

At length, on Wednesday, June 3d, we went on; but now the west wind had driven the ice landward, so that there was no longer open sea to travel south upon, and there was nothing for it but to go over the ice along the land. However, the wind was from the north, and we could put up a sail on our sledges, and thus get along pretty fast. We still saw several walruses on the ice, and there were also some in the water that were continually putting their heads up in the cracks and grunting after us. The ice we were crossing here was remarkably thin and bad, and as we got farther south it became even worse. It was so weighed down with the masses of snow that lay upon it that there was water beneath the snow wherever we turned. We had to make towards land as quickly as possible, as it looked still worse farther south. By going on snow-shoes, however, we kept fairly well on the top of the snow, though often both sledge and snow-shoes sank down into the water below and stuck fast, and no little trouble would be caused in getting everything safely on to firmer ice again. At last, however, we got in under a high, perpendicular basaltic cliff,* which swarmed with auks. This was the first time we had seen these birds in any great quantity; hitherto we had only seen one or two singly. We took it as a sign that we were approaching better-known regions. Alongside of it, to

* Jackson's "Cape Fisher."