

rugged ridges of the most fantastic form, resembling sometimes walls of rectangular blocks piled up in courses, and sometimes chains of rounded hills.

In spring, when the thaw occurs and the break-up commences, the pieces of light ice which solder together the large blocks and form them into a single mass are the first to melt; then the ice-masses split and separate, and the moving waters scatter them rapidly abroad, so that the vessels suddenly find a free passage opened up to them. However, a day of repose sometimes suffices to bring together these



FIG. 227.—SHIP CAUGHT AMONG THE ICE-FIELDS OF THE ARCTIC SEA.

floating fragments, which oscillate and dash against each other with sinister groans and strange noises, compared by the seamen to the yelping of young dogs.

When a ship finds herself imprisoned in the midst of a field of floating ice, inexplicable changes are occasionally observed in these vast incoherent aggregations. A ship which seemed to be held immovably is found in a few hours to have made a complete revolution on its own axis. Two vessels, imprisoned at a short distance from each other, separated for several leagues without their crews being able to discover any alteration in the ice surrounding them. On other occasions the ships are dragged along with the floating ice, like so many white bears, which make long sea-voyages on these monstrous vehicles. In 1777, the Dutch whaler *Wilhelmina* was carried, with nine of her comrades, from the 80th to the 62nd degree of latitude, in sight of the coast of Iceland. During this terrible traject, the ships were dashed