

ICE BOUND.

By W. CLARK BURSLEY. Author of "The Wreck of the Greenhorn," "Jack's Courtesan," "My Watch-Boat," "The Lady Head," &c.

CHAPTER XXIX. I VALUE THE LADIES.

The day had been so full of business, there had been so much to engage my mind, that it was not until I was seated at supper in the old cook room, in which had passed so many melancholy hours, that I found myself able to take a calm survey of my situation, and to compare the various motions of my fortune.

I was not in a bad way. From which I should awaken presently, and discover myself still securely imprisoned in the ice, and all those passages of the powder blast, the liberation of the schooner, my lonely days at her anchor, my encounter with the whaler, as visionary and vanishing as those dusty forms of vapor which had swarmed in giant shape upon my little open boat.

But even if circumstances had been wanting in the saboteur of Billy Pitt, who sat near the furnace munching away with prodigious enjoyment of his food, and bringing his can of hot spices from his vast blubber lips with a mighty splash of ice, I must have found it in each hissing log and roaring plunge of the old piratical bucket, so full of the vitality of the wind swollen canvas, so quiet with all its life, nestled in a vessel storming through the deep with buoyancy and under full control. Oh heaven! how different from the dull ambling of the morning, the sluggish pitching and rolling to the weak pulling of the sprit!

I was up and down a good deal during the night. But for the treasure I should have been less anxious, I dare say. I had come so successfully to this point that I was resolved, if my hope were to miscarry, the misfortune should not be owing to want of vigilance on my part; and there happened an incident which inevitably tended to sharpen my watchfulness, though I was perfectly conscious it was a million to one against its occurring a second time.

I came on deck to relieve Wilkinson at midnight, after a half hour's nodding done by the furnace below. He went to his cabin; I stood under the lee of a cloth seized in the weather main rigging. Pitt arrived, and I told him he could return to the cabin and stay there till I called him. The helm being lashed and the schooner doing very well, nothing wanted watching in particular, yet I would not have the deck abandoned, and meant to keep a look-out, turn and turn about with Pitt, as Wilkinson and Cromwell had. She snow had ceased, but it was very dark and thick, the ocean a roaring, rolling shadow, palpitating upon the eyes in rolling folds of blackness, with the quick expiring flash of foam to windward.

When I was in the cabin, I found that Wilkinson had been looking at the watch, and had seen the schooner's light, and that she was close to the boat, coming upon us with a light bound. I was in a hurry to get up, and I knew that she was close to the boat, coming upon us with a light bound. I was in a hurry to get up, and I knew that she was close to the boat, coming upon us with a light bound.

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I assigned, and you wish me to see the matter right; there was plenty of time before me; I should be willing to stand by my own opinion if I had by it, so heavily obliged was I to them for coming to my assistance. I was in this I spoke the truth, though, as you will understand who know my position, I had to flatter. It went against my conscience to make out that the chest was full of small arms; but I should have been glad to tell them the truth, and perhaps by the truth make devils of men who were, and promised to remain, steady, temperate, honest fellows. I was not governed by the desire to keep all the treasure to myself; no, I vowed to God I should have been glad to give them a moiety of it had I not apprehended the very grave consequences if I were caught with them. But this, surely, must be so plain that it is idle to go on insisting on it.

The fine weather, the golden lane that it was to attend our successful navigation, the satisfactory behavior of the schooner, put us into a high good humor with one another; and when it came to my collecting all the clothes in the after cabin, and to distributing them among the three men, I thought Billy Pitt and Cromwell would have gone mad with delight. To the best of my recollection, the apparel that had been left us by the American captain (who, as you know, had cleared the cabin), consisted of a pair of blue trousers of several coats of cut velvet, trimmed with gold and silver lace, some frocks of white drab with large plate buttons, broad waistcoats of blue satin and green silk, crimson and other colored cloth breeches, along with some cloaks, three corner hats, black and white stockings, a number of ruffled shirts, and other articles of which I recollect the character, though my ignorance of the costumes of that period prevents me from naming them.

To be continued.

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