

A PERILOUS PASSAGE.
From New York Weekly.
"If I were to advise you," said the station master, "I should say stay where you are if you know when you are well off. We all know the lake never was more dangerous than now, unless it was breaking up; and besides, ten chances to one you, miss, would freeze to death in this storm before you could get across."

"But I must go," reinstated with wild earnestness, fearing lest these discouraging remarks might deter my companion. "I am willing to run the risk. I am not afraid."

"I'm a little warm, miss," said Harry Langley, apologetically; "only just enough, though, to keep up my nerve and courage. If you say so, I'll borrow an extra robe to keep you from freezing, and come round with my team in a jiffy."

"By all means, if you are not afraid," I answered eagerly. "Afraid!" he answered contemptuously. "I was never born in the woods to be scared by an owl" and he went off whistling through the snow-storm with his companion.

In the course of ten minutes he came dashing up to the station with his team, and I was soon carefully deposited therein and thickly swathed in wraps of various descriptions. Receiving the friendly good-byes and well wishes of the station-master, we dashed recklessly off on the frozen bosom of the lake.

The snow had abated, or rather subsided by a stinging sleet that blew into our faces, piercing our flesh like needles. But for this, during the first few miles of our journey, I might have felt tolerably comfortable.

As we advanced the reefs, or openings in the ice above the submerged rocks, became more frequent and dangerous, exercising all the muscular strength and agility of our fleet horse in carrying himself and the cutter safely over the wide and perilous openings at the crowning points of the reefs.

My driver drew his flask as often as every second mile and imbibed some of the spirits it contained, pressing upon me the importance of doing the same to prevent freezing, till I feared he would become incapable of the risky adventure he had undertaken.

I could not resist, with him, of the great subject of temperance, and to show him what a brave self-sacrificing person like himself might be capable of, if disposed to wean himself from this demoralizing habit. He said he had often tried to break off from drinking, and was free to admit that it never did him any good. It might, he said, upon an occasion like the present tend to quicken the blood, and prevent one from freezing.

"In that case," I answered, "if used for the purpose of preserving or prolonging life, it was to be regarded simply in the light of medicine, not as an unnatural and pernicious vice, as we must be led to regard its habitual use."

He admitted he should be better without it, and might be induced to leave it off, perhaps, if any one should take interest enough in him to encourage him.

"Look!" he exclaimed, pointing to an abrupt elevation or swell in the ice-field beyond, "we are coming, now, to the last and worst reef of all! If we escape this, we are all right, and shall be in W— in half an hour."

We had commenced to ascend, which presented the appearance of an ordinary low elevation of the earth's surface, covered with a fresh mantle of snow. We were soon at its apex, and the next moment the horse made a flying leap over the yawning rupture.

"For God's sake, miss, cling to the dasher, or you will be lost!" shouted my companion, and I threw myself desperately forward at the suggestion, disengaging myself from the warm fur wrappings which had enveloped me and caught a firm hold upon the dash-board.

The movement was not a moment too soon, for my salvation, for the next instant the strong dash-board struck the thick jagged edge of the chasm about middle way of the curve, dropping the entire body of the cutter back into the fearful opening.

The next instant the sleigh came up with a tremendous jerk, that seemed to wrench every part of its slender but tough frame-work, and was hauled half-way down the other side of the reef on one runner, before it righted.

When we had time to collect ourselves after this perilous—al-

most miraculous escape, we found that the cushions of the sleigh, and every wrapper, robe and buffalo, had been left behind us in the awful chasm from which our powerful steed had dragged us.

The piercing, cold, and cutting sleet now played upon my exposed person in a manner that soon drove a benumbing chill into the very marrow of my bones, succeeded by a drowsy, stupefied sense of ease and quiet. I was undoubtedly fast sinking into that last chill sleep which precedes death by freezing, when I found myself suddenly and somewhat roughly awakened by my brave and generous companion.

He had divested himself of his overcoat, and was striving to wrap me in it. He buttoned it snugly around my half-frozen body, and then commenced shaking and thumping me violently, till at length he was successful in partially arousing me from the fatal lethargy into which I had unconsciously sunk after the first cold chill had struck me in my recently exposed state.

The moment he saw I was beginning to arouse from my involuntary lethargy, he began to talk loudly, calling my attention to this or that, and striving by a variety of artifices to prevent me from sinking back into my former stupor; but in spite of all his efforts, without shaking me up again, I would sink away, and rouse again by starts whenever his hand touched me; and then his voice, which would grow suddenly loud and distinct to my hearing, would begin gradually to grow fainter and fainter, as though being borne farther and farther away, till there was nothing left of it but a faint buzz. Then he would rouse me again, with a gentle or more determined shake as the case might require.

"Come, come!" he would say, impatiently, "rouse up, miss! You mustn't go to sleep. You'll freeze if you do!" and then he would shake me up again with, "Come, miss, take a swallow with you, and do you good!" And twice, though I belonged to the temperance division, I yielded to his importunities.

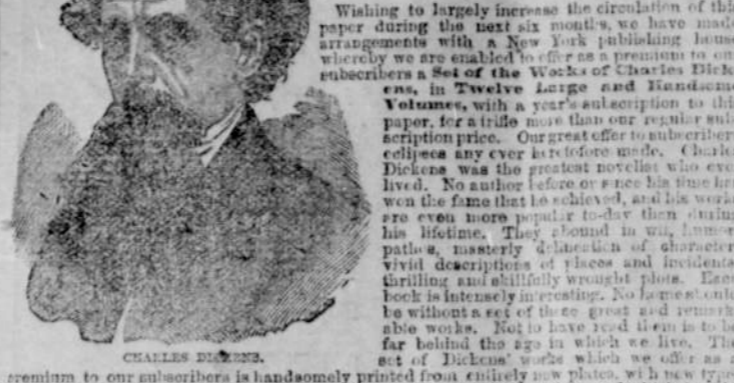
(To be continued.)

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