

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### EXPLORATIONS OF DR. ISAAC I. HAYES.

He visits Melville Bay—Winters at Port Foulke—Arctic Night described—Highest Point reached.

THE next American Arctic exploration on the northeastern coast was effected by Dr. Hayes, surgeon of the second Grinnell expedition.

The proposed route was again to be by way of Smith's Sound, and his objects were to complete the survey of the north coasts of Greenland and Grinnell Land, and to make further explorations towards the Pole, in order to verify the existence of the reported open Polar Sea. On the former voyage he had traced Grinnell Land beyond the eightieth parallel, and he now hoped to push a vessel into the ice-belt there, and thence transport a boat over it into the open water of the great basin which he hoped to find beyond.

The fore-and-aft-schooner United States sailed from Bokin on July 7th, 1860, and crossed the Arctic circle on the 30th of July. Dr. Hayes visited Pröven and Upernavik, where the ship's company was increased by the addition of six persons. On the 23d day of August Melville Bay was entered in a thick snow-storm. The expedition wintered at Port Foulke. Dr. Hayes thus describes in his journal on the 16th day of January, 1861, an Arctic night:

"Our eyes now turn wistfully to the south, eagerly watching for the tip of Aurora's chariot, as the fair goddess of the morning rises from the sea to drop a ray of gladness from her rosy fingers into this long-neglected world. It is almost a month since we passed the darkest day of winter, and it will be a long time yet before we have light; but it is time for us now to have at noontime a faint flush upon the horizon. A faint twilight flush mounting the southern sky to-day at the meridian hour, though barely perceptible, was a cheering sight to all. We feel that the veil of night is lifting, that the cloud

is passing away, that the load of darkness is being lightened. . . .

"The people have exhausted their means of amusement; we long for the day and for work. Talk as you will of pluck and of manly amusement, this Arctic night is a severe ordeal. It



DR. ISAAC I. HAYES.

is a severe trial to the moral and the intellectual faculties. The cheering influences of the rising sun, which invite to labor; the soothing influences of the evening twilight, which invite to repose; the change from day to night and from night to day, which lightens the burden to the weary mind and the

aching body, is withdrawn; and, in the constant longing for light, the mind and body, weary with the changeless progress of the time, fail to find repose where all is rest. The grandeur of nature ceases to give delight to the dull sympathies; the heart longs for new associations, new objects, and new companionships; the dark and dreary solitude oppresses the understanding; the desolation which reigns everywhere haunts the imagination; the silence—dark, dreary, and profound—becomes a terror. I have gone out into the Arctic night, and viewed nature in her varied aspects. I have rejoiced with her in her strength, and communed with her in repose. I have walked abroad in the darkness, when the winds were roaring through the hills and crashing over the plains. I have wandered far out upon the frozen sea, and listened to the voice of the icebergs, bewailing their imprisonment; along the glacier, where forms and falls the avalanche; up on the hill-top, where the drifting snow, coursing its way over the rocks, sang its plaintive song; and again I have wandered away to the distant valley, where all these sounds were hushed, and the air was still and solemn as the tomb.

“And here it is that the true spirit of the Arctic night is revealed, where its wonders are unloosed, to sport and play with the mind’s vain imaginings. The heavens above and the earth beneath reveal only an endless and fathomless quiet; there is nowhere evidence of life or motion; I stand alone amidst the mighty hills; their tall crests climb upward, and are lost in the gray vault of the skies; their dark cliffs, standing against their slopes of white, are the steps of a vast amphitheatre. The mind, finding no rest on their bald summits, wanders into space; the moon, weary with long vigil, sinks to her repose; the Pleiades no longer breathe their sweet influences; Cassiopeia and Andromeda and Orion, and all the infinite host of the unnumbered constellations, fail to infuse one spark of joy into this dead atmosphere; they have lost all their tenderness, and are cold and pulseless. The eye leaves them and returns to earth, and the trembling ear awaits something that will break the oppressive stillness. But no footfall of living thing reaches it, no wild beast howls through the solitude. There is no cry of bird to enliven the scene; no tree among whose branches the winds can sigh and moan. The pulsations of my own heart are alone heard in the great void; and, as the blood courses through the

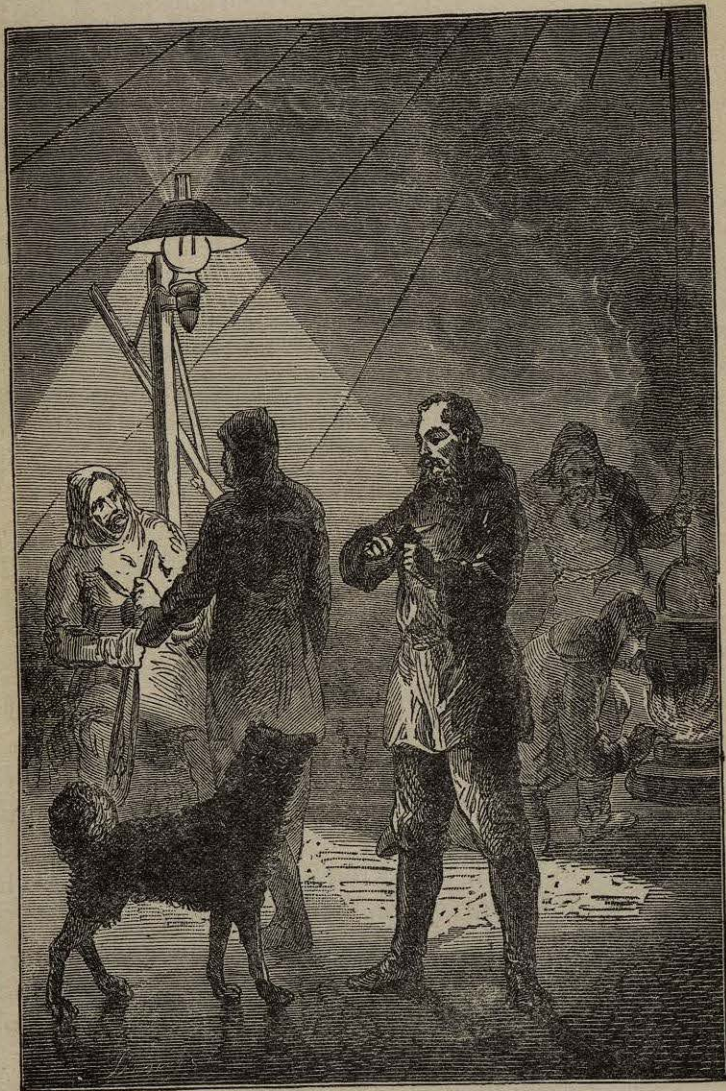
sensitive organization of the ear, I am oppressed as with discordant sounds. Silence has ceased to be negative; it has become endowed with positive attributes. I seem to hear and see and feel it. It stands forth as a frightful spectre, filling the mind with the overpowering consciousness of universal death—proclaiming the end of all things and heralding the everlasting future. Its presence is unendurable. I spring from the rock upon which I have been seated; I plant my feet heavily in the snow, to banish its awful presence, and the sound rolls through the night and drives away the phantom.

“I have seen no expression on the face of nature so filled with terror as the silence of the Arctic night.”

In the early spring the Esquimaux replenished the dog-teams to the number of twenty. Several, however, died as before. With the rest a provision depot for the summer use was soon established, and on the 4th of April, 1861, Hayes, with twelve officers and men, started out on his principal and long journey to the North. His equipment consisted of a metallic life-boat, mounted on runners, with provisions for seven persons for five months, and for six persons and fourteen dogs for six weeks. He was, however, again compelled to keep to the eastern shore, and, consequently, encountered the same experience of ice-hummocks with which Kane had met; and finally finding it impossible to transport the boat brought out in the fond anticipation of pushing it out on the Polar waters, he sent it back with the main party, while he continued the journey with two companions only. But with these he reached the west coast by nearly the same track followed by him in 1854, corrected some errors of the chart made at that time, entered Kennedy Channel, and on the 16th of the month attained a point forty miles farther north than Kane’s highest on the opposite shore. Returning in the same track he reached his vessel after an absence of fifty-nine days, and a journey of comings and goings of fourteen hundred miles. To the highest point reached he gave the name of Cape Lieber. To the north lay Lady Franklin Bay. In the far distance, north of Cape Beechey, a headland was seen to which he gave the name of Cape Union.

The schooner, having been prepared for sea, was broken out of the ice on the 10th of July, and sailed from her winter harbor on the 14th. After much difficulty and two trials she

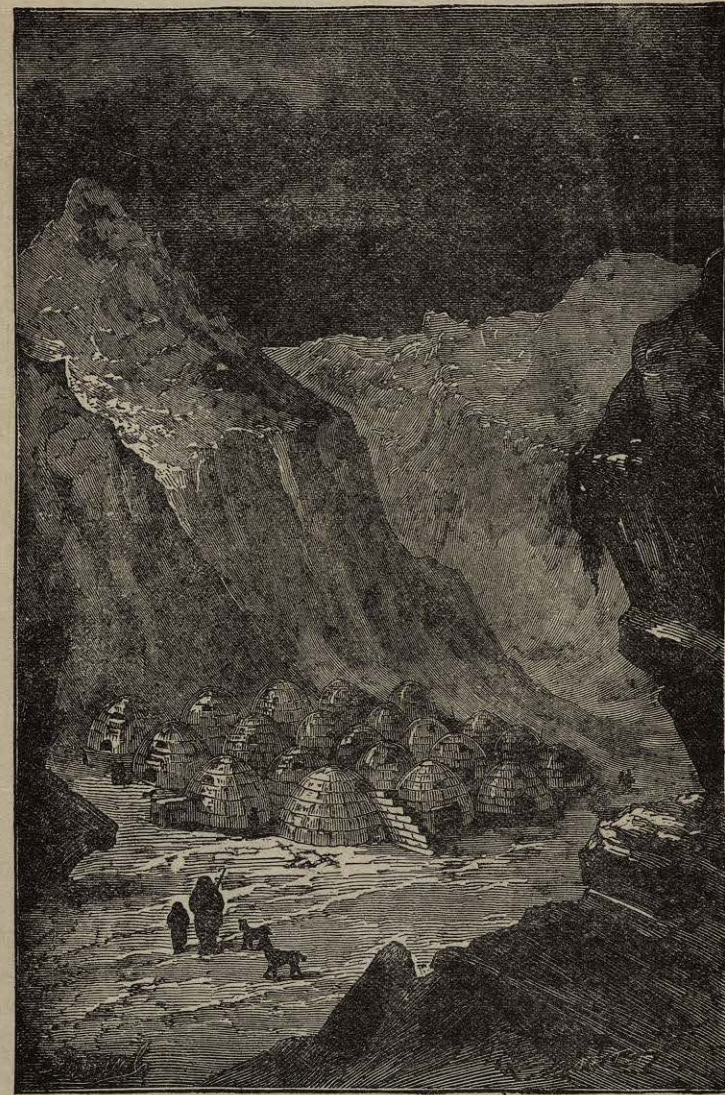
reached the west coast ten miles below Cape Isabella. Continuing his voyage southward Dr. Hayes completed the survey of the eastern coast of North Baffin Bay, from Cape Alexander to Granville Bay; a survey made independently



THE TENT OF DR. I. I. HAYES.

of the charts of his predecessors. The shore-line surveyed on the eastern side, a portion of which is new discovery, equalled about six hundred miles, and on the western side, between Clarence Head on the south and Cape Union on the north, about thirteen hundred miles.

He entered Melville Bay, and after boring through the "pack" for one hundred and fifty miles entered the Southern Water, and reached Upernavik on the 14th of August, and Disco Island September 1st. The voyage from Godhaven



SNOW VILLAGE—IGLOO.

southward was very stormy. Off Halifax the ship received such injury as required her to put into port for repairs. Leaving this harbor, October 19th, Dr. Hayes arrived in Boston on the 23d, after an absence of fifteen months and thirteen days.