

loose tracts, and floating ice passing; weather generally so thick as not to be able to see two hundred feet. From eight to midnight, passed twenty-five islands. At 10^h 45^m, weather clear for a short time; saw the ice extending from southwest to northeast. At midnight, sea clearer; sails and rigging stiff with ice.

March 23d, latitude, at meridian, about 69° 17' S., longitude 100° 30' W. This day the weather has been clearer than for some time past. At daylight, intended keeping away to fix position of field-ice, but about that time the weather became very thick; hove-to until seven o'clock, when, no prospect of the weather clearing, stood to the northward and eastward. The sea now became tolerably clear, yet the passage of floating ice and icebergs still devolved the necessity of a bright look-out. In the afternoon, stood to the southward and eastward, and for three hours observed appearances of land; but at 3^h 30^m, discovered large masses of ice, and numerous icebergs. At six, the ice bore from south to east, standing to the northward and eastward; water much discoloured. At midnight, the southern horizon brilliantly illuminated by the aurora australis.

March 24th, latitude, at meridian, about 69° 06' S., longitude 96° 50' W. From four to eight had moderate northwesterly winds, with snow; weather hazy. From eight to meridian, moderate breezes, with a heavy fall of snow; first part passed many icebergs, and large quantities of floating ice. At 10^h 30^m, got suddenly into large fields of packed and broken ice, extending as far as the eye could reach, in all directions, and which, by the assistance of the snow, (which, in the clearer spots, laid undisturbed on the surface,) appeared to be rapidly becoming solid; the sea was cut off by the larger masses to windward, and to add to our anxiety the wind appeared declining: we lost no time in forcing out to windward, as on the former occasion. The vessel seeming ill-constructed for such rough contusions, and very fearful that her copper would be cut through, we cut up the boards in the spare-cabin berths to preserve it; but after getting into clearer water, the sea became too heavy, and while within the field I did not think we could spare the time to get them on. I am well convinced, and such was the general opinion on board, that within a short time after we cleared it, it became a firm field of ice. Having on two distinct occasions narrowly escaped being closed in by the ice, our want of fuel, the general unfitness of the vessel, and want of preparations for such an emergency, my "Instructions" called upon me most imperiously to return; and I put our head to the northward, determined to keep it so until we should change our temperature; which, with a proper ambition to get beyond previous navigators, I did the