bodies, and besides could not advance save with extreme caution, if they did not wish to fall into the cracks in the ice. Penellan, who walked ahead, carefully sounded every depression with his iron-tipped staff.

Towards five o'clock in the evening the fog began to thicken and the little band had to halt. Penellan looked about for a lump of ice that might shelter them from the wind, and, after being somewhat rested, while regretting the absence of a drink of something hot, they spread their buffalo skin on the snow and enveloping themselves in it, pressed close to each other, and soon sleep had the advantage over weariness.

The next morning Jean Cornbutte and his companions were shrouded in a bed of snow of more than a foot's thickness. Happily their buffalo robes, which were perfectly impermeable, had preserved them, and the snow itself had even contributed to the preservation of their natural warmth, which it prevented from radiating.

Jean Cornbutte gave the signal for the start, and, towards noon, he and his companions at length perceived the coast that at first they had trouble to distinguish. Tall blocks of ice, perpendicularly hewn, rose up on the shore;

their varied summits, of all forms and sizes, reproduced on an extended scale the phenomena of crystallization; myriads of aquatic fowl flew away at the approach of the seamen, and the seals that were lazily extended on the ice precipitately dived under.

“By my faith!” said Penellan, “we shall neither lack furs nor game!”

“These animals,” Jean Cornbutte responded, “look very much as though they had already received a visit from men, for, in regions entirely uninhabited, they would not be so savage.”

“Greenlanders are the only ones who frequent these lands,” replied Andrew Vasling.

“I see, nevertheless, no trace of their passage, no encampment, not the smallest hut!” answered Penellan, climbing a high peak.

“Ahoy! Captain,” cried he, “come on! I perceive a point of land that shall preserve us finely from the northeast winds.”

“This way, my children!” said Jean Cornbutte.

His comrades followed him, and all soon rejoined Penellan. The seaman had spoken truly. A point of land quite elevated, advanced as a promontory and bending back towards the coast, formed a small bay, a mile or more in depth. Some moving ice, shattered by that point, was floating about, and the sea, protected from the coldest winds, was not yet entirely frozen over.

This was an excellent wintering place. What remained to be done was to bring the ship to it. Now Jean Cornbutte noticed that the neighboring ice-field was of a great thickness, and, at the time, the excavation of a channel to conduct the brig to its destination appeared extremely difficult. Consequently it was needful to seek some other

cove, but vainly did Jean Cornbutte advance towards the north. The coast remained straight and abrupt for a long stretch, and, beyond the point, it was directly exposed to the blasts of the east wind. This circumstance disconcerted the Captain, so much the more that Andrew Vasling laid great stress on the evil aspect of the situation, supporting himself by peremptory reasons. Penellan, even, had much ado to prove to his own satisfaction that, at this conjuncture, all would be for the best.

The brig had therefore nothing left save a chance of finding a locality for wintering on the southern part of the coast. It was retracing the same path that it had come, but there was no room for hesitation. The little troop retook its way to the ship, and marched rapidly, for the provisions began to fail. All along the route Jean Cornbutte sought for some pass that might be practicable, or at least for a fissure that would permit the digging of a channel across the plain of ice, but in vain.

Towards evening the seamen arrived in the vicinity of the ice-cake where they had camped the night before. The whole day had passed without snow, and they could recognize the imprint that their bodies had made on the ice. All were then disposed for thus going to bed, and they stretched themselves out on their buffalo skins.

Penellan, mightily crossed by the unsuccess of their explorations, was sleeping quite poorly, when, during a moment of listlessness, his attention was drawn to a dull, rolling sound. He listened attentively to this noise, which seemed to him so strange that he nudged Jean Cornbutte's elbow.

"What is that?" asked the Captain, who, agreeably to the habits of a mariner, had his intelligence as quickly aroused as his body.

"Listen, Captain!" replied Penellan.

The noise increased with a sensible violence.

“That cannot be thunder in so elevated a latitude,” said Jean Cornbutte, getting up.

“I believe that we rather have business with a troop of white bears!” Penellan answered.

“The devil! we have not yet seen any.”

“Sooner or later,” answered Penellan, “we ought to expect a visit from them. Let us begin then by receiving them well.”

Penellan, armed with a gun, nimbly climbed the block that sheltered them. The darkness being dense, and the weather clouded, he could discover nothing; but another incident soon proved to him that the cause of the noise did not arise in his vicinity. Jean Cornbutte rejoined him, and they noted with affright that the rolling, the intensity of which awoke their companions, was produced under their feet. A peril of a new kind was threatening them. To the noise that soon resembled the pealing of thunder, was joined a very pronounced movement of undulation in the ice-field. Several of the sailors lost their equilibrium and fell.

“Attention!” cried Penellan.

“Yes!” was responded.

“Turquette, Gradlin! Where are you?”

“Here am I!” replied Turquette, shoveling off the snow with which he was covered.

“This way, Vasling,” shouted Jean Cornbutte to the mate. “And Gradlin?”

“Present, Captain! But we are lost” exclaimed Gradlin, affrighted.

“Ah, no!” said Penellan. “We are probably saved.”

Hardly had he uttered these words, when a frightful cracking was heard. The ice-plain had entirely broken up, and the sailors had to cling to the block that oscillated near them. Despite the helmsman's words, they found themselves in an excessively perilous position, for an ice-quake had just been produced. The ice-fields had, according to the mariner's expression, just weighed anchor. This movement lasted nearly two minutes, and it was to be feared that a crevasse might open even under the unfortunate sailors' feet! So they awaited daylight, in the midst of continual paroxysms of terror, for they could not, under penalty of perishing, hazard a step, and they remained prostrate to avoid being engulfed.

With the first gleams of day, a wholly different picture was presented to their eyes. The vast plain level the evening before was now disjoined in a thousand places, and the waves, thrust up by some submarine commotion, had shattered the thick stratum that covered them.

The thought of his brig came to the mind of Jean Cornbutte.

"My poor brig!" exclaimed he. "It must be lost!"

The darkest despair began to be depicted on the countenances of his companions. The destruction of the ship would inevitably soon bring death to them.

"Courage, my friends!" rejoined Penellan. "Remember that the ice-quake of this night has opened a road for us across the ice, which will allow of our brig's being conducted to the wintering bay! Ah! hold, I'm not mistaken! The *Jeune Hardie*, behold, is nearer to us by a mile!"

All pushed forward, and so imprudently that Turquette slipped into a fissure, and would have infallibly perished had not Jean Cornbutte drawn him out by his head. He

came off clear from it, however, with the exception of a somewhat chilling bath.

In fact, the brig had been drifted a couple of miles by the wind. After great exertions the little party reached it. The vessel was in good condition, but the rudder, which they had neglected to raise, had been broken by the ice.

VII.

SETTLING FOR THE WINTER

Penellan was once more right; all was for the best, and the icequake had opened for the ship a practicable route to the bay. The seamen had no more to do, save skilfully to order the currents so as to direct the ice-cakes through them in a way to trace a route.

On the 19th of September the brig was, at length, established at a distance of two cable lengths from land, in its wintering bay, and firmly anchored on a good bottom. The very day following, the ice had already formed about its hull; soon it became strong enough to support a man's weight, and communication could be directly established with the land.

According to the custom of Arctic navigators, the rigging remained as it was; the sails were carefully folded upon the yards and sheathed, and the crow's-nest dwelt in its place as much for permitting distant observations to be taken as for drawing attention to the vessel.

The sun already scarcely rose above the horizon. Since the June solstice the spirals that it was describing had been more and more lowered, and soon it would disappear altogether.

The crew hastened to make their preparations. Penellan had the main arrangement of them. The ice soon became thick around the ship, and there were fears that its pressure might prove dangerous; but Penellan waited till,

in consequence of the motion of the floating ice-cakes, and their adherence, it had reached a thickness of twenty feet; he then had it cut slanting around the hull, so that it met again under the ship, the form of which it took. Enclosed in a bed, the brig henceforth had no more to fear from the pressure of the ice, that could not offer any movement.

The seamen afterwards raised along the wales¹, and even to the height of the netting, a snow-wall of from five to six feet's thickness, which was not long in assuming a rock-like hardness. This envelope did not allow the interior warmth to radiate. A sail-tent, recovered with skins, and hermetically closed, was stretched over the whole length of the deck, and formed a species of promenade for the crew.

Likewise, on land, there was constructed a snow storehouse, in which the articles that encumbered the ship were piled up. The partitions of the cabins were torn down in such a way as to form only one large apartment, forward as well as aft. This single room was, besides, warmed with greater facility, for the ice and dampness found fewer corners in which to lurk. It was equally more easy to air the space suitably, by means of canvas flaps that opened outward.

Every one displayed extreme activity in these divers preparations, and, towards the 20th of September, they were entirely completed. Andrew Vasling did not show himself to be the least skilful in these various arrangements. He especially displayed a too great eagerness in occupying himself with the young girl, and if the latter, wholly absorbed in thoughts of her Louis, did not take notice, Jean Cornbutte clearly comprehended what it signified. He talked to Penellan about it; he recalled several circumstances that entirely enlightened him as to his mate's intentions. Andrew Vasling loved Marie and

¹ wale—one of the heavy planks of strakes extending along the sides of a wooden ship—AHD

intended to ask her uncle for her just as soon as no more doubt could be entertained of the death of the wrecked one; they should then return to Dunkirk, and Andrew Vasling could very well accommodate himself to espousing a rich and pretty girl, who should then be Jean Cornbutte's sole heir.

Only, in his impatience, Andrew Vasling often lacked skill. He had several times declared as useless the search undertaken to find the castaways again, and often a new token would come to belie him, which Penellan would take pleasure in rendering as marked as possible. Moreover, the mate cordially detested the helmsman, who returned the sentiment with interest. The latter feared only one thing, which was that Andrew Vasling might succeed in sowing a germ of dissension in the crew, and he got Jean Cornbutte to promise not to answer on the first occasion, save evasively.

When the preparations for wintering were terminated, the Captain took divers measures proper for the preservation of his crew's health. Every morning the men had orders to air the rooms and to wipe off carefully the inner walls in order to clear them from the night's moisture. They received, in the morning and evening, tea or hot coffee, which is one of the best cordials to be employed against cold; then they were parted into squads for hunting, and had to procure, as well as they could, fresh food every day for the ship's table.

Each one also had to take salutary exercise every day, and not expose himself to the outside air without moving about, for, in a coldness of thirty degrees below zero, it was possible that some portions of the body might suddenly freeze. Under such a circumstance it would have been necessary to have had recourse to rubbings with snow, which alone could have answered in saving the affected part.

Penellan also strongly recommended the use of cold ablutions each morning. A certain courage was required to plunge the hands and face in snow that had been melted within the ship. But Penellan bravely set the example, and Marie was not the last to imitate him.

Jean Cornbutte did not forget, besides, reading and prayers, for it was important not to leave room in the heart for despair or weariness. Nothing is more dangerous in those desolate latitudes.

The sky, ever sombre, filled the soul with sadness. A dense snow, lashed by violent winds, added to the accustomed horror. The sun was to disappear. If clouds had not been piled above the navigators' heads, they could have enjoyed the light of the moon that was veritably about to become their sun during the long night of the poles; but with westerly winds the snow did not cease falling. Each morn it was found needful to disencumber the ship's sides, and to cut a new stairway in the ice, in order to descend to the plain. At that labor success was easy by means of snow-knives; once the steps carved out, a little water was cast upon them, and they hardened immediately.

Penellan also caused a hole to be dug in the ice not far from the vessel. Every day the fresh crust formed on the top was broken, and the water that was drawn from a certain depth was less cold than at the surface.

All these preparations lasted about three weeks. The question of pushing the search further forward was then mooted. The ship was imprisoned for six or seven months, and the next thaw could alone open a new route for it through the ice. It was therefore necessary to profit by this enforced inactivity in directing explorations into the North.

VIII.

THE PLAN OF THE EXPLORATIONS

On the 9th of October, Jean Cornbutte held a council to prepare the plan of his operations, and, in order that mutual responsibility might augment the zeal and courage of each individual, he admitted the whole crew to it. Chart in hand, he clearly explained his present situation.

The eastern coast of Greenland advances perpendicularly towards the North. The discoveries of navigators have given the exact limit of those shores. In the space of five hundred leagues which separates Greenland from Spitsbergen, no land had yet been recognized. A single isle, Shannon Island, was found a hundred miles north of the bay of Gael-Hamkes, where the *Jeune Hardie* was on the point of venturing.

If then the Norwegian vessel, according to all probability, had been drawn in that direction, supposing that it had been able to attain Shannon Island, it was there that Louis Cornbutte, and the other wrecked ones, must have sought an asylum for the winter.

This opinion prevailed, despite the opposition of Andrew Vasling, and a decision was come to that the explorations should be directed on the Shannon Island side.

The arrangements were at once begun. There had been obtained on the Norwegian coast a sled made after the Esquimaux fashion, being constructed of planks curved behind and before, and suitable for gliding over the snow and ice. It was twelve feet long and four wide, and consequently could carry, if needed, provisions for several weeks. Fidele Misonne soon had it in readiness, and he worked upon it in the snow store-house, to which his tools had been transported. For the first time, a coal stove was set up in this store house, for all labor without it would have been impossible. The stove-pipe found a vent in one of the lateral walls, by means of a hole pierced through the snow; but a serious inconvenience resulted from that arrangement, for the heat of the pipe, little by little, caused

the snow to melt at the spot where it came in contact with it, and the opening sensibly enlarged. Jean Cornbutte thought of encircling that portion of the pipe with a metallic cloth, the property of which is to prevent the heat from escaping. This idea was a complete success.

While Misonne was at work on the sled, Penellan, helped by Marie, got ready the changes of garments for the route. The sealskin boots were fortunately abundant. Jean Cornbutte and Andrew Vasling busied themselves with the provisions; they selected a small barrel of alcohol for heating a portable chafing-dish; reserves of tea and coffee were taken in sufficient quantity, and a small case of biscuit, two hundred pounds of pemmican, and a few bottles of brandy, completed the alimentary part of the preparations. Hunting was to furnish fresh provisions every day. A certain quantity of powder was divided among several bags. The compass, sextant, and spy-glass were put in a place where they would be secure from every shock.

On the 11th of October, the sun did not appear above the horizon. A lamp had to be kept continually lighted in the crew's lodgings. There was no time to be wasted; the explorations had to be commenced, and for an important reason.

In a month the cold would be such that it would no longer be possible to place foot in the open air without perilling life. During two months at least the crew would be condemned to the most absolute confinement, and then the thaw would begin afterwards, and be prolonged until the period when the ship should quit the ice. That thaw would certainly prevent all exploring. On another side, should Louis Cornbutte and his companions yet be alive, it would not be probable that they could withstand the rigors of an Arctic winter. It was therefore necessary to save them before, or all hope would be lost

Andrew Vasling knew all that better than any one else. He also determined to bring forward numerous obstacles to the expedition.

The preparations for the journey were terminated by the 20th of October. The question was then to select the men to take part in it. The young girl could not be left without Jean Cornbutte or Penellan to guard her. Now, neither of these two could fail to be of the caravan. It was important, therefore, to know whether Marie could sustain the fatigue of such a journey. Hitherto she had passed through rough trials without suffering in too great a degree from them, for she was a mariner's daughter, habituated from infancy to the fatigues of the sea; and, in truth, Penellan was not frightened at seeing her wrestling with the dangers of the Polar Ocean.

It was decided, then, after lengthy discussions, that the young girl should accompany the expedition, and that in case of need there should be reserved a place for her in the sled, on which a little wooden hut was built, and hermetically closed. As to Marie, she was at the very summit of her desires, for the idea of being withdrawn from her two protectors was repugnant to her.

The expedition party consisted of Marie, Jean Cornbutte, Penellan, Andrew Vasling, Aupic, and Fidele Misonne. Alain Turquette dwelt behind, being specially charged with the care of the brig, on which remained Gervique and Gradlin. Provisions of all sorts were carried with them; for Jean Cornbutte, in order to push the explorations as far forward as possible, had resolved to make deposits of supplies along the route after every seven or eight days' marching. Just as soon as the sled was ready, it was immediately loaded and covered over with a tent of buffalo skins. The whole had a weight of about seven hundred pounds, which a team of five dogs could easily draw over the ice.

On the 22d of October, as the captain had foreseen, a sudden change was made manifest in the temperature. The sky cleared up, the stars twinkled brightly, and the moon shone above the horizon, whence it was not again to be absent for a fortnight. The thermometer had descended to twenty-five degrees below zero.

The departure was to take place on the following day.

IX.

THE SNOW HOUSE

On the 23d of October, at eleven o'clock in the morning, under a brilliant moon, the caravan commenced its march. Precautions were taken this time, so that the journey might be prolonged for a good while if it should be needful. Jean Cornbutte followed the coast line, while pursuing a northwardly course. The footsteps of the walkers left no impress on the resisting ice. Moreover, Jean Cornbutte was obliged to be guided by signal-points that he selected at a long distance; sometimes he marched over a hill all bristling with peaks, at others over an enormous cake of ice that the internal pressure had lifted above the plain.

At the first halt, after traversing about fifteen miles, Penellan made preparations for camping. The tent was set up against an ice-block. Marie had not suffered too much from the rigorous cold, for, through good fortune, the breeze having calmed down, it was much more supportable; but several times the young girl had to get off the sled to prevent numbness from arresting the circulation of her blood. In other respects, her little hut, tapestried with skins through the care of Penellan, offered all the comfort possible.

When night, or rather when the moment for repose arrived, the little hut was placed under the tent, where it answered for the young girl's sleeping-room. The evening meal was composed of fresh meat, pemmican, and warm

tea. Jean Cornbutte, to prevent the calamitous effects of scurvy, had a few drops of lemon-juice distributed to everybody. And then all went to sleep under God's protection.

After eight hours of slumber, each one again took up his post for marching. A substantial breakfast was furnished to the men and the dogs, and then all set forth. The excessively smooth surface of the ice permitted the animals to bear away the sled with great facility. The men, sometimes, had much ado to follow after.

But an evil from which several of the seamen soon had to suffer was dimness of sight. Ophthalmia became apparent in the cases of Aupic and Misonne. The moonlight, striking those immense white plains, burns the sight and causes an insufferable smarting of the eyes.

There was also produced a very curious effect by refraction. While walking, at the moment when one believed that he was putting his foot on a hillock he descended lower which circumstance occasioned frequent tumbles, happily not serious, which Penellan turned into jokes. Nevertheless he cautioned the party not to make a step without sounding the surface with the iron-tipped staves that each one was provided with.

About the 1st of November, ten days after starting, the caravan found that it was fifty leagues to the north. The fatigue had been extreme for every one. Jean Cornbutte experienced a terrible dimness of vision, and his sight was sensibly impaired. Aupic and Fidele Misonne could only grope along, for their red-encircled eyes seemed burnt by the white reflection. Marie had been preserved from those accidents by reason of remaining in the hut, which she occupied as much as possible. Penellan, sustained by an indomitable courage, withstood all those fatigues. He who carried himself the best, however, and on whom those pains, that cold, and that dimness of sight seemed to have

taken no hold, was Andrew Vasling. His iron-like body was formed for such fatigues; with pleasure he beheld discouragement getting possession of the most robust, and he already foresaw the moment near at hand when it would be needful to retrace their road.

Now, on the 1st of November, in consequence of weariness, it became indispensable to rest during a day or two.

As soon as the camping place was chosen they set to work to install themselves. It was determined to construct a snow-house that could be supported against the rocks of the promontory. Fidele Misonne at once traced the foundation of it, which measured fifteen feet in length by five in width. Penellan, Aupic, and Misonne, with the aid of their knives, hewed vast blocks of ice which they carried to the designated place and set them in position as masons would have put up walls of stone. Soon the lower wall was raised to a height of five feet, with an almost equal thickness, for material was not wanting, and it was important for the work to be sufficiently solid to last for some days. The four walls were completed in about eight hours; an entrance had been spared on the south side, and the tent-cloth, which was placed on the four walls, fell over the side where the doorway was, which it masked. The only question now was to cover the whole with broad blocks, in order to form the roof of that ephemeral structure.

After three hours of irksome labor, the house was finished, and each one of the party entered it, a prey to fatigue and discouragement. Jean Cornbutte suffered to such a degree as not to be able to walk a single step, and Andrew Vasling so well took advantage of his pain that he extracted the promise from him that he would not further pursue his search in those frightful solitudes. Penellan did not know any longer to what saint to make his vows. He considered that to abandon his companions on unlikely

presumptions would be unworthy and cowardly. So he sought to destroy those presumptions, but he did so vainly.

Nevertheless, though a return had been determined upon, repose had become so necessary that for three days no preparations for starting back were made.

On the 4th of November Jean Cornbutte commenced to have buried on a point of the coast those provisions not necessary to him. The locality of the deposit was marked, in case, which was improbable, of new explorations drawing him in that direction. At every four days' march he had left similar deposits along his route. Thus he was assured of supplies for the return, without having the trouble of transporting them on his sled.

The departure was fixed to take place on the 8th of November, at ten o'clock in the morning. The most profound sadness had taken possession of the little troop. Marie, seeing her uncle wholly disheartened, could scarcely restrain her tears. So much futile suffering! so much labor lost! Penellan's temper became murderously outrageous; he sent everybody to the Devil, and never lost an occasion to grow angry over the feebleness and cowardice of his companions, who were, he said, more timid and worn out than Marie, who would have gone to the world's end without complaining. Andrew Vasling could not conceal the pleasure that this determination caused him. He was more attentive than ever to the young girl, to whom he gave hopes of a new search being undertaken after the winter had passed, well knowing that then it would be too late!

X.

BURIED ALIVE

On the eve before starting, at supper, Penellan made himself busy by breaking up empty cases, in order to

thrust the fragments into the stove, when, all at once, he was suffocated by a dense smoke. At the same moment the snow-house was shaken as though by an earthquake. Each one of the party started with terror, and Penellan rushed into the open air.

A total darkness reigned. A frightful tempest, for it was not a thaw, was bursting over those shores. Whirlwinds of snow swept down with extreme violence, and the cold grew so excessive that the helmsman felt that his hands were rapidly freezing. He was compelled to re-enter the hut, after having rigorously rubbed himself with snow. •

“Behold the tempest!” said he. “Heaven decree that our house may make resistance, for if the hurricane destroys it, we are lost!”

At the same time that the squalls were running loose through the air a startling noise was produced under the frozen surface; the ice-cakes, shattered at the promontory’s head, were striking together with a great clatter, and precipitating themselves on each other; the wind blew with such force that it seemed now and then that the house was being entirely torn apart; phosphorescent gleams, which were inexplicable in that latitude, shot across the snowy vortex.

“Marie, Marie!” ejaculated Penellan, seizing the young girl’s hands.

“We are verily in a bad strait!” said Fidele Misonne.

“And I don’t know whether we shall escape from it,” Aupic replied.

“Let us leave this snow-house!” said Andrew Vasling.

That is impossible rejoined Penellan. The cold without is fearful, while here we shall, perhaps, be able to brave it”

“Give me the thermometer,” said Andrew Vasling.

Aupic passed the instrument to him, on which ten degrees below zero were marked there in the hut, although the fire was lighted. Andrew Vasling uplifted the canvas that fell in front of the entrance, and precipitately slipped it outside, for he would have been bruised by the ice splinters that the wind tossed about like hail.

“Well, Monsieur Vasling,” said Penellan, “do you want to go on?”

“It is that the wind may break up the ice on which we are resting, as it has broken the ice-cakes of the promontory, and that we may be drawn away or submerged!”

“That appears difficult to me,” answered Penellan; “for it is freezing in a way to make ice of all liquid surfaces! Let us see what the temperature is.”

He raised the canvas in a manner to let his arm only pass out, and had some trouble to find the thermometer in the midst of the snow, but finally he succeeded in catching hold of it, and bringing it close to the lamp he said:—

“Thirty-two degrees below zero! This is the greatest cold that we have thus far experienced!”

“Yet ten degrees more,” added Andrew Vasling, “and the mercury will freeze!”

A gloomy silence followed this reflection.

About eight o'clock in the morning, Penellan, a second time, essayed to go forth to judge of the situation. It was, besides, necessary to offer an issue to the smoke that the wind had on several occasions driven into the boat. The seaman tightly fastened his clothing, made sure of his hood by tying it down to his head with a handkerchief, and lifted the canvas up.

The entrance was entirely obstructed by solidly packed snow. Penellan took his iron-pointed staff, and succeeded

in ramming it into the compact mass; but terror froze his blood when he knew that the extremity of his staff was no longer free and had stopped at a hard body.

“Cornbuttel!” said he to the Captain, who had come near to him, “we are buried under the snow!”

“What do you say?” exclaimed Jean Cornbutte.

“I say that the snow is heaped up and frozen around and over us; that we are buried alive!”

“Let us attempt to push back this mass of snow,” the Captain answered.

The two friends propped themselves against the obstacle choking up the doorway, but they could not displace it. The snow formed an ice-cake more than five feet thick, and was all one with the house.

Jean Cornbutte could not restrain a cry that aroused Misonne and Andrew Vasling. An oath burst from between the latter’s teeth, and his features contracted.

At this moment a smoke, thicker than ever, passed back into the hut, for it could find no way of egress.

“A curse!” exclaimed Misonne. “The stove-pipe is stopped up with ice!”

Penellan took his staff again and upset the stove, after having cast some snow on the brands to extinguish them, which operation produced such a smoke that the lamp’s gleam could hardly be perceived; then he attempted to clear the orifice with his staff, but everywhere he encountered only a rock of ice!

Nothing more could be expected save a frightful death, preceded by terrible agony! The smoke, making its way into the throats of the unfortunates, caused an insufferable pain, and the air itself would not be long in failing them!

Marie arose then, and her presence, which made Jean Cornbutte despair, rendered Penellan somewhat courageous. The helmsman said within himself that that poor child could not be destined for so horrible a death!

“Ah!” said the young girl, “have you made too much fire? The room is full of smoke.!”

“Yes, yes—” the helmsman answered, indistinctly articulating.

“One can plainly see that,” rejoined Marie, “for it is not cold, and for a long time, even, we have not felt so much heat!”

No one dared to tell her the truth.

“Come, Marie,” Penellan said, bluffing things off, “help us to get breakfast. It is too cold to go out. Here is the chafing-dish; there the brandy, and here the coffee.”

“Come, you others, a little pemmican forthwith, since this cursed weather prevents our hunting!”

These words reanimated his companions.

“Let us eat first,” Penellan added, “and we will see afterwards about getting out of here.”

Penellan joined example to advice, and devoured his portion. His companions imitated him, and then they took a cup of hot coffee that brought back a little courage to their hearts; then Jean Cornbutte decided with great energy that means for escape should be immediately attempted.

Then it was that Andrew Vasling made the following reflection:—

“If the tempest is still raging, which is probable, we must be buried some ten feet under the ice, for no more noise from without is heard.”

Penellan looked at Marie, who comprehended the truth, but did not tremble.

Penellan at first got the top of his iron-pointed staff reddened by the flame of the spirits-of-wine, and then introduced it successively into the four icy-walls, but in none of them was an issue discovered. Jean Cornbutte resolved then to dig an opening in the door-way itself. The ice was so hard that the cutlass carved into it with difficulty. The pieces that were successfully extracted soon encumbered the hut. By the end of two hours of this wearisome labor, the gallery that had been hollowed out was not three feet deep.

Therefore a more expeditious means had to be imagined, and one that was less likely to make the house hotter, for the more one advanced, the more the ice, becoming hard, necessitated violent efforts in the cutting. Penellan bethought him of making use of the alcohol chafing-dish to melt the ice in the desired direction. This was a hazardous expedient, for should the imprisonment happen to be prolonged, that alcohol, of which the seamen had but a small quantity, would be lacking to them at the moment of preparing the repast. Nevertheless, the project obtained the assent of all hands, and was put in execution. In the first place, a hole three feet deep, and one in diameter, was dug for the reception of the water that would proceed from the melting of the ice, and they did not have to repent of this precaution, for the fluid soon began to trickle under the action of the fire that Penellan sent through the mass of snow.

An opening was, little by little, hollowed out, but at such kind of labor one could not long continue, for the water, diffusing itself over their clothing, entirely permeated them. Penellan was obliged to relinquish at the end of a quarter of an hour, and draw in the chafing-dish, to dry himself. Misonne was not tardy in taking his place and did not put less courage into his work.

By the end of two hours' labor, although the gallery was already five feet in depth, the iron-tipped staff had not yet found an outward issue.

"It is not possible," said Jean Cornbutte, "for the snow to have fallen in such abundance. It may be that it has been heaped up at this point by the wind. Perhaps we shall have to think of escaping through some other place."

"I do not know," Penellan responded; "but, if it were not for discouraging our companions, we ought to continue to pierce the wall in the same direction. It is impossible for us not to find an outlet!"

"Will not the alcohol fail?" asked the Captain.

"I hope not," Penellan answered, "but it must be on condition that we deprive ourselves of hot drink! Besides, that is not what disquiets me the most."

"What does, then, Penellan?" asked Jean Cornbutte.

XI.

A CLOUD OF SMOKE

The next day, when the seamen awoke, a complete darkness enveloped them. The lamp had gone out. Jean Cornbutte aroused Penellan to ask him for the steel for striking a light, which was passed to him.

Penellan got up to light the chafing dish, but in rising his head struck the icy ceiling. He was startled, for the night previous he had been able still to stand erect. By the chafing dish, lighted at the flickering gleam of the alcohol, he perceived that the ceiling had sunk a foot.

Penellan set to work once more furiously.

At that moment the young girl, by the faint light cast from the chafing-dish on the countenance of the helmsman, comprehended that despair and will were struggling over his rugged physiognomy.

She came to him, took his hands, and pressed them with tenderness. Penellan felt his courage returning.

“She cannot die thus!” exclaimed he.

He retook his chafing-dish, and set to work anew to creep into the narrow opening. There, with a stout hand, he thrust in his iron-pointed staff, and felt no resistance. Had he then arrived at the soft layers of snow? He drew in his staff, and a brilliant ray of light rushed into the icy house.

“Help, my friends!” he cried.

And, with hands and feet, he repulsed the snow, but the exterior surface had not thawed, as he believed. With the ray of light a violent cold penetrated into the cabin and laid hold upon all the wet parts, which were solidified in an instant. His cutlass aiding him, Penellan enlarged the orifice and at length was able to breathe the open air. He sank on his knees to thank God, and was soon joined by the young girl and his comrades.

A magnificent moon was brightening the atmosphere, the rigorous cold of which the seamen could not support. They turned back, but previously to doing so Penellan looked around him. The promontory was there no more, and the hut was in the middle of an immense plain of ice. Penellan wanted to go towards the sled, in which were the provisions; the sled had disappeared.

The temperature obliged him to re-enter. He did not speak of anything to his companions. Before all else it was needful to dry his clothing, which operation the alcohol chafing-dish performed. The thermometer, for an instant placed in the air, descended to thirty degrees below zero.

By the close of an hour, Andrew Vasling and Penellan resolved to front the exterior atmosphere. They enveloped themselves in their still moist garments, and started out

through the opening, whose walls had already acquired the hardness of rock.

“We have been drawn towards the northeast,” said Andrew Vasling, taking a reckoning by the stars, which shone with an extraordinary lustre.

“There would be nothing wrong,” replied Penellan, “if our sled had accompanied us!”

“Is the sled no longer here?” Andrew Vasling exclaimed. “We are lost, then!”

“Let us look,” rejoined Penellan.

They turned around the hut, which formed a block more than fifteen feet high. An immense quantity of snow had fallen during the continuance of the tempest, and the wind had accumulated it about the only elevation that the plain presented. The entire block had been pulled along by the wind, in the midst of broken lumps of ice, for more than twenty-five miles in a northeasterly direction, and the prisoners had suffered the fate of their floating prison. The sled, borne on another ice-cake, had wandered away to the other side, without doubt, for no trace of it was perceived and the dogs must have succumbed during that fearful tempest.

Andrew Vasling and Penellan felt despair entering their souls. They dared not re-enter the snow-house. They dared not announce that fatal information to their companions in misfortune. They climbed the very block of ice in which the hut was dug, and discerned nought save that white immensity surrounding them on all sides. Already the cold was stiffening their limbs, and the moisture on their garments was metamorphosed into icicles that hung all around them.

At the moment when Penellan was going to descend the hillock he cast a glance upon Andrew Vasling. He saw him

all at once looking eagerly on one side, and then starting and paling.

“What ails you, Vasling?” he asked.

“Nothing,” responded the one interrogated “Let us descend and counsel a speedy quitting of these shores, which we ought never to have trodden!”

But, instead of obeying, Penellan remounted and brought his eyes to bear on the side that had drawn the Mate’s attention. A very different effect was produced on him, for he raised a shout of joy and cried out:—

“God be praised!”

A faint smoke was rising in the northeast. There was no room for mistake. Off there breathed animated beings. Penellan’s cries of joy drew forth his companions, and all were able to convince themselves that the helmsman was not deceived.

Immediately, without disquieting themselves about the lack of food, without thinking of the rigor of the temperature, enveloped in their hooded cloaks, all swiftly moved forward in the direction signalled.

The smoke was rising in the northeast, and the little band precipitately took that way. That at which they were aiming was distant some five or six miles, and it was becoming very difficult to steer their course with certainty. The smoke had disappeared, and there was no elevation to serve as a guiding point, for the ice-plain was entirely level. It was important, notwithstanding, not to deviate from a straight line.

“Since we cannot be guided save by distant objects,” said Jean Cornbutte, “here is the means to be employed: Penellan is to march ahead, Vasling at twenty paces behind him, and I at twenty paces behind Vasling. I can judge, then, whether Penellan moves out of a straight line.”

The march had been continued in this wise for a half hour, when Penellan suddenly stopped and listened.

The group of seamen rejoined him.

“Have you heard nothing?” demanded he of them.

“Nothing,” answered Misonne.

“That it singular!” ejaculated Penellan. it has seemed to me that shouts were coming from this side.”

“Shouts?” rejoined the young girl. “We should then be very near our goal!”

“That is not a reason,” responded Andrew Vasling. “In these high latitudes, and in this great cold, sound is carried to extraordinary distances.”

“However it may be,” said Jean Corn butte, “let us march on under penalty of being frozen!”

“No,” said Penellan. “Hark!”

A few feeble, yet nevertheless perceptible sounds were heard. These shouts appeared to be cries of pain and anguish. They were twice renewed. One would have said somebody was calling for help. Then all was again silence.

“I am not mistaken,” Penellan said; “forward!”

And he commenced to run in the direction of the shouts. In this manner he traversed about two miles, and his stupefaction was great when he perceived a man lying on the snow. He drew near to him, raised him up, and lifted his arms to heaven in despair.

Andrew Vasling, who followed him closely, with the rest of the sailors, hastened up and exclaimed:—

“Is it one of our shipwrecked ones? It is our sailor, Cortrois!”

“He is dead,” Penellan replied; “dead from cold!”

Jean Cornbutte and Marie drew near to the corpse, which the ice had already stiffened. Despair was painted on every countenance. The dead man was one of Louis Cornbutte's companions!

"Forward!" cried Penellan.

Again they marched for a half hour without uttering a word, and they noticed an elevation of the surface which certainly ought to be land.

"It is Shannon Island," said Jean Cornbutte.

After another mile, they distinctly perceived a smoke escaping from a snow-hut, closed by a wooden door. They shouted. Two men burst from the hut, and one of them Penellan recognized as Peter Nouquet.

"Peter!" cried he.

The one addressed stood still, as a man stupefied, having no consciousness of what was passing around him. Andrew Vasling looked with an inquietude, mingled with a cruel joy, upon Peter Nouquet's companions, for among them he did not recognize Louis Cornbutte.

"Peter! it is I!" exclaimed Penellan. "These are all your friends!"

Peter Nouquet came to his senses, and fell into the arms of his old comrade.

"And my son! Louis!" Jean Cornbutte cried, in accents of the deepest despair.

XII.

THE RETURN TO THE SHIP

At that moment an almost dying man, issuing from the hut, dragged himself over the ice.

It was Louis Cornbutte, "My son!"

"My betrothed!"

These two cries went forth at the same moment, and Louis Cornbutte sank fainting in the arms of his father and the young girl, who drew him into the hut, where their attentions reanimated him.

“My father! Marie!” exclaimed Louis Cornbutte. “I see you again before dying!”

“You shall not die!” Penellan answered, for all your friends are close to you!”

Andrew Vasling must have felt great hatred not to have tendered his hand to Louis Cornbutte; but he did not tender it.

Peter Nouquet was delighted. He embraced everybody; then he put some wood in the stove, and soon a supportable temperature was established in the cabin.

There were yet two other men, whom neither Jean Cornbutte nor Penellan recognized.

They were Jocki and Herming, the only Norwegian sailors remaining of the crew of the *Froöern*.

“My friends, we are saved!” said Louis Cornbutte.

“My father! Marie! you have been exposed to so many perils!”

“We do not regret it, Louis,” Jean Cornbutte responded. “The brig, the *Jeune Hardie*, is firmly anchored in the ice, sixty leagues from here. “We will return to it together.”

“When will Cortrois come in,” said Peter Nouquet, “he is very content, likewise!”

A sad silence followed this comment, and Penellan apprised Peter Nouquet and Louis Cornbutte of the death of their comrade from the cold.

“My friends,” said Penellan, “we will stay here till the cold diminishes. You have provisions and wood?”

“Yes, and we will burn what remains of the *Froöern!*”

The *Froöern* had, indeed, been drawn forty miles from the place where Louis Cornbutte was wintering. There it had been broken to pieces by the icebergs floating in the thaw, and the castaways had been borne off with a portion of the remains, out of which they had built their cabin, to the southern shore of Shannon Island.

The wrecked ones then numbered five, Louis Cornbutte, Cortrois, Peter Nouquet, Jocki, and Herming. As to the remainder of the Norwegian crew, it had gone down with the shallop at the moment of the shipwreck.

Just as soon as Louis Cornbutte, drawn into the ice, saw that he was being enclosed by it, he took every precaution for passing the winter. He was an energetic man, of great activity as well as great courage; but, despite his firmness, that horrible climate had vanquished him, and when his father found him, he did not expect anything more but to die. Besides, it was not against the elements alone that he had to struggle, but also against the ill-will of the two Norwegian sailors, who, notwithstanding, owed their lives to him. They were like two savages, almost inaccessible to the most natural feelings. So, when Louis Cornbutte had a chance to talk with Penellan, he cautioned him to distrust them particularly. In return, Penellan made him acquainted with Andrew Vasling's conduct. Louis Cornbutte could not believe it, but Penellan proved to him that, ever since his disappearance, Andrew Vasling had always acted in a way to make sure of the young girl's hand.

All that day was employed in repose and in the pleasure of seeing one another again. Fidele Misonne and Peter Nouquet killed some sea-fowls near the house, from which it was not prudent to ramble. This fresh food and the fire, which was made more brisk, brought back strength to those in the worst health. Louis Cornbutte himself

experienced a sensible improvement. This was the first moment of pleasure that those brave seamen had felt. So they made much of it with a will in that miserable cabin, six hundred leagues away, in the seas of the North, and in a cold of thirty degrees below zero.

This temperature lasted through that moon, and it was not until the 17th of November, eight days subsequent to this reunion, that Jean Cornbutte and his companions could meditate on departing. They had only the starlight to guide them, but the cold was less biting, and even a little snow fell.

Before leaving the place, a grave was dug for poor Cortrois—a sad ceremony that deeply affected his companions! He was the first amongst them who was not to behold his country again.

Misonne had constructed with the cabin boards a sort of sled, destined for the transportation of the provisions, and the sailors drew it by turns. Jean Cornbutte directed the march over the route already traversed. The encampments were formed at the hour for rest with great promptitude. Jean Cornbutte hoped to find his deposits of provisions again which had become nearly indispensable, with the present addition of four persons to his band.

Through a providential stroke of luck he was once more put in possession of his sled, which had stranded near the promontory, when all had incurred such peril. The dogs, after having eaten their leather trappings to satisfy their hunger, had attacked the supplies in the sled. This was what had kept them, and they themselves had guided the party to the sled, in which the provisions still remained in great quantity.

The little troop retook the road towards the wintering bay. The dogs were harnessed to the sled, and no other incident signaled the expedition.

Only it became an assured fact that Aupic, Andrew Vasling, and the Norwegians kept apart, and did not mingle with their companions; but without knowledge of it, they were closely watched. This germ of dissension, nevertheless, more than once sent terror to the souls of Louis Cornbutte and Penellan.

About the 7th of December, twenty days after their reunion, they sighted the bay within which the *Jeune Hardie* was wintering. What was their astonishment at perceiving the brig hoisted almost four metres (about thirteen feet) in the air on top of blocks of ice! They hurried on, greatly disquieted in regard to their comrades, and were received with shouts of joy by Gervique, Turquette, and Gradlin. All were in good health, and yet they, too, had encountered great dangers.

The tempest had been felt in the whole Polar Sea. The ice had been broken up and displaced, and the pieces slipping the one on the other had struck the bed on which the ship rested. Their specific weight tending to bear them above the water, they had acquired an incalculable power, and the brig abruptly found itself raised above the surface of the water.

The first moments were given up to the joy of the return. The seamen of the exploring party were delighted to discover all things in good condition, which state of affairs assured them of a rough winter, no doubt, but one in the end supportable. The uplifting of the vessel had not shaken it, and it was perfectly firm. When the thawing season would arrive, there would be nothing more to do save to make it glide over an inclined plane—in a word, to launch it into the sea, once more become unobstructed.

But a bad piece of news made the visages of Jean Cornbutte and his companions grow sombre. During the terrible storm, the snow storehouse constructed on the shore had been entirely shattered; the supplies that it

contained had been dispersed, and it had not been possible to save the least part of them. Just as soon as this misfortune reached their ears Jean and Louis Cornbutte paid a visit to the hold and the steward's room of the brig, in order to know how to hold out with what remained of the provisions.

The thaw should not arrive before the month of May, and the brig would not be able to quit the bay before that period. There were then five months of winter that had to be spent in the midst of the ice, pending which fourteen persons were to be nourished. Calculations and accounts made, Jean Cornbutte computed that he could, at most, attain the moment of departure by placing everybody on half rations. Hunting, therefore, became obligatory for the obtaining of food in greater abundance.

Through fear that another such calamity might occur, it was resolved not to put any more supplies on land. All hands dwelt on board the brig, and were likewise arranged for the new-comers in the common lodgings of the sailors. Turquette, Gervique, and Gradlin, during their companions' absence, had hollowed out a stairway in the ice, that permitted, without difficulty, one's arriving on deck.

XIII.

THE TWO RIVALS

Andrew Vasling had taken a liking to the two Norwegian sailors. Aupic also made one of their band, which generally kept by itself, boldly disapproving of all the new measures; but Louis Cornbutte, to whom his father had remitted the command of the brig, and become a new master of his vessel, did not give heed in that quarter, and, despite the counsels of Marie, who engaged him to use gentleness, he made it to be understood that he would be obeyed on all points.

Nevertheless, two days after, the two Norwegians succeeded in getting possession of a cask of salted meat. Louis Cornbutte demanded that it should be returned at once, but Aupic took their part, and Andrew even made known that the measures relating to food would not last much longer.

There was no need of proving to these unfortunates that all was done for the common good, for they knew it, and sought only a pretext for revolt. Penellan advanced towards the two Norwegians, who drew their cutlasses, but, seconded by Misonne and Turquette, he succeeded in tearing them from the men's hands, and took back the cask of salt meat. Andrew Vasling and Aupic, seeing the affair going against them, did not meddle in anyway. Nevertheless, Louis Cornbutte took the mate apart and said to him:—

“Andrew Vasling, you are a miserable creature. I am acquainted with the whole of your conduct, and I know where your schemes tend, but as the safety of all the crew is confided to me, if any one of you thinks of conspiring its ruin, I will stab him with my own hands!”

“Louis Cornbutte,” the mate responded, “it is permissible for you to exercise authority, but recollect that implicit obedience no more exists here, and that the strongest alone lays down the law!”

The young girl had never trembled before the dangers of the Polar Seas, but she was afraid of that hatred of which she was the cause, and Louis Cornbutte's energy could scarcely reassure her.

Despite this declaration of war, meals were taken at the same hours, and in common. Hunting still supplied a few ptarmigans and white hares, but with the great cold approaching, this resource was about to fail. The cold began on the 22d of December, the day when the thermometer fell to thirty-five degrees below zero. The

wintering party experienced pains in the ears, in the nose, and in all the extremities of the body; they were struck with a grievous torpor, mingled with pains in the head, and their breathing became more and more difficult.

In this condition they had no courage left to go forth hunting, or to take any exercise. They remained huddled around the stove, which could but give them an insufficient heat, and just as soon as they withdrew from it a little, they felt their blood suddenly growing cold.

Jean Cornbutte beheld his health seriously encroached upon, and even then he could no longer leave his lodgings. Symptoms similar to those of scurvy were manifested in him, and his limbs were covered with whitish spots. The young girl remained healthy, and occupied herself in tending the sick with the earnestness of a Sister of Charity. Moreover, all those brave seamen blessed her from the bottom of their hearts.

The 1st of January was one of the gloomiest days of the winter's sojourn. The wind was violent, and the cold insupportable. One could not step outside without exposing himself to being frozen. The most courageous had to confine themselves to walking on the deck, screened by the tent. Jean Cornbutte, Gervique, and Gradlin did not leave their beds. The two Norwegians, Aupic, and Andrew Vasling, whose health kept up, cast ferocious glances on their companions, whom they beheld growing weaker.

Louis Cornbutte led Penellan off on the deck, and asked him what was the state of the supply of combustibles,

“The coal has been exhausted for a long while,” answered Penellan, “and we are on the point of burning our last bits of wood!”

“If we cannot combat this cold,” said Louis Cornbutte, “we are lost!”

“One means remains to us,” replied Penellan, “and that is to burn what we can of our brig, from the nettings to the water-line; and, if needful, we can even demolish it entirely, and reconstruct a smaller ship.”

“It is an extreme measure,” Louis Cornbutte responded, “and one that there will be no plenty of time to employ when our men are in health; for,” said he, in a low voice, “our forces diminish, and those of our enemies seem to increase.”

“It is true!” spoke Penellan, “and without the precaution that we used, to watch night and day, I know not what might happen to us.”

“Let us take our axes,” said Louis Cornbutte, “and harvest our wood.”

Despite the cold, both mounted the forward nettings, and felled all the wood that was not indispensably needful to the ship. Then they returned with this novel provision. The stove was crammed anew, and one man stood guard to prevent the fire from going out.

Meanwhile Louis Cornbutte and his friends were soon tired out. They could not confide any detail of the general existence to their enemies. Loaded with all the domestic cares, they quickly felt their strength becoming exhausted. Scurvy had plainly shown itself on Jean Cornbutte, who suffered intolerable pain. Gervique and Gradlin commenced likewise to be affected by it. Without the supply of lemon-juice with which they were abundantly furnished, those unfortunates would have promptly succumbed under their sufferings. So this sovereign remedy was not sparingly dealt out to them.

But one day, the 15th of January, Louis Cornbutte descended to the steward’s room to renew his supply of lemons, and was astounded to see that the barrels in which they were enclosed had disappeared. He went up to

Penellan and informed him of this new misfortune. A theft had been committed, and the authors of it could easily be recognized. Louis Cornbutte then comprehended how his enemies' health was sustained! His side had now no more the strength to take the provisions from them, on which his life and that of his companions depended, and, for the first time, he was plunged into sullen despair.

XIV.

DISTRESS

On the 20th of January the greater part of the unfortunates had not strength left to quit their beds. Each one, independently of his woollen blankets, had a buffalo robe which protected him from the cold; but just as soon as one tried to lift his arms in the air he experienced such agony that he had to draw them under at once.

Nevertheless, Louis Cornbutte having lighted a fire in the stove, Penellan, Misonne, and Andrew Vasling got out of their beds, and came and crouched around it. Penellan prepared some hot coffee, and thus gave a little strength to them as well as to Marie, who came to share their meal.

Louis Cornbutte went close to the bed of his father, who was lying almost motionless, and whose limbs were injured by his malady. The old marine murmured a few unconnected words that tore his son's heart.

"Louis!" he said, "I am going to die! Oh! how I suffer! Save me!"

Louis Cornbutte made a decisive resolution. He went back to the mate, and said to him, though he could scarcely contain himself:—

"Do you know where the lemons are, Vasling?"

"In the steward's room, I suppose," responded the mate, unconcernedly.

“You well know that they are not there, since you have stolen them!”

“You are the master, Louis Cornbutte,” ironically replied Andrew Vasling, “and it is permitted you to say and do everything.”

“For pity’s sake, Vasling, my father is dying! You can save him! Answer!”

“I have nothing to answer,” Andrew Vasling responded.

“Wretch!” exclaimed Penellan, casting himself, cutlass in hand, on the mate.

“Help, my men!” cried out Andrew Vasling, recoiling.

Aupic, and the two Norwegian sailors leaped down from their beds, and ranged themselves behind him. Misonne, Turquette, Penellan, and Louis Cornbutte, made preparations to defend themselves. Peter Nouquet and Gradlin, although suffering severely, arose to aid them.

“You are too strong for us!” then said Andrew Vasling. “We do not want anything but a sure fight!”

The seamen were so weak that they dare not rush upon the four miscreants, for in case of a check, they would have been lost.

“Andrew Vasling,” said Louis Cornbutte, in a sombre voice, “if my father dies, you will have killed him, and I will kill you as a dog!”

Andrew Vasling and his accomplice withdrew to the other end of their quarters and did not make any reply.

It was necessary to renew the supply of wood, and despite the cold, Louis Cornbutte mounted the deck, and set to work to cut a part of the brig’s net-work, but, at the end of a quarter of an hour, he was forced to re-enter, for he ran the risk of being stunned by the cold. In passing he glanced at the thermometer, placed in the air, and saw

that the mercury was frozen. The cold had therefore overstepped forty-two degrees below zero. The weather was dry and clear, and the wind blew from the north.

On the 26th the wind changed, it came from the northeast, and the exterior thermometer marked thirty-five degrees. Jean Cornbutte was in agony, and his son had vainly sought some remedy for his pains. On that day, however, casting himself on Andrew Vasling without the latter's being aware of his intention, he succeeded in pulling a lemon from the grasp of the mate, who was getting ready to suck it. Andrew Vasling did not take a step to regain it. It seemed that he awaited an occasion to accomplish his odious schemes.

The juice of the lemon gave Jean Cornbutte a little strength, but it would be necessary to continue the remedy. The young girl went and supplicated Andrew Vasling on her knees, but he would not, answer her and Penellan soon heard

——a few lines missing here on old machine.

about a half a column

——

The following is a google translation.

The Lemon juice restored some strength to Cornbutte, but he had to continue this remedy. The girl went on her knees begging Vasling, who did not reply, and soon heard the wretched Penellan tell his companions:

“The old one is dying! Gervique, Gradlin and Pierre Nouquet are not much better! The others lose their strength every day! The time is approaching when their life will be ours!”

It was then resolved Cornbutte between Louis and his companions not to wait any more and profit from ~~enjoy~~ the little strength they had left. They resolved to act the next night and kill these wretches to avoid being killed by them.

The temperature had risen a little. Louis Cornbutte ventured out with his gun to bring some game.

He moved away about three miles from the ship, and often misled by the effects of mirage or refraction, he walked farther than he wanted. It was unwise, since traces of recent fierce animals showed themselves on the ground. Louis Cornbutte however refused to return without reporting some fresh meat, and continued on his route ~~went his way~~, but then he felt a strange feeling, which turned his head. It was what is called "the vertigo of white."

Indeed, reflection of mountains of ice ~~cream~~ and the plain seized him from head to foot, and it seemed that the color penetrated and caused him an irresistible fading. His eye was soaked, his view eyes deviated. He thought he was going mad with the whiteness. Unaware of this terrible effect, he continued his march and was not slow at getting a ptarmigan, which he pursued with ardor. The bird fell soon and taking it to go, Louis Cornbutte, jumping from the ice cube onto the plain, fell heavily, for he had jumped of ten feet, where the refraction made him believe that he had only two to pass. Vertigo seized him then, and without knowing why, he began to call for help for a few minutes, although nothing had broken his fall. The cold, commencing to invade, he returned to his sense of conservation and rose laboriously.

Suddenly, without realizing that he could, the smell of burnt grease seized his smell. As it was downwind of the ship, he supposed that the smell was coming from there, and he did not understand what purpose they burned the

fat, because it was very dangerous, as this could attract ~~offshoot~~ bands of polar bears.

Louis Cornbutte therefore took the path of the brig, a prey to a preoccupation which, in his excited mind ~~excited~~, soon degenerated into terror. It seemed to him that huge masses were moving ~~huge masses~~ on the horizon, and he wondered if there was not any ice quake. Many of these masses came between him and the ship, and it seemed they stood on the sides of the brig. He stopped to consider them more carefully, and his terror was extreme, when he recognized a band of gigantic bears.

These animals had been attracted by the smell of grease that had surprised Louis Cornbutte. He took cover behind a mound of ice, and he counted three that were not slow to climb the ice blocks on which rested the Jeune-Hardie.

Nothing seemed to him to suppose that the danger was known inside the ship, and a terrible fear gripped his heart. How to oppose these dangerous enemies? Andre Vasling and his companions would they meet all men the edge in this common danger? Penellan and others, half starved, numb with cold, could they resist these fearsome beasts, excited by an insatiable hunger? Will ~~Do~~ they not be surprised, moreover, by an unexpected attack?

Louis Cornbutte made these reflections in an instant. The bear had climbed the ice and mounted an assault on the ship. Louis Cornbutte could then leave the block that protected him, he came crawling on the ice, and soon he could see the huge animals tear the tent with their claws and jump onto the bridge. Louis Cornbutte thought of firing a gun to warn his companions, but if they climbed without being armed, they would inevitably be dashed to pieces, and no evidence they had knowledge of this new danger!

—End of section translated by google more or less and chapter XIV.

Here is another section taken from the sampson Low edition by George M. Towle---

The lemon-juice somewhat relieved old Cornbutte, but it was necessary to continue the remedy. Marie begged Vasling on her knees to produce the lemons, but he did not reply, and soon Penellan heard the wretch say to his accomplices, —

" The old fellow is dying. Gervique, Gradlin, and Nouquet are not much better. The others are daily losing their strength. The time is near when their lives will belong to us ! "

It was then resolved by Louis Cornbutte and his adherents not to wait, and to profit by the little strength which still remained to them. They determined to act the next night, and to kill these wretches, so as not to be killed by them.

The temperature rose a little. Louis Cornbutte ventured to go out with his gun in search of some game.

He proceeded some three miles from the ship, and, often deceived by the effects of the mirage and refraction, he went farther away than he intended. It was imprudent, for recent tracks of ferocious animals betrayed themselves. He did not wish, however, to return without some fresh meat, and continued on his route ; but he then experienced a stiance fueling, which turned his head. It was what is called "white vertigo."

The reflection of the ice hillocks and fields affected him from head to foot, and it seemed to him that the dazzling color penetrated him and caused an irresistible nausea. His eye was impregnated, his sight became wandering. He thought he should go mad with the whiteness. Without fully understanding this terrible effect, he advanced on his way, and scon raised a ptarmigan, which he eagerly pursued. The bird soon fell, and in order to reach it Louis

leaped from an ice-block and fell heavily ; for the leap was at least ten feet, and the refraction made him think it was only two. The vertigo then seized him, and, without knowing why, he began to call for help, though he had not been injured by the fall. The cold began to take him, and he painfully rose, urged by the sense of self-preservation.

Of a sudden, without being able to account for it, he smelt an odor of boiling fat. As he was in the wind coming from the ship, he supposed that this odor proceeded from her, and could not imagine why they should be cooking fat; this being a dangerous thing to do, as likely to attract thither the white bears.

Louis returned towards the ship, absorbed in reflections which soon inspired his excited mind with terror. It seemed to him as if colossal masses were moving on the horizon, and he asked himself if there was not still a quaking of the ice. Several of these masses interposed themselves between him. and the ship, and appeared to rise about its sides. He stopped to gaze at them more attentively, when he recognized a herd of gigantic bears.

These animals had been attracted by the odor of grease which had surprised Louis. He sheltered himself behind a hillock, and counted three which were scaling the blocks on which the " Jeune-Hardio " was resting.

Nothing led him to suppose that this danger was known on the interior of the ship, and a terrible anguish oppressed his heart. How resist these redoubtable enemies ? Would Andre Vasling and his confederates unite with the rest on board in the common peril ? Could Penellan and the others, half starved, benumbed with cold, resist these formidable beasts, made wild by unassuaged hunger ? Would they not be surprised by an unlooked-for attack ?

Louis made these reflections rapidly. The bears had crossed the blocks, and were mounting to the assault of the ship. He might then quit the block which protected

him ; he went nearer, clinging to the ice, and could soon see the enormous animals tearing the tent with their paws and leaping on the deck. He thought of firing his gun to give his comrades notice ; but if these came up without arms, they would inevitably be torn in pieces, and nothing indicated that they were aware of their new danger.

---end of section from trans of Geo M. Towle.

XV.

THE WHITE BEARS

After Louis Cornbutte's departure, Penellan had carefully shut the door of the quarters, which opened at the base of the stairway leading to the deck. He went back to the store, with the tending of which he charged himself, while his companions regained their beds for the purpose of there finding a little warmth.

It was then six o'clock in the evening. Penellan set about preparing supper. He descended to the steward's room to look for salt meat that he wanted to soften in boiling water. When he remounted, he found, his place taken by Andrew Vasling, who had put some morsels of fat to cook in the mess pan.

"I was there before you," said Penellan, brusquely, to Andrew Vasling. "Why have you taken my place?"

"For the reason that makes you demand it," responded Andrew Vasling; "because I wish to get my supper cooked."

"You shall take that away at once," replied Penellan, "or we'll see."

"We will see nothing," Andrew Vasling answered, "and this supper shall be cooked in spite of you."

“You shall not taste it then!” cried Penellan, throwing himself upon Andrew Vasling, who seized his cutlass, exclaiming:—

“Help, Norwegians! Help, Aupic!”

These last were on foot, in a trice, armed with pistols and poniards. The scheme had been arranged.

Penellan rushed upon Andrew Vasling, who had doubtless given himself the part of combatting with him all alone, for his companions ran to the beds of Misonne, Turquette, and Peter Nouquet. The last mentioned, defenseless, overwhelmed by sickness, was delivered to the ferocity of Herming. The carpenter seized an axe, and quitting his bed, rushed to encounter Aupic. Turquette and the Norwegian Jocki wrestled desperately. Gervique and Gradlin, a prey to excruciating sufferings, had not even consciousness of what was going on near them.

Peter Nouquet soon received a dagger thrust in his side, and Herming turned upon Penellan, who was fighting with rage. Andrew Vasling had caught him about the body.

But, at the very beginning of the struggle, the mess-pan had been overturned on the furnace, and the fat, spreading over the blazing coals, impregnated the atmosphere with an infectious odor. Marie arose, with screams of distress, and rushed towards the bed in which old Jean Cornbutte was breathing his last.

Andrew Vasling, less vigorous than Penellan, soon felt his arms giving way before those of the helmsman. They were too close to each other to make use of their weapons. The mate, perceiving Herming, cried: —

“To my aid! Herming!”

“Help! Misonne!” shouted Penellan, in his turn.

But Misonne was rolling on the floor with Aupic, who was trying to run him through with his cutlass. The

carpenter's axe was a weapon of little use in his defense, for he could not direct its motions, and had the greatest trouble in the world to parry the poniard blows that Aupic brought to bear on him.

Meanwhile, blood was flowing in the midst of the roarings and yells. Turquette, brought down by Jocki, a man of uncommon strength, had received a poniard thrust in the shoulder, and he vainly sought to get possession of a pistol slipped under the Norwegian's belt. This fellow had him grasped as in a vice, and no movement was possible to him.

At the cry of Andrew Vasling, whom Penellan had backed up against the entrance-door, Herming hurried forward. At the moment when he was about to send his cutlass through the Breton's back, the latter, with a stout foot, spread him flat on the floor. The effort that he made allowed Andrew Vasling to disengage his right arm from Penellan's grasp; but the door of entrance, on which they were bearing all their weight, suddenly caved in, and Andrew Vasling fell backward.

All at once, a terrible roaring burst forth, and a gigantic bear appeared, on the steps of the stairway. Andrew Vasling perceived it the first. It was not four feet from him. The same instant a detonation was heard, and the bear, wounded or affrighted, turned on its tracks. Andrew Vasling, who had succeeded in rising to his feet, started in pursuit, abandoning Penellan.

The helmsman then replaced the broken down door, and looked around him. Misonne and Turquette, tightly bound by their adversaries, had been thrust into a corner, and were making vain efforts to break their bonds. Penellan hurried to their aid, but was overthrown by the two Norwegians and Aupic. His exhausted strength would not permit him to resist those three men, who tied him in a way to interdict all movement. Then, at the shouts of the

mate, they rushed upon deck, believing that they were to have to do with Louis Cornbutte.

There Andrew Vasling was struggling with a bear, in which he had already thrust his poniard twice. The animal, beating the air with his formidable paws, sought to strike Andrew Vasling. The latter, almost pushed against the network of the vessel, would have been lost, when a second detonation re-sounded. The bear fell. Andrew Vasling raised his head, and perceived Louis Cornbutte in the rattling of the forsail mast his gun in his hand. Louis Cornbutte aimed at the bear's heart, and the bear was dead.

Hate dominated over gratitude in Andrew Vasling's bosom; but, before satisfying it, he looked about him. Aupic had his head shattered by a blow from a paw, and was extended lifeless on the deck. Jocki, axe in hand, was warding off, not without trouble, the blows of the second bear that had just killed Aupic. The animal had received two blows from the poniard, but nevertheless fought with fury. A third bear was moving towards the vessel's prow.

Andrew Vasling did not occupy himself then with his hatred, and, followed by Herming, he went to help Jocki; but Jocki, seized between the bear's paws, was beaten flat, and when the animal fell under the attacks of Andrew Vasling and Herming, who discharged their pistols at it, it held naught save a corpse in its paws.

"There are now but two of us," said Andrew Vasling, with a gloomy and ferocious look; "but if we succumb, it shall not be without vengeance!"

Herming reloaded his pistol without responding. Before anything else, the third bear had to be dismissed. Andrew Vasling looked forward but did not see it. Lifting his eyes he perceived it erect on the nettings and already clambering over the rattlings to reach Louis Cornbutte. Andrew Vasling let his gun, which he was pointing upon

the animal, descend, and a ferocious delight was depicted in his eyes.

“Ah!” he exclaimed, “you owe me that vengeance!”

Meanwhile, Louis Cornbutte had taken refuge in the top of the foresail. The bear kept on mounting and was not more than six feet from Louis, when the latter shouldered his gun and aimed at the animal’s heart.

On his side, Andrew Vasling shouldered his to shoot Louis, should the bear fall.

Louis Cornbutte fired, but it did not appear that the bear had been touched, for it rushed with a bound to the top. The whole mast quivered.

Andrew Vasling sent forth a cry of joy.

“Herming,” cried he to the Norwegian sailor, “go find Marie for me. Go fetch me my betrothed.”

Herming descended the stairway to the quarters.

Meanwhile, the furious animal had precipitated itself on Louis Cornbutte, who sought shelter on the other side of the mast; but, at the moment when the enormous paw was lowering to crush his head, Louis Cornbutte, grasping one of the backstays, let himself glide to the deck, not without danger, for a ball whistled by his ears. Andrew Vasling had just fired and missed him. The two adversaries found themselves face to face, cutlass in hand.

The combat was to be decisive. Fully to glut his vengeance, by making the young girl assist at the death of her betrothed, Andrew Vasling had deprived himself, of Herming’s aid. He had then none to depend upon except himself.

Louis Cornbutte and Andrew Vasling seized each other by the throat, and stood in such a way as not to be able to recoil. Of the two, one would have to fall dead. They struck violent blows, that they could only half parry, for blood

soon ran on both sides. Andrew Vasling tried to thrust his arm around his adversary's neck, so as to floor him. Louis Cornbutte, knowing that he who fell would be lost, prevented him, and succeeded in seizing both of his arms; but, by this movement, his poniard escaped from his hand.

Dreadful cries at this moment reached his ears. They proceeded from Marie, whom Herming wanted to drag along. Rage took control of Louis Cornbutte's heart; he straightened himself to bend Andrew Vasling's loins, but just then both of the antagonists felt themselves seized in a mighty grip.

The bear, come down from the top of the foresail, had fallen on both of them.

Andrew Vasling was supported against the animal's body. Louis Cornbutte felt the monster's claws entering his flesh. The bear was squeezing both of them.

"Help! help, Herming!" the mate was able to shout.

"To my aid! Penellan!" exclaimed Louis Cornbutte.

Steps were heard on the stairway. Penellan appeared armed with his pistol, which he discharged in the animal's ear. The creature sent forth a roar. The pain made him open his paws an instant, and Louis Cornbutte, exhausted, slipped down motionless to the deck; but the animal forcibly closing them again in supreme agony, fell, dragging with him the wretched Andrew Vasling, whose body was crushed beneath him.

Penellan rushed to succor Louis Cornbutte. No serious wound placed the latter's life in danger, and his breath had only failed him for a moment.

"Marie!" said he, opening his eyes.

"Saved!" responded the helmsman. "Herming is stretched out there, with a poniard thrust in his side!"

"And those bears?"

“Dead, Louis, dead as our enemies! But it can be said that, without those beasts, we would have been lost! Truly, they have come to our aid! Let us, then, thank Providence!”

Louis Cornbutte and Penellan descended to their quarters, and Marie flew into their arms.

XVI.

CONCLUSION

Herming, mortally wounded, had been conveyed to a bed by Misonne and Turquette, who had succeeded in bursting their bonds. The wretch already had the death-rattle in his throat, and the two seamen busied themselves with Peter Nouquet, whose wound, happily, was not serious.

But a greater misfortune was to strike Louis Cornbutte. His father no more gave signs of life! Had he died from anxiety at beholding his son in the power of his enemies? Had he succumbed before that terrible scene? No one knows. But the poor old mariner, shattered by disease, had ceased to live!

Under this unexpected blow, Louis Cornbutte and Marie fell into a profound despair; then they knelt beside the bed and wept, while praying for Jean Cornbutte's soul.

Penellan, Misonne, and Turquette left them alone in that chamber, and reascended to the deck. The bodies of the three bears were drawn forward; Penellan resolved to keep their fur, which would be of great utility, but he did not think for a single moment of eating their flesh. Besides, the number of men to be fed was now greatly diminished. The corpses of Andrew Vasling, Aupic, and Jocki, thrown into a pit dug on shore, were presently joined by that of Herming. The Norwegian died during the night, without repentance or remorse, the foam of rage on his mouth.

The three seamen repaired the tent, which, split in several places, allowed the snow to fall upon the deck. The temperature was excessively cold, and thus remained until the return of the sun, which only appeared above the horizon on the 8th of January.

Jean Cornbutte was buried on that shore. He had left his country to find his son again, and had come to die in that frightful climate! His grave was dug on elevated ground, and over it the seamen planted a simple wooden cross.

After that day Louis Cornbutte and his companions encountered further cruel trials; but the lemons, which they again found, brought back their health.

Gervique, Gradlin, and Peter Nouquet were able to rise a fortnight subsequent to those terrible events, and to take a little exercise.

Soon hunting became easier and game more abundant. The aquatic birds returned in great numbers. Frequently a species of wild duck, which furnished excellent food, was killed. The hunters had no loss to deplore other than that of two dogs, of which they were deprived twenty-five miles to the south, whilst on an expedition, to examine the condition of the ice-plains.

The month of February was signalized by violent tempests and abundant snows. The medium temperature still kept at twenty-five degrees below zero, but the wintering party, in comparison, did not suffer from it. Besides, the sight of the sun, that rose more and more above the horizon, rejoiced them by announcing the termination of their torments. It must be believed also that Heaven took pity on them, for the warmth was premature that year. Even in the month of March, a few ravens were noticed wheeling around the ship. Louis Cornbutte captured some cranes that had extended their northern

peregrinations thus far. Flocks of wild geese also made their appearance in the south.

This return of the birds indicated a diminution of the cold. Nevertheless, it did not do to place too much reliance on the occurrence, for, with a change of wind, or during new or full moons, the temperature suddenly lowered, and the mariners were forced to have recourse to the greatest precautions to provide themselves against it. They had already burnt all the nettings of the vessel to keep themselves warm, as well as the round-house of the quarter-deck, and a great part of the spar-deck. It was then time for that winter's sojourn to come to an end. Fortunately, the medium for March was not lower than sixteen degrees below zero. Marie busied herself in the preparation of new garments for that precocious summer season.

From the equinox forward the sun constantly maintained a position above the horizon. The eight months of daylight had begun. The perpetual brightness and uninterrupted heat, although excessively feeble, were not tardy in acting on the ice,

Great precautions had to be taken to launch the *Jeune Hardie* from the top of the ice-cakes surrounding her. The vessel was, in consequence, firmly propped, and it seemed proper to wait till the ice had been broken up by the thaw; but the inferior ice-cakes, reposing on a bed of water, already warmer, became detached little by little, and the brig insensibly descended. Towards the first days of April it had regained its natural level.

With April came torrent-like rains which, profusely diffused over the ice-plain, hastened yet further its decomposition. The thermometer went up to ten degrees below zero. Some of the men took off their sealskin vestments, and it was no longer needful to keep a stove, day and night, in the lodgings. The supply of alcohol,

which was not exhausted, was no more used save for cooking purposes.

Presently the ice commenced to break, with muffled crackings. Fissures were formed with great rapidity, and it became imprudent to advance upon the plain without a staff to sound the passages, for the flexures wound in all directions. It even happened that several seamen fell into the water, but they escaped unharmed save by a cold bath.

The seals at this epoch returned, and often chase was given them, for their blubber could be utilized.

The health of all remained excellent. The time was filled up by preparations for departure and by hunting. Louis Cornbutte frequently went to study the passes, and, following the configuration of the southern coast, he determined to attempt a passage more to the south. Already the breaking up of the ice had been produced in several places, and some floating cakes were taking a direction towards the open sea. On the 25th of April the ship was got ready. The sails, drawn from the sheaths, were found in a perfect state of preservation, and to see them swinging at the breath of the wind was a true delight to the mariners. The ship started up, for it had again found its floating line, and, though it could not stir as yet, it was, nevertheless, resting in its natural element.

By the month of May the thaw was making rapid advances. The snow, covering the shore, melted on all sides, and formed a thick slush, which rendered the coast almost unapproachable. Some little shoots of heath, both rosy and pale, timidly showed themselves through the remains of the snow, and seemed to smile at the small amount of warmth. The thermometer, at length, mounted above zero.

At twenty miles' distance to the south of the ship, the ice cakes, completely detached, were then taking their course towards the Atlantic ocean. Although the sea was

not entirely free around the vessel, passes were established by which Louis Cornbutte wished to profit.

On the 21st of May, after a last visit to his father's grave, Louis Cornbutte finally forsook the wintering bay. The hearts of those brave mariners were filled at the same time with joy and sadness, for one does not quit without regret the place where one has beheld the death of a friend. The wind blew from the north, and favored the brig's departure. It was often stopped by ice-banks that had to be cut with the saw; often the icebergs arose before it, and a powder-mine had to be employed in order to blow them up. During a month longer the navigation was full of dangers that frequently placed the vessel within two finger lengths of destruction; but the crew were bold and accustomed to those perilous manoeuvres. Penellan, Peter Nouquet, Turquette, and Fidele Misonne alone did the work of ten sailors, and Marie had grateful smiles for each one. The *Jeune Hardie* was at length delivered from the ice in the latitude of Jan Mayen Island. About the 25th of June the brig met some ships that were going into the north for the seal and whale fisheries. It had spent nearly a month in coming south from the Polar Sea.

On the 16th of August the *Jeune Hardie* found herself in sight of Dunkirk. She had been signalled by the look-out, and the whole population of the port hurried to the jetty. The seamen of the brig soon fell into the arms of their friends. The old Curé received Louis Cornbutte and Marie on his breast, and, of the masses that he said on the two following days, the first was for the repose of Jean Cornbutte's soul, and the second to ask a blessing on the betrothed ones, for so long a time united by misfortune.

THE END

End of the Voyage Extraordinaire
--sent to Brian Taves on December 18 2010
after editing by Norman Wolcott
7963 Pond Haven Lane
St, Michaels MD 21663
nwolcott2@post.harvard.edu

AHD=American Heritage Dictionary
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