speak, a double stern-post. The planking is carried outside these timbers, and the stern protected by heavy iron plates wrought outside the planking.

Between these two counter-timbers there is a well for the screw, and also one for the rudder, through which they can both be hoisted up on deck. It is usual in sealers to have the screw arranged in this way, so that it can easily be replaced by a spare screw should it be broken by the ice. But such an arrangement is not usual in the case of the rudder, and, while with our small crew, and with the help of the capstan, we could hoist the rudder on deck in a few minutes in case of any sudden ice-pressure or the like, I have known it take sealers with a crew of over 60 men several hours, or even a whole day, to ship a fresh rudder.

The stern is, on the whole, the Achilles' heel of ships in the Polar Seas; here the ice can easily inflict great damage, for instance, by breaking the rudder. To guard against this danger, our rudder was placed so low down as not to be visible above water, so that if a floe should strike the vessel aft, it would break its force against the strong stern-part, and could hardly touch the rudder itself. As a matter of fact, notwithstanding the violent pressures we met with, we never suffered any injury in this respect.

Everything was of course done to make the sides of the ship as strong as possible. The frame timbers were of choice Italian oak that had originally been intended