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The Surpassing Adventures of Allan Gordon

Humbly and most respectfully inscribed to Sir David Brewster¹

Edited from Hogg's Manuscript by Gillian Hughes

It is well known that the ship *Briel* of Amsterdam took up a scotsman from the ice of the polar sea in the year 1764 and set him ashore at Aberdeen from whence he had sailed seven years before in the whaler ship *Anne Forbes*. His name was Allan Gordon and his narrative as taken down by John Duff schoolmaster at Cabrach is now in my possession.²

I Allan Gordon was the son of Adam Gordon a hind or farm servant on the banks of the Bogie and I was born in a small cottage three miles above Huntly. My father learned me to read but never to write and when I was eleven years of age he bound me apprentice to a tailor in Huntly a little crooked wretch who when ever any body offended him always wreaked his ill nature on me. I bore with him long not daring to break my apprenticeship for fear of the fine that would fall on my poor father although many a threshed skin I got and every time my knuckles itched to be at this tailor's ugly face. I was always obliged to *Sir* and *master* him and if by chance I called him by any other name I got the length of the needle in my flesh instantly and a well threshed skin when we got out of sight.

This was not to be borne by a lad of any spirit so one time we were sewing on a board together at the manse of Auchendoir and the minister and his wife were sitting by the fire in the same apartment. It was Saturday evening and my master was anxious to have the job done that night and kept urging me to ply and make long stitches. This last injunction he durst not give openly but there was an understood term which conveyed his meaning. This was 'Sit yond boy. Sit yond'. This he kept repeating and repeating that evening and at every hint gave me a pradd with his needle until in a fit of impatience I returned 'The deil's i' the bodie for I can sit nae farther yond unless I beass'. He gave me such a look! I regarded it not but laughed and joked and crooned 'Cauld kale in Aberdeen An sowins in Strath-Bogie' and 'The tailor fell o'er the bed needles an' a'³ But the minister said 'Aha William so the secret is out regarding the order to your lad always to *sit yond*. Therefore give up and go your ways home and come back on Monday morning for I will not have my clothes or my boy's clothes spoiled by your long stitches'. 'But tell me this sir' said my master who wanted to put the matter off as a joke 'Whether do you think long stitches or short sermons are the worst?'

‘William I want none of your profane and homely jests’ said the parson. ‘Therefore keep them to yourself and give up my work I can have another tradesman to finish it’

‘Yes you can sir’ said my master ‘And so can I go and hear another minister. I have the advantage of you there for you cannot have a tradesman like me in Aberdeen-shire whereas I can have a far better minister. For I maintain that in short sermons often repeated there is greater blame than in long stitches on new ground’

Thus parted the parson of Auchendoir and my master in high chagrin the consequence of which I was doomed to abide. No sooner were we beyond the glebe lands than he said with ill-feigned civility ‘Well you have behaved yourself like a sensible young man and a gentleman to night’. I was going to say that I had spoken rashly and unadvisedly and was sorry for it but that it was the severe prick with the needle that caused it. Before I got my answer arranged he struck me such a blow above the right eye that made the blood to stream. I chanced to have the layboard carrying in my right hand a substantial plaintree deal more than two feet long with which I gave him such a knap over the head that I made his skull ring again and his eyes to stand in back water. ‘How dare you for your soul sirrah lift your hand against your master?’ said he

‘I’ll not be struck like a dog in that way by the king or the Duke of Gordon’ said I ‘And far less by a bowled tailor’

This answer put the creature perfectly mad for he valued himself greatly on his personal appearance and he flew on me like a tyger. My spirit of resistance was fairly up I returned blow for blow and there as desperate a battle ensued as ever was fought. In a few minutes he⁴ began to quail and though his lip quivered with rage he was rather frightened and wanted to call a parley. ‘Come come this will never do’ said he. ‘Down on your knees and beg my pardon’

‘I’ll be d— if I will’ said I.

‘You sirrah? You’ll be d— if you will? Do you say so to me’ said he in a loud majestic tone for two mason lads appeared coming toward us. ‘Then sir know that your life is in my hand and I will chastise you until you be no more’. He threw off his coat and waistcoat and fell to me like a days-work. I held down my head and took a tempest of blows on my shoulders and neck I then ran with my head full drive on the pit of his stomach which made him stagger and fall backward. I gave him just one fundamental kick and then turned and laughed aloud. He flew after me in desperate fury striking both with feet and hands fighting in glorious stile for the two masons were now close at hand. I could fight none save as a bullock or ram but having frequently seen these fight desperately I followed their example instinctively and run always against my dumpy mishapen master with my head full drive. He tore out my hair and cursed and swore most manfully but I regarded not these giving him always the other dunch and whenever I hit him fairly whether on the face or breast I knocked him down. The two mason lads rolled on the green with laughter for to make the thing the more ludicrous whenever I knocked him down with my head I turned round and flung at him with my heels like a horse thus in my warfare imitating the beasts only.

I soon mauled him so that he could not rise but there he lay threatening future vengeance and cursing me most emphatically. He threw first the goose and then the layboard at my head which I eschewed and then run up and flung at him like an incensed or vicious horse giving him some good hard kicks and then went off and left him. Instead of going home I went straight to Aberdeen where I could have procured work as a journeyman but durst not remain for my late incensed master. So I went on board a Hull coasting vessel and continued in her five years as a cabin boy and sailor

and by that time had become quite attached to the nautical life. I went one voyage to New York and another to Lisbon but the description of all these would only delay the narrative I sat down to relate only I thought it behoved me to tell how a man of Bogie-side chanced to become a sailor.

In 1757 I entered on board the Anne Forbes for the Greenland whale fishery.⁵ Our captain's name was John Hughes an Englishman a drunken rash headlong fool and one with whom it was impossible for any seaman to have the least comfort. As there had been some excellent fish gotten the preceding summer in the Spitzbergen seas we had instructions to proceed thither. Accordingly we parted with the rest of the whalers off Cape Farewell and stretched away to the north east. We had fine weather and an open sea save that there was a girdle of ice of from ten to thirty miles broad that belted the whole coast of East Greenland the mountains of which country were frequently in our view. We sailed between that and Iceland and about the seventieth degree came frequently in view of some tremendous fish all of which appeared to be journeying rapidly northward. We captured one and continued our rout straight on for a fortnight although our mate who was an old experienced hand represented to our captain again and again the danger of penetrating so far into the polar seas but he was an absurd and obstinate mule and only laughed the good old man to scorn pretending that he was making some curious observations on the dipping of the needle whereas he never dipped the needle at all it just stood where it was only it gave over pointing. He then told us we were at the pole and afterwards that we had sailed round it. He gave us a treat and plenty to drink on this joyful occasion but we only laughed in our sleeves at him for in fact there was no pole nor pillar of any kind to be seen; neither was there any axletree or groove which there behoved to have been had we been at the pole of the world. There was nothing but a calm open sea and the sun beating on us all the four-and-twenty hours. There were plenty of fish. We loaded our vessel but yet the absurd monster would not leave the ground but continued exulting and filling himself drunk on the merits of his grand discovery and pretended that he could sail to China as soon as to Spain. For my part I believed then and believe still that it was all nonsense though there was certainly something peculiar in our situation for the needle had no power not a grain. It stood where we put it or kept whirling and wheeling as if it had been dancing a highland reel.

For two days the mate kept pointing out to the captain some brilliant appearances at a great distance which he said he suspected were immense floes or fields of ice and if the wind should chance to raise in that direction we should to a certainty be inclosed. But Captain Hughes answered him with the greatest contempt thus 'Why you old grovelling ass you have not half the science of a walrus nor half the ambition of a lobster. You do not percieve and not percieving you cannot estimate the value of the discovery I have made. A discovery which will hand⁶ down my name to all generations and not only my name but the very name of the vessel and every one on board of her will go down to posterity. Therefore tell not me of your floes and your fields your rainbow colours and cowardly surmises. Am I not resting on the pole of the world and can run from hence into any of its divisions I chuse. I am like a man on the top of a hill who if the storm approaches on the one side can take shelter on the other'

'Why it may⁷ a' be true that ye say Captain' said old Abram Johnston the mate. 'I may hae little science an' less ambition. But I hae that muckle science as to percieve that you are detaining us in a very critical and perilous situation for no earthly purpose that I can see. And my ambition is all to save the ship and cargo of my employers'

‘Say rather to save your own mean and despicable life’ retorted⁸ the captain. ‘I am answerable to my employers for the ship and cargo not you. And think you not the value of the discovery I have made to be of more value than any ship or cargo that ever sailed the ocean?’

‘Perhaps it may Captain’ said he. ‘That point I shall not dispute with you. But if we lose the ship we lose ourselves and the grand discovery into the bargain’

‘There you said true old foggy!’ said the captain ‘and it is the first word of sense you have spoken. Come and let us have one bottle together on the head of it. Who knows what you may yet be. You can box the compass. Now tell me which is north and which south’

‘What o’ clock is it?’ said he.

‘Aha catch me there old foggie’

‘Then in fact Captain I do not know for this place is like the new Jerusalem⁹ there is no night here and no star to be seen and glad would I be to be out of it’

‘Better and better old Abram. Well then we shall sail southward with the first breeze to give you peace of conscience and I’ll take you half a dozen we be the first of the whalers on the coast of Scotland’

The Captain filled himself drunk as usual and in a few hours afterwards¹⁰ from some unaccountable current the mate perceived the vessel to be drifting with great rapidity: and not knowing in what direction he called up the captain. I shall never forget how blue and confounded like he looked that morning but he instantly commanded¹¹ all sails to be set and after he had taken the sun’s altitude he actually knew where we were,¹² put about ship and sailed in the contrary direction from that in which we had been drifting for the last eight hours.¹³ The current was strong against us with a light breeze on our star board bow. The ice approached us on all sides and what was worst of all a whitish fog covered us. The captain was now manifestly alarmed for he kept close on deck and gave his orders with impatience and surliness cursing and threshing on us as we had been beasts. I confess I enjoyed his dilemma somewhat and would almost have run the risk of shipwreck to have seen his big lobster snout cooled on an iceberg for I hated him most heartily.

When our needle became once more fixed in the same direction I never was so glad as I then knew what we were doing and whither sailing.

But sailing was soon out of the question. We were completely involved in broken floating ice while an interminable field appeared following us behind. In the midst of this confusion we continued drifting swiftly toward the southwest with reefed sails sometimes finding a little opening and making some progress. We passed what I took for a huge iceberg but I heard our captain say it was one of the Seven Sisters off the coast of Spitzbergen. That was the last land we were doomed to see after struggling on for four and twenty hours longer we perceived another field of ice before us which likewise seemed approaching us for the floating ice was crushing up before it and rolling over it. But whether it was floating or fixed I know not the consequence to us was the same for the field behind coming on us with great velocity while we were fixed on the one ahead I saw what was likely to be the issue. I run up to the top mast while our captain cursed me and ordered me down but I regarded him not. In an instant crash went the masts and bulwarks¹⁴ of the goodly Anne Forbes like egg shells. I was swung from the mast by the concussion I know not how far and landed on one of the fields of ice. I saw the captain and William Peterkin struggling to reach one of the floes but they were instantly swamped and crushed to pieces. The whole perished in an instant except myself and the ship went down but in less than

half an hour by some extraordinary operation of the iceberg below the water she was thrown out on the ice keel uppermost a perfect wreck.

There then was I left on a field of floating ice on the great polar ocean without one bite of food. I had nothing in my pocket save an old testament of very small dimensions which my mother gave me when I went to my apprenticeship. It wanted both the prophecies and new Testament but had the psalms and with it I had never parted having lost the fellow of it. I saw at once the necessity of trying to reach the hulk which was beset with danger for the broken ice towered up in heaps and I had no doubt there were great gulfs between them. But life was sweet and hunger hard to bide so it behoved me to try. It is impossible to describe the perils I underwent in this attempt for when climbing over mountains of ice as firm as rocks I came to other parts which had little more consistency than froth and there I slumped over head and ears into the sea. But the sea was so terribly compressed by the weight of the ice that it always balked me up again fairly above the ice. Then the ice was so slippery I could get no hold and I knew if I sunk among the rubbish into the water gradually I was gone therefore when I found that I was going I jumped in and then I was sure to come up again with a bolt. At length when beginning to despair I reached a splinter of a boat mast and then it was wonderful with what safety I proceeded though on the very point of being totally exhausted with cold hunger and fatigue.

But behold when at length I reached the wreck I could not get in. Her keel was right¹⁵ uppermost but all the other parts were so jammed¹⁶ in among ice that I could find no ingress and moreover I was completely exhausted and had nothing to dig with save the mast splinter. The hulk as far as above the ice seemed nearly complete and unbroke up but within I could not get. Percieving a number of things scattered here and there at a little distance I took my splinter and made toward them in hopes of finding some thing to allay my hunger and thirst. I suffered far most from the latter for all the ice which I tasted was salt and my heart was burning with unquenchable thirst. I found nothing save scraps of sails, cables, boats and things that had been smashed on deck when the ice closed on us but by the clearing up of the fog for a little I percieved a mountain not far from me beyond a level plain of ice. I hasted to it supposing it to be an island but when I went it was a tremendous iceberg so steep and slippery that I could not climb it but to my agreeable astonishment I found the ice was fresh. I kneeled and blessed my kind Maker for this relief commended myself to his mercy and pity in that my perilous situation and there I sucked and sucked till I could hold no more.

My strength was now renewed and my eyes enlightened but the throes of hunger were increased. I went once more among the wreck looking for something to eat but in fact with the hopes only of finding some one of my dead companions on whom I had made up my mind to prey most liberally but I found none so that the Almighty preserved me from cannibalism. I however found among other things a small boathook used for the yawl and a harpoon fastened to a part of the shattered long boat. These were prizes not to be despised by a man in such circumstances so returning to the wreck with the boathook I easily cleared away the ice astern and reached the cabin window by which I entered but found a dreadful cabin full of ice and all turned topsy turvey. I made my way to the biscuit bunker which being inverted I broke up at the bottom and found it crammed full of biscuit. Although it was steeped in salt water I thought I never tasted any thing so delicious so I ate and ate till I grew as thirsty as ever and was obliged to betake me to my iceberg again but this time I was so provident as to take as much of it with me as I could carry and now having some prospect of protracting existence for a while I felt rather happy and thankful that I

alone was saved from such a sudden and dreadful death. I had likewise rather sanguine hopes that the Almighty had something farther to do with me in this world and might preserve me to mix once more with my fellow creatures though by what means I could not divine.

There was one phenomenon here which to me was incomprehensible. Perhaps not more than a month before (for there being no nights I could not exactly tell) we had sailed along that sea without once perceiving ice excepting that which girdled Greenland and now there was nothing to be seen but solid ice all around as far as the eye could reach on the clearest day. Where could this ice have come from? For a part of the day was still very warm. It must have shifted from one side of the polar sea to the other till it rested on some island. If I had not seen this I could not have believed it but there are currents tides and workings of nature or of God in that sea that man comprehends not.

To return to my narrative I continued clearing away the rubbish from the cabin for I could not be idle and on reaching the captain's secret store closet I broke it open in hopes of getting something to drink but the wine bottles were all overturned and smashed at which I was exceedingly grieved for I felt a violent inclination to drink of something stronger than ice water. I got knives and forks however a cork screw and many other things that would have been of great use had I had any use for them. At length below all the rubbish I came upon a whole cask of spirits unpierced and certainly never man made a more joyful discovery not even my late Captain when he absurdly supposed he had discovered the North pole. My desire was that it might prove ale or porter before opening it for there was a feeling within me that whispered these were greatly wanted. The cork screw was instantly put in requisition out flew the bung and down went my nose to the hole. It was either rum or brandy I could not tell which indeed I believe it was a mixture of the two so taking the tube of the old ship bellows I put in the wide end and sucked the small one. The liquor came liberally. Never was there such nectar tasted. But I was little aware of its potency having never drunk any thing so good before and besides my stomach and whole frame was out of order of course I was overcome in an instant grew dizzy and perswaded that the hulk was turning up I caught at the closet shelves to support myself but down I went beside my cask and I remember of laughing and trying with my whole might to rise but could not and there I lay till the wheeling of the ship which run round swifter than an upper milstone twirled me into a profound sleep.

The most singular thing now befel me that ever befel to a man and I cannot explain how I outlived it. I had actually lain in a trance for at least a month in that closet in utter darkness the door having been closed no doubt by myself but how or when I knew not. The first thing that brought me to my senses was the discovery that my tube would no longer reach the brandy and that my supply was cut off for the present. This was a grievous dissapointment at the time but it proved a lucky and providential one for if my tube had been long enough I had never risen from the ceiling of that inverted closet. I put up my hand by chance and feeling that my beard had grown to an enormous length I began to consider where I was and by degrees was enabled to trace myself all the way from the minister's glebe at Auchendoir to Aberdeen and then away to the North pole and back again to my deplorable habitation. My body was all so benumbed that I could not rise which gave me still more leisure to reflect and reflection sobered me apace. The whole of the time I passed in this oblivious state appeared to me on reflection as only a few hours if I say a day and night it would be the most that was left impressed on my memory. I

recollected of taking some merry and liberal sucks but the intervening time was wholly lost.

Still I lay quiet and dormant except that I occasionally tried to rub my limbs to bring them in play. At length I conceived that I heard a great number of people busily engaged and muttering round the vessel. I listened and listened and became certain of it and never can I describe the terror that came over me. One would have thought the conviction that I was surrounded with human beings would have brought me joy as it gave hopes of the possibility of escape. But I assure you the reverse was the case for my body being in a nervish state I was seized with the most dreadful horrors. I supposed they were some sort of polar demons or at best savage cannibals and at length I heard one of them enter the cabin at my hole astern with apparent difficulty and soon after began a munching at my salt biscuits. I lay long but at length was seized with irresistible curiosity to see what kind of mortal it was and how dressed. I therefore rose up and cautiously opened the closet door and when I looked by I saw what I supposed was a naked woman escaping out at the cabin window. I was sure I saw her bare feet and toes and from her form she appeared altogether without clothes. This in the middle of the frozen ocean was altogether unaccountable but having now my cabin to myself I seized my boathook in the one hand and my harpoon in the other and went cautiously to my cabin hole for window there was none; it had been knocked out altogether during the ship's temporary dive among the ice. Horrors multiplied upon me! When I peeped from my hole judge of my feelings on perceiving a whole herd of white polar bears prowling around the ship and all busy digging and eating. Whether a distant view of the hulk or the smell of the blubber and carcasses of the fish had brought them was the same to me as there they were and all busily employed and it was amazing what holes these powerful persevering monsters had dug in the ice and were preying on the fish that had been in the ship and on the bodies of my late companions. There were two within ten or twelve yards of me rugging and riving at the body of my late captain which I knew to be his from the shreds and patches of his clothes that were strewed about and a part of his deck hat such as is worn by English coasters and there was the end of his grand discovery, poor infatuated wretch. From this fatal catastrophe I have often thought the North pole would never be discovered or that the discoverer would never return with the tidings for none could have a finer or opener passage than we had northward which was soon obstructed in such an extraordinary manner.

Not knowing what experiment to fall on to drive this herd of monsters away I took a speaking trumpet and shouted through it with all my might 'Avast brothers!' on which they sprung all up on their hind feet standing as straight as human creatures and I am sure there were some of them that stood at least ten feet high. As they were all sleek fat and plump they appeared very like naked human creatures with long brutal heads. Such a fearful sight I never had seen. They listened and stared about them for a space in this position but showed no inclination to fly sensible I suppose that they were the lords of those regions they again fell to munching¹⁷ their grateful repast. I tried them with various kinds of sounds but instead of flying they began to congregate and draw nearer me to reconnoitre what it could be expecting I was sure some fresh prey. I then began instantly to barricade my only place of entrance pulling the fire grate into it which was now of no use the chimney being turned downward. I then took all the knives and forks I could get and every sharp instrument and tied them to the bars with oakum putting their sharp points outward and conceiving myself in perfect safety I retired to my closet drew of a tin tankard of the grand elixir took the blankets from the cabin beds which were hard frozen and making myself a bed in the

closet I locked the door inside took a composing draught wrapped myself up in my frozen blankets and like other polar animals once more betook me to a state of torpidity.

But let no one think I was utterly abandoned and hopeless. I knew and believed that wherever I was God was there also seeing every one of my actions and hearing every word that I spoke. So before I set my lips to my beloved and intoxicating potion I sung a great part of the 107 psalm¹⁸ and was rather proud to hear the white bears gather around the hulk to listen. I then read two chapters in Genesis and prayed every sentence of prayer kind that I could make out some of it very ill expressed but perfectly serious. I then laid me down after taking a potent draught of spirits as happy and careless as the king on the throne and slept until my tankard was out which I think could not be above two days and as it required both light and strength to renew it I was obliged to sober myself before I could effect this. I arose again but the nights were now setting in and the bears prowling all about though rather in a more listless manner as if gorged. I thought too there were not so many of them but then I could only see in one direction. I ate a good deal of salt biscuit that time and I could now reach plenty of hoar frost which lay nearly two inches thick to allay my thirst. I am however quite certain that I could live for months and years if not centuries on good rum and brandy mixed without tasting any thing else.

I was now quite sure from the invasion of the bears that there was a communication from my abode with some country I knew not which but I thought it would most likely be with Spitzbergen. I was sure I had passed it far to the southward and had a particular aversion at returning north. I imagined I was somewhere about the middle of the sea between Greenland and the North Cape but I was wrong as will eventually appear. I could not think of parting with my half hogshead of precious spirits in such an inhospitable climate and I knew there was plenty of stuff of all kinds within the hulk if I could reach it and about this period I more than half determined to attempt wintering on the ice. On pondering over the possibility of this I plainly perceived that the first thing it behoved me to do was to drink in moderation and the next was to work my way both into the hold and the fore-castle at whatever labour where it was likely plenty of coals and stores of various sorts would still remain. I did not understand the geography of the ship very well every thing being reversed and the companion door down among the ice. This I judged it necessary to gain and then work my way between the deck and the solid ice below and many a day's hard labour I spent invain upon this for when I at length arrived at the valve of the hold I found the whole weight of the cargo tumbled over and lying above it so that to open it was not only impossible but if it had been practicable would have been attended with certain suffocation to myself. I marvelled at my stupidity in not perceiving this before and rather suspect that what with horror and drinking I had not all my senses about me.

In the course of my excavations however I found the captains wardrobe consisting of plenty of shirts and clothes but all steeped with salt water and frozen. I found his shaving utensils too and his flint and frizel for lighting his pipe the far greatest treasure of all. I reached likewise the coal bunker behind the flue containing a few coals and an old axe for breaking them with.¹⁹ Among the rubbish of a boat that had been fastened on deck I likewise groped out a square-sail and some smaller ones which I had put there below cover with my own hands. I likewise recovered a gallant hatchet and many other things of value and notwithstanding my disappointment in not gaining the hold I was a happy man.

I next made haste to kindle a fire which I easily effected but the success was premature. From my inverted grate no smoke finding egress I was in a short time

nearly quite suffocated and was obliged reluctantly to extinguish my fire. Before doing so as the ice below the door of the hold and all about was loaded with blubber I cut a part of my shirt into candlewicks and making a lamp of a broken bottle I kindled that which was of itself a great comfort. My whole wits were now put in requisition how to make a vent. I durst not break open the rigging of my house in the keel. No no that would never do. If I had had a hearth of any sort to prevent my house taking fire I could have made a fire astern and a vent of the cabin window but then I had no hearth unless I could have reached the gridiron in²⁰ the forecabin which at that time seemed impracticable. And besides if I made a chimney of my only door of access I could neither get out nor in. Another plan behoved to be contrived and I did contrive one which I had very nearly effected with great ease but was too little of a philosopher till experience made me one. I took a goat skin which had long been used as a hearth-rug in the cabin and putting that next to the fire I made a funnel of that and sailcloth along the roof of my inverted cabin and out at the cabin window. I did it simply by pinning the cloth along the roof on each side and always as I proceeded I put in a piece of stick those next the fire being six inches long and those at the outer end only three so that I had a nice funnel of a triangular shape. I kindled my fire with a heart full of hope. No! The devil a piping of smoke would go out at the end of my grand flue! I was terribly cast down and knew not what to do next till at length it struck²¹ me as I lay on my bed that perhaps smoke would not descend. I had never seen it do so and people made their chimneys always on the tops of their houses never either at the bottom or through the gable like mine. I could not think of breaking up my keel in which I might yet be obliged to trust myself on the ocean and therefore I longed ardently to preserve it as a forlorn hope. Fire was now the only thing I wanted to make me exceedingly happy.²² I wanted it for melting snow or ice for cooking and for drying my clothes but without a smoke vent I could not use it. So the next day as an easy experiment though one of which I had little hope I carried my flue up to the heel of the keel and kindled my fire once more. There was not a vent in all Aberdeen no nor in London drew better. I clapped my hands and screamed and danced for joy but bethinking what better behoved me I kneeled down and blessed and thanked my kind Maker and preserver most heartily and I always reflect on those ardent devotions on the ice of the northern ocean with great delight. I was then only in my 21st year strong agile and so healthy that I never in my life had had any ailment and I cannot describe my exultation that night as I sat by my blazing fire drying my new stock of shirts bedclothes and clothes of all sorts. It was a night to be remembered as long as I live and shall be so most gratefully.

It was plain that winter was now set in. The calls of the swans and geese journeying southward no more reached my ears. A few bears were occasionally prowling about but they neither troubled me nor I them and as I now had to use my grate I merely stuffed up my entrance with a large snow ball which I shaped in it of wet snow and suited it when frozen to a hairsbreadth. It pushed outward and as I had a piece of cable through it I pushed it out or drew it in as suited my convenience but my employment and enjoyment being all within doors I went out only once a day to gather snow look about me &c.

Well just when the days were beginning to fade altogether it came one night a terrible storm of wind and snow drift. I peeped out several times at it but it was dreadful so I drew in my snowball stuffed the hole doubly and retired to rest after singing a psalm reading and praying. About the middle of the night I was awaked by some noise inside my cabin. I was frightened beyond measure for I had no conception what it could be. I conceived that the bears had all retired to their dens long ago and

were lying in a state of torpidity and an absurd terror took hold of me that it was the ghost of Captain Hughes and the conviction that I was sleeping in his shirt and bed clothes and drinking his beloved beverage nightly made me feel very uneasy. I had likewise seen him perish among the broken ice and though assistance was out of my power I had never proffered it and finally I had seen the bears grubbing up his flesh and bones without greatly regretting it. And in short the meeting with my late commander's spirit at this time I found would be any thing but agreeable. It came to my closet door and rapped I held my breath for I was unable to speak with terror. It tried to wrench open the door and a terrible effort it made but it failed for that time. I was by this time on my feet with a large carving knife in my hand as sharp as a lance in the point which I kept always on a shelf beside me. But presently I heard the ghost go away and attack my biscuit bunker. I then knew it was my former visitor the bear and kept quiet. She did not stay to eat any I never heard her give a crump but immediately draw herself out at the window again with much difficulty.

I lay still though the cold from the open window was terrible but having nothing wherewith rightly to shut it I lay still hoping the danger and spoliation for that time was over and resolved to secure my premises better in future. In about half an hour I heard the creature dragging itself in again. I arose with great quietness and listened and heard it take bread from the bunker and immediately depart. I was now sure that it had come to steal for its winter store and that it would leave me destitute for though I knew that there was plenty of provision in the hulk I could not reach it so I instantly struck a light which (having made tinder) I could now do in a moment and keeping close within my closet I awaited the return of this foraging monster with a palpitating heart for whether or not it was from having been bread a tailor²³ I cannot tell but I certainly had something rather cowardly and timorous in my nature. In about the same space of time half an hour namely I heard the creature enter once more and attack the biscuit. I flung open the closet door and bolted out having the light in my left hand and the long ship carving knife for cutting up beef whales and porpoises in my right. This apparition particularly I supposed the light which in all probability the creature had never seen before frightened it so dreadfully that it dashed out at the window with more precipitance than prudence for not taking leisure to put out its forefeet first along with its head it stuck fast and could not move. I run forward and with my long knife gave the animal two deadly stabs below the fifth rib toward the heart. The blood gushed out and nearly filled my cabin and the creature very soon gave over struggling.

I had no intention of committing this murder on the poor animal. It was wholly a spontaneous act. When I struck it it was merely with a sort of vague intention of frightening it that it might not come back. But I saw it stretching out its limbs in death and its feet and thighs so like those of a human creature I could not help feeling as if I had committed some enormous crime. I am ashamed to own this now but it is the truth and all that I can say for myself is that I was bred a tailor and was often ashamed of that which other men would have been proud of and proud of that of which men would have been ashamed.

Be that as it may I left the huge animal sticking in the hole to keep out the cold and retired to my couch locking and bolting my closet door but not to sleep. I was in a quandary and was afraid of something I knew not what but I took a good dram which warmed and cheered my heart considerably. I lay long in a sort of feverish state without repose and at length I arose and went to examine my prey. It was stiff and beginning to grow rigid in the flank yet strange to say I heard it munching the biscuits out side and making a sort of grumbling noise over them. I was more frightened than

ever and began to think that nature was all reversed in that horrible clime for how a creature could be dead and frozen in its hinder parts and munching and eating with its foreparts was to me quite inconceivable. Yet I was sure of it. What does any body think I should have done? Certainly just what I did. I ran once more into my closet and locked myself in.

This state of things could not last. I could not remain shut up in my cabin without water by a huge monster half dead and half living so as I could not push it out I resolved to pull it in and abide by the consequences. I did so. The animal was stark dead and its tongue hanging out at its mouth hard frozen. I was you may be sure glad to find it so yet how to account for my former impressions was above my calculations.²⁴

I turned my prey on its back to begin the operation of flaying and cutting up. The animal was a huge she bear with milk in her dugs which had manifestly been newly sucked. If my heart smote me before for what I had done it smote me ten times more intensely now when I had taken a mother from her starving offspring and when I thought of her having been stealing bread to preserve them from famishing amid the storm I not only shed tears I wept like a repentant sinner and begged forgiveness of heaven.

What could be done? I had taken a life which I could not restore and thinking it might be a prey sent me by providence to preserve my own life I skinned the animal with great difficulty chipped it into neat square pieces and spread it on the ice below the inverted deck to freeze. I calculated that I could not have less than twenty stones weight of good wholesome fresh meat. I then cleaned out my cabin washing it all with hot water and spread the bear's skin on it for a carpet. I then took a modicum of warm punch went to my bed and slept most profoundly.

But new adventures still awaited me even in that solitude where any one would have thought I was abstracted from every thing that had life. On awaking I heard a noise at my window and instantly recognised the sounds as the same which I had heard before when the dead bear was sticking fast in the window. It was a sort of plaintive grumbling. I had fearful misgivings guessing too truly what it was and without hesitation opened the window. It was a bear cub just apparently starving to death of hunger and cold and asking its mother of me with such pitiful whines looks and trembling gestures as I never in life witnessed. It raised its forefeet to the window as if intreating to be taken in. I helped it in and I am sure a more affecting sight never met the eye of mortal man. When it found its parent's skin it uttered a bleat of joy and the tears actually streamed from its eyes. It went on uttering the same sort of joyful sounds that a foal does which has been long kept from its dam. It went round and round and licked the skin for very fondness but alas it was always looking for what it could not get, the mother's exhausted dug. Poor object when I thought of its having come to the very spot where it had last seen her and where it had been fed with bread from her dying mouth I thought my heart should have broke.

At length it seemed to comprehend something of the matter that a rueful change had taken place for after long pauses of stupid consideration its mutters of joy gradually changed into moanings of heart rending pathos. It showed neither hostility to nor fear of me its mother was its home, its guide and director, and it had no other. So after going several times round with the most hopeless looks that I ever witnessed it laid itself down in a round form to die contented but its groans were not to be borne. I proffered it some biscuit. It looked astonished and rather afraid having assuredly forgotten in its agony first of joy and then of sorrow that there was any other creature present to witness these. It took the first small piece shily and timorously but the rest

it took so voraciously that it scarcely took any time to masticate it and I was afraid it would choak. It had been clearly on the very point of famishing. I knew that was not its natural food and I had little to spare but what could I do? I had not the heart to offer it a piece of its parents flesh and I had no other.

In casting about in my mind how I was to feed this poor forlorn object I recollected with joy that on the ice which I had cleared below the deck of the hold there were huge heaps of frozen blubber lying. Forthwith I crept away with my old coal axe and a light and brought plenty of rigid blubber which I broke into small pieces and fed it from my hand patting it every time and speaking kindly to it calling it Nancy after the only girl I had ever loved for it was a female and if ever I witnessed looks of gratitude it was from that helpless creature thus cast friendless and destitute on my protection. I patted it and fondled over it and when it licked my hand in return my heart bounded with delight. Our friendship was formed with a resolution that it should never be broken on my part.

No one can imagine who has not like me been left all alone on a wide wide sea the interest that I felt in this young savage of the desert. I have no expression for my feelings otherwise than to say I loved it. Yes I felt that I loved her for her misfortunes for her filial affection and for thus confiding in me. I fed her slowly and liberally until I began to dread I was giving her too much and took the remainder away back out of her reach again.²⁵ I then sat down beside her gazed fondly on her patting her all the while and repeating her name 'poor Nancy poor Nancy'. She licked my hand again and then rolling herself up once more on her mother's skin after a few occasional heavy moans she fell sound asleep.

Out of this sleep she did not waken for I know not how long for I lived a strange sort of life having lost all reckoning of months weeks or days. The only regulator that I had of time was by the length that my beard had grown and I think the length of this first sleep of hers was at least three days and nights and she might probably have slept as many months if I had not with great difficulty awaked her for the sake of her society which I could not live without.

In the mean time I was not idle having now a new motive for exertion and it was amazing how easily I effected my object when once I fell upon a right plan. I cannot imagine how I should have been so stupid. But the truth is that never having passed from the cabin either to the hold or fore-castle save by the companion door and the deck so even now when the ship was turned with her keel right uppermost I never had once thought that any other way was practicable whereas it was utterly impracticable. Now think of the ease attending this important achievement? In the floor of the fore-castle there was a trap door communicating with the bilge water into which we emptied foul water without being obliged to run up the ship's side every instant. There was likewise one in the cabin but that being carpeted was seldom or never opened. These floors be it²⁶ remembered were now my ceiling a circumstance which seems till then never to have been thoroughly comprehended by me. Thus on pushing aside the latch of the trap door above which I easily effected with a table knife well knowing its simple structure the door fell toward me and hung by the hinges. On entering this hatch-hole I found myself in the keel of the vessel among the pig iron which having fallen downward I had a free passage first into the hold where I found abundance of coals and casks of fresh water or rather of fresh ice and the carcasses of five or six whales so at all events I had plenty of meat for my new companion for many years to come and plenty of blubber to burn but all was in a state of perfect rigidity. Over these I past into the fore-castle and in the larder found a large barrel half full of beef and another more than half full of pork. These were turned of

course with their bottoms upmost but the lids being locked I had no other thing to do but turn them the other way and then they were just as at first. I found likewise bacon mutton and deer hams and about half a cask of Highland whisky so that no man could have a better provisioned house than I had if its foundation had been upon a rock save on the ocean ice which in the event of any great storm from the south or south east was liable to be broken up.²⁷ I had however a strong trust in the mercy of God who had hitherto preserved and provided for me in such a wonderful manner and great as my dangers and difficulties have been my trust was not placed on a bruised reed.

I now went back rejoicing to my sleeping partner taking a good whang of solid fish with me with pipes snuff and tobacco all which I found nicely packed up in boxes. I had found the captain's store before but now I had the greatest abundance for every one of our crew had been smokers and some of them took snuff. I tried to waken Nancy but tried invain. She was quite dormant. I lifted her up in my arms shook her and boxed her on the ear but her head hung down. When I boxed her she uttered sometimes a sort of sleepy 'humph!' but would not open her eyes. At length I held burning tobacco to her nose which made her sneeze violently and wakened her up somewhat. I then held a piece of fish to her nose which slowly and carelessly she devoured. In a little time her eyes lightened up and she looked for more. I fed her and she awakened and her eyes lighted up but ever and anon she smelled on the skin uttering a mournfull mutter over it. I wanted her to lie beside me and carried her into my room closing the door but she would not settle nor rest from the skin of her mother. I then arose and bringing the skin I spread it above my blankets. She then came in of herself and lay down on it uttering the same kind of sounds as before.

My only difficulty now was in keeping her from sleeping which I could only effect by constant and gentle feeding for it seems to be inherent in the nature of the great white polar bear only to burrow in their dens and sleep when they can find nothing more of any kind to eat. In short I got her learned by degrees to follow me out and in. When out she was never weary of rolling among the snow and she often scraped bitterly at the ice as if longing to get into the sea. But as she now lay in my bosom I did not encourage this propensity especially as she continued to thrive and grow amazingly fast and was as plump as a small fatted calf. Yes she lay in my bosom and though certainly a most uncourtly mate she being the only one I had I loved her sincerely I might almost say intensely. She never once showed the least disposition toward surliness but having transferred her love from her mother to me her only protector she was all affection and kindness seeming to consider me as a friend of her own species. She answered to her name and came at my bidding and when we walked out upon the ice I took her paw in my arm and learned her to walk upright. A pretty couple certainly we were I dressed like a gentleman in my late captain's holiday clothes and she walking arm in arm with me with her short steps her long taper neck and unfeasible long head there certainly never was any thing more ludicrous I often laughed heartily at the figure we made and as she tried to imitate me in every thing so she did in laughing but her laugh was perfectly irresistible with the half closed eye the grin and the neigh. It was no laugh in reality and such a caricature of one never was exhibited. There was a fine echo proceeding from some caverns in the huge iceberg which rose immediately in our vicinity. There was something exceedingly romantic in the voice of this spirit of the iceberg and I often amused myself by shouting to it and listening to the distant repetition which I perswaded myself was louder than my own voice. But how was I amused one day with Nancy who had been gamboling and rolling on the ice at a great rate when she all at once of her own accord stood up on end and putting a paw to each side of her mouth as I was wont to do she uttered such a

tremendous bray to the echo as was enough to have split its parent iceberg. The shout was returned with increased energy while Nancy was standing with her nose towards it listening with the most intent admiration. Then turning round her grinning snout and perceiving that I had fallen down in a convulsion of laughter she too threw herself down on the snow and laughed kicked and spurred to admiration. I laughed until I was weak and then went up to her and caressed her saying many kind things to her. After that she shouted every day to the echo until I gave over laughing at it and then she gave it up.

From the time that I got possession of Nancy and the whole ship I never spent a winter so uniformly delightful and long as it was the only thing I was terrified for was its coming to an end for then I knew the ice would break up and God only knew where I might be driven. I never knew aught about the seasons nor troubled myself calculating about them which I knew would be to no purpose for suppose the winter is all one night yet the fact is that there is no night at all in those arctic regions, at least on the blazon of white ice where I was. There is no pitch dark winter night such as I have often seen in Strathbogie. I never went out that it was not quite light though I never knew one time of the twenty four hours from another. There was often a white frost fog brooding over the ice through which I could not see objects at any distance still it was quite light where I stood. The darkest time I ever chanced to be out was like a winter twilight in Scotland an hour after the sun goes down. Neither was the cold at all intolerable. Loud stormy winds came but seldom and if it had not been for my nose I could have wrought at hard labour in the open air a part of almost every day. But the frost raised such a smarting in my nose I could not suffer it.

The sun at length made his appearance above the southern horizon and though I felt no symptoms of instability in the foundation of my abode I began to have many anxious thoughts for the snow with which I had covered the hulk to a yard in thickness began on some days to melt and run down on the one side forming huge icicles. The first thing I employed myself in after the appearance of the sun was to go daily and labour at cutting out a regular stair to the top of the iceberg in order to make what discoveries I could. This I was not long in effecting and found it a huge mountain of solid ice as high as North Berwick Law but more irregular in its form having peaks and ravines innumerable. I felt greatly exhilarated on feeling myself on such an elevation and as for Nancy she was perfectly mad with delight for her spirits always rose and fell with mine she ran round and round the top making many acute wheels and cutting the most ludicrous capers till coming inadvertently on a steep place she missed her feet and went to the bottom as swift as an arrow. The hill was so high and she so white I could scarcely discern her trying to climb it again but she could not until she came round by the stair. Then seeing that I appeared amused at her adventure she took another scamper threw herself on her hams set her fore feet wide and down she went again. This was an amusement of every day's occurrence until I gave over being amused with it and then it was given up. I sometimes persuaded myself that I perceived hills sometimes in one direction, sometimes²⁸ another but they were never to be seen again. These were singularly illusive scenes I could fancy I saw hills and glens with wreathes of snow here and there and yet I could never see them in the same direction again. It is a strange unearthly climate thereabouts and has no congeniality in it with human nature.

At length the swans came north over my head shouting day and night and the voice of the wild gander from the breast of the sky was rarely silent. This I thought boded bad things for me for it told plainly that the polar seas beyond this great land²⁹ of ice were open. I therefore judged that if the ice broke up I was sure to be carried

northward no man knew where among unknown³⁰ seas and frozen coasts and perhaps be frozen to one of the latter to remain till I suffered a miserable death.

The truth is that I felt myself a very helpless being I had no compass and not the least notion where I was. I thought it behoved me at this time in order to endeavor the preservation of my own life to set out in search of some country but I knew not where to go or where to find either continent or isle. I had still plenty of victuals such as they were, both oat meal, rye and flour. I had a fowling piece and had contrived to dry a box of gun powder which had all run into one lump, but when scraped down fired middling well. I had beef and pork: but for the longing desire³¹ I had for fresh meat I had devoured a good deal of my bear's flesh though I never let Nancy taste it nor yet the soup it was boiled in. She liked the whales better and lived most sumptuously; better than ever a bear lived before; and I never saw an animal thrive so well. She rolled and tumbled among the snow often for hours at a time.

I climbed the iceberg every tolerable day and at length formed the resolution of digging a cavern in it as it was impossible I thought that it could sink nor could it melt for ages. I began accordingly with axe and shovel and high up I am sure three or four hundreds of feet above the level ice I began my cavern. The task was a delightful one. It was very easy the ice coming off in great splinters I made great progress and when I had finished my anti-room it was like a chrysalis dome perfectly brilliant and beautiful. When the sun shone it had all the colours of the rainbow. I liked the employment and persevered on till I made several neat apartments and one with a chimney which I made with great labour with a bar of pig iron. I gloried in this achievement feeling as if I were in a castle where no polar bear or enemy of any kind could approach me without finding out my stair which on such a large mountain was quite improbable. There was one of my apartments allotted for a pantry and here I carried with great toil a part of my provisions & part of spirits meal and in short every thing I had; but the carrying of them up that perpendicular stair was a very severe job. I resolved if I saw the ice breaking up to trust myself on the iceberg as my best resource, and trust the rest to providence which had hitherto been so kind to me.

Had the hulk of the Anne Forbes been situated in the middle of a floe I would have trusted myself in her with perfect security but I knew she was on the verge of a fissure in which she had first been swallowed up and then by some extraordinary operation in the meeting of the ice below water was shortly tossed up again with her keel uppermost.

Now I must let the friends that read this see exactly how we were situated. When the ship went down I was at the top of the mast. I was swung off a great distance to the south. In a short time by a tremendous convulsion of the meeting of the two fields the ship was tossed up again. That fissure between the fields in which the ship was swallowed up was between me and the ship as the reader will recollect; and the difficulty I had in crossing it to the wreck. The iceberg arose straight to the N. W. and the base of it only about the distance of a hundred and forty paces; the ice between being all level while that to the S. and S. E. was all broken and raised into ridges. This engendered a hope in me that the floe on which the hulk rested was attached to the mountain iceberg. There was likewise a sloping declivity all round the southern base of the mountain as if part of it had been melted and frozen again and I therefore considered myself as perfectly safe in it from any danger but starvation and could not but deem it eminently sublime for me to be living in a chrysaline palace on this elemental mountain which for any thing I knew might have brooded upon the shores of the polar sea or traversed its lonely depth for ages.

For the space of two months I daresay, I spent all my waking hours on the top of this romantic mountain with Nancy for she was as constant to me as my shadow but we still continued at some risk to sleep in the cabin it being so much more comfortable than sleeping in a bedroom of ice. Then every morning when I went up to my chrysal palace I sung a psalm read a chapter and prayed and every day my hope was strengthened that God would not forsake his poor outcast from humanity who thus trusted in him. The whole of those two months passed in our common routine manner so that I do not recollect any thing worth relating.

I can give no dates; but one morning which I supposed from the height and heat of the sun was about midsummer on going to the top of the ice mountain and looking round the whole sea to the northward was clear of ice to within a mile of us while there was at the same time manifestly a strong current running rapidly in that direction and I hourly expected some great revolution. It was to me like the subverting of a kingdom or the breaking up of a world.

Every thing remained as usual for several days farther only I and my companion slept in our chrysal chamber and continued carrying necessaries to it the whole day for I had a wallet with which I loaded Nancy and she could carry more at a time than I could. But there was one time that would have been about midnight if there had been such a thing for the sun was North that I was awakened from a sound sleep by the tottering motion of the iceberg. I was astonished and frightened for it was not like the motion of a ship getting under weigh but that of a cart over great stones. I then became convinced that that huge mass of ice rested on the bottom of the ocean and I thought it would certainly split into shivers. The motion however ceased in the course of a minute by which time I was up and out on my platform from whence I saw that the iceberg had moved a small degree round to the west. It had separated from the interminable field of ice on the east leaving a gap there about a bowshot over and on the west that gap not only run to a point but S. W. from that the ice of the field was crushed up in a crooked ridge. From this it was quite evident the bottom of the iceberg rested and swung on some point from which it could not get free.

As the wreck remained on our side of the opening I hastened down from the mountain to see how matters stood and view this mighty phenomenon for so it appeared to me. But it was a far greater phenomenon than any man can conceive for it is impossible to describe it in any words that I have. The place where I stood and where the hulk of the Anne Forbes rested was only on one of the shelves of this mighty mountain. The sea in the opening was as bright as a mirror nay it was as pure as ether and through it I could see the laiggins of this amazing cone spreading away shelve below shelve into the channels of the ocean.

I now understood perfectly well the whole circumstances of our wreck. This huge mass had been coming from the north with an under current carrying all before it. The field of ice that encountered it had been going in an opposite direction with a surface current³² then when the colision took place this great surface field heaved up by some of the downward shelves of the mountain³³ had rushed over the Anne Forbes smashed her gunwale and masts to atoms and laid her over. This sudden pressure of the great field had put the iceberg a little off its equilibrium making the forepart to dip when the revulsion had tossed the wreck backward on the mountain's own base. Nothing could be more natural or evident indeed it could not have happened otherwise.

Assoon as Nancy saw the water she rushed into it and swam about in perfect delight vanished in below the ice for a space that frighted me for her safety although I knew it was the nature of that species to fish for their food even to the channels of the

ocean. She at length appeared with a fish in her mouth something like a large hirling. I was glad of it regarding it as a feast and carressed and commended her for it. No sooner was she sensible of my approval than away she flew again to the verge of the opening peeping above its margin with a most knowing turn up of her cheek. Whenever she dived she brought up a fish of some sort but that day I think she only got three. Every day thereafter the fish grew more plenty the light having brought all the fish in that channel to enjoy its influence and day after day Nancy had the verge of the opening bedded with fine fish so that I had a treasure in value far above what I had calculated in that singular animal. These fish were all unknown to me nominally except the cod but there were some of them of a very rich flavour. I cleaned them carefully, washed them with salt water and spread them among ice in the heart of the iceberg in case of future exigences. These fish before the end would have loaded a cart.

I often reflected with wonder and admiration of the extraordinary kindness of providence to me. That I should have been left alone in the midst of the frozen ocean without lacking one of the necessaries comforts or even luxuries of life. I wanted nothing but the society of my species which was half and more compensated by that of the most docile and affectionate of all animals. I hope I was duly grateful to my preserver I meant to be so and expressed it as well as I could always before I lay down to sleep and immediately after I arose. I was always glad that Nancy who was such an irresistible mimic did not begin singing psalms with me for she would have made a very bad business of it. But the poor creature had the good sense never to attempt it. She uniformly lay down with her head on her fore paws closed her eyes and looked very devout without any caricature.

Percieving the strong foundation on which I rested I again slept in my old birth in the closet of the cabin and there was one morning when I arose (I must call it morning though there was no night) our beautiful chrystal gap of water³⁴ was gone and we had set off on another polar voyage and left the interminable field of ice behind us as far as the eye could reach. Soon did I lose sight of it and then all was again sea nothing but sea and that we (by *we* I mean the Iceberg Nancy and me) were generally going on an under current was quite evident from the swiftness with which³⁵ all other floating substances past us in the contrary direction so that we were either going with an under current or at a prodigious rate which was hardly probable. And yet a current would have a powerful influence on such an extent of base presented to it.

O that I had been a man of science or that I had had a compass or any kind of instrument with me that I might have noted down marks that would have kept things in my memory for write I could not. But of all expeditions next to that of Noah I consider this of mine as having been the grandest ever accomplished by man.³⁶ There was I reposing at my ease or walking in awful sublimity on the top of a lofty mountain moving on with irresistible power and splendor. Without star or compass without sail or rudder there was I journeying on in the light of a sun that set not solely in the Almighty's hand to lead me and direct me whithersoever he pleased. The fowls of heaven occassionally roosted in thousands on my mountain and regarded me only as a fellow creature. I rejoiced in their presence and loved to see them so beautiful and so happy and moreover they assured me of the presence of the Deity for I knew they were all his creatures a portion of his limitless creation and as a sparrow could not fall to the ground without his permission and decree so I knew that all these lovely creatures were living and moving in him and that I was there in his benign and awful

presence in that sublime tabernacle of the ocean as immediately as in the grandest temple of worship that the world contained.³⁷

I never lacked amusement long at a time when abroad on that wonderful hill. There was a broad field to walk on all round the ledges of it except on one place where it rose perpendicular from the sea. On these ledges the uncouth and lazy walruses were frequently to be seen resting and rolling themselves and the seals would have congregated on it had it not been for Nancy between whom and they there was a perpetual and bloody warfare carried on and many of them were forced to give up the ghost to her indomitable spirit and prowess. I was grieved at these encounters thinking my favourite and only companion would be disabled or slain for they often went below water while the sea would have been all red with blood. But so keen was she of the sport I could not restrain her. Besides I could make no use of their carcasses for cook it as I would the meat was bad. Nancy was fonder of it than any other. She did not catch very many fish in the open sea although constantly on the look out for them yet it was very rare that I had not plenty for my table. There were sometimes that she caught great numbers of herrings of the very finest quality and there were other days that we fell among great shoals of gilses or small salmon as I thought.

For the space of six months at least must I have traversed those polar seas without ever knowing³⁸ where I was. I knew the main points of the heaven for a while by accounting the point of the sun's highest elevation above the horizon south but at length I lost myself and this rule proved of no avail. The hulk which for a long time at first had always been astern became at length the prow and I knew not where I was going. I several times saw mountains on my larboard bow in the early part of our tour and twice in particular quite distinctly. They were all speckled with snow and very like the Grampian mountains of Scotland in a day of spring.

At length I saw a headland or island straight before me and my resistless vessel bearing straight upon it. I was all anxiety of course and though I believed I was not in Europe I was anxious to see what kind of country it was and was on the top point of the iceberg on the watch. It was very rugged rocky and steep and at least one third of it covered with snow. I was even so nigh that I saw a being moving about on the shore staring at the floating mountain. I saw or at least believed that it was a woman while my bosom dilated and my heart beat hard for joy at coming once more in contact with my fellow creatures. I thought what countries and continents I was willing to traverse what seas to cross and what hardships to endure to reach my dear Scotland again. I put my two hands to my mouth in place of a speaking trumpet and hailed the female stranger with my whole strength of lungs. But ere ever I was aware or could prevent it Nancy did the same and sent forth such a bray that made all the rocks of that unknown country ring. That being a voice the most dreadful of all others to these polar inhabitants the poor frightened native fled with the swiftness of a roe and vanished among the rocks. I was for the first time provoked and angry at poor Nancy who having perceived my elevation of spirits thought it incumbent on her to be the same. I threatened her angrily but the poor creature first prostrated herself at my feet and then turning up her four feet she kicked and writhed as if begging pardon in the most repentant manner on which I caressed her and said 'Never mind dear Nancy only you are never to do the like again'. She never caricatured me all her life again.

I had observed a good while before that there was a stripe of something on the surface of the sea before me like a line of broken ice but I regarded it not for my glorious vessel plowed through all such like foam-bells. But when I drew nearer I perceived that it was a current running through a strait from one ocean to another and at such a rate as I had never seen a current before. I am sure at the inside of calculation

that it was running at the rate of sixteen knots an hour. The broken ice drift-wood and something like large morsels of moss were running by me with a swiftness quite incalculable. Still I regarded it not seated on my invincible mountain. But before I came into this stream by a quarter of a mile I got into an eddy which actually rolled my mountain almost completely round. In this gyration some of her projecting under shelves had got into the stream which sucked her in and away I went exactly at a right angle from the course I was journeying on before. This stream came through a straight strait between steep and rocky mountains not very high as far as I could put my eyes and by my calculation was running from the S. W. to the N. E. but this is not to be relied on. The current was running at such a rate that among the floating ice it was white with foam and roaring like a flooded river. For a space of time that would have amounted to weeks I run on with this stream and at length I landed in another eddy on a far larger scale in which I floated round and round I do not know how long within a diameter of about two miles. Having seen nothing like any of these phenomena the preceding summer I am persuaded I was then in the northern seas of Asia and though I saw nothing like a pole I must have been far beyond it.³⁹

All this time among these rapids and whirlpools I got no fish. I had still plenty preserved in ice but I began to long for them fresh out of the water. Nancy never looked for them. From some singular instinct she seemed perfectly to understand that it was invain. At length I saw her one day diving very often. I was on the height and being persuaded that we were off on another tack I did not descend but continued on the hill until I went to sleep making observations and at length was quite convinced that we were moving straight on at a steady pace and as I judged in a direction between S. and S. E. so that I became convinced I should rest or be frozen still on the coast of Siberia or Nova-Zembla. I sailed on and sailed on in utter uncertainty but without one symptom of despair in my heart. I sung praises to God and worshipped him before I went to sleep and as soon as I awoke and having cast myself entirely on his protection I was all submission to his will. I still wanted none of the conveniences of life. With Nancy and an open sea I could never want fish and I was occasionally laying by what I could spare for the approaching winter. I had been saving my spirits all summer but I was ashamed on calculating how much I had drunk in less than a twelvemonth. I could not have had less than forty gallons at first of the very best which was enough in all conscience for three years but I had been rather reckless on it at first which now I sore repented.

I spent a part of every day teaching Nancy to understand and obey every one of my commands and though not a very apt scholar she was an attentive one. When she found that she had done any thing that drew forth my approbation she never forgot that again. She swam for every thing I threw into the sea carried burdens cheerfully while her sagacious looks proved an agreeable conversation to me in absence of all others.

I came once more in sight of land still on my left hand so that it behoved to be another continent as I was passing to the north before and southward now. On the third day I came very near the coast and saw high rugged shores tall precipitate mountains which reminded me of sugar loaves in a grocer's shop. The narrow vallies between were nearly free of snow and the perpetual sunshine on the country gave it rather a pleasing and interesting appearance. The current was prodigious. I was going at such a rate that the mountains appeared changing their relative situations in constant succession. When I next awoke from sleep I found that I was off at a tangent with another current and had lost sight of that country for ever.

About this time the fogs began to brood over the face of the ocean the sun to wear toward the horizon and from that time forth I saw no more around me sun moon nor stars but journeyed on I knew not the least whither. During this period Nancy added materially to our stock of fish many of which I had never seen before I suppose they were dog-fish and cat-fish and sea wolves &c however I cleaned them all in the best manner I was able and laid them up in a state where I was sure of their perfect preservation. Unless when employed with some little thing of this nature I either lay and dozed read in my bible which I got mostly by heart or conversed with Nancy. She was not only a most useful slave but a social and agreeable companion. The only thing that I regretted she growing far too big.

The hulk of the Anne Forbes still continued in the same position without the least alteration and though I often slept in my crystal cave in summer I drew into my old cabin as winter approached for my anti-room at the cavern had been all melted away during the summer months and it was grown quite imperfect.

The next change I met with was the hearing of a great rushing noise like a tempest which astonished me not a little as the frost-fog was setting as dense and calm as ever. I could not even perceive a movement in it and my cabin⁴⁰ being now astern I could see no alteration of the ocean. I climbed the mountain but there all was dense and calm and the roaring sound not nearly so palpable to the sense. I descended again slept and wakened and still the sound grew louder and louder. This to me being quite incomprehensible I was bewildered in undefinable terror not knowing what phenomenon was next to overtake me. It was in vain that I clomb the hill and came down again I could see nothing and still the sound increased. Nancy never regarded it but watched for fish always when not asleep and numbers boiling up in our wake she did not miss to improve her chances never I believe letting one escape that once came fairly in view.

Not so with me. I was utterly dumfounded till at length I resolved to walk round my huge mountain as far as I could win one side being perpendicular and impassible and when I reached that to return. But by the time I got half way round that was to the prow of the mountain the mystery was cleared up. The new ice had commenced and a strong under current bearing this irresistible mass with its broad base furiously on it it was breaking it up with tremendous violence louder than the loudest thunder. The conflict was so fierce and awful I was glad to retreat astern in trembling amazement and commit myself once more unto him whose mighty arm alone can control the elements.

On my next awaking the constant thundering sound was changed into loud crashes like discharges of Artillery. I was almost resolved not to come and witness the turmoil for I was aware how awful it would be but I am glad that I came and witnessed a scene with which I shall never see any thing again to compare. The ice had thickened to a board several inches in thickness but the form of this huge mountain with its broad shelving base running in below the ice with the current heaved up the field into broad crystal flakes which gradually rising to a perpendicular position to the height of a hundred feet and more they then fell backward with a crash that made the frozen ocean groan and heave like a blanket. The attack and resistance continued. Again and again was the great frozen space broken up with crashes not to be equalled by any thing in nature and therefore incomparable unless we could conceive the rending of a sphere to pieces.

The ice continuing thus to be rolled up like a scroll before the mountain was heaped up before it to such a height that it at length became once more immovably fixed and all the turmoil was still. Here was another instance that a kind providence

watched over me for good. Had my valuable hulk of the Anne Forbes been in front of the mountain at this time it would not only have been smashed to atoms but covered ten feet deep beneath shoals⁴¹ of ice while there on the stern and lee side of the mountain it stood all unskaited and snug as ever. I was exceedingly thankful for this.

I had now nothing before me but a life of monotony for six months and I made up my mind to it made a thorough review of all my store and perceived there was no danger of starvation for hunger for a time so long that I could not calculate and from the calculation of which my mind revolted for O it is true that the Almighty once said 'It is not good for man to be alone'.⁴²

However as usual I was not suffered to be long without some incidents of thrilling interest. An intense frost set in the fog cleared away the stars appeared in the zenith and a beautiful blue twilight sky fringed the horizon. It was so light that I could have perceived objects at a greater distance than in sunshine. I was on the top of the mountain looking all abroad and persuaded myself that I saw land right ahead and at no great distance. My heart palpitated with anxiety joy and fear, and I could scarcely sleep or eat but kept constantly on the watch at every bright interval and still the form of the hills continued the same so I became assured they were not clouds such as often had deceived me.

While sitting contemplating this scene with the deepest interest judge of my excitement when the report of a gun reached my ears and as I judged from the same direction. At least I was sure it was not far from it either to the one side or the other. I took it for a signal gun from some ship but what it was or whence it came must ever remain a mystery to me. There is no doubt that the interminable field of level ice would conduct the sound unimpaired from an immense distance but to my ears it sounded as quite nigh not more than two miles. I hasted from the height but my stair was at that time slippery and in bad repair and I made bad speed seized my fowling piece and some of my powder little otherwise than a stone in hardness and consistency and as fast as I could scrape it down I charged and fired away from the height. After my third shot the salutation was returned with a roar louder than before. I tried as well as I could to imitate the signal of distress but judging that there was no time to be lost after my first signal had been answered I hasted down once more packed up some powder and shot victuals and a bottle of spirits and posted off in the direction whence I deemed the sounds and the land lay.

I had to take a circle to eschew the heaps of broken ice before me which put me a little off my aim; but before I went away I had lighted a lamp in the cavern which I knew would burn for a long time and which could not be seen from any point save one being that from which the sound proceeded and as I thought due south. The wind was perfectly calm the frost intense and a thick hoar frost covered the ice to the depth of about three inches. Yea though at that time the sky was perfectly clear and the stars visible in the zenith the hoar frost or rime as it is called in Scotland was falling very thick. The Aurora Borealis made it nearly as bright as day and the scene was truly beautiful the silvery rime that qavered in the atmosphere being all spangled with pale rainbows much more beautiful than a lunar one. Although the falling rime was so light as not to be perceptible to feeling yet my budget and hat were soon loaded with it.

Well I kept looking back to my light and firing my piece all the way posting on with what speed I was able, but a life of almost complete idleness had rendered me soft and lumpish and instead of being frozen by the cold I felt myself getting much too warm and then I took a sirpling of rum-brandy and a lick of snow alternately. I lost sight of my lamp and then had no other guide save to look behind me at my track

and see that I kept always on a straight line. No answer being made to my signals all this time I found I had embarked on a voyage of great uncertainty but at length I fairly discovered a hill right before me something like Arthur's seat and as I thought other subjacent ones and laying other hopes and uncertainties aside I made straight for that.

I was calculating that by this time I had travelled from sixteen to twenty miles from the length of time I had taken and the fatigue I felt and while still making straight for the hills which I thought were not above half that distance from me I perceived Nancy a long way to the right seeming greatly interested about something and as if following a track. I turned in the same direction and to my joyful astonishment found the traces of a company amounting to from thirty to forty individuals all journeying on the same path straight for the land. I had some scruples at following and joining so large a body of savages who might be cannibals for ought I knew and might flay and eat Nancy and I even without the ceremony of letting out the life blood. I knew not what country I was in whether in Europe Asia or America. And though⁴³ I had a sort of conviction that after going the round of all the transverse currents of the polar ocean I was again fixed on the same ground and against the same field of ice that had opposed me the preceding year but as I had no data to go upon to ascertain this it must be viewed for the present as mere conjecture yet this conjecture vague as it was encouraged me to proceed as I knew to a certainty the year before from the mountains I had seen on my tour that I had been off the coast of Greenland where I had heard there were colonies of Christians.

Well on I went on the track of this colony of sincere and simple Christians as I weened they must be returning from their summer station of hunting and fishing to their winter abodes with their families and spoils. The traces of their steps were partially filled up with the falling rime yet still I could perceive that there was a mixture of large and small footsteps of full grown and young people and thus encouraged I posted on for many miles. I had for a good while imagined that the interest Nancy was taking in the pursuit was greater than could well be accounted for. She was constantly standing and walking on end holding out her long nose as if scenting something of mighty concern to her and turning first up the one ear and then the other as if perceiving something through the gloom. At length I came upon some marks that were rather equivocal on which I stood still to consider a little. I went on. A man hotly engaged in any pursuit does not like to turn from it all at once. I stooped down and took the light hoar frost carefully from several of the footmarks. O they were the steps of human beings there was no doubt of it. There were the five toes the ball of the foot and the heel all as apparent as the sun at noonday! But then I thought again that that inapt simile might have been suggested by divine providence for in the first place there was no sun and no noonday there and moreover how was it possible the people of that country could travel over ice and snow barefooted? That *certainly* was impracticable; for their toes would be all frost-bitten and their journeying quickly at an end. Still I went blindly on hardly knowing what I was doing thinking or where going till I perceived that Nancy had run off and left me on the track; and then straining my sight forward I perceived on a rising ground that must have been a shore a whole herd of white bears all turned with their faces towards me waiting her approach with the news. I saw some of them standing upright larger than the largest giants and certainly I never got such a fright since I was born of my mother. I durst not run for fear of being pursued by the whole herd and torn to pieces. I durst not call on my favourite and best friend for fear of being discovered in case I was still undiscovered and as I dared not either advance or retreat I squatted down on the ice and wished myself under it.

There I lay for a considerable space peeping over my paws like a setter on a dead point and my heart beating against the ice with audible thumps till at length the monsters came all off in a body toward me. There was no more time for me to lie praying there so I sprung to my feet and ran. Yes I ran with a swiftness which the extreme of terror only could have impelled me to effect. I flew without looking behind me and actually thought I was outspeeding the best polar bear till a certain noise that I heard behind me compelled me to look over my shoulder when I perceived two bears in close pursuit of me. I flung my wallet of provisions and my remaining bottle of rum from me and held on having then nothing but my gun which was loaded and my long durk. The two bears seemed to be quarrelling but whether quarrelling or junketting I had not time to distinguish till they came to my wallet at which they paused and tearing the wallet they soon devoured my victuals. I then with the most extravagant joy perceived that the lesser one of the twain was Nancy and my terror was greatly abated for I thought with her and my loaded gun and long knife I was a match for this single monster at any rate.

Still I durst not call on Nancy but being quite outspent with running I paused to gather breath and look at the two. The large wild monster took up the bottle of rum smelled it and turned it over seeming greatly taken with it when Nancy with perfect *sang froid* snatched it from him drew the cork with her teeth and setting the bottle to her mouth took apparently a long pull of the spirits and then handed it to her travelling companion. He took the bottle set it to his mouth and as I thought drank about the half of it. To describe his motions and looks at that stage of his progress is impossible. He held up his nose at an angle of forty five shot out his long red tongue and licked his chops and ever and anon cast the most eloquent looks to Nancy. He seemed both delighted and astonished and would not part with the bottle again although Nancy tried to attain it by every wile and quirk she could invent. No he would not part with it but wheeling always round with his back to her took another pull till he finished it and many a turn up he gave the empty bottle before he threw it away in a rage because it would not produce any more.

He then fell a dancing and bobbing on his hams most potently and never was drunkenness better portrayed. He nodded his head from side to side and cut capers innumerable while Nancy exhilarated by the novelty of the scene stood straight up on her hind feet and waltzed around him. He would needs do the same but then at every whisk and every embrace she gave him he tumbled over at full length till finally after several ineffectual efforts to rise he groaned stretched out his limbs and lay still. I had easily foreseen what the consequences would be knowing the potency of my liquor from experience so I kept my station determined to kill the monster as soon as he grew incapable of defence.

Nancy manifestly anticipated this. She came running to me fawned and led the way back again and to show me that he was incapable of moving she scraped him with her foot and then jumped upon him but all that she could elicit was a groan. I had my gun loaded with two balls but for all that when I saw the inordinate size and strength of the monster I took fright and durst not fire. I paced his length as he lay stretched I declare with perfect seriousness he was within a foot of four yards and his body as thick as a two years old bull. I durst not shoot for my life though I had the muzzle of the gun twice at his ear for I knew not what such a monster might do in a last struggle one blow of his paw or one cranch with his teeth would have finished my course so upon the whole I thought my safest plan was to leave him asleep and make my escape which I did. I have often thought it was a cowardly action but I did it and lived to repent it.

My situation now was any thing but enviable. I had fled with such precipitancy that I had lost all traces of my path back to my castle. My own track would have been a sort of guide to me but I knew not where to find it. Besides I had neither meat nor drink and was still uncertain about the pursuit of the bears after me. I had no dependance save on Nancy who was so much taken up with the drunken monster we had left behind that I could scarce make her attend to any thing else. Although it is very unnatural to suppose it I am certain she wanted me to kill him for when I left him whole and sound her looks of disspointment were quite manifest. After travelling several miles with me in gloomy discontent she returned and hasted back again and as she and I had been accustomed to kill every thing that came in our way I had no doubt that she was gone back to worry a monster three times as large and strong as herself.

I was now in a most woful case having lost my only guide who I knew could have led me home as easily as I could have gone from Huntly to the Raws of Strath-Bogie. I was hungry I was thirsty and overcome with sleep and fatigue yet was still speeding on I knew not whither. I had only one stay wherein to trust but it was the best and one that never yet had failed me even in perils of shipwreck and death. I kneeld on the snow-covered ice and prayed to God to direct and save me. I did this shortly for I was afraid of falling asleep in which case I was gone but the moment I rose I found myself strengthened and revived. More than that when I rose I was a little jumbled about the line I behoved to pursue and examining the one I had come I had a strong impression it was not the right one. This irresistible impulse was I am certain impressed upon my heart by a Divine Providence for though I almost went off at a tangent to the right I had not journeyed an hour ere I came on my own backward track which though a little filled up with hoar frost was still visible. I never was more happy at any relief than this and I did not fail to testify my grateful thanks to heaven for the happy deliverance. O let never mortal man despair for he may depend on this that whether in the noisy crowd or on the lonely waste he is in the hands of the Almighty who can direct or leave him to himself as he sees meet. For me in all my perils and they have been many I have ever trusted in the Lord and have never trusted invain.

I now hied me on with a cheerfulness and eagerness that were too much for my ability hungry and fatigued as I was but I knew where I was going and had hopes that I was near my secure but solitary home. The want of Nancy preyed heavily on my heart. No man alive could miss a partner more than I did for I found I could not subsist without her. If I had had her that night to have spoke to and leaned upon I felt how happy I would have been and how helpless I was without her. I grew exceedingly fatigued and began to eat snow incessantly. This did me ill for my joints lost their power and sleep quite overcame me and though I knew that to lie down on the ice was death I felt an irresistible to do it. I actually laid me down though I knew it was the sleep of death but a better resolution aroused me. I stood on my knees and leaned my head and arm on the muzzle of my gun thus getting some momentary sleeps and then whenever I was getting too sound asleep with the benumbing frost I fell over which wakened me.

These temporary restings refreshed me. I could walk three or four hundred yards after them at first with considerable agility but then I could not give over eating snow and my stages continued to become shorter and shorter. My track was still visible and that was all and I now came to some broken ice which raised my spirits as I remembered of none save that plowed up by the prow of my ice-mountain. At that very time I heard a sort of noise coming along the ice but although it was very light for that region I could see nothing owing to the frost rime and the dazzling whiteness.

I heard it approaching still like the galloping of horses accompanied occasionally with a growling murmur. I made all the speed I could but alas I fear I made but poor progress for my strength was gone. At length hearing the sound close behind me I looked back and beheld a bear coming on me full speed. It was soon kneeling at my feet and licking my hand. It was Nancy bleeding. She instantly turned about set up her angry birses and went slowly and doubtfully back as determined on an unequal battle. After straining my sight through the rime I perceived a gigantic bear standing on end like a tall obelisk covered with snow. Any one may guess how my heart fainted within me but I cocked my gun and tried to run on. My power was exhausted I could do no more. Nancy tried to oppose the monster by throwing herself always in before him but she durst not apparently seize him. He was a male and partly a gentleman⁴⁴ for he would not bite or tear her but he sometimes gave her a cuff with his paw to make her keep out of his way. I tried several times to take aim at him but found it impossible without shooting Nancy so that all I could do was to run on until fairly exhausted I fell flat on my face. The strife continued and approached close to my heels and instantly I found myself grasped and one of the bears above me. I could make no exertion but I soon discovered that it was poor Nancy trying to cover me with her own body from the dreadful death that awaited me. The monster struggled to reach my neck while my defender clung to me so closely that I was nearly strangled. His strength was overpowering he forced his head in below her and I felt first his cold nose and then his warm lips close to my throat. I called out 'Sieze him' the words that I used for baiting on Nancy and which she always promptly obeyed on which she gave him such a snap which not only made him desist but growl like a bull. Still he would neither lay mouth nor paw upon her one of those rare and beautiful instances of the sublimity of natural instinct of which there are so many among the brutal creation.

The monster growled and went round and round and at length made his attack at the same point again and in trying to reach my neck he seized me by the left arm close below the shoulder. I called out furiously to Nancy who that moment seized the gigantic monster by the throat with her teeth and paws at the same moment. He flew away from me and swung her round and round like a clout bellowing fearfully but quit her gripe she would not. He seized her with his paws hugged her and threw her down but all this while never made a motion to tear her; he squeezed her so strait that I saw the white of her eyes begin to turn up. I then with all the speed and precision my wounded arm would admit of held the muzzle of the gun to his ear and fired and yet owing to the violent motion he made none of the two bullets went through the brain but one at the root of the jaw and the other between that and the eye. The shot took away the power of doing any hurt with his mouth but his paws continued to embrace Nancy with a deadly grasp for rid of her he could not get she still keeping a fast hold of his throat. I then stabbed him to the heart again and again and though the blood streamed through the snow as if a sluice of blood had been opened it was amazing how tenacious the monster was of life. But at length he slackened his gripes and rolled over and over on the ice. Still he was not dead but as soon as Nancy got free I embraced her and feeble and overworn almost to death with her at my side to lean upon I made my escape to my old hulk the welcomest sight I had ever seen.

I barcaded my entrance window fed Nancy eat some raw frozen fish myself drank a little rum brandy and then took a short and troubled sleep but before I did any of these save the first I kneeled down and thanked my kind Maker and preserver for this most wonderful deliverance. I then kindled a good fire of coals and driftwood of which I had collected great store during summer and having plenty of ice in the hold I warmed a pot of water bathed and dressed my arm which was sore lacerated. I then

washed and bathed Nancy all over. Her shoulders were a little lacerated and swelled from the grasps of the monster's paws but saving that there was no wound upon her. I dried her with a cloth combed her and made her as clean as a bride and though she licked my hand and my wound and was as kind and gentle as ever I could not help observing with pain and a share of terror that there was a gloomy gleam in her eye which I had never witnessed before. Her look was quite altered. It was heavy sullen and drowsy but when she looked up there was something like a gleam of madness in it. This was the most distressing circumstance of all to me and though I suspected it was from the heat of irritation to which she had been driven by the deadly combat with one of her own species and one that had followed her too for love still it was the same to me who was obliged to abide by the consequences.

We had slept in the same bed ever since we met but gladly would I have dispensed with her company that night. Still I had not the heart to separate her from me per force as she sat nid-nodding and casting imploring looks for me to go to bed. So we went into the closet together as usual although I was not at all at my ease. Nancy was in the same state she tossed and tumbled and groaned whereas she was wont to lie as quiet as a lamb. At length she laid her left paw over me above the clothes and seemed to fall sound asleep. But in about ten minutes after she gave me such a hugg that it had nearly deprived me of breath. I made no motion no resistance but suffered patiently though in agony both of body and mind and I acted wisely for in a short while after her hold relaxed and she again tossed herself over and fell asleep.

I then rose as quietly as I could stole out to the cabin and locked the door and making myself up a bed in my late captains hammock I slept a part though ill at ease. I heard no more noise or disturbance all remaining quiet so I lay and rested myself I know not how long. When I next arose urged by hunger I peeped into Nancy after much fear and solicitude thinking she was dead. She had taken the round form and was lying with her limbs folded and her nose in below her flank. I at once perceived that with the late exertion and a hearty meal she was falling into the torpid state and that the mistake the preceding night (which I am always disposed to call the time allotted for sleep) had been through a sort of disturbed dream about her late combat so I heaped clothes above her of which I had plenty and left her to her repose and if I calculated any thing aright from the sleeps I took each one of which I estimated as a night she lay snug in that state for three months.

I visited her once or twice every day and though I could not distinguish her breathing nor feel the play of her lungs the dull heat of her body continued the same which assured me she was not dead but sleeping. That was a wearisome time for me and save the skinning and cutting up of my great white bear absolutely void of adventures. He was as fat as a fed bullock and his flesh tasted very much like that of a he-goat having been completely blooded it was white and clean and a great treat; he had as much tallow as loaded me for one jaunt and I judged his carcass to be about thirty stones Aberdeen weight.⁴⁵

It proved a severe winter much stormier than the last and there was one morning I perceived that my smoke would not vent and behold on opening up my window I found myself covered up with snow to a depth of which I could form no calculation. It had been a great snow drift and the hulk having been on the lee side of the mountain I was completely covered in. I soon however opened up a vent for the smoke and then I had a snug warm abode for the remainder of the winter.

I read much on my bible during this lonely season and got a great part of it by heart. By that I mean the historical parts for as for the tedious ceremonial law I accounted that perfect nonsense.⁴⁶ I could name to myself all the kings of Israel and

Judah how long each of them reigned and all the battles they lost or won. I could go over the judges of Israel in the same way with the twelve tribes and the numbers of each. I had besides particular favourites and could recite every word concerning them. Benjamin was my favourite tribe for spirit and bravery and Jonathan my favourite character of the whole scripture catalogue.

But if I read much I thought more of my singular destiny and condition and what it behoved me to do. Was I to try once more to reach the abodes of humanity see my own species face to face and enjoy that social intercourse for which the human heart and affections are so peculiarly framed? Or was I to remain there where I was and traverse the arctic regions on an iceberg all the days of my life subjected without remede to all the caprices of the elements the storms and the currents of the ocean? After balancing these things in my mind for months I could not decide which to fix on. My present life was one of such romance that if I could have been certified that at any future period I should escape to give a relation of it I would have chosen to remain for the present. I was far from being unhappy and I had no dread of a shipwreck believing my floating mountain impregnable against all shocks currents or tornados. I had moreover a companion which was really of more value to me than any one of my own species could have been in such circumstances as well as more attached and subservient and altogether I considered that I had more real enjoyment than the one half of mankind. There was only one thing that distressed me should I chance by accident or disease to be deprived of Nancy then I would be left helpless and stayless and likely perish of hunger. This was a terrible prospect so by the time the sun began to show his disk above the horizon I had half and more resolved to make a pilgrimage over the ice in search of some inhabited country.

My next great concern was to waken Nancy but that for a long time I found quite impracticable she continued not only sound asleep but perfectly rigid. I could not even make her stretch herself out but there she lay like a round bowle. My perseverance in blowing tobacco smoke into her nose at last effected it. She fell into a violent fit of sneezing and then I took care not to let her fall asleep again. She was perfectly weak and tangle her limbs being scarcely able to bear her weight and when she first went out to roll herself among the snow her great exercise she could not roll herself over the body. But she increased in strength and spirits not only every day but every hour and was soon as frisky as gentle and kind as ever. I am almost ashamed to acknowledge how much I enjoyed the society of this devoted and delightful creature for though she could not speak there was a language in her eye that told every thing and she knew every word that I said to her. I looked on her as a treasure sent me by heaven in a most wonderful way and really loved her.

My thoughts were now employed night and day about my journey for though I knew the ice would not break up for a long time I thought it best now that I had daylight all the twenty-four hours to perform my journey before there was even a chance of the ice breaking up accordingly I made preparations for many days washing drying cooking and packing up. It is needless to enumerate all the miscellaneous things that I thought necessary to take with me but in short I loaded myself and Nancy heavily very heavily knowing that our loads would constantly be turning lighter and then I left my old comfortable cabin and my mountain of ice with many bitter tears all uncertain whether or not I should ever see it again or any other home in this world. I never had wept so sore all my life as I did on setting out that time while Nancy went rock-rocking with her load and ever and anon casting the most piteous looks at my face.

Away we jogged in this manner holding our course as nearly as I could guess to the south-southwest. The mountains towards which I had journeyed before were quite visible but I called that land in my own mind The Bear Island and believing it inhabited by a whole hoard of bears I left it on the left hand and held on. It seemed to be a long rugged island stretching from west to east but not very wide from north to south for as nearly as I could judge in the space of three days I had passed it.

But new adventures still awaited me and there all at once I met with one of the utmost consequence of all. Having as I said just passed the southwest corner of this country which I had named in my own mind The Bear Island I there came all at once upon the traces of three men and a number of dogs. Their footmarks were so large that I believed them to be giants and at first knew not what to do but perceiving that their steps were not longer than my own I was convinced they wore snow shoes took courage and determined to follow them which I did and in a few hours reached the shore. There I came to a spot where the men had rested and fed themselves and their dogs and my heart lightened with joy. I now knew not what to do but in order to overtake them it was necessary to leave my luggage or the greater part of it. But what was I to do with Nancy that puzzled me worst of all. She was an even forward destroyer and I knew all the dogs would go at once and in all probability the men next so that in fact with her I was not fit to approach the walks of humanity. Something behoved to be done so I made a muzzle for her of strong cord and taking a bottle of highland whisky with me and some provisions I set out on the track of the three men and followed most eagerly but all that I could do I could not restrain Nancy from leaving me on the scent of their track. I durst not let her go muzzled else they would worry her and kill her at once and she was the whole of my worlds inheritance. I durst not let her go unmuzzled lest she might devour them all so I was obliged to fasten on the muzzle put a cord to it and lead her. She liked this very ill and even tried to get loose by pulling the muzzle off with her paws but my commands restrained her although she continued to look at me with apparent astonishment and dejection. I said all the kind things to her that I could told her she was still my own dear Nancy but added many a time 'O you must not must not' She cowered in subjection and walked peaceably by my side.

I soon came to a place where the three men had all separated. I followed the steps of the middle one but these were so irregular up hill and down hill that it was a most fatiguing task and besides all the snow on the south sides of the hills was⁴⁷ becoming softened with the sun and there were a mixture of small black patches from which the snow was melted altogether. These I found to be mostly rocks or precipices. I was obliged to rest often and slept several times in the sun but I always fastened Nancy to my arm for fear of her making her escape.

After I had travelled about fourteen or fifteen hours I came to a place where the three men had all met again rested and refreshed themselves and there was a great deal of blood upon the snow from which I knew they were hunters and had killed a part of game and moreover I perceived from some herbaceous garbage scattered about that they had been feeding their dogs on the nombles of a deer. There I took a short sleep and some refreshment there being a spring gushing out of a rock like a mill-lead and likewise fed Nancy who was always going scenting among the blood and offal. At length she fixed upon a spot between two rocks and fell a scraping where I soon discovered a store of venison covered over with snow which was tramped firm over and all about it. From this I perceived that this spring was the rendezvous of the hunters and to meet with them I had only to remain where I was. With what anxiety of heart did I pass these few hours all uncertain as I was whether I was on the shores of

Asia Europe or America or whether I would fall among savage cannibals or civilized Christians. Sometimes I laid me down seeking in vain for some repose at others stalked about looking all around me.

Perhaps I did not wait there many hours but they seemed to me like as many days such a feverish anxiety had taken possession of my mind. It was at length relieved by the approach of six strong dogs coming all up hill baying upon me in the most furious manner. This was a trying situation as I was desirous of neither suffering skaith nor giving offence. But an expedient struck me in a moment one which I had often amused myself with in youth and never knew it fail not even with a chained mastiff. I drew my coat tails over my head stooped and ran forward to meet them. The scheme succeeded like a charm for after uttering a few short barks of terror they all turned tail and fled as the devil had been chasing them. These canine hunters had left their masters a little astern in order to have a rummage among their precious fragments when they were thus discomfited and chased back faster than they had advanced.

The astonishment and terror of their masters may well be conceived when they thus met their dauntless assistants retreating with looks of such wild dismay. They knew there were no herd of bears yet awake on the island and thus could form no conception of any thing else save some supernatural being of horrid presence. The flying dogs vanished over a sharp ridge of the hill and as I conceived myself still only waging war with them I hastened over after them in the same attitude. I was clothed in my late captain's Sunday or best suit and had the tails of my superfine blue coat drawn over my head which was bowed nearly as low as my knees and my hat I held out from me with my left hand and led Nancy with the right. In this mode was I first introduced to my new associates and that too without knowing it till hearing the frightened bark of the dogs once more close below me in the ravine I peeped through the cleft of my coat and perceived masters and dogs flying again the latter leading the way barking for downright terror of mind and the men cocking their heads and brattling after them. I instantly assumed my natural shape and hollowed out after them to stop and take a friend with them. They turned round gaping and staring but durst not wait the encounter and although they called something in return which I believed was my own native tongue yet as I approached they turned and fled once more. The seeing of a human creature⁴⁸ coming on them in the company of a white bear the only creature of which they stood in perpetual dread was too much for their comprehension. But the terror of the dogs was that which most of all convinced them that I was not an earthly creature so they took to their heels and I had no other shift but to pursue.

This made matters still worse for their snow shoes kept them above the snow whereas every step that I took I sunk at least half a foot the surface being thawed on all the south sides of the hills. I lost ground of course terribly and was obliged to give up the pursuit and return. At the place where they took first to flight they had dropped a bear's hide and some wallets of bear's flesh and grease. On these I made seizure and carrying them piecemeal to the spring deposited them⁴⁹ with the rest of their spoil. Assured then that they would come back to that place if not through hunger at least for the fruits of their severe labour I hid myself among some rocks hard by from which the sun had melted the snow to watch their motions.

They were long in returning at least I thought so for I slept twice with Nancy in my bosom and having become so hardy and having likewise a bearskin jacket and drawers next my flesh I could now in constant sunshine sleep any where without inconvenience or danger. I was at length awakened by Nancy struggling to get away

and on coming to my senses I heard people speaking and on peeping over the rock I saw the three men standing over their prey in earnest conversation and apparently astonished at finding all their prey carefully deposited together. The dogs still kept at a due distance the only thing I saw which kept them still jealous. An effort behoved to be made. I drew myself up to the verge of the cliff over which I was peeping and at once on my knees implored them for Jesus Christ's sake to take me under their protection. They knew the name and each of them took off his fur cap and knelt on his right knee. Whenever Nancy appeared on the cliff the dogs once more took to their heels. The men were just about to follow when I called out again naming the same sacred name with great emphasis. They paused and pointed to the bear saying something. I held up the cord to show them that she was muzzled and chained and ordering her she cowered at my feet and kissed my hand. In all my life I never saw three such statues of astonishment as these three men were on seeing this. They gaped and stared on one another spake a few words and then prostrated themselves on the snow taking me for a divine being. I saw this manifestly and resolved to keep up a sort of dignity as far as I was able for my own behoof. They lay on their bellies wallowing in the snow until I came to them when perceiving one of them with gray hairs I lifted him up first to his knees and laying my hand on his crown I blessed him in the name of the holy trinity. He seemed to understand something of the import of the blessing for he embraced my knees. I blessed the other two in the same manner and then lifting up my eyes and hands to heaven I prayed fervently that God would bless and sanctify our meeting and our communion and fellowship with one another while it continued. I then showed them my half bible and made them look on it but they shook their heads and did not comprehend the meaning of it. But when I named Moses and David and Solomon and Jesus Christ they held up their hands in admiration named them after me and then took the book kissed it and pressed it to their bosoms. We were now friends and they seemed from the deference they paid me to consider themselves as my sworn subjects. I then took out my brandy bottle and a small chrystal glass without the shaft that I carried in my pocket and filling it I drank to their good healths and then gave each of them a glass which they all emptied. They then smacked their lips and stared at one another in astonishment till one of the young men feeling its salutary effects on his cold stomach screamed and jumped for joy.

We were now friends and sat down to eat together I of some potted bear's flesh which I carried and they of some haberdine and raw flesh. We then packed up for our departure they having attained as much food as they could carry although they took care to carry no bones. They gave the dogs these for their share after having sliced the flesh neatly off them which they stuffed into sealskin bags and then yoking the dogs to these in pairs they trailed them with great swiftness over the snow. While the dogs were gnawing at their bones one of the largest and fiercest flew at Nancy who was muzzled but within one blow of her paw she made him tumble heels over head roaring like a bull. One of the men bent his bow and was going to shoot the dog but I interfered and made signs for them to muzzle the dogs which they did and then we journeyed together in peace I likewise having Nancy well loaded of their provision which they admired exceedingly.

My great anxiety now was to learn what country I was in but it was long before I could understand this. I was sure I had fallen among Christians but where I knew not. I was very ignorant of the polar countries and though I knew some of their names I knew nothing of their inhabitants. When these three men spoke to one another at a little distance from me I could not believe my senses that they were not speaking broad Aberdeen or rather Shetland Scots the tone and manner were so

exactly the same and yet when they spoke to me I could not understand them though convinced it was a dialect of the same language. The only country which I could name that seemed to impress them or that they understood was Norrway.⁵⁰ At the name of that country which they repeated calling it Norgeway I observed that they sometimes crossed their hands and looked up to heaven. I believed then that I was on an island somewhere off the coast of Norrway and that these three men had come from that country to hunt. I made them repeat the name of the place where we were again and again and the name they gave it sounded to me like 'Jean Main's Land'.⁵¹ Having never heard of such a place I remained in the dark.

When we came to my luggage the sun being warm we rested long and slept and the men let me understand that we had to provide for a long journey. Accordingly we set out on the ice once more and the dogs easing us greatly of our baggage we travelled at a great rate yet as nearly as I could guess we journeyed for a space of time equal to three days and three nights without a change of scene straight along the level surface the dogs knowing the road perfectly well and always running on before us. I at length beheld the open sea and marvelled greatly thinking our journey was now coming to a very abrupt and woful termination. The men however seemed nothing daunted but as far as I could judge were getting rather into better spirits and were occasionally pointing out some place of which I saw nothing but a blue calm sea basking in endless sunshine for the present. We at length came to two canoes and a boat lying on the ice near to the verge of the open sea. The boat was for carrying the dogs and one man and the canoes for a man each. The latter were covered with sealskin which belted round the occupier's waist that no water could touch him neither could the canoe sink. I had never seen one before and wondered that men could go into an open sea in such trifling little things that one might carry below his arm.⁵² There was a good deal of demur how Nancy and I were to be accomodated among the dogs but as the dogs were perfectly obedient each of the men took two dogs below the leather of his canoe and I was deposited in the bottom of the small boat made of skin driftwood and bones of fish and there with Nancy in my bosom I was forbid to move for fear of oversetting the frail bark. The sea was as smoothe as a mirror and I am convinced that we glided over it with great celerity. The canoes kept ahead but they were always hailing one another in a cheering strain and at length I percieved mountains spotted with snow straight before us. We had been journeying as well as sailing nearly south-west and how to reconcile this country with Norway I could not divine. Yet I had hopes that it was Norway and that I was among the native simple christians of that country and would soon find a conveyance⁵³ from the southern parts of it to my dear native country.

We at length arrived on another coast and were met upon the shore by twelve young people which turned out to be women though I could not distinguish at the time to which sex they belonged. The greyheaded man first kissed them all and then harranged them introducing me to them on which every one of them came to me the eldest first and apparently all the rest in succession according to their ages kneeled to me embraced my knees and recieved my blessing and a kiss and in fact never was poor forlorn stranger made more welcome. The two eldest women gave me each an hand and with six on each side the youngest outermost they conducted me to their habitation the elderly hunter walking before us and the two younger behind us and at the entrance to their habitation we were recieved by an old man with hair and a beard as white as the driven snow. He was the patriarch of the little colony and their priest and I was instructed by signs and words to kneel and recieve his blessing which I did and was then conducted in and welcomed by many tokens of veneration.

It was a strange place. The outer apartments were built and vaulted with snow but besides these there was a long natural cavern stretching under the rocks that seemed once to have been a seam of limestone from roots of large stactilites that appeared on its roof but time and thaws after frosts had wasted it away. There were beside this many irregular side apartments in one of which my bed was made which I made a good one and there Nancy and I were left to our repose and a more sound sleep I never enjoyed.

The colony consisted of thirty one women and ten men including the aged father the rest of the men had perished at sea or in bear-hunting. Beside these there were seven children two of whom only were boys so that a stout healthy young man such as I was certainly was as high a boon as heaven could have sent them in one individual though a whaler's whole crew would doubtless have been more welcome. There were other three men arrived at the settlement that night who brought a seal and some sea-lions for the general good but all were alike kind and civil to me.

I have not yet told in what country I was in for I did not know myself until a good while after the period of which I am writing. But it may be as well to let the reader know that I was in Old Greenland and among a remnant of a colony of Norwegians a race of simple primitive christians⁵⁴ whose progenitors had occupied that inclement shore for centuries and once by their account amounted to many thousands but strange to say if these people's accounts are at all to be credited fell all by degrees a prey to the irresistible invasions of the great polar bears.⁵⁵ All their traditional stories were about these ferocious animals and such stories for horror never blurred the legends of a country. They were described as having made frequent inroads in the month of October in such force that no single settlement could cope with them nor yet escape to seek help from others. And when once they beleaguered a settlement or tribe they never left it while there was a bone of the inhabitants remaining. All their songs and ballads relate to those heart-rending scenes of ravage and blood and they had a prophesy among them and a firm belief that the bears were one day to devour the last of them.

The people were much like ourselves but of lower stature than Scotsmen and their fur dresses made them appear as square creatures very near as broad as long. The women had mild simple faces all of one weatherbeaten hue very like the women of Lewis and Harris.⁵⁶ I was so delighted to be among females of my own species once more that I thought some of the young ones the most bewitching creatures in the world. It was amazing how soon we understood one another's language for we conversed without ceasing and I had soon taken up the laudable resolution of marrying three of them. I tried several of them on that point but all that I could make out of any of them was that I would be allowed but one and though I say it who should not there were plenty of competitors for that distinction. But perswading myself that I perceived symptoms of there having been some departures from this rule in the community I applied to the old father for satisfaction on this head who informed me that as Christians we were only allowed one wife but owing to the depressed state of the colony and the great shortcoming of men every man was allowed one or two handmaidens like the patriarchs of old that every woman among them might have the chance of becoming a mother if desirous to be so. But that it was very customary for their women to decline all advances save by lawful marriage and in that respect were virtuous to a failing and to the great detriment of the colony.

I felt that in my heart I had no such scruples and that I should like very well to act the part of old Jacob over again⁵⁷ and I judged such scruples in a woman quite unnatural in a state of society such as this in which she was sequestered from all

others of her species so having made a choice of three I determined on marrying one of them and keeping the other two for mistresses. And in making my choice of a wife I did rather an ungenerous thing for I took her who I thought was most indifferent about me and I chose her that I might make sure of the others afterwards who were rather overfond.

But there was one great obstacle to my enjoyment which I could not see a possibility of overcoming and that was the jealousy of Nancy. I knew she would not leave my apartment while I slept and I knew as well she would not suffer another to lye in my arms in her presence. I felt that I was so much subjected to her that I could not have answered for the life of a girl whom I was carressing no not for a day for though Nancy had been close muzzled she could have killed her rival with her paws in a few minutes. I often saw the gleam of jealousy and proud offence in her eye and dreaded the final consequences but these poor innocent maidens perceived nothing of the kind. Moreover Nancy soon became a favourite with the whole tribe owing to her expertness in fishing which was altogether unrivalled and held out a prospect of greater plenty to the clan than it had ever experienced. Her success was so astonishing that in narrow creeks she would often catch more in one day than all the fishermen of the tribe could do in ten. In fact she was worth us all for laying in a stock of provisions and to think of injuring parting with or even offending Nancy would have been a dereliction from nature. She had been the preserver of my life and the supporter of it and never was affection more ardent or disinterested than her's was for me it was therefore that I felt a reluctance in forfeiting these by exciting her jealousy. Accordingly I resolved on taking a stolen kiss with one or all of my charmers and put off my nuptials until the winter months when Nancy would be asleep and we confined to our cabins.

In the mean time we were busy⁵⁸ preparing for that period of rest devotion and festivity and our success especially in fishing was consonant to our utmost wishes. There is a curious phenomenon which I conceive to be peculiar to this country. It is that all along the coast the sea is open for seven or eight months of the year while farther out at sea where there are chains and ridges of rocks and islands the ice frequently remains unbroken through the whole year. And what is more there are no regular tides these degenerating all into irregular currents which seem to be affected by the prevalence of certain winds but not the least by the tides. There is a regular ebb and swell and sometimes a very high swell but no turn of the tide and alternate current as on the shores of Britain. I have often wondered that the tides were not perfectly understood. I have understood them since ever I went to sea when merely a boy; at least I believed I understood them which was the same thing to me. I believe in my theory still, and the study of this northern or frozen ocean has completely confirmed me in it.

It is astonishing that neither natural philosophers nor accomplished navigators of which there have been so many never perceived that the earth in its diurnal motion rolled with a swing from north to south and *vice-versa* every five hours and so many minutes and that this swing was caused by the influence of the moon upon our planet which at full moons is stronger and certain other full moons acts with double force and this at once accounts for all the phenomena of the tides which ere they reach the equator being opposed by others run all into currents and ere they reach the poles the same. And moreover this lunar swing of the earth accounts for the tides rolling past the mouths of the cross seas such as the Baltic and the Mediterranean whose only tides are a gentle alternate swell from shore to shore occasioned by this swing. The thing is so apparent that no man sailing on the British seas can help perceiving it. I

remember that there was one year I was on board the Hawk of Liverpool which brought a deal of uncustomed wine and spirits for Glasgow and the towns on the Clyde. We durst not enter the outer frith where a strick watch was kept but stretching away to the west we came at length into a creek in Argyleshire called Loch-Tarbet where we carried all our smuggled goods across a narrow neck of land. Here to my astonishment I found that it was high tide on the one side of the isthmus and ebb at the other and scarce a bow-shot between them. The cause was manifest. Here was an estuary taking Loch-Fine and the frith an hundred miles and more in length; before this was filled full by the one swing the tide had turned and the ebb below it brought it roaring and foaming backward and this continued I was told the whole year round; flood tide on the one side and ebb on the other. Not being able to describe this power that the moon has over the diurnal motion of the earth scientifically I merely mention it to put men of science and experience on a right basis because without adopting it they will never account logically for the tides and currents of the ocean.

The only extra expedition which we had this summer was one to the hulk of The Anne Forbes my old habitation of which I was very fond. I had described to them the riches that I left there in oil spirits iron &c. These two last were so highly estimated that the desire for the expedition grew irresistible. Accordingly all things were prepared for the adventure but as canoes were the only vessels chiefly used we had a terrible business before we got our dogs and sledges across the open sea and placed fairly on the ice. We drowned one woman and one dog in this expedition across and were very near losing two men besides but the greatest exertions imaginable were made for their preservation a man's life being a thing of high estimation there. We at length set out with eight light sledges drawn by one and thirty powerful dogs and the whole conducted by four men of which number I was one while poor Nancy accompanied us on foot. We had likewise a light canoe lashed on one of the sledges for fear of meeting with open fissures in the ice. The snow having been mostly from the ice it was blue and keen and once the dogs were fairly set a going they ran on with amazing swiftness. I never saw any journeying half so quick for there was an emulation among the animals who to be foremost the whole journey was actually one pitched race after another so that with the delay of only one sleep we arrived at my glorious chrystalline mountain beaming in the sun with prismatic and dazzling brightness. But still before we reached it the chasm in the ice separating it from the main field had begun and it was only by going round to where we saw the ice crushed up that we succeeded in getting on to the mountain and the wreck. I found every thing as I had left it and still plenty of stuff useful for the colony. Had we had fifty sledges we could have loaded them all but so intensely fond were my three associates of iron that they would have loaded almost wholly with it. We still found plenty to eat and drink and plenty for our dogs so we were in no hurry in loading and departing but here we were guilty of an oversight fraught with great danger for the mountain already affected by the great under current was just in the act of wheeling and moving off.

All was now bustle and confusion in order to get as much removed on to the firm ice as possible before the final seperation took place and we did succeed in bringing a very miscellaneous cargo though not half so much as we wished and at length the great mass went off with a roll that made a concussion in the ocean that would have swallowed up a whaler of the largest size. Two men and several dogs were still by the wreck when the iceberg seperated but they were on the other end from the great turmoil. The men threw themselves into the sea leaving the canoe behind them and then calling on the dogs they all followed and we got them safe on

the ice and away went the splendid meteor mountain once more on its voyage round the polar regions. A more glorious sight I never beheld in nature than this. The steep side of the hill being toward us it reflected the rays of the southern sun in a thousand dazzling hues too brilliant for the eye to look on. It was an illuminated phenomenon fading gradually from our astonished view on the far surface of the ocean. That was the last sight I saw of my old and sublime habitation and as it was still increasing by the alternate rains and frosts of Autumn I have no doubt that it is roving about among those interminable shoals and currents to this day unseen by all of existence save the walrus and the wild swan and haply the whale from his window of foam.

We now loaded with all diligence and returned home and during our stay Nancy as on the former year had furnished us with an immense heap of excellent fresh fish which were a great treat to us and formed a good part of the carriage of two sledges. We brought also the remainder of the spirits bags of blubber bear's-flesh iron and a great number of miscellaneous articles. I likewise loaded Nancy and every man carried some loading as our progress was now necessarily slow. There was nothing remarkable happened on our return save a great confusion in getting our goods from the ice to the land. The men and dogs returned for the remainder but I had no heart to go more so another returned in my stead and I went home with the baggage.

After this we had a grand fishing expedition about a hundred miles to the northward in which we took tents and the greater part of the women with us as also canoes and all our homely fishing tackle of nets and lines spears and clubs with us. We had excellent sport and fair success but our lodging accomodation was very bad for we lay in tiers above each other and the abundance of bad breaths from foul feeding was disagreeable to me. I would rather have lain beside poor Nancy by herself than in this mixed multitude but here she was very cumbersome to me for not being able to get in at my side she often lay with her head across over me and she was grown so heavy I could scarcely bear her. I once awakened in a state of absolute suffocation and found her lying straight across my face. She was still however the queen fisher and catered for us most abundantly but she would not suffer any one to lift the fish that she caught but me. She was fond of salmon and when she fell in with them would eat till I was often afraid she would kill herself.

At length the thin ice began to cover the creeks and we were obliged to return to our winter settlement which was now well stored with every production of that inclement coast. Fish was our great staple but we had part of rein deer and bear's flesh beside. As soon as the snow came on we fortified our dwelling by triple walls of half melted snow which afterwards freezing grew as firm as adamant. It is amazing how much drift-wood comes annually to that coast and all along the edges of the ice. Of this we had a considerable hoard but we trusted much to the blubber both for light and heating our water. We merely thawed our meat we seldom boiled it and some even⁵⁹ crumped it up frozen as it was. I even had grown that I preferred the fish in a raw state.

The sun went down and our long night at length commenced. Nancy fell asleep so I left her my apartment to herself covered her well up and took another bosom partner Lefa a young maiden about her prime and I thought I had made sure of other two mistresses beside determined to raise up a stock of fine hardy highlanders in old Greenland but my success was not equal to my calculation. The old father Herard joined our hands prayed over us made us kiss and then pronounced us married persons with a benediction on us which as far as I could understand it was very nearly the same as that generally used in Scotland. I had reserved a part of my highland whisky for my wedding and a merrier night I believe never was in Greenland. They know

nothing about ardent spirits there and are naturally a sedate simple set of people. I speak of this tribe a remnant of an old Christian community for any other human being I never saw as long as I was there.

What a strange life we led during the dreary and darksome winter months! We were actually little better than the bears lying in a torpid state. The air being closed out as far as possible we were drowsy insipid and almost incapable of moving. I am sure that after I was married I was not twelve hours out of my bed for three weeks. It was very difficult to get out to the open air the entrance was so shut up with faggots of seaweed and furze and unless one went at the hour of ⁶⁰ public egress when the shell was sounded to get out was next to impossible. We had plenty of meat but we could not eat it. We had neither air nor exercise and the three months in the depth of winter passed over like a drumbly confused dream. They pretended always to keep the sabbath though I daresay as distant as could be from the real first day of the week. They however kept a portion of their time and on that day I uniformly sung a psalm and read and prayed with them. As for old father Herard he prayed every day and as I came soon to understand it a very original prayer it was abstract altogether from any in use in my native country. He prayed always for 'the life of men and the death of fish' and 'that angels of God might pitch their tents near our happy home to guard and defend us against the great enemies of human nature *the white bears!*'. Many other sentences beside had allusion to them and moreover he prayed for 'the blessed and happy communion between the sexes of the tribe that all their maidens might become mothers and bear men children like the young of the dolphin in abundance healthy as the eagle and strong as the bear of the lands of snow'. For strange to say they accounted their own country a terrestrial paradise although the bleakest and last abode of living men.

The spring months at length returned and daylight appeared bracing our nerves and cheering our hearts but for a long time all was frozen up and there was no fishing and very little success in hunting so I then employed myself busily in courting mistresses in the dark recesses of our cave and succeeded so far but the beautiful Zeluki whom I loved best and who I knew loved me with all her heart received my addresses with disdain and great bitterness she having been highly affronted at my not taking her for my lawful wife instead of asking her for my handmaiden for by that gentle appellation they denominate a concubine in Greenland. Having now however gained possession of Lefa my wife and Ellastern another of my fair flames I was determined to have Zeluki too and plied her with my love incessantly so at length she condescended to admit me to her sleeping apartment but insisted on perfect secrecy so that I was even deterred from speaking. I knew the beloved spot well and crept away to it in silence and transport enjoying the highest felicity with her I loved best of any in the sept and descended again as silently as I came. Many stolen hours did I spend in that sweet and silent retreat but at length one night as I was going to retire I was held and accosted by my own wife. I was terribly astounded, nonplussed! For though I had broken no law of this simple community I felt that I had wronged a virtuous girl's feelings who had trusted me so I remained with her till day caressing her kindly but not daring to ask her any question for I suspected that in all these love appointments I had been with my wife in place of Zeluki and with Zeluki in place of my wife and then how I had been gulled was a heart-piercing consideration.

But the shrew had played me a far wickeder trick than that and since I am upon it it is as well to tell the issue. The truth then is that ere the fall of the next winter I found all the ugly women of the tribe all who had neither had ever had the offer of husband or lover in their lives claiming me as father to their children. While in the

mean time my own wife had no child and Zeluki was still a virgin blooming in her prime. It was impossible⁶¹ for any one to cut a more ridiculous figure than I did and I perceived that I was rather a butt of ridicule to the whole tribe. Yet it was manifest that they had advised Zeluki to the experiment at least that some of them had for she became a great favourite and I saw they approved of what she had done.

But now a great and irretrievable misfortune befel me and one which I fear led to the most dismal of consequences. In the midst of my amours with the women Nancy awoke and as soon as her lethargy wore off was kind and affectionate as ever and when the poor creature found that she was debarred from sleeping by me and watching over me in the night her unhappiness was extreme. Her moans by night disturbed the whole community and kept them waking. There was moreover a gleam of jealousy in her eye toward some of the women frightened me for I was afraid some one of them might be torn to pieces her whole savage nature being apparently roused up to brutal revenge though she luckily could not recognize at that time on whom her vengeance was to fall. I caressed her more than usual during the day but when she always found that she was expelled from me at night her chagrin increased to utter misery. I was now in a sad dilemma. I could not leave my wife and my other supposed beautiful innamorata to sleep with a huge white she bear and yet I had resolved to do it rather than drive her to desperation. Several of the men advised it she being the great support of the colony by her profound art in fishing but I was engaged in some of the amorous exploits alluded to above and put it off from day to day well knowing that she would never suffer one to lie in the same bed with her and me and so after she had spent a part of one night in such groans as if each were to be her last in the morning she was missing.

Great was the alarm and intense the sorrow at the loss of Nancy. But as the snow was by that time beginning to soften on the surface we could trace her footmarks from the door of our retreat and we set out in pursuit. We found that she had taken to the ice at once there being still no opening in it and had made straight toward the bear island where she met her first lover whom for my sake she cruelly murdered. There were two men went with me. We soon lost the track by reason of a shower of wet snow that had fallen but we followed to the mountains where I called her name from hill to hill but all to no purpose so we were obliged to return home weary and broken hearted. We had a tichel of dogs with us and from their marking on a snow wreath we digged and killed one sleeping bear with great difficulty as she awoke partially before we got her wounded. Had it not been for the dogs weak as she was she would probably have torn us all to pieces. With this prey we returned but a very poor prey it was the flesh of the bear being very bad at that season.

I felt now that I was reduced below the greater part of the men of the colony whereas before I was rather viewed as their chief next at least to the patriarch but my indefatigable provider was gone to mix with her own species taking the pattern from me who had deserted her for mine and I was left untutored and uninitiated into the strenuous means necessary to be used for existence in that inclement shore from whence I had slender hopes of ever making my escape. It is impossible for me to describe how inconsolable I felt for the loss of this invaluable animal. No man could have felt the loss of any worldly substance so much for when I thought of her boundless affection and kindness the tears always rushed to my eyes. I was like a heart-broken being taking no interest in our hunting and fishing expeditions save the providing for mere animal existence and I found that I had actually been happier traversing the frozen ocean on my iceberg with one faithful and obliging animal for my companion than I was now with an amiable wife certain illegitimate children as I

accounted them and their ill-favoured disgusting mothers. It was truly a queer state that I was in which my wicked inclinations had led me into and out of which it was now impossible to escape so I continued to fulfil the first commandment ever given to man with great promptitude yet still my wife continued childless.⁶²

The rest of the time that I remained here was a mere blank in existence and to recount every action minutely would be a weariness to the spirit of man and far more so to that of woman. It was a repetition of the same scenes over and over again of dozing and tanning leather all winter beneath the snow; making nets spears and canoes all the spring, and fishing and hunting all summer and autumn and thus we went on from year to year.

But in 1764 just as we were repairing our snow ramparts around our cavern on rising one morning we found ourselves invaded by a hoard of white bears and our ice-roof penetrated in two places. The colony now consisted of⁶³ about sixty men women and children but only one third of these were efficient men capable of standing any deadly struggle. True the women assisted in all employments however dangerous but in a bloody battle with a brutal horde they were not to be accounted on. Such a scene of consternation I never witnessed and may never christian view such another as was that time among the simple inhabitants of our lonely abode. There was nothing but weeping and wailing and every one lamenting the day that he or she was born and cursing those which made them mothers. I tried to comfort them but comfort was out of the question. Man and woman continued to aver that these animals⁶⁴ never yet invaded a settlement in that country that they did not devour every bone of its inhabitants before they left it. Then the horrid descriptions followed drawing pictures of⁶⁵ what the bears had done what they would do. They represented them as liking best to eat the children alive and that in order to enjoy such a meal with perfect zest they always held children down with one paw and began at the feet and eat upward and that the poor things would be crying and trying to creep away even when the monsters had proceeded leisurely with their meal nearly as far as the heart. Then they affirmed that they ravaged all the women and then sucked their blood from the throats.⁶⁶ In short the people were all seized with a mania of terror and it was agreed without a dissentient voice save my own that they would barricade the cavern that no bear should be able to enter and sleep all together in death which the want of air would soon procure to them insensibly.

This resolution was hailed with joy and even the old patriarch approved of it. I alone withstood it with all my eloquence and with all my energy declaring that if no one would stand with me I would stand in the breach myself and defend our women our children and our provisions to the last drop of my blood and if they would all join me nobly and exert themselves in the same sacred cause I would answer with my life for the ultimate success of our defence. 'The bears cannot keep their eyes open now' I added 'for more than a week or two. In less than a month they will be all sound asleep and lying torpid beneath the snow. Why then throw away our lives without an effort to preserve them. And worst of all if we immure ourselves up in our inner cave and smother ourselves to death do we not every one save the babies commit suicide and with our blood upon our own heads how shall we ever appear before our Maker or expect mercy at his hands who durst not trust to it here below?'

This argument prevailed with the simple christians who could not bear the thought of losing their immortal souls. But they assured me that let us do what we would the herd would not leave a bone of us for what they never had done they would not now begin. Nevertheless if I would be the responsible captain and take the whole charge of the defence they would take an oath to stand by me to the last in defence of

the lives that God had given them. This they did man and woman in the most solemn manner kneeling laying⁶⁷ both their hands on the bible and then kissing it.

I then undertook the defence of the settlement not only with high hopes but perfect assurance. Never was there a commander undertook the defence of a fortress however strong who was as confident of wearing out his enemy as I was and I really accounted the danger rather a slight one. We had plenty of spears both of bone and iron some bows, and arrows in abundance; but these last could only wound the bears not kill them. Of powder and lead we had only a few charges remaining. Had we had plenty of that some of our men were such excellent marksmen that we might have shot the whole herd one by one but alas that resource was no more. We had moreover to do with an enemy which every defeat, every life taken and every wound given only tended to exasperate and to determine them the more on our total subversion.

Our cave under the rocks I deemed quite impregnable but then there was no water in it and snow would not keep within it unmelted so that we were obliged to keep possession of a part of our snow fortress which was no easy matter for the strength of these animals and the power they have in their paws is so prodigious that when left at liberty to work they could dig almost through any thing. They soon had our snow roof riddled by several windows although whenever we were apprized of their attacks we could drive them off with our long sharp spears. In fact they did not seem particularly voracious or outrageous an united shout from us joined to the baying of dogs made them always scamper off and keep at a good distance for a space afterwards.

The frost now set in with all its usual intensity the weather grew calm and clear and we thought if we could drive the bears from our habitation they would soon be seized by a hopeless apathy dig holes for themselves and fall into the torpid state. Besides from any late glimpses we had got of them the herd seemed not nearly so numerous so we concluded they had separated and would needs become the assailants in our turn.

Accordingly early one morning of the then short day we sallied out on the bears not only every one who could bear arms but every one who could bear a red clout for a flag for which colour the bears were said to be frightened. Man woman maid and stripling sallied out with all our dogs and all our sounding shells and such a deafening noise I believe never was raised in Old Greenland. The bears durst not once stand before it they fled before us in a body and we pursued with cheerful hearts shouting on the dogs in the van the men next and the women last. Ere ever we were aware our ears were saluted by some piercing shrieks behind and on turning round perceived with horror which may easily be conceived that another powerful body of bears had attacked our rear and having already seized on a number of the women they had them carrying here and there clasped in their paws and then stretching them on the snow they embraced them to death and sucked their blood. We ran to the rescue and attacking such of the bears as had not yet seized a victim we drove them back. But alas our efforts were powerless and vain! for we were instantly attacked again behind by those we had been chasing and there being more of the bears than of us our case was desperate for a man was no more in the paws of one of those monsters than a babe is in the hands of a man. The women were all seized first particularly the young ones prostrated and devoured. The short stifled shrieks of these hapless wretches and the apparent joy and triumph of the bears over their prey will haunt me to my dying day. I fought with blind fury and desperation and a few of the Greenlanders still stood by me but many prostrated themselves on the ground whether to implore mercy from heaven or of the bears I could not tell but there was no mercy shown to them.

I was at length seized by an immense powerful bear round the arms and the breast and borne off with great rapidity but I neither cried nor prayed I struck with my heels and tried to wound with my weapons but my arms were held so strait they were void of power. The huge animal never once stopped until it had me at the door of our now nearly desolate habitation where it set me down uninjured kneeled at my feet and licked my hand. 'Nancy! My dear dear dear Nancy have we two met again' cried I embracing her. 'Then we shall never part again in this world'.

The generous animal whined and whimpered her joy grovelled on the snow and licked my feet my knees and my hands. I was now sure of protection this being a friend in need whose prowess in my defence had never been baffled and I was so overjoyed to meet with her again and at having found protection when I expected every moment to be torn in pieces that I was never weary of carressing her and saying kind and endearing words every one of which she seemed well to remember.

The cries of death and the growls of voluptuous joy continued to come from the slaughter-field and some grovelling sounds seemed approaching nearer on which Nancy seized me by the robe and drew me into the recess where she and I had had our abode for a season and leaving me to my repose she returned and kept watch in the inner door of our tent.

I heard no more and I think I had a drumbly and dreadful sleep from which I was awaked by Nancy pulling once more at my clothes. I saw she wanted something with me but for a long time I could not concieve what she wanted. I brought her meat but she would not taste it and I could not read her looks nor her whimperings till at length she seized a sealskin wallet and laid it on her back. I then knew at once that she wanted me to load her with provisions and fly which I effected with all speed and we issued from the cave Nancy leading the way with great caution. All was quiet. The bears were gorged and fallen into their repose and I believe a fitter time could not have been chosen to make my escape. There were several children and two old frail people in the cavern when I left it wholly unprotected. Some of these children were my own or supposed to be so and when I came away I heard one weeping and calling for its mother. But what could I do? I could do nothing but shed tears and leave them to that mercy which I prayed and hoped might yet be extended to save them.

Away then I went once more to push my fortune I knew not where with Nancy trotting loaded by my side. She led me straight to the sea side to the very spot at which she and I had first landed in Greenland and there she threw my load from her back kneeled licked my hand and then scampered off at full speed to share the prey with her associates.

There were plenty of canoes lying at the spot and some fishing boats but choosing the best canoe I could find as the safest vessel I stowed my victuals in about my feet and legs bound the doughty sealskin cover around my breast and away I set on my perilous voyage. The sea was still open all along the coast and I plied my voyage night and day along a weather shore going merely to land occassionally to take a short sleep. I got some distant views of Iceland but could not get near it for ice, so I held on my course until fairly hemmed in with ice that I could get no farther. I then drew my canoe ashore and climbed a hill from which I saw the open sea at no great distance and several ships all apparently bearing southward. Many an anxious day had I spent in my life but never one so fraught with anxiety as this. I posted on running without intermission in the direction of the ships but before I reached the verge of the ice they were all gone beyond hail. I set me down and cried one while and prayed another and in less than twelve hours the Briel of Amsterdam hove in

view beating up and as in one of her tacks she came close to me I was taken on board and safely landed in Scotland.

Editorial Note

The manuscript of Hogg's tale 'The Surpassing Adventures of Allan Gordon' survives in National Library of Scotland MS 1870, ff. 1-22. Hogg had sent it to the firm of Blackie and Son as a contribution to their edition of his collected prose tales. In the event the collection appeared after Hogg's death as the six volume *Tales and Sketches of the Ettrick Shepherd* of 1837; this tale appears on pp. 241-316 of its first volume, and it has never been reprinted since.

The manuscript would appear to be the version of the tale that is closest to Hogg's own intentions for it. It seems unlikely that Hogg would have seen the proofs of this tale, for *Tales and Sketches* was published more than a year after his death, while in his letter to Blackie and Son of 11 November 1833 (in NLS MS 807, f. 20) he gave the firm's corrector of the press permission to alter his tales as he thought fit—a permission presumably given simply to ensure that his work was published at all and not for artistic reasons. The 1837 text was clearly set up from Hogg's manuscript and then altered or shortened in various places at the proof stage: the page numbers marked in ink at intervals throughout the manuscript are consistent with this supposition. The text given here is that of Hogg's manuscript except in those places where that is faded or damaged: in less than forty cases where a word is for this reason incomplete I have adopted the reading of the 1837 version. For example, the manuscript gives for the first word of the penultimate paragraph of the tale 'Aw', which has been completed from the 1837 version to read 'Away'.

The differences between the manuscript and the 1837 version, however, are of some interest in showing how Blackie and Son treated Hogg's creative work. Apart from the addition of a cumbersome system of punctuation there are over a hundred alterations to the substantives of Hogg's text. The most significant are those which omit the courting complications of Allan's life in Old Greenland: these take away an important strand in the plot and the hero's character in over five hundred words altogether, presumably for reasons of sexual propriety. Other alterations seem to be motivated by a desire to remove supposedly offensive references to either sex or religion, but some exist merely to shorten the tale. Hogg's old-fashioned spelling of such words as 'tyger', 'stile' and 'chuse' is corrected, while occasionally Scots words such as 'laiggens' or 'frizel' are misunderstood. The majority of the individual alterations may appear to be slight but they have the cumulative effect of weakening the flow and raciness of Hogg's easy narrative style in favour of a relatively meaningless and characterless correctness and formality. The following passage, given first from the manuscript and then from 1837, provides a good example of this process:

My next great concern was to waken Nancy but that for a long time I found quite impracticable she continued not only sound asleep but perfectly rigid I could not even make her stretch herself out but there she lay like a round bowle. My perseverance in blowing tobacco smoke into her nose at last effected it. She fell into a violent fit of sneezing and then I took care not to let her fall asleep again. She was perfectly weak and tangle her limbs being

scarcely able to bear her weight and when she first went out to roll herself among the snow her great exercise she could not roll herself over the body. (f. 14)

My next great concern was to waken Nancy; but that for a long time I found quite impracticable. She continued not only sound asleep, but perfectly rigid. At length, by blowing tobacco smoke into her nose, I awakened her. She fell into a violent fit of sneezing; and then I took care not to let her fall asleep again. She was perfectly weak and tangle, her limbs being scarcely able to bear her weight; and when she first went out to roll among the snow, her favourite exercise, she could not turn herself round. (p. 291—there is a footnote explaining the meaning of the word tangle)

Hogg's manuscript contains various alterations and deletions: Hogg's alterations have been silently adopted and those by another person, presumably Blackie and Son's corrector of the press, silently disregarded. However, in a few cases where it seems impossible to establish who is responsible for the alteration I have had to fall back on my own judgment, and have presented the alternative choice in a note. In a few cases a word or letter is added because Hogg's sense is manifestly incomplete without it, or a careless repetition of a word is deleted, and these instances have also been noted. Hogg's own punctuation has been followed, with a few silent additions to complete it in places where, for example, a full stop is indicated because the word which follows begins with a capital letter or a speech has opening but not closing speech marks. In one instance, which is marked by a note, Hogg's punctuation has been supplemented to aid the reading of a passage correctly. On ff. 5r and 5v extra punctuation has been added in pencil to the manuscript, presumably by Blackie and Son's corrector of the press, and this has been disregarded.

I am grateful to Dr Douglas Mack, the textual consultant of *Altrive Chapbooks*, for his advice and practical help on the preparation of this text—especially for devoting some time in his busy schedule to an examination of the actual manuscript for me, which solved the problem created by the additional punctuation in it by revealing that it had been added in pencil. I am also grateful to the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland for permission to publish the manuscript of 'The Surpassing Adventures of Allan Gordon' and to quote from and refer to the various manuscript letters mentioned in the notes to it.

In the composition of this tale Hogg made use of the great contemporary interest in polar exploration, which indeed he most probably shared. His 'The p and the q; or, The Adventures of Jock M'Pherson' for example (edited by Robin W. MacLachlan in *Altrive Chapbooks*, No. 2 of September 1985, pp. 25-29) mentions the topic in a jesting way, and refers to the contemporary accounts of Sir John Barrow, Sir William Edward Parry and Sir John Franklin. Between January 1818 and October 1822 *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* contains no less than eleven articles relating to the pole, and as at this time Hogg received the magazine regularly from its publisher he would be well informed about the latest discoveries. Hogg mentions an older account of the polar regions in his letter to William Blackwood of 5 January 1828 (in NLS MS 4021, f. 271), John Harris's *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca: or a compleat Collection of Voyages and Travels, consisting of above four hundred of the most authentick writers*. This was first published in London in two volumes in 1705, and later in a revised version with additions by Dr. John Campbell in 1744-1748. According to his letter Hogg had used several incidents from

this in writing an earlier article of ‘polar curiosities’. A different source of inspiration, firmly echoed in the very title of Hogg’s tale, is of course Daniel Defoe’s classic account of the experiences of a shipwrecked mariner, *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. There is much to be said elsewhere about Hogg’s sources for this tale, transformed as they are by his distinctive sense of the fantastic and vivid imagination into ‘The Surpassing Adventures of Allan Gordon’.

Notes

- 1 Sir David Brewster (1781-1868) is the inventor of the kaleidoscope, and editor of the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*. He did a great deal of scientific work on optics—see *DNB*. His interest in the contemporary polar discoveries is shown by his authorship of several articles on the subject in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, while samples of minerals and rocks were sent to him personally by Captain John Ross from his expedition of 1818.
- 2 Hogg originally wrote after this ‘having been sent to me as a curiosity by the Earl of Fife to whom I have to express my grateful acknowledgement’, and then changed the latter part of this to ‘the late ingenious Duchess of Gordon in a quarto vol. among many other curious relics copied for her Grace by a clever amanuensis. I expressed my acknowledgements to her long ago and now thus publicly acknowledge it once again’. This is also deleted: Hogg’s clear uncertainty about the supposed method of transmission to adopt for his tale, and the fact that Blackie and Son’s corrector of the press seems to have made his longer deletions at the proof stage rather than on the manuscript, makes it probable that Hogg himself scored out this passage.
- 3 Hogg uses these popular tunes to comment on the scene. In the first the singer emphasises that he cannot do without his ‘cogie’, presumably his drinking-bowl, perhaps hinting at Allan’s resentment at being kept late at his work on a Saturday night and its cause—see Ewan MacColl, *Personal Choice: Scottish Folksongs and Ballads* (New York, [1963]), p. 46. There is a version of the second song by Burns: Allan jeers at his puny master by reminding him of this song, in which a girl, believing the country saying that a tailor is only the ninth part of a man, wrongly thinks it unnecessary to eject the little tailor from her bed one night.
- 4 Hogg presumably deleted ‘rather’ to avoid the repetition later in the sentence.
- 5 Scientific exploration of the pole often utilized the experience, ships, and men of the Greenland whale fishing. One of the more popular and comprehensive accounts of the region was *An Account of the Arctic Regions, with a History and Description of the Northern Whale-Fishery*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1820). Its author, William Scoresby of Whitby, was like his father a captain of the Greenland whale fishery, adding a scientific interest in the region to his occupation there. His vigorous narrative impressed not only Hogg’s generation but also Mrs Gaskell’s: her account of the Greenland whale fishery in *Sylvia’s Lovers* (1863) is based on Scoresby’s work.
- 6 The MS reads ‘had’ where the context demands ‘hand’.
- 7 The MS reads ‘it may it may’.
- 8 The MS reads ‘retor- retorted’.
- 9 See Revelation 21: 23-25.
- 10 Hogg originally wrote ‘The Captain filled himself drunk that night as usual and the next morning’.
- 11 The MS reads ‘com- commanded’.
- 12 The MS contains no comma, which has been added to clarify the passage.
- 13 Hogg originally wrote ‘drifting all night’.
- 14 Hogg originally wrote ‘crash went the ribs’.
- 15 The MS reads ‘rightt’.
- 16 The MS reads ‘jamed’.
- 17 The MS reads ‘muching’.
- 18 Psalm 107 praises God for his power to relieve those in distress: verses 23-30 refer to the deliverance of those ‘that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters’, describing their anguish in storms and God’s ability to bring them ‘unto their desired haven’.
- 19 The word ‘with’ has been deleted by an ink line, it is hardly possible to tell by whom.
- 20 Three words, barely legible but perhaps ‘the cabin [?]red’, have been deleted here—their lack of relevance to what follows suggests by Hogg.

- 21 The MS reads 'stuck'.
- 22 The MS reads 'hapy'.
- 23 In the MS 'or not' followed originally; perhaps Hogg deleted this to avoid their repetition later in the sentence.
- 24 A final 's' was deleted from the MS, by whom it is hardly possible to decide.
- 25 In the MS 'again' has been deleted, it is hardly possible to say by whom.
- 26 The MS originally read 'be it now remembered'; perhaps Hogg deleted 'now' to avoid its repetition later in the sentence.
- 27 The MS reads 'to be to be'.
- 28 The MS reads 'some sometimes'.
- 29 This word is not entirely clear, Hogg having written one over another.
- 30 The MS originally read 'unknown unknown seas'.
- 31 The word 'desire' inserted above the line, though hard to distinguish, appears to be in Hogg's hand.
- 32 The word 'current' inserted above the line, though hard to distinguish, appears to be in Hogg's hand.
- 33 The MS originally read 'mound'; the alteration to 'mountain' also appears to be in Hogg's hand.
- 34 In the MS 'of water' is inserted above the line in a cramped hand, probably Hogg's.
- 35 The MS reads 'which which'.
- 36 See Genesis Chapters 7 and 8.
- 37 Allan recalls Luke 12: 6-7, but his argument is reminiscent of that of Mungo Park when, plundered and left desolate in Africa some five hundred miles from the nearest European settlement, he receives assurance of God's presence with him from the beauty of a created thing:

At this moment, painful as my reflections were, the extraordinary beauty of a small moss, in fructification, irresistibly caught my eye ... Can that Being (thought I), who planted, watered, and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern upon the situation and sufferings of creatures formed after his own image?—surely not! (*Travels in the interior of Africa ... in the years 1795, 1796, and 1797*, second edition, London, 1799, p. 244)

- 38 The MS originally read 'knowing ever': the curved line to indicate that they should be reversed is consistent with the curve of Hogg's brackets elsewhere in the tale.
- 39 Allan has unintentionally discovered the North-East Passage from the polar region into Asia. John Harris's *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca*, revised edition, 2 vols (London, 1744-1748), II, 452-56 gives an account of various unsuccessful attempts to find it and decides that nevertheless it probably does exist.
- 40 The MS reads 'by cabin'.
- 41 The MS originally read 'shoals shoals of ice' before the duplication was deleted.
- 42 See Genesis 2: 18.
- 43 There is a line across the MS at this point, which was possibly intended to delete the words 'And though', but this is uncertain.
- 44 The MS originally read 'gentleman man' before the repetition was deleted.
- 45 Allan is presumably referring to weight as measured by the public tron, or weighing machine, of Aberdeen. The *Concise Scots Dictionary* (p. 817) records that although a Commission of 1661 set up the national standard of the troy stone of Lanark, the use of the tron weight continued after this, and that national uniformity was not completely achieved until 1824.
- 46 In the MS the words 'for as for the tedious ceremonial law I accounted that perfect nonsense' have been crossed out. They are included here because it seems more likely that Blackie and Son would see the impropriety of describing any part of Holy Writ as nonsense more easily than Hogg, who expresses a similar opinion in his *Lay Sermons on Good Principles and Good Breeding* (London, 1834), p. 65. The reference here too is presumably to the book of Leviticus in particular.
- 47 Hogg's original 'were' has 'was' superimposed, making it difficult to read but the alteration is probably also his.
- 48 The MS read 'creature creature' until the unnecessary repetition was deleted.
- 49 The MS read 'them them' until the unnecessary repetition was deleted.
- 50 Presumably Hogg wishes to account for Allan's sense of common ground with these men by referring to the Scandinavian past of Shetland, which only passed to Scotland in 1468 on the marriage of James III to Margaret, the daughter of the King of Denmark and Norway.
- 51 'John Mayens Island' is mentioned in *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca*, II, 389, where its situation near Spitzbergen is given and it is described as quite habitable, though deserted as a

result of the whales removal northward. ‘There is a Mountain towards the northern Part of it, which extends quite across the land ... *Beerenberg*, i. e. Bear-mountain, from the prodigious Numbers of those Creatures that have been seen upon it ... The greatest Inconveniences attending the Navigation thereabout, is the vast Quantities of Ice which float on all Sides, but especially towards the East, where, in the Spring, it is absolutely inaccessible’.

52 While there are many contemporary descriptions of canoes Hogg may actually have seen one in action. The eskimo John Sackeouse had accompanied a whaler ship from his native Greenland to Leith in 1816, where his good temper and sociable disposition made him many Edinburgh friends. ‘At Leith, during the winter of 1816-17, he frequently exhibited in his canoe in the docks, and excited, in this neighbourhood, a good deal of notice by his extraordinary dexterity’—see ‘Some Account of the late John Sackeouse, the Esquimaux’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 4 (March 1819), 656-58 (p. 656).

53 The MS reads ‘con- conveyance’.

54 The MS reads ‘christ- christians’.

55 William Scoresby, in *An Account of the Arctic Regions, with a History and Description of the Northern Whale-Fishery*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1820), I, 66-67, mentions colonies of Christians reaching Iceland and Greenland by about 1000 A.D., and as being well established near the southern point of Greenland a hundred years later:

They had two settlements, the most western of which increased up to four parishes, containing one hundred farms or villages; and the most eastern to twelve parishes, one hundred and ninety villages, one bishop’s see, and two convents. The intercourse between Greenland and the rest of the world, was intercepted about the year 1406, when the seventeenth bishop attempted to reach his see, but was prevented by ice. Since the beginning of the fifteenth century, these unfortunate colonists have been, of necessity, left to themselves, and, not having been heard of, are supposed to have perished ... It is not indeed known that none of them yet remain, though, from the circumstance of several of the ruins of their convents having been seen by the zealous missionary Hans Egede, in the year 1723, it is clear, that the western colony is not now in existence; but as to the eastern colony, Egede was of opinion, that there was a probability of some of the people being yet alive’.

Allan’s polar discoveries thus include the final remnant of these colonists, and he learns something of the history of the intervening years before their final extinction.

56 While Allan states that his Greenland people are of Norwegian extraction they are in fact described as eskimos.

57 Jacob’s twelve sons, the originals of the twelve tribes of Israel, were the result of his union with four women: Joseph and Benjamin were his wife Rachel’s sons; Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun were his wife Leah’s sons; Dan and Naphtali were Rachel’s maid Bilhah’s sons; and Gad and Asher were Leah’s maid Zilpah’s sons.

58 The MS reads ‘busy busy’.

59 The word ‘even’ is deleted in the MS, it is hard to tell by whom.

60 The MS reads ‘of of’.

61 The MS reads ‘imposs’, completed to ‘impossible’ by conjecture as the passage does not appear in 1837.

62 The first commandment ever given to man was, literally, God’s command to Adam not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (see Genesis 2: 16-17)—what Hogg probably refers to here, however, is the first of the commandments given by God to Moses, which is ‘thou shalt have no other gods before me’ (Exodus 20: 3).

63 The MS originally read ‘of of’ until the unnecessary repetition was deleted.

64 The MS originally read ‘they’; the alteration in small characters above the line to ‘these animals’ is hard to distinguish but appears to be in Hogg’s hand.

65 The MS originally read ‘from’; the alteration in small characters above the line to ‘of’ is hard to distinguish but appears to be in Hogg’s hand.

66 According to the accounts of the polar regions of Hogg’s own day, the polar bear ‘though possessed of courage and great means of defence ... always, unless urged by hunger, retreats before men’—see William Scoresby, *An Account of the Arctic Regions*, I, 519. Hogg’s prefiguration of the Dracula myth perhaps has its origin in the more sensational bear of *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca*, II, 381, who is ‘of a hideous and frightful Aspect, with white long Hair, greedy of human Blood’.

67 The MS originally read 'lay'; the alteration in small characters above the line to 'laying' is hard to distinguish but appears to be in Hogg's hand.

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