

to the astonishment of his crew, who were not familiar with physical laws.

The ice-fields which form in the highest latitudes are driven southward by the winds and currents; but sooner or later the action of the waves shatters and breaks them up. The edges of the fractured blocks often rise up and are soldered anew; hence results that curious mass of protuberances or asperities which our sailors call *hummocks*, and which give to the icy seas of the north so irregular and fantastic an appearance. Hummocks are formed when the wrecks of the shattered ice-field approach each other's edges so closely as to recement their union, and are frequently 300 feet in length.

When the masses of ice leave between them an open space wide enough to admit of a vessel's passage, the ice is said to be "open." But frequently we also meet with mountains of ice only partially

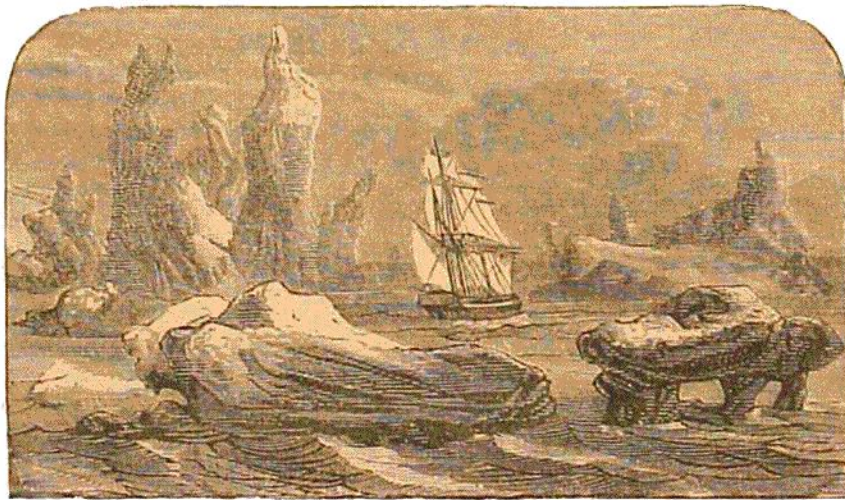


FIG. 226.—ESCAPING FROM AN ICE-FIELD.

submerged, one side of which is held down under the principal mass, while the other towers above the water. Scoresby once sailed above a *calf* (as our English seamen designate these icy eminences); but trembled at the thought that it might recover its erect position, and hurl his vessel into the air.

The aspect of the *ice-fields* varies in a thousand manners. Here it is an incoherent chaos, resembling a volcanic region, torn with crevasses in every direction, and bristling with shapeless blocks, scattered hither and thither, as if they were a giant's playthings; there it becomes a broken and irregular plain, an immense mosaic of ice-tables of all ages and dimensions, whose divisions are marked by long