

THE FROZEN PIKE.

BY W. CLARK RUSSELL.

[Continued.]

CHAPTER XIII.

I EXPLORE THE HOLD AND FORECASTLE.

It was pitch dark when I awoke, and I conceived it must be the middle of the night, but to my astonishment, on lighting the lantern, and looking at the watch, which I had taken the precaution to wind up overnight, I saw it wanted but twenty minutes of nine o'clock, so that I had passed through twelve hours of solid sleep. However, it was only needful to recollect where I was, and to cast a glance at the closed door and port, to understand why it was dark. I had slept fairly warm, and awoke with no sensation of cold; but the keen air had caused the steam of my breath to freeze upon my mouth in such a manner that, when feeling the sticky inconvenience I put my finger to it, it felt like a little mass; and I likewise felt the pain of cold in my face to such an extent that I had been blistered there my cheeks, nose and brow could have been smarted more. This resolved me henceforward to wrap up my head and face before going to rest.

I opened the door and passed out, and observed an amazing difference between the temperature of the air in which I had been sleeping and that of the atmosphere in the passage—a happy discovery, for it served to assure me that, if I was careful to lie under plenty of coverings and to keep the door air excluded, the heat of my body would raise the temperature of the little cabin; nor, providing the compartment was ventilated throughout the day, was there anything to be feared from the vitiation of the air by my own breathing.

My first business was to light the fire and set my breakfast to thaw, and boil me a kettle of water; and some time after I went on deck to view the weather, and to revolve in my mind the routine of the day. On opening the door of the companion-hatch I was nearly blinded by the glorious brilliance of the sunshine on the snow; after the blackness of the cabin it was like looking at the sun himself, and I had to stand a full three minutes with my hand upon my eyes before I could accustom my sight to the dazzling glare. It was the weather again; the sky over the glass-like masts of the schooner was a clear dark blue, with a few light clouds blowing over it from the southward. The wind had shifted at last; but, pure as the heavens were, the breeze was piping briskly with the weight and song of a small gale, and its fangs of frost, even in the comparative quiet of the sheltered deck, bit with a fierceness that had not been observable yesterday.

The moment I had the body of the vessel in my sight I perceived that she had changed her position since my last view of her. Her bows were more raised, and she lay over further by the depth of a plank. I stared earnestly at the rocky slopes on either hand, but could not have sworn their figuration was changed. An eager hope shot into my mind, but it quickly faded into an emotion of apprehension. It was conceivable indeed that on a sudden some early day I might find the schooner liberated and afloat, and this was the first inspiring flash; but then came the fear that the disruption and volcanic throes of the ice might crush her; a fear rational enough when I saw the height she lay above the sea, and how by pressure those slopes which formed her cradle might be jammed and welded together. The change of her posture then fell upon me with a kind of shock, and determined me, when I had broken my fast, to search her hold for a boat or for materials for constructing some ark by which I might float out to sea, should the ice grow menacing and force me from the schooner.

I made a plentiful meal, feeling the need of abundance of food in such a temperature as this, and heartily grateful that there was no need why I should stint myself. The having to pass the two figures every time I went on deck and returned was extremely disagreeable and unenvying, and I considered that, after searching the hold, the next duty I owed myself was to remove them on deck, and even over the side, if possible, for one place below was as sure to keep them haunting me as another, and they would be as much with me in the forecastle as if I stowed them away in the cabin adjoining mine.

Whilst I ate, my mind was so busy with considerations of the change in the ship's posture during the night that it ended in determining me to take a survey of her from the outside, and then climb the cliffs and look around before I fell to any other work. I fetched the cloak I had stripped the body on the rocks of and thawed and warmed it, and put it on, and a noble covering it was, thick, soft, and clinging. Then, arming myself with a boarding-pole to serve as a pole, I dropped into the fore-chains and thence stepped on to the ice, and very slowly and carefully walked round the schooner, examining her closely, and boring into the snow upon her side with my pike wherever I suspected a hole or indent. I could find nothing worth her in this way, though what a thaw might reveal I could not know. Her rudder hung frozen upon its pintles, and looked as it should. Some little distance abaft her rudder, where the hollow or chasm sloped to the sea, was a great split three or four feet wide; this had certainly happened in the night, and I must have slept as sound as the dead not to hear the noise of it. Such a rent as this sufficed to account for the subsidence of the after-part of the schooner and her further inclination to larboard. Indeed, the hollow was now coming to resemble the "ways" on which ships are launched; and you would have conceived by the appearance of it that if it should slope a little more yet, or would slide the schooner for the sea, and in the right posture too—that is, stern on.

I prayed with all my might and main for anything but this. It would have been very well had the hollow gone in a gentle declivity to the wash

of the sea, to the water itself, in short; but it terminated in the edge of a cliff, not very high indeed, but high enough to warrant the prompt foundering of any vessel that should launch herself off it. Happily the keel was too solidly frozen into the ice to render a passage of this description possible; and the conclusion I arrived at after careful inspection was that the sole chance that could offer for the delivery of the vessel to her proper element was in the cracking up and disruption of the bed on which she lay.

Having ended my survey of the schooner, I addressed myself to the ascent of the starboard slope, and scaled it much more easily than I had yesterday managed to make my way over the rocks. I climbed to the high-est block that was nearest me on the summit. To my astonishment, the first objects which encountered my eye were four icebergs, floating detached but close together at a distance of about three miles on my side of the north-east trend of the island. They swam low, and it was very easily seen that they had formed part of the coast there, though, as the form of the ice that way was not familiar to me, and as, moreover, the glare rendered the prospect very deceptive, I could not distinguish where the ruptures were.

Satisfied as to the state of the ice and the posture of the schooner, viewed from without, I sent a slow and piercing gaze along the ocean line, and then returned to the ship. The strong wind, the dance of the sea, the grandeur of the great tract of whiteness, vitalized by the flying of violet cloud-shadows along it, had fortified my spirits, and being free (for a while) of all superstitious dread, I determined to begin by exploring the forecastle and ascertaining if more bodies were in the schooner than those two in the cabin and the giant form on deck. I threw some coal on the fire, and placed an ox-tongue along with the cheese and a lump of the frozen wine in a pannikin in the oven (for I had a mind to taste the vessel's stores, and thought the tongue would make an agreeable change), and then putting the candle into the lantern walked very bravely to the forecastle and entered it.

I was prepared for the scene of confusion, but I must say it staggered me afresh with something of the force of the first impression. Sailors' chests lay open in all directions, and their contents covered the decks. There was the clearest evidence here that the majority of the crew had quitted the vessel in a violent hurry, turning out their boxes to cram their money and jewellery into their pockets, and heedlessly flinging down their own and the clothes which had fallen to their share. This I had every right to suppose from the character of the middle of the floor; for, passing the light over a part of it, I witnessed a great variety of attire of a kind which certainly no sailor in any age or vent to sea with; not so fine perhaps as that which lay in the cabins, but very good nevertheless, particularly the linen. I saw several wigs, beavers of the kind that was formerly carried under the arm, women's silk shoes, petticoats, pieces of lace, silk, and so forth; all directly assuring me that what I viewed was the contents of passengers' luggage, together with consignments and such freight as the pirates would seize and divide, every man filling his chest. Perhaps there was less on the whole than I supposed, the litter looking great by reason of everything having been torn open and flung down loose.

I trod upon these heaps with little concern; they appealed to me only as a provision for my fire should I be disappointed in my search for coal. The hammocks obliged me to move with a stooped head; it was only necessary to feel them with my hand—that is, to test their weight by pushing them in the middle—to know if they were tenanted. Some were heavier than the others, but all of them much lighter than they would have been had they contained human bodies; and by this rapid method I satisfied my mind that there were no dead men here as fully as if I had looked into each separate hammock.

This discovery was exceedingly comforting, for, though I do not know that I should have meddled with any frozen man had I found him in this place, his being in the forecastle would have rendered me constantly uneasy, and it must have come to my early closing this part of the ship and shrinking from it as from a spectre-ridden goblin, or to my disposing of the bodies by dragging them on deck—a dismal and hateful job. There were no ports, but a hatch overhead. Wanting light—the hatch making the darkness but little more than visible—I fetched from the arm-room a handspike that lay in a corner, and, mounting a chest, struck at the hatch so heartily that the ice cracked all around it and the cover rose. I pushed it up, and down rolled the sunshine in splendour.

Everything was plain now. In many places, glittering among the clothes, were gold and silver coins, a few silver ornaments such as buckles, and watches—things not missed by the pirates in the transport of their flight. In kicking a coat aside I discovered a couple of silver crucifixes bound together, and close by was a silver goblet and the hilt of a sword broken short off for the sake of the metal it was of. Nothing ruder than this interior is imaginable. The men must have been mightily put to it for room. There was a window in the lead, but the snow veiled it. Maybe the rogues messed together, and only used this forecastle to lie in. Right under the hatch, where the light was strongest, was a dead rat. I stooped to pick it up, meaning to fling it into the sea, but its tail broke off at the rump, like a pipe-stem.

Close against the after bulkhead that separated the forecastle from the cook-room was a little hatch. There was a quantity of wearing apparel upon it, and I should have missed it but for catching sight of some three inches of the dark line the cover made in the deck. On clearing away the clothes I perceived a ring similar to that in the lazarette hatch, and it rose to my first drag and left me the hold yawning black about a stanchion traversed by iron pins for the hands and feet. The atmosphere

was nasty, and to give it time to clear I went to the cook-house and warmed myself before the fire.

The fresh air blowing down the forecastle hatch speedily sweetened the hold. I lowered the lantern and followed, and found myself on top of some rum or spirit casks, which on my hitting them returned to me a solid note. There was a forepeak forward in the bows, and the casks were stowed to the bulkhead of it; the top of this bulkhead was open four feet from the upper deck, and on holding the lantern over and putting my head through I saw a quantity of coals. If the forepeak went as low as the vessel's floor, then I calculated there would not be less than fifteen tons of coal in it. This was a noble discovery to fall upon, and it made me feel so happy that I do not know that the assurance of my being immediately rescued from this island could have given a lighter pulse to my heart.

The candle yielded a very small light, and it was difficult to see above a yard or so ahead or around. I turned my face, and, crawling over the casks and came to under the powder-hatch, where lay coils of bawls, buckets, blocks, and the like, but there was no pinnace, though here she had been stowed, as a sailor would have promptly seen. A little way beyond, under the great cabin, was the powder-magazine; a small bulkheaded compartment with a little door, atop of which was a small bull's-eye lamp. I peered warily enough, you will suppose, into this place, and made out twelve barrels of powder. I heartily wished them overboard; and yet, after all, they were not very much more dangerous than the wine and spirits in the lazarette and fore-hold.

The rum remained to be explored—the after part, I mean, under the lazarette deck to the rudder-post—but I had seen enough; crawling about that black interior was cold, lonesome, melancholy work, and it was rendered peculiarly so by the obligation to keep the light amid a freight mainly formed of explosives and combustible matter. I had found plenty of coal, and that sufficed. So I returned by the same road I had entered, and sliding to the bulkhead door to keep the cold of the forecastle out of the cook-room, I stirred the fire into a blaze and sat down before it to rest and think.

(To be continued.)

Short and Long Courtships.

Daisy Dandelion, Essex, Ct., is perplexed over the question of short and long courtships, and wants our advice. Well, Daisy, it is hard to make a rule to fit every case, but in general we will say that long courtships are not advisable. Many women, pale, haggard, and waned from long continued untoward ailments, are forced to banish all thoughts of marriage. Such unfortunate sufferers should know that Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription is a positive cure for the most complicated and obstinate cases of leucorrhoea, excessive flowing, painful menstruation, unnatural suppressions, prolapsus, or falling of the womb, weak back, "female weakness," anteversion, retroversion, "bearing-down sensation," chronic congestion, inflammation and ulceration of the womb, inflammation, pain and tenderness in ovaries, accompanied with "internal heat."

For all derangements of the liver, stomach and bowels, take Dr. Pierce's Pellets.

When Baby was sick, we gave her Castoria.
When she was a Child, she cried for Castoria.
When she became a Woman, she clung to Castoria.
When she had Children, she gave them Castoria.

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GENERAL BUSINESS.

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"Castoria is so well adapted to children that I recommend it as superior to any prescription known to me." H. A. ARCHER, M.D., 111 No. Oxford St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Castoria cures Colic, Constipation, Worms, gives sleep, and promotes digestion. Without injurious medication. THE CENTRAI MEDICINE, 77 MURRAY STREET, N. Y.

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ON and AFTER WEDNESDAY, NOV. 28th, until further notice, trains will run on the above Railway, daily, as follows:

On and after **WEDNESDAY. NOV. 28th**, until further notice
 the Railway, daily, as follows:—

CHATHAM TO FREDERICTON.		FREDERICTON	
LEAVE			LEAVE
Chatham	8.00	A. M.	Fredericton
" "			