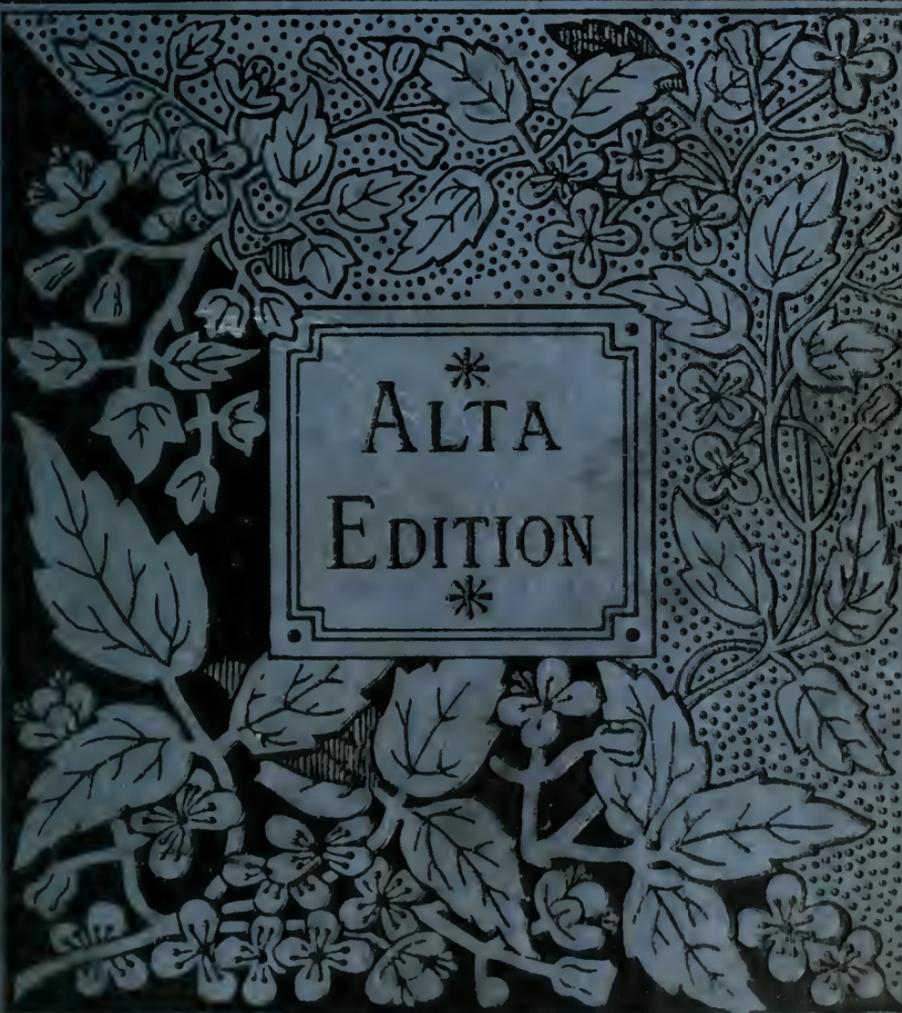


DESERT OF ICE



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THE  
DESERT OF ICE;

OR, THE

FURTHER ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN HATTERAS

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF  
JULES VERNE.

WITH ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS BY RIOU



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# THE DESERT OF ICE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE DOCTOR'S INVENTORY.

THE design which Captain Hatteras had formed of exploring the North, and of giving England the honor of discovering the Pole, was certainly a bold one. This hardy sailor had just done all that human skill could do. After struggling for nine months against contrary winds and seas, after destroying icebergs and ice-fields, after enduring the severity of an unprecedentedly cold winter, after going over all that his predecessors had done, after carrying the *Forward* beyond the seas which were already known, in short, after completing half his task, he saw his grand plans completely overthrown. The treachery, or rather the demoralization of his wearied crew, the criminal folly of some of the ring-leaders, left him in a terrible situation; of the eighteen men who had sailed in the brig, four were left, abandoned without supplies, without a boat, more than twenty-five hundred miles from home!

The explosion of the *Forward*, which had just blown up before their eyes, took from them their last means of subsistence. Still, Hatteras's courage did not abandon him at this terrible crisis. The men who were left were the best of the crew; they were genuine heroes. He made an appeal to the energy and wisdom of Dr. Clawbonny, to the devotion of Johnson and Bell, to his own faith in the enterprise; even in these desperate straits he ventured to speak of hope; his brave companions listened to him, and their courage in the past warranted confidence in their promises for the future.

The doctor, after listening to the captain's words, wanted to get an exact idea of their situation ; and, leaving the others about five hundred feet from the ship, he made his way to the scene of the catastrophe.

Of the *Forward*, which had been built with so much care, nothing was left ; pieces of ice, shapeless fragments all blackened and charred, twisted pieces of iron, ends of ropes still burning like fuse, and scattered here and there on the ice-field, testified to the force of the explosion. The cannon had been hurled to some distance, and was lying on a piece of ice that looked like a gun-carriage. The surface of the ice, for a circle of six hundred feet in diameter, was covered with fragments of all sorts ; the brig's keel lay under a mass of ice ; the icebergs, which had been partly melted by the fire, had already recovered their rock-like hardness.

The doctor then began to think of his ruined cabin, of his lost collections, of his precious instruments destroyed, his books torn, burned to ashes. So much that was valuable gone ! He gazed with tearful eyes at this vast disaster, thinking not of the future, but of the irreparable misfortune which dealt him so severe a blow. He was immediately joined by Johnson ; the old sailor's face bore signs of his recent sufferings ; he had been obliged to struggle against his revolted companions, defending the ship which had been intrusted to his care. The doctor sadly pressed the boatswain's hand.

"Well, my friend, what is going to become of us ?" asked the doctor.

"Who can say ?" answered Johnson.

"At any rate," continued the doctor, "don't let us give way to despair ; let us be men !"

"Yes, Doctor," answered the old sailor, "you are right ; it's

when matters look worst that we most need courage ; we are in a bad way ; we must see how we can best get out of it."



“Poor ship!” said the doctor, sighing; “I had become attached to it; I had got to look on it as on my own home, and there’s not left a piece that can be recognized!”

“Who would think, Doctor, that this mass of dust and ashes could be so dear to our heart?”

“And the launch,” continued the doctor, gazing around, “was it destroyed too?”

“No, Doctor; Shandon and the others, who left, took it with them.”

“And the gig?”

“Was broken into a thousand pieces. See, those sheets of tin are all that’s left of her.”

“Then we have nothing but the Halkett-boat?”\*

“That is all, and it is because you insisted on our taking it, that we have that.”

“It’s not of much use,” said the doctor.

“They were a pack of miserable, cowardly traitors who ran away!” said Johnson. “May they be punished as they deserve!”

“Johnson,” answered the doctor, mildly, “we must remember that their suffering had worn upon them very much. Only exceptional natures remain stanch in adversity, which completely overthrows the weak. Let us rather pity than curse them!”

After these words the doctor remained silent for a few minutes, and gazed around uneasily.

“What is become of the sledge?” asked Johnson.

“We left it a mile back.”

“In care of Simpson?”

“No, my friend; poor Simpson sank under the toil of the trip.”

“Dead!” cried the boatswain.

“Dead!” answered the doctor.

“Poor fellow!” said Johnson; “but who knows whether we may not soon be reduced to envying his fate?”

“But we have brought back a dying man in place of the one we lost,” answered the doctor.

“A dying man?”

\* Made of india-rubber, and capable of being inflated at pleasure.

“Yes, Captain Altamont.”

The doctor gave the boatswain in a few words an account of their finding him.

“An American!” said Johnson, thoughtfully.

“Yes; everything seems to point that way. But what was this *Porpoise* which had evidently been shipwrecked, and what was he doing in these waters?”

“He came in order to be lost,” answered Johnson; “he brought his crew to death, like all those whose foolhardiness leads them here. But, Doctor, did the expedition accomplish what it set out for?”

“Finding the coal?”

“Yes,” answered Johnson.

The doctor shook his head sadly.

“None at all?” asked the old sailor.

“None; our supplies gave out, fatigue nearly conquered us. We did not even reach the spot mentioned by Edward Belcher.”

“So,” continued Johnson, “you have no fuel?”

“No.”

“Nor food?”

“No.”

“And no boat with which to reach England?”

They were both silent; they needed all their courage to meet this terrible situation.

“Well,” resumed the boatswain, “there can be no doubts about our condition! We know what we have to expect! But the first thing to do, when the weather is so cold, is to build a snow-house.”

“Yes,” answered the doctor, “with Bell’s aid that will be easy; then we’ll go after the sledge, we’ll bring the American here, and then we’ll take counsel with Hatteras.”

“Poor captain!” said Johnson, forgetting his own griefs; “he must suffer terribly.”

With these words they returned to their companions. Hatteras was standing with folded arms, as usual, gazing silently into space. His face wore its usual expression of firmness. Of what was this remarkable man thinking? Of his desperate condition

and shattered hopes? Was he planning to return, since both men and the elements had combined against his attempt?

No one could have read his thoughts, which his face in no way expressed. His faithful Duke was with him, braving a temperature of  $-32^{\circ}$ .

Bell lay motionless on the ice; his insensibility might cost him his life; he was in danger of being frozen to death. Johnson shook him violently, rubbed him with snow, and with some difficulty aroused him from his torpor.

"Come, Bell, take courage!" he said; "don't lose heart; get up; we have to talk matters over, and we need a shelter. Have you forgotten how to make a snow-house? Come, help me, Bell! There's an iceberg we can cut into! Come, to work! That will give us what we need, courage!"

Bell, aroused by these words, obeyed the old sailor.

"Meanwhile," Johnson went on, "the doctor will be good enough to go to the sledge and bring it back with the dogs."

"I am ready," answered the doctor; "in an hour I shall be back."

"Shall you go too, Captain?" added Johnson, turning to Hatteras.

Although he was deep in thought, the captain heard the boatswain's question, for he answered gently, —

"No, my friend, if the doctor is willing to go alone. We must form some plan of action, and I want to be alone to think matters over. Go. Do what you think right for the present. I will be thinking of the future."

Johnson turned to the doctor.

"It's singular," he said; "the captain seems to have forgotten his anger; his voice never was so gentle before."

"Well!" answered the doctor; "he has recovered his presence of mind. Mark my words, Johnson, that man will be able to save us!"

Thereupon the doctor wrapped himself up as well as he could, and, staff in hand, walked away towards the sledge in the midst of a fog which the moonlight made almost bright. Johnson and Bell set to work immediately; the old sailor encouraged

the carpenter, who wrought on in silence; they did not need to build, but to dig into the solid ice; to be sure it was frozen very hard, and so rendered the task difficult, but it was thereby additionally secure; soon Johnson and Bell could work comfortably in the orifice, throwing outside all that they took from the solid mass.



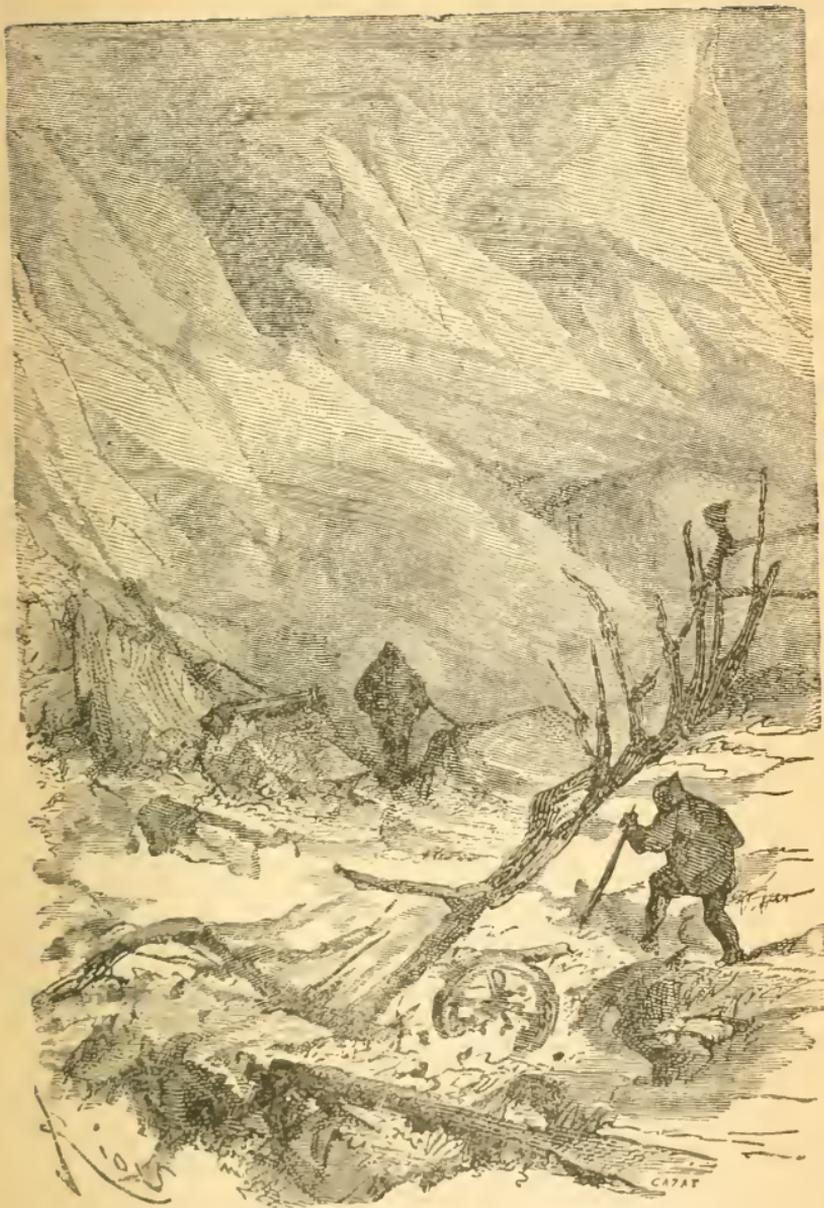
From time to time Hatteras would walk fitfully, stopping suddenly every now and then; evidently he did not wish to reach the spot where

his brig had been. As he had promised, the doctor was soon back; he brought with him Altamont, lying on the sledge beneath all the coverings; the Greenland dogs, thin, tired, and half starved, could hardly drag the sledge, and were gnawing at their harness; it was high time that men and beasts should take some rest.

While they were digging the house, the doctor happened to stumble upon a small stove which had not been injured by the explosion, and with a piece of chimney that could be easily repaired: the doctor carried it away in triumph. At the end of three hours the house was inhabitable; the stove was set in and filled with pieces of wood; it was soon roaring and giving out a comfortable warmth.

The American was brought in and covered up carefully; the four Englishmen sat about the fire. The last supplies of the sledge, a little biscuit and some hot tea, gave them some comfort. Hatteras did not speak; every one respected his silence. When the meal was finished the doctor made a sign for Johnson to follow him outside.

"Now," he said, "we are going to make an inventory of what is left. We must know exactly what things we have; they are scattered all about; we must pick them up; it may snow at any moment, and then it would be impossible to find a scrap."



"The large pieces of the engine lay here and there, twisted out of shape." — Page 7.



“Don’t let us lose any time, then,” answered Johnson; “food and wood is what we need at once.”

“Well, let us each take a side,” answered the doctor, “so as to cover the whole ground; let us begin at the centre and go out to the circumference.”

They went at once to the bed of ice where the *Forward* had lain; each examined with care all the fragments of the ship beneath the dim light of the moon. It was a genuine hunt; the doctor entered into this occupation with all the zest, not to say the pleasure, of a sportsman, and his heart beat high when he discovered a chest almost intact; but most were empty, and their fragments were scattered everywhere.

The violence of the explosion had been considerable; many things were but dust and ashes; the large pieces of the engine lay here and there, twisted out of shape; the broken flanges of the screw were hurled twenty fathoms from the ship and buried deeply in the hardened snow; the bent cylinders had been torn from their pivots; the chimney, torn nearly in two, and with chains still hanging to it, lay half hid under a large cake of ice; the bolts, bars, the iron-work of the helm, the sheathing, all the metal-work of the ship, lay about as if it had been fired from a gun.

But this iron, which would have made the fortune of a tribe of Esquimaux, was of no use under the circumstances; before anything else food had to be found, and the doctor did not discover a great deal.

“That’s bad,” he said to himself; “it is evident that the store-room, which was near the magazine, was entirely destroyed by the explosion; what was n’t burned was shattered to dust. It’s serious; and if Johnson is not luckier than I am, I don’t see what’s going to become of us.”

Still, as he enlarged his circles, the doctor managed to collect a few fragments of pemmican, about fifteen pounds, and four stone bottles, which had been thrown out upon the snow and so had escaped destruction; they held five or six pints of brandy.

Farther on he picked up two packets of grains of cochlearia, which would well make up for the loss of their lime-juice, which is so useful against the scurvy.

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