THE GREAT MIGRATION

His purpose in making these inland expeditions, is to pick up the freshwater fish; which he finds it convenient to catch in  
the numerous falls or shallows of the streams. He also varies his fish diet at this season, by making an occasional meal on   
such roots and berries as he may find growing along the banks. As other times of the year, when all inland water is   
frozen up, and even the sea to a great distance from land, he then keeps along the extreme edge of the frozen surface,  
and finds his food in the open water of the sea. Sea fish of different species, seals, the young walrus, and cunning, that  
the young of the great whale itself, become his prevail of which he hunts and captures with a skill and cunning that  
appears more the result of a reasoning process than a mere instinct. His natatory powers appear to have no limit, at all  
events, he has been met with swimming about in open water full miles from either ice or land. He has been often seen  
much further from shore, drifting upon masses of ice; but it is doubtful whether he cared much for the footing thus  
afforded him. It is quite possible he can swim as long as it pleases him, or until his strength may become exhausted by   
hunger. While going through the water, it does not appear necessary for him to make the slightest effort; and he can  
even spring up above the surface, and bound forward after the manner of porpoises or other cetaceae. If any quadruped  
has ever reached the pole, it is the polar bear; and it is quite probable that his range extends to this remarkable point on  
the eath’s surface. Most certainly it may, if we suppose that there is open water around the pole a supposition that, by  
analogical reasoning, may be proved to be correct. The daring parry found while bears at degrees; and there is no reason  
why they should not traverse the intervening zone of odd miles, almost as easily as the fowls of the air or the fish of the  
sea. No doubt there are polar bears around the pole; though it may be assumed for certain that none of them ever  
attempts to swarm up it, as the while bear is not the best climber of his kind. The female of the polar bear is not so  
much addicted to a maritime life as her liege lord. The former, unless when barren, keeps upon the land; and it is upon  
the land that she brings forth her young. When pregnant, she wanders off to some distance from the shore; and choosing  
her bed, she lies down, goes to sleep, and there remains until spring. She does not, like other hybernating bears, seek out  
a cave or hollow tree; for in the desolate land, she inhabits ofttimes neither one nor the other could be found. She   
merely waits for the setting in of a great snow storm which her instinct warns her of and then, stretching herself under  
the lee of a rock or other inequality, where the snow will be likely to form a deep drift, she remains motionless till it has  
smoored her quite up, often covering her body to the depth of several feet. There she remains throughout the winter,  
completely motionless, and apparently in a state of torpor. The heat of her body thawing the snow that comes  
immediately in contact with it together with some warmth from her limited breathing in time enlarges the space around  
her, so that she reclines inside a sort of icy shell. It is fortunate that circumstances provide her with this extra room;  
since in due course of time she will stand in need of it for the company she expects. And in process of time, it is called  
into use. When the spring sun begins to melt the snow outside, the bear becomes a mother, and a brace of little while  
cubs make their appearance, each about as big as a rabbit, the mother does not immediately lead them forth from their  
snowy chamber ; but continues to suckle them until they are of the size of arctic foxes, and ready to takes the road.  
Then she makes an effort, breaks through the icy crust that forms the dome of her dwelling and commences her journey  
towards the sea, there are times when the snow around her has become so firmly caked, that with her strength  
exhausted by the suckling of her cubs, the bear is unable to break through it. Is a case of this kind, she is compelled to   
remains in an involuntary durance until the sun gradually melts the ice around her and sets her free. Then she issues from  
her prolonged imprisonment, only the shadow of her former self, and scare able to keep her feet. The northern indians  
and eskimos capture hundreds of these hybernating bears every season taking both them and their cubs at the same time.  
They find the retreat in various ways; sometimes by their dogs scraping to get into it, and sometimes by observing the   
white hoar that hangs a little hole which the warmth of the bear’s breath has kept open in the snow. The hunters  
having ascertained the exact position of the animal’s body, either dig from above, and spear the old she in her bed; or  
they make a tunnel in a horizontal direction, and, getting a noose around the head or one of the paws of the bear, drag  
her forth in that way. To give an account of the many interesting habits peculiar to the polar bear with others which this  
species shares in common with the bruin family would require a volume to itself. These habits are well described by many  
writers of veracity, such as lyon, hearne, richardson, and a long array of other arctic explorers. It is therefore unnecessary  
to dwell on them here where we have only space to narrate an adventure which occurred to our young bear hunters.

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