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VOYAGE  
OF  
WILL ROGERS  
TO THE  
SOUTH POLE.

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OF  
*WILL ROGERS*  
TO THE  
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*EDITED BY CHRISTOPHER SPOTSWOOD.*



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## P R E F A C E .



**I**T is said that the stories of travellers are very often open to doubt, and it may be the case in this instance. The Editor, however, thinks that the story of Will Rogers is not impossible, although not very probable, and he ventures to hope that it will be deemed as credible as most travellers' stories.

June, 1888.



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## Voyage to the South Pole.

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**I**T seems strange that I should only now publish an account of my extraordinary voyage and experience near the South Pole, but when I arrived in England my story seemed to be so out of the way that I was laughed and jeered at, and not having written anything in my life in the shape of a journal, I gave up talking about it. Now, however, sooner than the world should lose what ought to be of great interest to it, I will attempt, in my plain way, to give an account of what occurred to me, and of the strange people I fell in with, in my last voyage, especially as my span of life is drawing to a close.

I was born in the village of Tamarton, near Plymouth, Devonshire, in the year 1812, and went to school at Stonehouse, in the same county, until I was eleven years of age, when I was obliged to leave school, owing to the death of my father, who was a small trader in that town. My mother and two sisters were left very poor, and feeling myself a burden to her, I resolved to shift for myself, and also hoped to be able, after a time, to be of some help to her. I engaged myself on board of a collier, and had a very rough life of it for two or three voyages, being kicked and cuffed by the captain and all hands, because, I suppose, I was a helpless lad; and in the last voyage I was so cruelly ill-treated that I ran away the first chance I had. I next shipped on board an East Indiaman, where my life was more bearable, and made several voyages in her from London. The treatment of boys on board ship in those days was very different to what it is in the present day. Talk of cruelty to animals! the cruelty to lads on board ship was worse than any animal ever went through! After a time, I became an expert seaman, but of course could not get to be more than a foremast hand, owing to my want of education. However, as soon as I got good wages I took



as much as I could from time to time to my dear mother, who was one of the best women, I do believe, that ever was, and who almost broke her heart when I first left her. The wages were not so good in those days, so that I had not much to take her, but such as it was, it was gratifying to her, as it was also to me, for they were so glad to see me after a long spell. After a time they got to be a little better off, for some kind friends, seeing that my mother was a good and striving woman, set her up in a small shop, which in a short time succeeded so as to keep the wolf from the door.

In one of my voyages I happened to be at Boston, in America, and out of a ship, as the one I was in was paid off and sold there. A vessel was being fitted out for whaling in the South Seas, and I engaged to ship in her when ready, which would be in about three months. In the meantime I knocked about at odd jobs, and, being strong and able, I was never idle. I found the Yankees a nice lot, and although they are cute, they never tried to take advantage of my being a Britisher, and supposed to be green. I will make one exception. A respectable looking chap wanted to engage me as an agent for selling what he called his patent lubricator. He was to fix a price, and what I got over was to be my commission. The stuff was contained in pots, and called "Tedkin's Patent," and was to be used for greasing cart wheels and such like. He said it was not yet patented, and he was waiting to sell some and get some money to get a patent, and to advertise, which, he said, was the secret nowadays to be successful. I said I thought that it was not necessary, as there was plenty of grease knocking about which would answer all purposes, and it would not be right to sell a thing as patented which was not so in fact. He said that would not matter if the thing succeeded, and that he would make up my loss of time afterwards if it did not succeed at first. I was very near going in with him, but being only a plain sailor man, not used to any kind of business, on consideration I thought, if it was such a good thing as he wanted to make out, why did he not sell his own stuff, and save my commission; also, I should lose my ship and lose my time. Although I was nothing of a scholar, I had at an early age got a habit of "putting two and two together," as I used to call it, and was called by the hands in a vessel which I once shipped in "Philosopher Bill," so I determined to have nothing more to do with him. I was

very glad of this, for I afterwards heard that he was a humbug and a schemer, and had got others on that lay before, and left them in the lurch with nothing in their pockets. My vessel (the "Lovely Nancy") was now nearly ready for sea, and I was busy on board in finishing the preparations, as I understood that business pretty well, if I did not know much else. Of course, I knew nothing of whaling, or what was necessary in the shape of whaling gear; but I was apt to learn, and had no doubt of being as able in a short time as any of them. I made up my mind for a long voyage, and looked forward to a good lay at the end of it; and knowing that my mother and sisters were not now in distressed circumstances, I felt easy in my mind. We set sail in the month of April, 1839, well manned and fitted out for a long voyage, and carried a doctor, who was contented to go on a second mate's lay. Our ship was commanded by Jakes Collins, who had made many successful whaling voyages. He was said to be a first-rate headsman, and seemed to be a good sort of a chap. I did not trust to his appearance at first, for I knew by experience that sometimes a man turns out to be a very different sort of a being when he gets to sea. However, he turned out all right, and I could not wish for a better skipper; in fact, all hands were pretty good, allowing for a few queer fellows who are found in all crews. I could always hold my own amongst them, as I had been with some rough customers in my time. I do say this in a boasting way, but am only stating a fact.

Nothing of consequence happened for a long spell, until we got into southern latitudes. We got our first whale off the coast of Australia; I do not know what part, somewhere off the west coast. I was in the boat which made fast to her, and I shall never forget my feelings at the time: I cannot say it was fear, but a queer sensation which I cannot describe. I was told that one of our best hands actually cried like a child when the boat in which he was was going to make fast for the first time; after that, he was all right. One thing I did not like was the dirty condition of the ship after trying out the blubber; in fact, everything we touched was oily, and of course our hands did not escape; and it was not clean dirt, as in other trades, which you can wash off when required. But I could never understand the folks who look down on those who are obliged to soil their hands, while they admire their own white and well-kept ones. I always looked upon manual labour as honourable—and



what would the world be without it? What would these people say if suddenly they were deprived of bread and meat, clothing, fuel, and, in fact, everything of comfort and luxury which are produced by these toilers? I am speaking of those who do not "put two and two together," and who, I am glad to think, are not very numerous. Of course, I do not advocate dirty habits: I only mean that persons should not scorn those who have to work for their living while they themselves live on the fat of the land in idleness because they have the means to do so. Every person ought to work in some way as long as he is able. It has been my opinion for many years, and I have always acted up to it, and I think I am right. This opinion was confirmed by after events in this very voyage. We cruised about off this coast for a month without seeing another whale, and then made for Van Diemen's Land, and got our next whale off the coast in a place called Fortescue Bay, and remained there for a month, during which time we were lucky enough to get two more fish, when we were ordered off, the Government of Van Diemen's Land having prisoners confined in the neighbourhood. After this we got no more fish there, when our skipper determined to sail further south, which we accordingly did, until we came in sight of land bounded by a barrier of ice. Inland, at a very great distance, the horizon was quite lighted up at night, while by day it was enveloped in smoke. The skipper thought there were volcanoes there, although we could not see them. We got two more fish, and bade fair to have a full ship now, and of course we were very jolly over our successful voyage. The doctor (not the cook, who is sometimes called "the doctor" on board ship) said he intended to get spliced as soon as he got home, for he had been waiting for a stroke of luck to do so. He was a fine young fellow, and a great favourite with everybody. We were all in the best of spirits, and quite a happy family, as one may say, which, perhaps, would not have been the case if our luck had been different. For my own part, I was very glad, as a few hundreds would enable me to help my mother a bit, and also to retire from the sea, and set up in some small business, with a wife to help me. I was never engaged to be married, because, in my circumstances, I did not think it right to be so, but I knew a very nice and suitable young woman, who would not mind, I thought, joining her fortunes to mine if I asked her. From my observation of others I could see that marriage was quite

a lottery, and those who think that they could not be deceived in the objects of their choice are often sadly out of their reckoning. I remember one Bob Summers, who married for love Betty Chambers, near my home. She was a very fine, handsome young woman, and Bob thought there was not such another in the wide world; but after a while she turned out to be very extravagant in adorning her person, and in other ways, which ruined poor Bob; and, as the saying goes, when poverty tapped at the door love flew out of the window. Then, again, Roger Slyman married Becky Brooks—a love match, too. She was thought to be very amiable, and was very quiet and meek in her manner, but which she belied after marriage, for she turned out to be a regular shrew, and of a most ungovernable temper: so Roger's hopes of happiness were blighted. But then, those were two out of the few blanks that I knew of, and I should be very sorry to condemn matrimony on account of the few unsuitable matches that take place. I hope the reader will excuse my habit of moralising, for I cannot help it—it has been the habit of my life. Well, off this barrier of ice we got a few fish, and one day two of our boats, in one of which I happened to be, made fast to a right whale, which immediately sounded, and when she came up made for the ice before we were near enough to lance her. She got so close to the barrier that we were afraid she would take and smash our boats against it. The other boat let go, and we were doing the same, when a kink in the line got hold of my ankle and disabled me; I was in the bows and perfectly helpless. The rest of the crew, seeing this, in their terror jumped overboard, and, I suppose, swam to the other boat, which was not far off them. I was then all alone, and was towed along at a great rate round a point in the ice which could not be seen before, until she sounded again, when I got free, but for the life of me I could do no more, as my leg was so sore and painful that I could scarcely move. The rope had got another hitch somewhere, and when the whale came up again she carried me along at a great rate in an opening in the ice. How long I was towed in this way I cannot tell, as I became insensible, and when I came to myself I was going along at the same rate. After a time, at the expense of a great deal of pain and trouble, I managed to get hold of a tomahawk, with which I cut the rope, and got clear of the whale. What surprised me then was that the boat seemed to be drifting in a current close to the ice



at the rate of about ten knots, broadside on. What to do I could not tell; but as I could not stem the current, I crawled aft, got the steer oar, and got the boat straight, end on, with the current, trusting that God would direct and deliver me in His good time, as I had experienced on former occasions. I kept on the rest of that day, and all the next night, for I could not turn back; all I could do was to keep the boat from running into the ice; and one thing that surprised me was that the water seemed to be getting warmer as I went along, and in the morning there was a strip of land about twenty-one yards wide beyond the fringe of ice. The land was level there, and I then discovered that I was in an opening in the ice, about ten or twelve miles across. Well, I kept on in the same course for a mile or so, when suddenly I came to a small bay, into which I steered, and found back water there. I got ashore as well as I was able, moored my boat, and determined to stay there, as I could not guess where the current would take me to. Fortunately, the day's provisions and water were in my boat, so that I had enough of both to last me some days. The men had left their pea jackets behind in their hurry, so that I had a fair supply of matches and tobacco, in addition to my own, to last me for several days. But what was I to do for shelter, and fuel to keep up a fire? Each boat carried a lug sail, to take advantage of a slant of wind in getting back to the ship, so I made a kind of tent with the help of mine and the oars, and slept very well, covered by the men's monkey jackets, with moss, which was very plentiful, for my bed. In going the rounds of my little strip of land, I found, just on the edge of the ice, the ends of some pine trees, very much decayed, which served me for fuel, and so I had a fire continually burning, so as to save my matches, which I took care to keep dry, not knowing what might happen in the future. There were immense numbers of gulls and other sea fowls which came and laid eggs on the shore, so that I had no difficulty in getting meat and eggs whenever I wanted some. The birds were very tame, and allowed me to catch them without being at all alarmed. My greatest difficulty was finding a substitute for bread, for there was plenty of water from melted snow. After I had been there for some time, while grubbing in the soil with a lance out of the boat, I found a plant, which was very plentiful, with a bulbous root, on cutting which open I discovered a great quantity of small seeds like sago, which I cooked in my

pannican, and found to be very good and wholesome, and did very well in addition to my roasted fowl, as I called the seagulls. I could see that there were shoals of fish in my little bay, and I puzzled myself for a long time how to catch them; they seemed to be a kind of herring, and used to come up a narrow creek at high water in great numbers; so I set to to make a small net to put across the mouth of the creek at high tide. I unstranded a piece of whale line, and knowing the stitch, soon made a small net, which I weighted with stones. When I tried it the first time, I could see that there was a school of fish up the creek, which was only about twenty yards long. I had provided myself with two sharp stakes, and a stone for a hammer, and going at once I drove one stake quickly close to the water with the net fast to it, and with the other end in my hand crossed to the other side, and drove in my other stake. I then had to wait until the tide went down. I could see numbers of fish coming down to where they were stopped by the net, and then I felt sure I should be successful. After a coil in my bunk for about an hour, I returned to my fishery, and was pleased to find a quantity of nice silvery fish almost aground. I took as many of them as I wanted, and let the remainder go. I now felt in no fear of being starved for want of good food, and felt very thankful, but I had some anxiety as to how I should fare when the winter came. The weather was cold at night now, but, what puzzled me, the water in the bay was comparatively warm. In taking the ice and snow off my firewood, at some distance in, I found that the timber was quite sound, and there seemed to be an immense quantity of it. It seemed to be a part of an ancient forest, and, what appeared strange to me, I found some bones of an animal, although I had seen no animal about since my arrival. Although not in want of food and shelter, I felt very unhappy at the thought of being left by myself on a desolate shore, and wondered what my end would be. No doubt my messmates gave me up as lost, starved with cold and hunger—for what else could they think?—and would carry home the news, which would soon reach my mother. I knew this would nearly break her heart, which thought made me very miserable. I could not put to sea in my boat, for I could never stem the current to enable me to do so; and even if I could have done this, the provisions and water I could carry would last me a very short time, after which I must perish on the open sea. So I made up my mind to my fate, trusting that



something would occur in God's providence for my delivery. Meantime, I buried all the spare fish and birds in the snow, which was quite handy; I knew that they would keep in the snow, and would be a stand-by for the winter. I afterwards found out that I need not have taken the trouble. I said that I had not seen any animal on my domain, but one day after this I saw a large animal, with a head like a sheep, and a long tail, jumping along on his hind legs at the rate of 15 knots over the hard snow. He was quite white, and I should say stood nearly six feet high. I went and examined the snow where he crossed, and found the tracks of his feet, which consisted of one large toe and two smaller ones on each foot. I think that this was a stray one in this quarter, for I never met with another in any of my excursions over the snow in my neighbourhood. On one of these occasions I got wet, and neglecting to change my clothes, I got a severe cold. As may be imagined, I was in a bad way, having no one to attend on me, not even to cook my bit of food. Oh! did not I think of the folks at home then, and wish myself alongside of them. I got very weak before the fever was over, but, by the help of a good constitution, weathered the storm. I forgot to mention that I found a new way of cooking my food. I remembered that one of my former messmates described how the New Zealanders used to bake their food, which was nothing more than in an oven or hole dug in the ground, and I then set to work and dug a hole in a shelving bank, which I proceeded to fill with fuel and set fire to it. It took a great lot of wood, keeping the fire going for a good hour, and when I thought it warm enough I cleaned out the ashes and popped in two large birds. This was not a success, as the earth still continued damp. I then kept the fire going for a week all day and part of the night, when I found it answer very well. I made a kind of roof to it to keep out the wet weather. I had built a hut on the edge of the snow with timber from my store, and covered the roof with snow, which kept it watertight, as the snow did not melt there. As I had no nails, and my only tools were my pocket-knife and chopper, I tied it, where required, with strands from the whale line. In time I saved a good lot of feathers from my birds, and made myself a bed and pillow out of them, with the help of part of my lug sail. The birds were as plentiful as ever, and, what seemed strange to me, were as tame as ever. I certainly alarmed them as little as I could help, for I

always caught them by the neck, which I twisted immediately. I felt as comfortable as could be expected, and was very thankful in being saved from starvation on a desolate shore; but it was dreadfully lonely, and to me, fond of the society of my fellow human beings, it came rather hard. I have sometimes thought how those men would like my experience who had plenty of money and nothing to do, and complained of want of society if they were away from their own set, as they call it, when there were better men in every respect around them. I think they would take up with a black-fellow sooner than be without a companion. For my part I should have been rejoiced to have a dog for company, especially as he is a faithful and affectionate creature, which cannot always be said of many of our fellow creatures; in fact, very seldom in my experience. But I was soon to have company in a way I little expected.

One day I was lying in my bunk, thinking of old England and the dear ones there, when I suddenly heard a shout which I knew at once must come from the throat of a human being. I jumped up with a feeling I cannot describe (something between wonder, delight, and alarm), when, at the distance of one hundred yards, I saw three men dressed in warm furs. They had a kind of sledge with them, which seemed to have been drawn by an animal of which I never saw the like before. The men appeared to hesitate about coming on, when I shouted "Come on!" as if I expected they would understand me. Whether or not, they did come on, wondering, I have no doubt, what kind of being I was. They spoke to me in some language I could not understand. I also spoke to them with the like effect. I then tried "pigeon English," which I had learned in one of my voyages to Canton, and also a smattering of other languages I had picked up in my voyages; but it was of no use, so we had to make ourselves understood as well as we could by dumb signs. They told me, as well as I was able to understand, that they came from a long distance (pointing to the south), and that they were attracted by the smoke of my fire (pointing to it), which some of them had seen in an exploring expedition over the snow and ice. I found out afterwards that this was the case. I also tried to explain how I came there, and showed them my hut and boat, which latter they seemed to admire very much. They then came into my mansion, bringing in some food from their sledge, which they set on my table, and of which they



asked me to partake with them. I, nothing loath, fell to, not having had my dinner: it was then being baked in my oven, which I afterwards showed them, to their great admiration. They then unharnessed their horse (as I called it), which immediately began to devour the moss and vegetation which was very plentiful about. This saved them taking any fodder out of their supply in the sledge.

These men were over six feet high, with fair complexion and hair, large beards, and very broad chests; apparently muscular, and, I should say, of great strength. Their voices were soft and musical, and their language was also musical, and resembled somewhat the Italian which I had heard at Naples when I was on a voyage in the Mediterranean. They were very good looking, too, and seemed to be of a civilized race. There were a great many things I wanted to know about them—such as the kind of country they lived in, their number, etc.,—but of course they could not understand me, so I had to rest content at present, being thankful that they had fallen in with me and saved me from my lonely life; for I made no doubt they would ask me to go back with them, which indeed they did soon afterwards. As they seemed inclined to rest for some days, I set to work and gathered moss for their beds; and as I had built a pretty large hut they seemed to be very comfortable, as indeed they must have been after such a long journey over the snow.

The day after their arrival I showed them my contrivance for catching fish, and made a haul in their presence. They seemed to know all about nets and fishing, and described fish (pointing to my little fellows) a foot and a-half long; so I concluded they must have plenty in their country. They appeared to be very intelligent, and I longed to be able to converse with them. The leader took some trouble to teach me a few words of their language, such as the names of the few articles which I possessed and articles of food. I launched my boat, and persuaded them to get into it and take an oar each, having the steer oar myself. They were a little awkward at first, but soon got into the way of the stroke. We pulled about the bay for a couple of hours, they delighting in the sport, from which I concluded that they had no craft of the same kind in their own country. I took care, however, to keep in the bay, out of the current.

After a few days they told me by motions that they intended to return home, and asked me to go with them.

Of course I consented at once, and enquired in the same way in what direction their home lay. They pointed this out to me, which was to the south; in fact, in the direction of the current which swept by my bay. After a good deal of consideration the thought struck me that it would be possible to go there in my boat. I put this to them, and, to my surprise, the leader consented readily (I found out afterwards that they were aware of the current and which way it trended); so without more ado I got my goods together and put them aboard, having previously overhauled my boat for a long voyage. I was sorry not to have my lug sail, which I had cut up for my bed, as it might have been of service to relieve the oars, but found out when under weigh that it was not required, as the current took us along with very little help from the oars, even against a head wind which we had now and then. They then put the contents of their sledge aboard with their provisions, which consisted of hard baked bread, like biscuit, and salted meat, with other things which I could not make out. Their drink was an infusion of some kind of dried herb, which was sweet to the taste, not requiring sugar, which suited me very well, as I was always fond of sugar, and had not tasted any for a long time. They filled a large skin with water got from melting snow. I wondered what they would do with their horse (as I called it) and their sledge. The latter they determined to take in tow, as it was made of very light and strong wood, like my firewood, and the former they signified to me would find his way home by the track of the sledge, getting his food by the way from patches of moss under the snow, which he knew how to find and uncover.

We are strange beings, for now I was about to leave my solitary home I felt a kind of regret which was unaccountable to me; but if I had thought there was any chance of my being left behind, the regret would be the other way no doubt. But as soon as we had got on board and I took the steer oar my heart was as light as a feather, and I started in great spirits. I had taken the precaution for some time past of storing a quantity of the seeds which stood in the place of bread, which I added to our stock of provisions.

The weather was fine, and we pulled out of the bay into the current which I had dreaded before; after which it was only paddling, the current taking us along at such a rate. We hugged the shore for many days; in fact, nearly the whole time we were on the water. My crew would have



been pleasant companions if I could have understood them, for they conversed and seemed to joke with each other, and sang songs, the tunes of some of which were, to my thinking, very pretty. I do not think I was a bad judge, for I could sing a good song myself, and was accounted a good singer among my messmates. After my companions had been singing one day they signified to me that they would like to hear me. I at once sang "Black-eyed Susan," with the tune of which they were very much pleased.

Of all the different people I have come across in voyages I think the Chinese were the only ones who had no notion of music, for it is all noise they make, and the more noise the better they seem to like it.

I kept no account of time, so had lost all count, and could not tell how long I had been in the region. I knew it was summer time when I got there. I was afterwards sorry for this, but at the beginning I was too cast down to think of it. About two or three weeks after we started with the whaleboat we had the sun shining much longer every day, until at last we had it all day, and the snow was gradually going back from the shore, perhaps for a mile or so, but the land appeared to be very rocky and barren. I saw one of the animals on it which I had seen from my hut on the bay, but this one was not quite white like the other. I pointed it out to my companions, and they laughed and, pointing to their mouths, gave me to understand that they were good for eating.

I now found out that we were on one shore of a large body of water, if not an inland sea, for I could not see the land on the other side, and we came in sight of three large volcanoes right ahead. We rounded a sharp point, after which we kept to the left hand, still hugging the land. I forgot to mention that the current gradually got less swift and at last we lost it altogether.

I noticed now an immense number of jets of water inland, some of them spouting up twenty or thirty feet high. My companions gave me to understand that the water was hot. I had begun to understand a good deal of what they said by this time.

My crew pulled well, for they were powerful fellows, and we made good headway. At last the land seemed to be not so barren, and trees and vegetation appeared here and there, and then small dwellings and patches of cultivated land. These increased as we went on, until in the distance

I came in sight of a town built near the shore, on the banks of what appeared to be a large river. On our way we had passed the mouths of several good streams.

It must not be supposed that we were awake all this journey because it was hard to tell night from day. My companions seemed to know the time for sleep, and the boat was allowed to drift while we were asleep, with one of us to keep watch and prevent her from going ashore.

At last we came in full view of the town, situated about a mile inland from the mouth of a large river, in which were a number of queer-looking craft and boats, which were almost as broad as they were long, but appeared to be very fast, rowed with paddles instead of oars. A number of these were brought out to meet us, and some men in a large boat had a long yarn with the leader of my crew, and they all looked at me and my boat with astonishment. They were all fine-looking men, like my companions, and I could not see an old man amongst them. There were a few women on the shore looking in curiosity, but rather frightened, as I thought. When I saw them nearer they appeared to be very handsome.

After we had unloaded our boat and hauled her up, I was conducted to a large building, accompanied by my crew, and introduced to half-a-dozen noble-looking men; after which the leader of my crew made a speech which I had no doubt was giving an account of their expedition. I was looked on with great curiosity as I stood up in my monkey jacket and uncombed hair, more like a wild beast than a human being, for I had taken no trouble with my person except to keep it clean.

When I left the whaleboat I saw hundreds of men and women gathered round looking at it. In the room I was taken to were a large table and several stools, certainly very handsome and well finished; and presently I and my late companions sat down to a very good meal of stewed meat and the hard bread I have mentioned, moistened with the sweet drink we had during our voyage in the whaleboat; and we were left to ourselves to eat it, which I thought was very good manners on their part, and would shame a good many of my own country. In fact, I was astonished to find a civilized people here, letting alone finding a people at all.

In the course of a few hours I was shown where to sleep, which was in a small room in the same building, on a bed of down, with bedclothes as at home. I found that the



people seemed to go to rest at the same time, for I saw no one about, although the sun was shining, from which I concluded that they had some way of telling the time unknown to me. For my part I was glad to get to bed, being quite tired out with my late exertions and excitement. I slept soundly for I don't know how many hours, but I guessed about fourteen or fifteen. I found the people awake and going about their work, for I could not see a single idle person. I found out afterwards that idleness was a crime amongst them, and all had to work by brain or otherwise, no matter whether rich or poor, except, of course, young children. This did not mean that property was equally divided amongst them, for every person could keep what was his own, which, however, he was expected to use as it pleased him for the general good, after providing for his own need. Some I found did not act up to this rule, but not many, for human nature is the same in all climes; but the few were held to be unworthy and not much liked by their fellows. However, I am going ahead too fast. After giving me a good rest they found me something to do, and as they knew I was accustomed to boats, I was put into one of their boats to carry provisions from a distance to the town, with the leader of the men who took me from my desolate home. We were soon very good friends, and I picked up from him a good deal of their language, being naturally quick in getting hold of languages, wherever I might be. The work was not hard, for these people never worked as hard as labouring men do at home, having no occasion for it, as there were so many labouring men to do what was required; and being a strong man myself, six feet high, with broad shoulders, and weighing at least fifteen stone at that time, the work was child's play to me. I had to thank my sea-fowl, eggs, and fish, for keeping me in such good condition. I also had a knack of making the best of everything under difficulties, for it does no good to fret too much, although I had enough at first to frighten the stoutest heart. I was very thankful I had dropped into such good quarters, and should have been very jolly if I had known when it was to end and I should be able to get home again; but seeing no prospect of this I put my regrets in my pocket.

They were certainly a quiet, kind, and good-hearted people, and they all apparently had a great fancy for me, as far as I came in contact with them. I afterwards found

them nearly all the same. I had at one time worked in a shipbuilder's yard and had picked up a good deal of knowledge of the trade, and so I helped them in making their crafts and boats. What I proposed and did for them in that way they thought greatly improved their style, which indeed it did, as I had them built for sailing as well, for their flat-bottomed boats were not fit for sailing, being very crank, and they had never sailed one. This happened after I had been there a good while. I had great difficulty at first in using their tools, which were good when I got used to them, but I should even then have been glad of a good handsaw, plane, and firmer chisel. One thing was, the wood was very good to work, and they appeared to have a plentiful supply, which they got from a source which I was afterwards shown.

I shall never forget the delight of the people, men and women, when I launched my first cutter and got her under way, with my mate, whom I had first instructed to manage the foresail and jib. It was a great success, for she went to windward like a bird, at the rate of seven or eight knots.

I must now say something of the women. They partook of the same character as the men, only, as might be expected, of a softer nature, and although I do not like to disparage my own countrywomen, I think that they are far before them in many respects. For instance, I never saw a bold or forward woman amongst them, but all seemed modest, quiet, and retiring. This I found to be the case in all my after experience amongst them. They were certainly very beautiful, almost without exception. I do not know how it was I did not lose my heart amongst them, and can only account for it by the remembrance of a pair of bright eyes in the dear old land. There was one thing, they never made advances, although I could see that I was a general favourite among them. My mate one day hinted to me that I ought to marry, and pointed out some nice young women who he thought would have me, but as I did not say anything he never mentioned the subject again. I always had some kind of notion, notwithstanding my giving the thought up, that I should in some way or other get home to my dear ones.

As I made progress in their language I began to know them better, having long conversations with their principal men, of whom I was chosen one, I suppose on account of my good conduct and falling in with their ways. I found



that they had four magistrates, elected every two suns, which was equal to one year with us. One was for settling disputes—in fact, the duties of a judge—and he was very rarely called on to act; another for religion; one for education, and one for morality. This was all the government they had for about ten thousand souls, which they told me was about their number. I asked if the people increased at all, and my friend said he did not think so, for they were not long lived, and the proportion of single people was very great. Their religion was in effect Christian, for they believed in a great all-powerful God, who sent a holy being to the earth to redeem sinful men. At least that, and a good deal more like our belief, was what I made out from him. From this I could not help thinking that these people had been brought in some miraculous way from a Christian country long ago. I asked my friend if he knew, or had anything to show, how they came there. He said no, but that he thought the people must have suffered great hardships at some former time, from traces which had been found at different places. No doubt their being left free from contact with the rest of the world tended a great deal to the purity of their morals and good dispositions. This is my notion of the matter. The climate might have had a good deal to do with it, as well as their religion. He asked me if we had any religion in my country. I said that we had, similar to theirs, at which he was not surprised, and questioned and cross-questioned me on the subject, which forced me to tell him some disagreeable truths. I told him that my country was a nation consisting of many millions of souls, but the governing part was small, and included only two small islands, the inhabitants of which were Christians, believing in a Saviour like them, and that they had settlements in all parts of the world, some containing people who were not of our belief. In answer to questions I told him that we had an immense number of persons of different ranks, called clergymen, to look after religion; that some were very high, and were paid large sums to look after the rest; and those who got the most pay did the least work: also that there were different kinds of Christians, the greater part differing very little from each other, as I thought; but I had not troubled my head about it beyond my own church. At that church, I told him, the clergyman held services of two hours each every seventh day, and I believed my mother never had a visit from him, although she attended

his church many years; that I heard he visited people who were well off, at which my mother used to feel hurt, but being a humble-minded body she forgave it, and went on as usual, as if he were anxious for our souls, which I am sure he could not have been. I told him that I should not think they were all like that, as I had been told of many very different; but being so many years at sea, and such a short time at home after each voyage, I could hardly judge whether it was true or not. I told him that there were a great many poor people amongst us, and some very rich, who enjoyed, or thought they enjoyed, their riches, many of them never giving a thought to the poor, but that I had heard of many noble exceptions. I said I could only speak from my own experience, which was not much, being mostly at sea, and I might not be doing them justice. This was in the course of a great many conversations. He said he wondered at the clergy being paid, as it was the duty of those well off to do the work of religious teaching, as with them, and not remain idle. I explained that most of them did not know enough themselves to be able to teach others, and that they spent most of their time in what they called pleasure. I did not tell him about the vice and misery in our great towns, for it went against the grain to confess so much about my dear country, and I afterwards explained away a great deal of what I had said when I came to think it over. He could not understand why it required such great learning to teach the simple truths of religion. I could not tell him, but said a great many men spent the greater part of their lives in the study of it, which I believed they called theology.

If I have said anything to these people which is not exactly correct of my countrymen I hope the reader will excuse it and put it down to my ignorance.

I once happened to drop the word war, which I had to explain to him,—how the world was divided into different countries, which were jealous of one another and coveted each other's land, and trained and armed numbers of men to go and kill each other! He seemed to be very much shocked at this, and asked me if they were Christians; and on my answering that they were, he expressed great doubt about their being real Christians, that is if it was similar to their religion, which had no word to signify murder. I told him the countries were governed by kings, who had great power in their hands, and could make peace or war as they



liked, very much against the will of their people, but that this was not the case in my own country, which was obliged to keep armed men in self defence, for if she did not she would soon fall a prey to her neighbours. He appeared to think that the rest of the world was very bad, and said he was thankful that they had no intercourse with it.

They certainly were a model people in every respect, and the more I knew of them the more I liked them. They called their country Bencolo. They had metals which they worked, particularly iron, but made no use of silver or gold except as ornaments. They had a great many of the old world arts, which made me think that at some great distance of time they had been transported bodily into this region, and had preserved their religion and habits, although having lost the tradition of how they came there, if they ever had any. They had no money to traffic with, but exchanged goods with each other. Their land extended a great distance along the shores of the inland sea, although it was only a fringe.

I found that there was a rapid current running out to the ocean on the opposite side to that on which I entered in my whaleboat, which the people avoided when in their boats, for fear of being carried away to sea: in fact, this had happened to some of them at different times, and they were never heard of again. This set me thinking, and ended in a resolve which I shall tell farther on.

I could never understand how these people made out their days (the months and year I could perfectly comprehend). For instance, there was bedtime and time for getting up, although the sun was shining all the time or else no sun at all for months. When the sun disappeared it was not quite dark, owing to the southern lights and the glare of the immense volcanoes. Indeed, the winter was a very pleasant time to me, for the people used to get together and be more sociable at that season, and there was not so much work to do. I shall never forget the sun wheeling round lower and lower until we lost sight of him for some months.

I could not help admiring the respectful way the young people treated their elders (which I found out was part of their religion): it was quite a contrast to many of our young people at home, especially boys. However, I always laid this to thoughtlessness and their bad bringing up, for I have seen the very same boys when grown up turn out to be fine characters in every respect.

We did not lack fun in the winter, as there were plenty of games in which both sexes engaged, for they are a mirthful people: snowballing was one of them: and I always joined in the fun. I had a great mind to teach them "kiss in the ring," but on second thoughts decided not to do it, as perhaps they might think that kissing was not proper. I made a hole in my manners on one occasion. I came pretty close to a beautiful young woman, and something tempted me to give her a kiss, at which she was very much offended; but I was forgiven on explaining that it was quite a common thing in my country. I could not help noticing that the same young lady always looked slyly and not unpleasantly at me ever afterwards.

The animals in this country are pretty numerous, but what puzzled me was that the females carried their young in a bag under the stomach. This was without any exception—not even the powerful animals they used as beasts of burden, which were also killed for food. Meat was not much used by them, their chief animal food being fish, which was good and abundant. There were plenty of birds (all strange to me except a kind of wood-pigeon), some very beautiful and of most gaudy colours, which seemed strange for such a cold country in the winter.

I went to see their wood supply: it was most wonderful, all dug out of the ice and snow—fir trees of immense size—and no limit to the quantity. It was situated about twenty miles distant, in the snow and ice country. I told them of our coal mines and the great quantity of coal used for fuel, describing as well as I could its nature and qualities; but I could not make them understand steam power and the uses to which it was put. Many of the things I told of our dear country I saw they could hardly believe, and I got to be rather reserved in consequence. For instance, when I told them we built ships which would hold thousands of men each, they held up their hands in astonishment, as if it was incredible, and some expressed their doubts as to how such monsters could be got into the water. However, I showed them afterwards how it was done, when I had built a craft of about fifty tons and got her into the water by means of ways and the usual manner of launching vessels. This caused great admiration, and the day was kept as a gala day, the people coming from all along the coast to see it. When I got her rigged and fitted out, I took some of the people on a cruise for a couple of days. They showed me



where the current outwards commenced round a point of land, but begged me not to go near it for fear of being carried out to sea. I was wishing to get near, to examine it, having no fear of being carried out with my weatherly craft, because I could tell by making a long board I should get out of the current; so we returned safe and sound after a very pleasant cruise.

In this trip, while skirting the land in one place, I saw three very large birds in a flock: they were like ostriches, but appeared to be three times as large. The people on board told me they were scarce and wild, seldom coming near the settled parts.

The beasts of burden I mentioned were large and powerful, something like a bear, and would go at a good speed over the snow. They were quite tame, although, I was told, originally wild, as were most of their domestic animals.

When the sun disappeared our work and amusements varied, and it was with shouts he was welcomed when he again appeared.

I do not know what these people would do, if the population were to increase much, with such a speck of land to live upon. I suppose the climate had something to do with their early decay, for I never saw a stronger or more healthy people while young; but the old people appeared to be taken off suddenly by some disease which I could never make out.

In my conversations with these people about my country I spoke about our laws and lawyers. They could not understand why the laws should be so difficult and require so much explaining. They said that they had certain rules for their guidance, which they supposed I called laws, but which did not require explaining, and if there was any doubt at any time, the matter was referred to one of the chief men. I could not tell them much about it, but said that some people spent a great deal of money in law, in disputes between themselves, and very often each came badly off, and the lawyer got well paid; at which they laughed heartily. Of course I could not explain much about it, having no knowledge of the kind, and was very often puzzled to know what to answer. I could see, however, that they were a far happier and better people than we, or any other that I ever came across.

They built a little vessel about the same size and pattern as mine, and rigged it in the same way, with which they

went for a sail with mine. We were both loaded with passengers, including ladies, who appeared to enjoy the sail. We were very merry, and thinking of returning, when suddenly I saw there was something amiss with their boat. I think she must have missed stays, for the wind had caught her mainsail—the sheet of which was fast—and turned the boat over, throwing all the occupants into the water. I bore up at once, and took in the ladies, who were kept up by the men, all except one, who was struggling with no one to assist her, all the men being engaged with the others. She was nearly sinking for the third time before I could jump overboard, but, being a powerful swimmer, I held her up and got her into the boat with the rest. We then righted the boat, she being built of light wood, baled her out, and took her in tow homewards. They were not perfect in the management of the sails, although I took a great deal of trouble in teaching them previously. It was curious that the lady I saved was the one I made the mistake of kissing. She was always very cordial with me afterwards, and I thought regarded me with a good deal of interest. I am not a vain man, but I thought she would have married me with a little persuasion, and I am nearly certain her parents would not have objected. However, I was not at all troubled, having made a resolve to get home some day; and I could not think of taking a young woman like that from a comfortable home, on a dangerous adventure, if I loved her ever so much and she was ever so willing.

I certainly did love these people, and knew I should feel it much whenever I should part from them. No doubt I have omitted many things relating to them which I ought to have described and may think of at some future time, but I do not think I have flattered them. Some day perhaps an expedition may be fitted out to try and find them; that is, if my story is believed, which I think rather doubtful, seeing that there is only my unsupported word; and it was unfortunate that I had nothing to show from that country to confirm my statements.

After a period of so-called darkness the sun began to appear again; and it was now I broached my intention of leaving them, to try to get home. My plan was to build a strong cutter, of about ten tons, which I could manage by myself; to have spare sails and spars, with provisions and water to last me three months; and to sail out by the current flowing outwards, trusting to meet with some vessel when I got well



to the north. When I mentioned this to some of the chief men they said they were sorry that I should embark on such a desperate undertaking, in which they knew I should be sure to perish, and tried all they knew, aided by the women, to persuade me to give the matter up. These last appeared to feel it most, more moved by pity than anything else; and indeed, in all my intercourse with mankind in every clime I have visited, I have always found the women more willing than the men to help and pity people in distress or sickness. I had a great battle with myself about it, but at last my love of home and those near and dear to me prevailed, although, if I had had no ties of the sort I should have been content to pass the rest of my days with this grand people.

Another reason for trying to get home was my desire to let the world know of my discovery of this unknown region, although I should be sorry if the old-world vices were ever imported there. But, as it turned out, they did not believe me; and I suppose it will be left to some future explorer to confirm the truth of my story, and add many things, scientific and otherwise, to my account of the country, which I have omitted.

When they found out that I had quite made up my mind to go, they assisted me in every way they could. They brought me splendid timber to the banks of the river, and set carpenters on to assist me in building my craft. I was watched with much interest by a great many people, and long before the summer was over I had finished my vessel. She was very strongly built, for encountering icebergs, which I fully expected to meet after leaving that sea. I fitted her out with two sets of sails, spare spars, firewood, a little cook-house, small cabin, and every convenience, decked overall, with small hatchway and companion and ladder. I laid in provisions and water for three months, and might have had enough for twelve if I had wanted them. In fact, the people wanted me to take more than I could carry, although they still tried to persuade me not to leave them. One thing I was deficient in: that was, a mariner's compass. But they had taught me the situation of certain stars by which I could steer at night, when I was not asleep, after I got away from that region. Before that the current would take me to the north.

I felt very queer about it after all, for I could not hide from myself that I had engaged in a desperate adventure. I had preserved the monkey jackets which were left in the

whaleboat, and took them with me on board my craft, as I knew they would be very acceptable before I got into a warm latitude. I had also kept the boxes of matches which were in the pockets of the jackets. I had my sheath knife and my pipe, which was of no use, as I had no tobacco. I amused the people a good deal by smoking my pipe as long as my tobacco lasted. They could not understand the fun of it. One day one of them tried a whiff or two, and it nearly knocked him over. He never asked for another smoke.

After getting everything ready and shipshape I proceeded to take leave of my kind friends. I am not easily affected, but am not ashamed to own that my eyes were moist enough, and several of the women shed tears, especially the girl I liked best. In taking leave of her very little would then have put me off my enterprise. Such is human nature; for I had grown very fond of her without knowing it. However, after this great trial to my feelings, I put to sea with a fair wind, accompanied by a whole fleet of boats until I got into the current northwards, when they left me with many good wishes for my welfare.

I noticed that the water was much warmer in this current than the other, which I put down to the boiling hot springs and spouts on the coast and inland, which the people told me existed in immense numbers and size, sufficient in some places to form large streams. I went on my solitary voyage, I must confess, in very poor spirits, for I knew what was before me, and my leave-taking affected me much for a long time. But I had too much to do soon, in looking out for my navigation, to brood over what I could not now help. I sailed with the current while the wind was fair and drifted when I had a headwind. One thing pleased me: that was, that I had got a weatherly craft, though not a fast one on account of her build. I did not want a fast boat, so long as she was buoyant and safe in a sea-way. Whenever I wanted to sleep I threw a thick spar overboard with lashings at each end, and allowed the boat to drift until I awoke, when I would haul it in and go on my course. On one occasion it came on to blow hard while I was asleep, and on waking I found the boat was riding safely to the spar, which I often made use of afterwards, when the wind was too strong to carry sail.

I kept on in my course as well as I could until I got into regular day and night instead of all day, and then I knew



that I had made good progress. I forgot to mention that I had a hole in the deck, near the tiller, where I could sit and steer in a gale of wind, so protected that not a drop of water would be taken in, although my deck should be a-wash with an extra wave or two. Of course I got the benefit of these waves, but being well clothed it had no ill effect on me. I saw a great many whales, and often wished I was in my old vessel, with her jolly crew, to chase and get a few of them. I wondered how the doctor got on—whether he was happily married—and whether I should ever get home and obtain my lay. This latter appeared doubtful to me, as the owners must have given me up for lost and divided the money long ago. I had plenty of time to think, and my mind often went back to the kind people I had just left behind.

I had stood out some tough gales, and was getting hopeful, when one evening I could see a storm brewing. I had no idea what part of the South Sea I was in, whether near any land or not, and made preparations for the night. I threw out my spar to windward, took in all sail, had my supper, and waited for what might come. In about a couple of hours the gale came with a vengeance. It got quite dark, and the seas washed my decks constantly, and myself pretty well. I had no fear of a capsize or foundering as long as my lashings to the spar held out, and even if they did not, I think I should have been pretty safe, as my boat was staunch and well ballasted with ballast which would not shift. My only fear was that I might during the gale drift on to some land and get wrecked. The idea of this taking place during the night was terrible, but I kept up a good heart notwithstanding. I did not know how long I had been at sea, for it was impossible for me to keep count. When morning broke I found that I was drifting straight on to an iceberg, and the wind having moderated I pulled in my spar and set a little sail to clear it, which I did with difficulty, making a close shave, as I had got pretty close before I saw it. That was a narrow escape, for which I was very thankful. After that I kept a good look out for icebergs, but fortunately saw no more.

Before leaving Bencolo I provided fishing lines and hooks (of which they made a great variety), to fish sometimes for fresh provisions, and also to pass the time on my lonely voyage. I rigged a red rag on a large hook, as I have seen done for mackerel, and let it trail after the boat. To my

great delight I sometimes caught fish as large as ling, but far better eating. They were the only kind I caught. A big shark used to follow the boat sometimes for days. If I had thought of bringing my whale lance with me I could have given him something for following me. It made me shiver to think what my fate would be if by any chance I went overboard.

I must say there was a great sameness one day with another, but I kept a good look out for the sight of a ship, although I was aware I was out of the course of most vessels, except perhaps a whaler or two.

After about a week, to my great joy, I saw a vessel dead ahead of me, but so far off that I could not make out her rig or anything about her, and of course she could not see me even with the glasses. However, I sailed after her with the hope of getting within the sweep of their telescopes. She was steering away from me, and at the close of the day she had increased her distance from me. The next morning she was nowhere to be seen. This was a great damper to me, but I soon rallied with the hope of better luck next time. You may be sure I kept up a good look out after this, but I am sorry to say to no purpose.

My thoughts went back very often to the people I left behind, and I wished sometimes that I had studied their ways more than I did. I remember a conversation I once had with one of their principal men on the subject of a future state after death. It seems that they all expect to go to Heaven without exception, but all will not be rewarded alike, and that they will see all their friends and relations again, but will lose all their earthly feelings except love. Now, all this may be very well for a people like them, but I thought it would never do for us, unless meeting with those we loved on earth. This last I must say is a comforting thought; but to my thinking, as a plain man, not well versed in scripture, I would not like to meet some down-right bad persons I have come across, let alone the wretched people who have committed murders and all sorts of abominable crimes. I could not for the life of me confess to these people the state of our society, with its vice from the highest to the lowest, without in some measure condemning myself as belonging to such a lot, so I held my tongue about it. I do not pretend to any great virtue in myself, but my conscience acquits me of any great crime. These people have no word for "Hell," which some of us



are threatened with by our teachers if we do not comply with certain forms of worship made by man, and for non-compliance with which in former times people were sent into another world with cruel tortures by their fellow men, as well as being condemned to everlasting punishment. I had peculiar ideas as to the last, which I think are shared in by a great many people. I am afraid that this will look like a short lecture, but I hope I shall be excused on the ground of being given to moralising.

I have said that the Bencolians had plenty of silver and gold, which they made up for household ornaments as well as for the person. Thinking that I might be cast ashore in some civilized country where money was wanted, I got between four and five pounds of gold dust from my friends and sewed it into a leather belt which I kept tied round my waist. I could have got ten times the quantity, which they pressed upon me, but I could not conceal more than I took on my person, for who knows, if I did not conceal it, I might be robbed and murdered for it by people amongst whom I might be thrown? I also put into the same belt a gold ornament given me by the young woman I have mentioned. It was in the shape of a brooch and worn by her as such, and had a large heavy crystal in the centre. I had heard of diamonds, and hoped this was one, for, if so, it would be of great value in England and make me independent, if ever I got there. I knew very well that if I returned to England as a shipwrecked sailor, with no money in my pocket, I should have to go to sea again without delay, although I might have some friends to welcome me, for friends soon get cool if your pockets are empty, but if you do not require help you will find many to offer it to you, and that in all sincerity. Such I found to be the case in my experience; and no doubt it is human nature. Whenever I found a real friend I always was true to him and excused many faults and shortcomings in him, as none of us are without them. It was very different in my intercourse with the Bencolians, for there every man was my friend, and I never had occasion to doubt it. I never saw any cheating or trying to get the better of you, but all were honest as the day. I shall never forget the horror shown by some of them when one day I unguardedly let out that there were cheats and robbers amongst us, who would even kill you to get what belonged to you. I was sorry for this afterwards, for I did not want to give

them too bad an idea of the state of society amongst us. They had no word for hypocrisy, but I explained it to them by saying that many people amongst us pretended to be very good, when in fact they were quite the contrary, and that this vice pervaded all society in some measure, from the highest to the lowest, even extending to our clergymen or teachers. I do not think I was far wrong in saying this, for I have seen it myself, as who has not, with any experience of the world?

But to return to my voyage. I began to fear that I was a good deal out of the track of passing vessels, but had nothing for it but to wait with patience. Some days I had perfect calm; then head winds and sometimes gales of wind: the last I did not care for much, except at night. One evening, just before sundown, I could see that there was a storm brewing, and so made all snug for the night. I remained on deck until the storm came on, which it did with great violence. I then threw out my buoy and lay to, but did not turn in, as it would have been impossible for me to sleep. The night was very dark, and my poor little craft got a great knocking about, but I knew she could weather the storm. It began to rain, and I felt rather cold, although I had two great-coats on. A glass of spirits would then have been very acceptable, although I never had any hankering after it at any time, but I was always of opinion that it did good in some cases, and this was one. Not that I wanted to get up some Dutch courage, for I did not need that; but it did good in circulating the blood. I know the teetotalers would not agree with me in this, but I think they carry their fad too far, and many a sick person has lost his life through want of a stimulant at the proper time. I may be wrong, but that is what I think about it.

This was the hardest gale I had had since leaving Bencolo, and there was no prospect of its getting less that night. As soon as the day broke I fancied I heard breakers ahead, and sure enough, when it got lighter, I saw that I was drifting on to a lee shore. I was about six miles from it, and there was a long stretch of coast-line, so that I had no chance of avoiding or working past it in such a gale. There was nothing left for me but to take my chance of getting on shore, and wait, and not long to wait, for it seemed to me that I was drifting faster than usual. Of course this was more apparent than real, as I dreaded the shock of striking on the rocks. There was no beach or bay



to leeward, and I made up my mind to be dashed against the rocks and lose my life. And then my mind went back to my youth and my parents, and all the events of my life seemed to come to me suddenly and quickly. In fact, in the hour that I was drifting to the shore I nearly lived my life over again. Still, I was cool and did not lose my presence of mind, but nerved myself for what was coming. When I had drifted within half a cable's length of the shore I looked hard for some opening in the rocks, into which I might drive my boat and perhaps get on shore; but the rocks all appeared to be high. At last, when I got within twenty fathoms of the shore I saw an opening in the rocks like a cave. Although it was dangerous to take in my buoy and get the boat about, still it was my only chance. Accordingly I drew in my buoy, set my jib, got the boat round, and made head on for the cave. There was some water dashing into it, but not too much, I concluded, for me to escape from the boat; but what to do after getting there I had no notion, when the tide should rise, as it was evidently low tide. I dashed head on into the cave, and the boat got jammed for about half a minute, which enabled me to jump out up to my middle in water every time the sea came in. I then looked about and saw light overhead, through an opening. The next wave or two took my poor craft out to sea again and dashed her to pieces against the rocks. Although I was in such a serious case I could almost have cried for the loss of my boat. But I had something more to look after, and that without delay. Some parts of the wall of the opening were rough, so that I climbed up to a good height, very near where it got narrower, but came down with a run into the water, which was fortunate for me, for if it had not been so, very likely I should have got hurt and perhaps disabled. I persevered many times, with the like want of success, when the tide began to come in and the water to rise. I now gave myself up for lost, and stuck on the side out of the water, for I had got very cold. If I had not been very hardy I should have been incapable of doing anything more and have perished with the cold. As the waves washed in with the rise of the tide, some few portions of the wreck came in, amongst which was a broken oar. It struck me that I might make use of this to make my escape, so I jumped down and seized it, and fixing it from side to side above my head, managed to get to the narrow part, when I had no further

difficulty in getting to the top. I had still some trouble in getting out of the way of the sea, as I had to climb some high rocks, for which I was little fit, and I was numb with the cold. On getting clear I knelt down and thanked the Almighty for my preservation from drowning. I was not too soon in getting up, for as the tide rose the water came belching out of the opening, and before I left the spot it came out with a roar like thunder to the height of twenty feet or more. The opening was evidently caused by the action of the waves on some soft portion of the rocks. It was most providential for me that I made for the cave; otherwise I should have been dashed to pieces, and the world would have lost this true history.

After getting dry I started along the land, both cold and hungry, with no food and no means of making a fire. It was a barren and desolate land, and I walked about until nightfall without finding anything to eat. I stayed for the night amongst some high stones, which gave me some shelter, and with my knife, which I always carried in a sheath, cut a lot of dry tussocky grass, which was plentiful, and covered myself with it, thus keeping moderately warm for the night.

The next day I wandered about trying to get something for food; and making for the shore again, where the cliffs were not so high, I found some shellfish, which of course I ate raw. In my walk on that day I discovered that I was on an island and that there were others not far off. On the following day I walked along the shore, still living on shellfish, which began to disagree with me, possibly from eating them raw. It is said that necessity makes us try many things, so I began thinking how I might get a fire. I had noticed some very dry grass, almost like tinder, and thought if I could get a spark of fire in it, it would easily burn, and I might then get a fire. I had seen some stones which I thought might strike fire, and having provided myself with one something like a flint, by the help of my pocket-knife I tried my luck with this new kind of tinder. I had a piece of cotton rag ready, also some dry tussocky grass. I got plenty of sparks from my knife and flint, but the tinder would not catch. I was not going to be easily beaten, so kept at it for half an hour or more, until my flint got worn out. I had some trouble in finding another, but when I did it was a better kind. The first few strokes of this, to my great joy, caused a spark to ignite the tow. I then got my



rag, put it round the tow, and all into the grass, which I whisked about in the air until it burst into flame, and I soon had a roaring fire, which I afterwards never allowed to go down, as, whenever I left the spot for any time, I had only to cover the fire with ashes, which would keep it alive for days if I wished it. I now always cooked my shellfish, but they were very tough when cooked, and I often wished for the sea-birds which I used to catch in my little bay in the ice region. There were plenty of sea-birds here, but they were too shy to be caught.

I had a few fine days, during which time I made myself a shelter of driftwood in a small bay which I came across. This was fortunate, as the rain came on and continued for some weeks, during which time I was miserable enough, being both cold and hungry. I began to feel rather weak, living on such poor fare. On the beach of the bay a number of seals used to come and bask in the sun. I remembered on one occasion one of my shipmates (who had been a sealer) said that they killed the seals with a blow on the nose from a club; and I thought I might change my diet with seals' flesh; but where to get a club I did not know, for there was no tree on the island—only stunted bushes and perished driftwood on the beach. After considering a good while I thought I might knock one down with a stone, so one day I provided myself with a heavy stone which I could manage conveniently, and went down to the water's edge, in front of a seal, which, seeing me between him and the water, came down at a pretty good pace on his flippers immediately in front of me, to reach the water; for they are too awkward to go anywhere except in a straight line. When he came close he stopped for a few seconds, wondering, no doubt, what kind of strange animal I was. I then dropped the stone, with all the force I could muster, on the end of his nose, which appeared to stun him. Not satisfied with this, I picked up the stone and gave him a second blow, and then, drawing my knife, bled him as they bleed a sheep or a bullock; after which I drew him up off the beach and skinned him. There was an immense quantity of fat on the skin, which, however, I could make no use of, but cutting off as much meat as would keep good, I took it up to my fire and cooked some steaks, which were a treat to me, although they were hard and very oily. On this fare I picked up strength a good deal, and whenever I was out of meat I could always get another seal. They usually laid on

the rocks, but I could never get one there, as they slid down the rocks at an amazing pace. With the skins I covered my breakwind, which kept the rain off me. On the fine days I used to go exploring, which I was glad to do to keep myself warm. On one occasion I went farther than usual, and discovered another bay which was large enough to shelter a ship, and which bore traces of some one having been there before. I had not time to explore it on that evening, but determined to go the next day, if the weather was favourable. I returned to my sleeping-place and turned in, with hopes of finding some traces of human habitation, if not of human beings.

The next morning I set out in good spirits, after a hearty meal of seal's flesh, for I had given up the shellfish for the present, or as long as I could get meat. I reached the place and commenced my search from one end of the bay very carefully. When I had got nearly to the other end I came across a piece of old rope just above high water mark. Next I saw some chips evidently cut from pine with an axe or some sharp instrument. Then in the sand above high water mark I saw a track of where a boat had been drawn up and lain, but not recently. I finished examining the bay without finding anything else. I then went inland a bit, and found a small stream of water running into the sea. (I had found water where I first camped.) Going up the stream I saw at a little distance a pole stuck up amongst some rocks, which I thought looked like a small flagstaff, and hurried up to it. I found sure enough that it had been placed there by hands, but for what purpose I could not guess. I was not long left in doubt, however, for on going round a short distance I fell in with a pile of stones placed in a hollow place. I removed the stones with a great deal of labour, and discovered the mouth of a cave, which evidently these stones were put there to protect from birds or animals. When I entered the opening I found myself in a large cavern capable of holding more than a dozen men, and at the extreme end I found a quantity of provisions and clothing. There were several casks of flour, pork, and beef, with tea and sugar, all in a dry place, and also several blankets, pairs of warm trousers, pea coats, and other articles of wearing apparel; also matches and cooking utensils. These things were evidently placed there for shipwrecked sailors. There was a rough fireplace rigged, the smoke from which, I afterwards found out,



escaped through a chink in the roof, which also partially lighted the cave. I immediately took possession, and glad enough I was to do so, for I rather dreaded the cold weather coming on; and I felt assured that the place would be visited at some time or other for shipwrecked people. The place was well situated, as persons cast on the island would naturally follow the stream and find the store, as I did. My first proceeding was to make a fire and bake some cakes in a fryingpan: then I made a can of tea, and fried some pork. I can tell you I enjoyed my meal, and then coiled away under a blanket and had a good sleep for the first time for some weeks. I awoke after a while, before it got dark, and got my supper ready. On a further search I found to my great satisfaction a stock of good tobacco and clay pipes, also two or three lamps for burning oil; so that to get a light I had nothing to do but try out some seal-oil, which I afterwards found out answered very well with a piece of cotton rag for a wick. Well, after I had taken my supper that night I filled my pipe; and those smokers who have been without tobacco for a good while can imagine how I enjoyed my first smoke on that night, for I had had none since I first arrived at Bencolo. I thanked in my heart the Christian people who left all these good things for poor shipwrecked men who would otherwise perish from hunger and cold. I afterwards found out, farther along the coast, that a vessel or vessels had been wrecked there, from wreckage stuck amongst the rocks.

The next day I went over to my old quarters and brought away a lot of seals' blubber, which I melted when I got to my new home. It made capital oil for the lamp, so that now I was set up with everything I wanted. I began now to look out for a visit from some vessel, and every day made a smoke on some high land overlooking the bay. By making a small fire and putting green bushes and damp grass on it, I managed to make a pretty good smoke two or three times a day.

I found some fishing-hooks and lines in the cave, and often went fishing off the rocks when it was calm. I could always catch some fish, which was a bit of a change from the salt meat, although I was very thankful for the latter. It also served to divert my mind a bit while I was waiting for succour. I think I must have been cast on the larger island, as far as I could see, but there may have been others

which I could not see. At any rate help would come to mine on account of the provisions stored there.

After patient waiting, early one morning I at last saw a sail, as I thought, and watched it very anxiously. After about an hour I made out that she was steering for the island, but could not tell her rig, as she had a fair wind. On getting nearer she altered her course for the small island, when I discovered that she was a small brig, and to my great disappointment she sailed behind the small island and I lost sight of her altogether. I began to fear she would leave without paying me a visit, and then suddenly remembered that I had neglected to make a smoke on the headland. I lost no time in doing so, and kept it going all day. I was so anxious that I never left the spot through the day, and went without my usual meals, but sat and smoked my pipe a good many times. Towards evening I had the satisfaction of seeing the brig showing out from behind the island and then steering direct for my bay.

Here was deliverance at last, after my perilous voyage, and my sufferings in the boat, and my fortunate escape when she was dashed on the rocks. I felt almost wild with joy, and was burning with impatience until the craft dropped her anchor in the bay, where I was waiting for her. It had now got dark, and she had anchored a good way out from the shore. I was doomed to disappointment, as no boat put off on that night, and so, after waiting for two or three hours I went home, got my supper, and went to bed but not to sleep, for I was too much excited for that, until near morning.

At daybreak I was on the beach again, but there was no one astir on board, so that I thought it best to curb my impatience, and went back and prepared and had my breakfast. Thinking to give them time enough to have their breakfast and come on shore, I lit my pipe and was taking it easy for a bit, when I heard a hail which made me almost jump out of my skin. I rushed out and saw a couple of men coming up the stream towards me. I was very soon shaking hands with them heartily. One turned out to be Captain Moore, of the brig "Waterwitch," the other one of the seamen. The captain told me he was sent out specially to these islands to pick up some shipwrecked seamen who were supposed to be on them, and that they had examined the other island first without finding traces of any



men on it. He also said he did not see my smoke until he cleared the point of the island. He then asked me how I came there. I took them into the cave and gave him a full account of my adventures and of the people I had been amongst. They both opened their eyes as I went on, and I could see they did not believe me. I was much taken aback, but I have not wondered at it since, for my account has always been met in the same spirit, and my adventures were sufficiently wonderful to cause unbelief. The captain told me to my face that he thought I was telling a falsehood and that the rest of my shipmates had been made away with in some way or other. I said that I was telling him nothing but the truth, on which he began to swear at me, and said it was a pity I had found the store of provisions, but that he would take me to Sydney in the brig. Of course I was glad at the thought of my deliverance, but felt very hurt at not being believed. My story about being jammed in the hole in the rocks and my escape from it seemed to amuse the other man much, and they both asked me if I had nothing to show to confirm my story. I was not going to show them the contents of my leather belt, which I carried round my waist all the time; but ten to one they would not have believed me if I had. I had divided some of the gold into small lots, for sale when I should require money in some civilized place. It seems that the captain was aware of the store of provisions here, and he was instructed to add to it if needful, but as I was the only one who took advantage of it, that course was not necessary. They then started to search the island, although I assured them that I had been all over it without seeing another inhabitant. While they were away I made some bread and a pot of tea, so that when they returned from the search I had everything snug for a meal; after which we put out the fire, closed the mouth of the cave with stones as it was before, and started for the brig. We remained in the bay that night, and sailed for Sydney early the next morning.

I took part in working the ship, and we had a good passage to Sydney. When we arrived there I was taken before the authorities and again questioned as to my story of adventure at the South Pole. Of course I just told the truth, but it was plain that I was not believed; and ever after that, except in some few cases, I held my tongue about it, for it was not at all to my liking to be considered a liar, which I never was in my life.

Most of my shipmates on board the brig believed my story, and I was able to give them many particulars which the captain did not enquire about, or else he might not have been so doubtful of my truthfulness.

I did not stay long in Sydney, nor had I occasion to sell any of my gold there, but shipped on board the barque "Bardaster," for London, as able seaman. The vessel had lost some of her hands by desertion, and they were glad to get me. I never related my adventures to any one on board this vessel, although the captain had heard of my story in Sydney, but did not know that I was the man. This was fortunate, for it saved me much mortification.

We had a good passage as far as Cape Horn, experiencing bad weather there, but afterwards pretty fine until we cast anchor in the Downs. As soon as ever I was paid off, after selling my gold and my precious stone, I started for my home in Devonshire with my pockets well lined. My gold weighed out sixty ounces, for which I got four pounds an ounce, and the stone turned out to be a diamond, as I almost expected, for which I got ten thousand pounds. The jeweller advised me to change my cheque for a draft on a Plymouth bank, which I did, and lodged the money there on arrival.

I was now an independent man, and had made up my mind to give up the sea, although I was rather fond of it, notwithstanding my late escapes from a watery grave. I travelled home in stage coaches, and was very impatient until I got to my journey's end. I found on arrival that my mother had left Stonehouse and gone to Plymouth, so I had to go there and hunt her up, which I did without much trouble. She was keeping a shop in one of the main streets, and I foolishly appeared to her without letting her know beforehand, just for a surprise, for which I was afterwards very sorry, for on seeing me she gave a great scream and fainted away. It seems that the account of my loss had come to my mother from the owners of the "Lovely Nancy," saying that my lay, which amounted to three hundred pounds, was at her disposal, as there was no doubt I had perished by the accident, of which they gave a full account, and which she would not otherwise have known about, as news did not travel as quickly in those days as it does now.

When my mother came to she told me that she got frightened on seeing me, having no doubt of my death,



and that she never ceased thinking of me and mourning for me day and night. I then gave her a full account of my adventures, at which she was very much astonished, but did not doubt me, as she knew that I was truthful from my youth up. She was in deep mourning, as were also my sisters. The latter were away learning business in a shop. When they returned in the evening my mother prepared them for the meeting with me, which was a very joyful one: indeed, we were now a very happy family; and as I had made up my mind not to go to sea any more, we had hopes of a good deal of future happiness. We had money enough to live on the interest of it, but we thought it best to keep in business, as it was an occupation, which every one ought to have, whether well off or not. I was confirmed in this opinion by the example of the Bencolians, where the practice worked so well.

I devoted part of my capital to stocking a first-rate shop for my mother and sisters, and another part in starting a boatbuilder's yard for myself; and I lost no time in getting my lay from the owners of the "Lovely Nancy." They were aware, I suppose, of where my relatives lived from the captain, to whom I told all my affairs during the voyage from Boston.

My old sweetheart was still single, and after a little time I asked her to marry me, and she consented. She did not then know of the fortune I brought home, so that I knew she married me for myself alone, and I know that neither of us have ever had cause to regret it.

And now I must bring my little history to a close, trusting to the future for confirmation of all I have stated. I think I should be sorry if Europeans ever came in contact with my dear friends the Bencolians, for it would be a pity to disturb them from their peaceable and innocent lives; and I should be content to have my story doubted, as it has been all along, rather than any harm should come to them.

