

In doing this, we of course kept well prepared, as the different icebergs popped upon us, to tack, ware, or perform such other evolutions as were found necessary to avoid them.

On the evening of the 25th of March, having reached the latitude of $68^{\circ} 08'$ S., and then in longitude $95^{\circ} 44'$ W., (we had been as far west as $97^{\circ} 58'$.) with the air at 29° , and the water 30° of Fahrenheit, —having had it much lower, as far back as the 17th, and to the northward of us, where the ship was covered with ice, as well as some parts of her gun-deck,—the sun having crossed the equator, and made some northern declination; the shortness of the days here, and the little time allowed for running the ship amongst icebergs, without much hazard, in consequence of fogs and snow-storms; the miserable condition of the Peacock for a winter's campaign, in the event of being frozen in; the masses of ice we had yet to pass through on our return, and the nature of my instructions: these circumstances, combined with the report of Lieutenant Walker, premonished me of the necessity of turning the ship's head towards a more temperate climate.

It required more moral courage to bring my mind to this decision than I can well describe, for we had at that moment less ice about us than at any time since we had entered its neighbourhood; and had I followed my own inclinations merely, and allowed the promptings of ambition, or love of praise, to have governed my decisions, regardless of the future operations of the Expedition, the lives of my officers and men, and the trust reposed in me by the government, I should indeed have been unworthy of the trust I hold, and ever felt a consciousness, that whatever more might have been achieved, by any further attempt south, at that late season, would have been acquired only by recklessly hazarding, what an honest conviction of duty to my country, and the lives intrusted to my care, most decidedly forbade.

We observed the aurora australis for the first time on the night of the 15th of March, in the latitude of $65^{\circ} 24'$ S., and again on the 16th, 18th, and 26th. On the night of the 18th, an arc of pale twilight was described in the southern quarter, reaching an altitude of twelve degrees, and extending from southwest to southeast; both above and below the arc were horizontal sheets of dark stratus clouds, and between the lower strata and the horizon, a suspended bank of mist or vapour, having all the appearance of a shadow cast on the sky; rays of light were continually being thrown out along the whole extent of the arc, assuming various hues, of pale red, light blue, violet, and straw-coloured tints; radiating towards the zenith, and reaching altitudes of from twenty-five to forty-five degrees. These exhibitions were confined to that particular portion of the horizon, and continued