

rate of nine miles an hour, and once in the night came within less than a ship's length of a large berg. A naval officer on board declared to me next morning that the peril had been imminent; that he had weathered a typhoon in the Chinese seas, and would rather brave another than sail so fast in the night through a pack of icebergs. He now thought it most probable that the President steam-ship had been lost by striking a berg. He reminded me that we had seen a pinnacle of ice, distant 100 yards or more from the main body of a berg, of which it was evidently a part, the intervening submerged ice being concealed under water. How easily, therefore, might we have struck against similar hidden masses, where no such projecting pinnacle remained to warn us of our danger.

At half-past nine o'clock on the evening of the 8th June, it being bright moonlight, some hours after we had lost sight of the ice, when we were in a latitude corresponding to the south of France, we saw in the north a most brilliant exhibition of the Aurora Borealis; the sky seemed to open and close, emitting, for a short period, silvery streams of light like comets' tails, and then a large space became overspread with a most delicate roseate hue. The occurrence of this phenomenon in the summer season, and in so southern a latitude, seemed to point to its connection with the ice which was drifting over the sea between us and Newfoundland, now to the N. W. of us. We learn from Sir James Ross's narrative of the late antarctic expedition, the highly interesting fact, that when the Aurora Borealis was playing over the great barrier of coast ice on the shores of the antarctic land, it partook distinctly of the irregular and broken shape of the icy cliffs over which it hovered.*

June 12.—A pilot came on board from Ireland, with English newspapers, filled with debates on the repeal of the corn-laws. Among the foreign news, a considerable space was occupied with the affairs of France, Germany, Italy, India, China, and there was only a short paragraph or two about America, North and South. I had been traveling long enough in the New World to sympathize fully with the feelings of some of my American fellow-

* Vol. ii. p. 221. 1842.