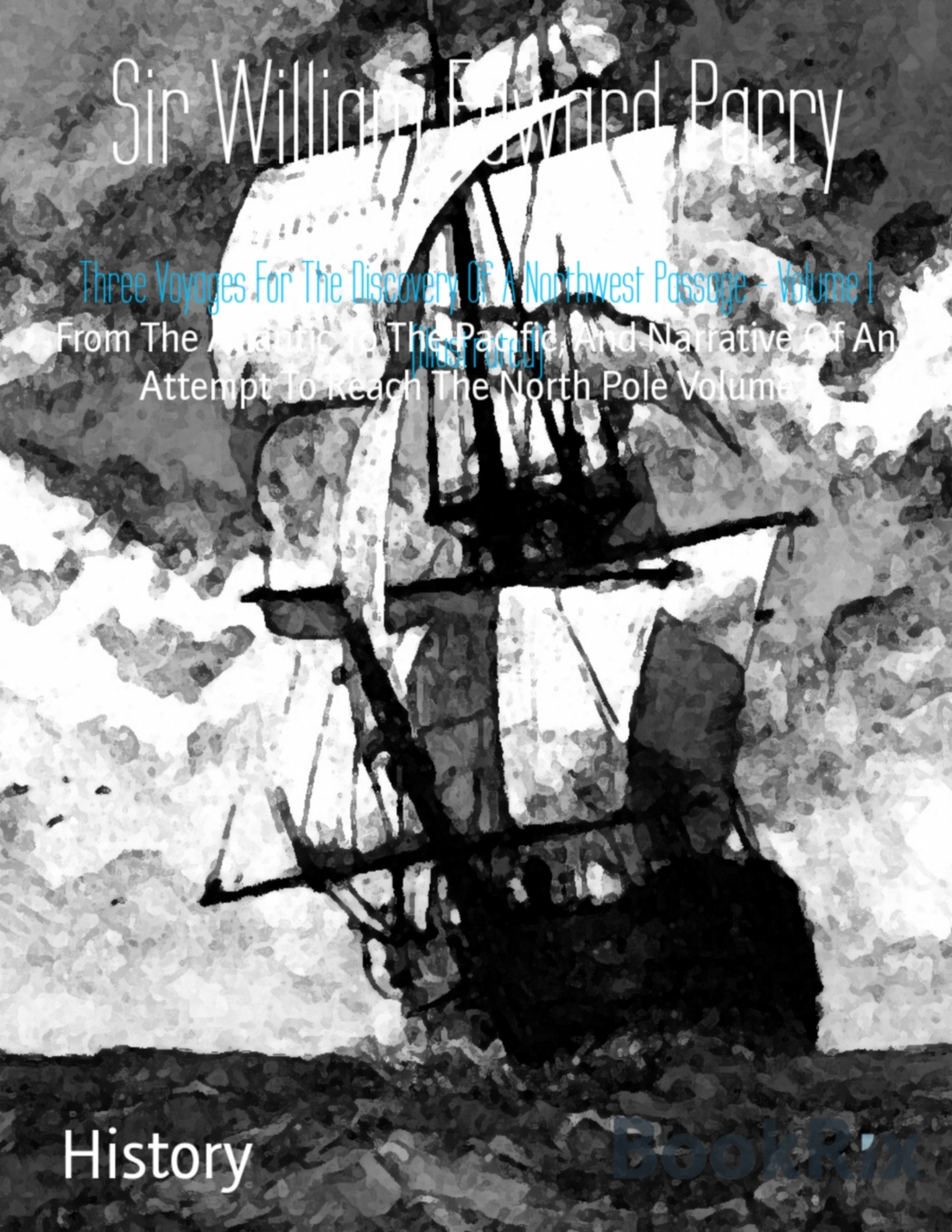


Sir William Edward Parry



Three Voyages For The Discovery Of A Northwest Passage - Volume I
From The Atlantic To The Pacific, And Narrative Of An
Attempt To Reach The North Pole Volume I

History

BookRix



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Three Voyages For The Discovery Of A Northwest Passage - Volume 1 (Illustrated)

**From The Atlantic To The Pacific, And
Narrative Of An Attempt To Reach
The North Pole Volume I**

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PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISEMENT

The two volumes herewith presented to the public contain an uninterrupted narrative, in Captain Parry's own words, of the five voyages made by that distinguished navigator, under the sanction of the British government, in search of a passage from the eastern to the western side of the American Continent, through the Arctic Ocean. Although abbreviated, the curtailment has been effected, not by any change in the language of the original writer, but merely by omitting all such details as were not inviting to the general reader; and, in a word, changing the character of the work from that of an official report to that of a narrative. The effort has been to preserve all interesting and amusing particulars; to record all facts and transactions of importance; to present an accurate though brief notice of all valuable accessions to geographic as well as general knowledge, effected in the progress of the voyages; and, at the same time, to keep the reader's attention ever on the alert by the rapid and uninterrupted succession of striking incidents.

It is hoped that the aim here designated has been accomplished; and that, in the abridged narrative of Parry's Voyages, there will be found matter, not only to interest the reader for amusement, but also to improve. The scenes and adventures recorded by the navigator are in the highest degree novel and remarkable; and it cannot be other than profitable to know what perils were encountered, what courage, firmness, and ingenuity were displayed, what moral and physical influences were developed, and what triumphs of human skill were achieved, in the progress of

voyages undertaken solely to advance the interests of science.

H. & B.

New-York, May, 1840.

TECHNICAL TERMS PECULIAR TO THE NAVIGATION AMONG ICE

BAY-ICE.--Ice newly formed upon the surface of the sea. The expression is, however, applied also to ice a foot or two in thickness.

BESET.--The situation of a ship when closely surrounded by ice.

BIGHT.--An indentation in a floe of ice, like a bay, by which name it is sometimes called.

BLINK.--A peculiar brightness in the atmosphere, often assuming an arch-like form, which is generally perceptible over ice or land covered with snow. The blink of land, as well as that over _large_ quantities of ice, is usually of a yellowish cast.

BORE.--The operation of "boring" through loose ice consists in entering it under a press of sail, and forcing the ship through by separating the masses.

CALF.--A mass of ice lying under a floe near its margin, and, when disengaged from that position, rising with violence to the surface of the water. See TONGUE.

CLEAR WATER.--Any part of the sea unencumbered with ice.

CROW'S NEST.--A small circular house like a cask, fixed at the masthead, in which the look-out man sits, either to guide the ship through the ice or to give notice of whales.

DOCK.--In a floe may be natural or artificial; the former being simply a small "bight," in which a ship is placed to secure her from the danger of external pressure; and the latter, a square space cut out with saws for a similar purpose.

FIELD.--A sheet of ice generally of great thickness, and of too great extent to be seen over from a ship's masthead.

FLINCHING.--The operation of stripping a sea-animal of its skin and blubber.

FLOE.--The same as a field, except that its extent can be distinguished from a ship's masthead. A "bay-floe" is a floe of ice newly formed.

FLOE-PIECE.--An expression generally applied to small pieces of floes, not more than a furlong square.

A HOLE or POOL of Water.--A small space of "clear water," when the rest of the sea is covered with ice.

HUMMOCK.--A mass of ice rising to a considerable height above the general level of a floe, and forming a part of it. Hummocks are originally raised by the pressure of floes against each other.

LAND-ICE.--Ice attached to the land, either in floes or in heavy grounded masses lying near the shore.

LANE of Water.--A narrow channel among the masses of ice, through which a boat or ship may pass.

LEAD.--A channel through the ice. A ship is said to "take the right lead" when she follows a channel conducting her into a more navigable sea, and vice versa.

MAKING-OFF Blubber.--The operation of putting it into casks.

NIPPED.--The situation of a ship when forcibly pressed by ice.

PACK.--A large body of ice, consisting of separate masses, lying close together, and whose extent cannot be seen.

PANCAKE-ICE.--Newly formed ice, assuming the peculiar conformation of numberless patches of "sludge," and giving the surface of the sea the appearance of a handsome pavement.

PATCH of Ice.--The same as a pack, but of small dimensions.

SAILING-ICE.--Ice of which the masses are so much separated as to allow a ship to sail among them.

SALLYING a Ship.--The operation of causing her to roll, by the men running in a body from side to side, so as to relieve her from the adhesion and friction of the young ice around her.

SLUDGE.--Ice of the consistence of thick honey, offering little impediment to a ship while in this state, but greatly favouring the formation of a "bay-floe."

STREAM.--A long and narrow, but generally continuous, collection of loose ice.

TONGUE.--A mass of ice projecting under water from an iceberg or floe, and generally distinguishable at a considerable depth of smooth water. It differs from a "calf" in being fixed to, or a part of the larger body.

WATER-SKY.--A dark appearance in the sky, indicating "clear water" in that direction, and forming a striking contrast with the "blink" over land or ice.

YOUNG-ICE.--Nearly the same as "bay-ice," but generally applied to ice more recently formed than the latter.

VOYAGE FOR THE DISCOVERY OF A NORTHWEST PASSAGE

INTRODUCTION.

Lieutenant Parry was appointed to the command of his majesty's ship the Hecla, a bomb of 375 tons, on the 16th of January, 1819; and the Griper, gun brig, 180 tons, commissioned by Lieutenant Matthew Liddon, was at the same time directed to put herself under his orders. The object of the expedition was to attempt the discovery of a Northwest Passage into the Pacific. The vessels were rigged after the manner of a bark, as being the most convenient among the ice, and requiring the smallest number of men to work them. They were furnished with provisions and stores for two years; in addition to which, there was a large supply of fresh meats and soups preserved in tin cases, essence of malt and hops, essence of spruce, and other extra stores, adapted to cold climates and a long voyage. The ships were ballasted entirely with coals; an abundance of warm clothing was allowed, a wolfskin blanket being supplied to each officer and man, besides a housing-cloth, similar to that with which wagons are usually covered, to make a sort of tent on board. Although the finding a passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific was the main object of the expedition, yet the ascertaining many points of natural history, geography, &c., was considered a most important object, never to be lost sight of. After they had passed the latitude of 65° north, they were from time to time to throw overboard a bottle, closely sealed, containing a paper, stating the date and position at which it was launched. Whenever they landed on the northern coast of North America, they were to erect a pole, having a flag, and bury a bottle at the foot of it, containing an abstract of their proceedings and future intentions, for the information of Lieutenant Franklin, who

had been sent on a land expedition to explore that coast from the mouth of the Coppermine River of Hearne.

According to the official instructions, the interests of science were not neglected, and many important facts were made out; among the most curious, it may be mentioned, that it appears to be proved that the North Pole is not the coldest point of the Arctic hemisphere, but that the place where the expedition wintered is one of the coldest spots on the face of the globe.

I.



Passage across the Atlantic.--Enter Davis's Strait.--Unsuccessful Attempt to penetrate the Ice to the Western Coast.--Voyage up the Strait.--Passage through the Ice to the Western Coast.--Arrival off Possession Bay, on the Southern Side of the Entrance into Sir James Lancaster's Sound.

In the beginning of May, 1819, the Hecla and Griper were towed down the river; the guns and gunner's stores were received on board on the 6th; and the instruments and chronometers were embarked on the evening of the 8th, when the two ships anchored at the Nore. The Griper, being a slower sailer, was occasionally taken in tow by the Hecla, and they rounded the northern point of the Orkneys, at the distance of two miles and a half; on Thursday, the 20th of the same month.

Nothing of moment occurred for several days; but the wind veered to the westward on the 30th, and increased to a fresh gale, with an irregular sea and heavy rain, which brought us under our close-reefed topsails. At half past one, P.M., we began to cross the space in which the "Sunken Land of Buss" is laid down in Steel's chart from England to

Greenland; and, in the course of this and the following day, we tried for soundings several times without success.

Early in the morning of the 18th of June, in standing to the northward, we fell in with the first "stream" of ice we had seen, and soon after saw several icebergs. At daylight the water had changed its colour to a dirty brownish tinge. The temperature of the water was $36\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, being 3° colder than on the preceding night; a decrease that was probably occasioned by our approach to the ice. We ran through a narrow part of the stream, and found the ice beyond it to be "packed" and heavy. The birds were more numerous than usual; and, besides the fulmar peterels, boatswains, and kittiwakes, we saw, for the first time, some rotges, dovebies, or black guillemots, and terns, the latter known best to seamen by the name of the Greenland swallow.

On the clearing up of a fog on the morning of the 24th, we saw a long chain of icebergs, extending several miles, in a N.b.W. and S.b.E. direction; and, as we approached them, we found a quantity of "floe-ice" intermixed with them, beyond which, to the westward, nothing but ice could be seen. At noon we had soundings, with one hundred and twenty fathoms of line, on a bottom of fine sand, which makes it probable that most of the icebergs were aground in this place. In the afternoon we sailed within the edge of the ice, as much as a light westerly wind would admit, in order to approach the western land. Some curious effects of atmospheric refraction were observed this evening, the low ice being at times considerably raised in the horizon, and constantly altering its appearance.

The weather being nearly calm on the morning of the 25th, all the boats were kept ahead, to tow the ships through the ice to the westward. It remained tolerably open till four P.M., when a breeze, freshening up from the

eastward, caused the ice, through which we had lately been towing, to close together so rapidly, that we had scarcely time to hoist up the boats before the ships were immovably "beset." The clear sea which we had left was about four miles to the eastward of us, while to the westward nothing but one extensive field of ice could be seen. It is impossible to conceive a more helpless situation than that of a ship thus beset, when all the power that can be applied will not alter the direction of her head a single degree of the compass.

A large black whale, being the first, was seen near the ships. It is usual for these animals to descend head foremost, displaying the broad fork of their enormous tail above the surface of the water; but, on this occasion, the ice was so close as not to admit of this mode of descent, and the fish went down tail foremost, to the great amusement of our Greenland sailors.

While in this state a large white bear came near the Griper, and was killed by her people, but he sunk between the pieces of ice. This animal had probably been attracted by the smell of some red herrings which the men were frying at the time. It is a common practice with the Greenland sailors to take advantage of the strong sense of smelling which these creatures possess, by enticing them near the ships in this manner.

The swell had somewhat subsided on the 29th, but the ships remained firmly fixed in the ice as before. In the course of the day we saw land bearing N. 69° W. about thirteen leagues distant, appearing from the masthead like a group of islands, and situated near to the entrance of Cumberland Strait: the soundings were one hundred and thirty-five fathoms; the temperature of the sea at that depth 30°; that of the surface being the same, and of the air 34°.

On the 30th the ice began to slacken a little more about the ships; and, after two hours' heaving with a hawser on each bow brought to the capstan and windlass, we succeeded in moving the Hecla about her own length to the eastward, where alone any clear sea was visible. The ice continuing to open still more in the course of the day, we were at length enabled to get both ships into open water, after eight hours' incessant labour.

On the 1st and 2d of July, we continued to keep close to the edge of the ice without perceiving any opening in it. Its outer margin consisted of heavy detached masses, much washed by the sea, and formed what is technically called "a pack," this name being given to ice when so closely connected as not to admit the passage of a ship between the masses. Within the margin of the pack, it appeared to consist of heavy and extensive floes, having a bright ice-blink over them; but no clear water could be discovered to the westward. The birds, which had hitherto been seen since our first approach to the ice, were fulmar peterels, little auks, looms, and a few gulls.

On the morning of the 3d the wind blew strong from the eastward, with a short, breaking sea, and thick, rainy weather, which made our situation for some hours rather an unpleasant one, the ice being close under our lee. Fortunately, however, we weathered it by stretching back a few miles to the southward. In the afternoon the wind moderated, and we tacked again to the northward, crossing the Arctic circle at four P.M., in the longitude of $57^{\circ} 27' W$. We passed at least fifty icebergs in the course of the day, many of them of large dimensions. Towards midnight, the wind having shifted to the southwest and moderated, another extensive chain of very large icebergs appeared to the northward: as we approached them the wind died away, and the ships' heads were kept to the northward, only by

the steerage way given to them by a heavy southerly swell, which, dashing the loose ice with tremendous force against the bergs, sometimes raised a white spray over the latter to the height of more than one hundred feet, and, being accompanied with a loud noise, exactly resembling the roar of distant thunder, presented a scene at once sublime and terrific. We could find no bottom near these icebergs with one hundred and ten fathoms of line.

At four A.M. on the 4th we came to a quantity of loose ice, which lay straggling among the bergs; and as there was a light breeze from the southward, and I was anxious to avoid, if possible, the necessity of going to the eastward, I pushed the Hecla into the ice, in the hope of being able to make our way through it. We had scarcely done so, however, before it fell calm; when the ship became perfectly unmanageable, and was for some time at the mercy of the swell, which drifted us fast towards the bergs. All the boats were immediately sent ahead to tow; and the Griper's signal was made not to enter the ice. After two hours' hard pulling, we succeeded in getting the Hecla back again into clear water, and to a sufficient distance from the icebergs, which it is very dangerous to approach when there is a swell. At noon we were in lat. $69^{\circ} 50' 47''$, long. $57^{\circ} 07' 56''$, being near the middle of the narrowest part of Davis's Strait, which is here not more than fifty leagues across.

On the 5th it was necessary to pass through some heavy streams of ice, in order to avoid the loss of time by going round to the eastward. On this, as on many other occasions, the advantage possessed by a ship of considerable weight in the water, in separating the heavy masses of ice, was Very apparent. In some of the streams through which the Hecla passed, a vessel of a hundred tons less burden must have been immovably beset. The Griper was on this and

many other occasions only enabled to follow the Hecla by taking advantage of the openings made by the latter.

A herd of seahorses being seen lying on a piece of ice, our boat succeeded in killing one of them. These animals usually lie huddled together like pigs, one over the other, and are so stupidly tame as to allow a boat to approach them within a few yards without moving. When at length they are disturbed, they dash into the water in great confusion. It may be worth remarking, as a proof how tenacious the walrus sometimes is of life, that the animal killed to-day struggled violently for ten minutes after it was struck, and towed the boat twenty or thirty yards, after which the iron of the harpoon broke; and yet it was found, on examination, that the iron barb had penetrated both auricles of the heart. A quantity of the blubber was put into casks, as a winter's supply of lamp-oil.

A large bear being seen on a piece of ice, near which we were passing on the 10th, a boat was despatched in pursuit, and our people succeeded in killing and towing it on board. As these animals sink immediately on being mortally wounded, some dexterity is requisite to secure them, by first throwing a rope over the neck, at which many of the Greenland seamen are remarkably expert. It is customary for the boats of the whalers to have two or three lines coiled in them, which not only gives them great stability, but, with good management, makes it difficult for a bear, when swimming, to put his paw upon the gunwale, which they generally endeavour to do; whereas, with our boats, which are more light and crank, and therefore very easily heeled over, I have more than once seen a bear on the point of taking possession of them. Great caution should therefore be used under such circumstances in attacking these ferocious creatures. We have always found a boarding-pike the most useful weapon for this purpose. The lance used by

the whalers will not easily penetrate the skin, and a musket-ball, except when very close, is scarcely more efficacious.

On the 17th, the margin of the ice appearing more open than we had yet seen it, and there being some appearance of a "water-sky" to the northwest, I was induced to run the ships into the ice, though the weather was too thick to allow us to see more than a mile or two in that direction. We were, at noon, in latitude $72^{\circ} 00' 21''$, longitude $59^{\circ} 43' 04''$, the depth of water being one hundred and ninety fathoms, on a muddy bottom. The wind shortly after died away, as usual, and, after making a number tacks, in order to gain all we could to the westward, we found ourselves so closely, hemmed in by the ice on every side, that there was no longer room to work the ships, and we therefore made them fast to a floe till the weather should clear up. The afternoon was employed in taking on board a supply of water from the floe. It may be proper at once to remark that, from this time till the end of the voyage, snow-water was exclusively made use of on board the ships for every purpose. During the summer months, it is found in abundance in the pools upon the floes and icebergs; and in the winter, snow was dissolved in the coppers for our daily consumption. The fog cleared away in the evening, when we perceived that no farther progress could be made through the ice, into which we sailed to the westward about twelve miles. We were therefore once more under the necessity of returning to the eastward, lest a change of wind should beset the ships in their present situation.

A thick fog came on again at night, and prevailed till near noon on the 18th, when we came to a close but narrow stream of ice, lying exactly across our course, and at right angles to the main body of the ice. As this stream extended to the eastward as far as we could see from the "crow's nest," an endeavour was made to push the ships with all sail

through the narrowest part. The facility with which this operation, technically called "boring," is performed, depends chiefly on having a fresh and free wind, with which we were not favoured on this occasion; so that, when we had forced the ships about one hundred yards into the ice, their way was completely stopped. The stream consisted of such small pieces of ice, that, when an attempt was made to warp the ships ahead by fastening lines to some of the heaviest masses near them, the ice itself came home, without the ships being moved forward.--Every effort to extricate them from this helpless situation proved fruitless for more than two hours, when the Hecla was at length backed out, and succeeded in pushing through another part of the stream in which a small opening appeared just at that moment. All our boats were immediately despatched to the assistance of the Griper, which still remained beset, and which no effort could move in any direction. We at length resorted to the expedient of sending a whale-line to her from the Hecla, and then, making all sail upon the latter ship, we succeeded in towing her out, head to wind, till she was enabled to proceed in clear water. The crossing of this stream of ice, of which, the breadth scarcely exceeded three hundred yards, occupied us constantly for more than five hours, and may serve as an example of the detention to which ships are liable in this kind of navigation.

Early on the morning of the 21st the fog cleared away, and discovered to us the land called by Davis, Hope Sanderson and the Woman's Islands, being the first land we had seen in sailing northward into Baffin's Bay, from the lat. of $63\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$. We found ourselves in the midst of a great number of very high icebergs, of which I counted, from the crow's-nest, eighty-eight, besides many smaller ones.

Having now reached the latitude of 73° without seeing a single opening in the ice, and being unwilling to increase our

distance from Sir James Lancaster's Sound by proceeding much farther to the northward, I determined once more to enter the ice in this place, and to try the experiment of forcing our way through it, in order to get into the open sea. Being therefore favoured with clear weather, and a moderate breeze from the southeastward, we ran into the ice, which for the first two miles consisted of detached pieces, but afterward of floes of considerable extent, and six or seven feet in thickness. The wind died away towards midnight, and the weather was serene and clear.

At six A.M. on the 23d, a thick fog came on, which rendered it impossible to see our way any farther. We therefore warped to an iceberg, to which the ships were made fast at noon, to wait the clearing up of the fog, being in lat. $73^{\circ} 04' 10''$, long. $60^{\circ} 11' 30''$. At eight P.M. the weather cleared up, and a few small pools of open water were seen here and there, but the ice was generally as close as before, and the wind being to the westward of north, it was not deemed advisable to move.

The weather, being clear in the morning of the 25th, and a few narrow lanes of water appearing to the westward, the Griper was made fast astern of the Hecla; and her crew being sent to assist in manning our capstan, we proceeded to warp the ships through the ice. This method, which is often adopted by our whalers, has the obvious advantage of applying the whole united force in separating the masses of ice which lie in the way of the first ship, allowing the second, or even third, to follow close astern, with very little obstruction. In this manner we had advanced about four miles to the westward by eight P.M., after eleven hours of very laborious exertion; and having then come to the end of the clear water, and the weather being again foggy, the ships were secured in a deep "bight," or bay in a floe, called by the sailors a "natural dock."

Early on the morning of the 26th there was clear water as far as we could see to the westward, which, on account of the fog, did not exceed the distance of three hundred yards. We made sail, however, and having groped our way for about half a mile, found the ice once more close in every direction except that in which we had been sailing, obliging us to make the ships fast to a floe. At half past three P.M. the weather cleared up, and a few narrow lanes of water being seen to the westward, every exertion was immediately made to get into them. On beginning to heave, however, we found that the "hole" of water in which the Hecla lay was now so completely enclosed by ice that no passage out of it could be found. We tried every corner, but to no purpose; all the power we could apply being insufficient to move the heavy masses of ice which had fixed themselves firmly between us and the lanes of water without. In the mean time, Lieutenant Liddon had succeeded in advancing about three hundred yards, and had placed the Griper's bow between two heavy floes, which it was necessary to separate before any farther progress could be made. Both ships continued to heave at their hawsers occasionally, as the ice appeared to slacken a little, by which means they were now and then drawn ahead a few inches at a time, but did not advance more than half a dozen yards in the course of the night. By our nearing several bergs to the northward, the ice appeared to be drifting in that direction, the wind being moderate from the southward.

About three A.M., Tuesday, 27th, by a sudden motion of the ice, we succeeded in getting the Hecla out of her confined situation, and ran her up astern of the Griper. The clear water had made so much to the westward, that a narrow neck of ice was all that was now interposed between the ships and a large open space in that quarter. Both ships'

companies were therefore ordered upon the ice to saw off the neck, when the floes suddenly opened sufficiently to allow the Griper to push through under all sail. No time was lost in the attempt to get the Hecla through after her; but, by one of those accidents to which this navigation is liable, and which render it so precarious and uncertain, a piece of loose ice, which lay between the two ships, was drawn after the Griper by the eddy produced by her motion, and completely blocked the narrow passage through which we were about to follow. Before we could remove this obstruction by hauling it back out of the channel, the floes were again pressed together, wedging it firmly and immovably between them: the saws were immediately set to work, and used with great effect; but it was not till eleven o'clock that we succeeded, after seven hours' labour, in getting the Hecla into the lanes of clear water which opened more and more to the westward.

On the 29th we had so much clear water, that the ships had a very perceptible pitching motion, which, from the closeness of the ice, does not very often occur in the Polar regions, and which is therefore hailed with pleasure as an indication of an open sea. At five P.M. the swell increased considerably, and, as the wind freshened up from the northeast, the ice gradually disappeared; so that by six o'clock we were sailing in an open sea, perfectly free from obstruction of any kind.

We now seemed all at once to have got into the headquarters of the whales. They were so numerous that I directed the number to be counted during each watch, and no less than eighty-two are mentioned in this day's log. Mr. Allison, the Greenland master, considered them generally as large ones, and remarked that a fleet of whalers might easily have obtained a cargo here in a few days. In the afternoon the wind broke us off from the N.N.W., which

obliged us to cast off the Griper, and we carried all sail ahead to make the land. We saw it at half past five P.M., being the high land about Possession Bay, and at the same time several streams of loose but heavy ice came in sight, which a fresh breeze was drifting fast to the southeastward.

The wind increased to a fresh breeze on the morning of the 31st, which prevented our making much way to the westward. We stood in towards Cape Byam Martin, and sounded in eighty fathoms on a rocky bottom, at the distance of two miles in an east direction from it. We soon after discovered the flagstaff which had been erected on Possession Mount on the former expedition; an object which, though insignificant in itself, called up every person immediately on deck to look at and to greet it as an old acquaintance.

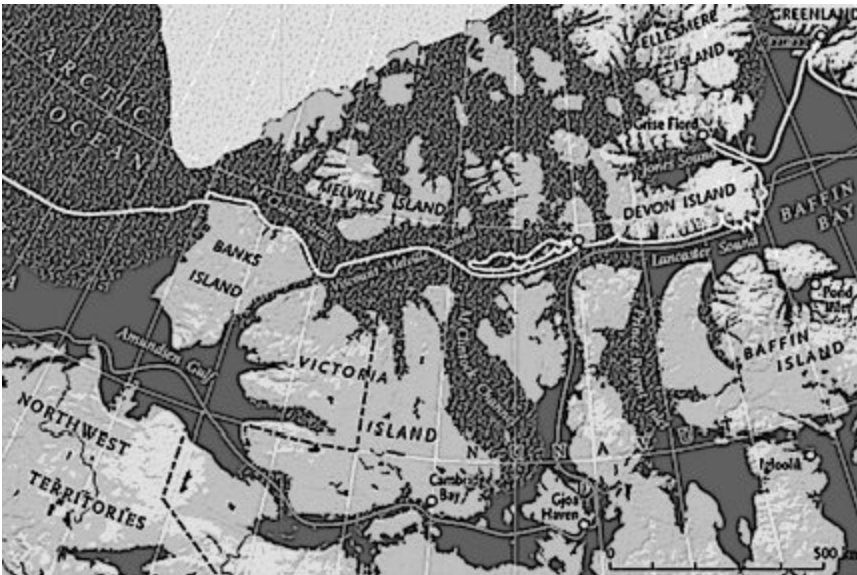
The land immediately at the hack of Possession Bay rises in a gentle slope from the sea, presenting an open and extensive space of low ground, flanked by hills to the north and south. In this valley, and even on the hills, to the height of six or seven hundred feet above the sea, there was scarcely any snow, but the mountains at the back were completely covered with it. Some pieces of birch-bark having been picked up in the bed of this stream in 1818, which gave reason to suppose that wood might be found growing in the interior, I directed Mr. Fisher to walk up it, accompanied by a small party, and to occupy an hour or two while the Griper was coming up, and Captain Sabine and myself were employed upon the beach, in examining the nature and productions of the country.

Mr. Fisher reported, on his return, that he had followed the stream between three and four miles, where it turned to the southwest, without discovering any indications of a wooded country; but a sufficient explanation respecting the

birch-bark was perhaps furnished by his finding, at the distance of a quarter of a mile from the sea, a piece of whalebone two feet ten inches in length and two inches in breadth, having a number of circular holes very neatly and regularly perforated along one of its edges, which had undoubtedly formed part of an Esquimaux sledge. This circumstance affording a proof of the Esquimaux having visited this part of the coast at no very distant period, it was concluded that the piece of bark above alluded to had been brought hither by these people. From the appearance of the whalebone, it might have been lying there for four or five years. That none of the Esquimaux tribe had visited this part of the coast since we landed there in 1818, was evident from the flagstaff then erected still remaining untouched. Mr. Fisher found every part of the valley quite free from snow as high as he ascended it: and the following fact seems to render it probable that no great quantity either of snow or sleet had fallen here since our last visit. Mr. Fisher had not proceeded far, till, to his great surprise, he encountered the tracks of human feet upon the banks of the stream, which appeared so fresh that he at first imagined them to have been recently made by some natives, but which, on examination, were distinctly ascertained to be the marks of our own shoes, made eleven months before.

II.

Entrance into Sir James Lancaster's Sound of Baffin.--
Uninterrupted Passage to the Westward.--Discovery and
Examination of Prince Regent's Inlet.--Progress to the
Southward stopped by Ice.--Return to the Northward.--Pass
Barrow's Strait, and enter the Polar Sea.



We were now about to enter and to explore that great sound or inlet which has obtained a degree of celebrity beyond what it might otherwise have been considered to possess, from the very opposite opinions which have been held with regard to it. To us it was peculiarly interesting, as being the point to which our instructions more particularly directed our attention; and I may add, what I believe we all felt, it was that point of the voyage which was to determine the success or failure of the expedition, according as one or other of the opposite opinions alluded to should be corroborated. It will readily be conceived, then, how great our anxiety was for a change of the westerly wind and swell, which, on the 1st of August, set down Sir James Lancaster's Sound, and prevented our making much progress. Several whales were seen in the course of the day, and Mr. Allison

remarked that this was the only part of Baffin's Bay in which he had ever seen young whales; for it is a matter of surprise to the whalers in general, that they seldom or never meet with young ones on this fishery, as they are accustomed to do in the seas of Spitzbergen.

The Griper continued to detain us so much, that I determined on making the best of our way to the westward, and ordered the Hecla to be hove to in the evening, and sent Lieutenant Liddon an instruction, with some signals, which might facilitate our meeting in case of fog; and I appointed as a place of rendezvous the meridian of 85° west, and as near the middle of the sound as circumstances would permit. As soon, therefore, as the boat returned from the Griper, we carried a press of sail, and in the course of the evening saw the northern shore of the sound looming through the clouds which hung over it.

The weather being clear in the evening of the 2d, we had the first distinct view of both sides of the sound; and the difference in the character of the two shores was very apparent; that on the south consisting of high and peaked mountains, completely snow-clad, except on the lower parts, while the northern coast has generally a smoother outline, and had, comparatively with the other, little snow upon it; the difference in this last respect appearing to depend principally on the difference in their absolute height. The sea was open before us, free from ice or land; and the Hecla pitched so much from the westerly swell in the course of the day, as to throw the water once or twice into the stern windows; a circumstance which, together with other appearances, we were willing to attribute to an open sea in the desired direction. More than forty black whales were seen during the day.

We made little way on the 3d, but being favoured at length by the easterly breeze which was bringing up the Griper, and for which we had long been looking with much impatience, a crowd of sail was set to carry us with all rapidity to the westward. It is more easy to imagine than to describe the almost breathless anxiety which was now visible in every countenance, while, as the breeze continued to a fresh gale, we ran quickly up the sound. The mastheads were crowded by the officers and men during the whole afternoon; and an unconcerned observer, if any could have been unconcerned on such an occasion, would have been amused by the eagerness with which the various reports from the crow's-nest were received; all, however, hitherto favourable to our most sanguine hopes.

Our course was nearly due west, and the wind still continuing to freshen, took us in a few hours nearly out of sight of the Griper. The only ice which we met with consisted of a few large bergs very much washed by the sea; and the weather being remarkably clear, so as to enable us to run with perfect safety, we were by midnight, in a great measure, relieved from our anxiety respecting the supposed continuity of land at the bottom of this magnificent inlet, having reached the longitude of $83^{\circ} 12'$, where the two shores are still above thirteen leagues apart, without the slightest appearance of any land to the westward of us for four or five points of the compass.

Having made the ship snug, so as to be in readiness to round to should the land be seen ahead, and the Griper having come up within a few miles of us, we again bore up at one A.M., the 4th. At half past three, Lieutenant Beechey, who had relieved me on deck, discovered from the crow's-nest a reef of rocks, in-shore of us to the northward, on which the sea was breaking. The cliffs on this part of the coast present a singular appearance, being stratified

horizontally, and having a number of regular projecting masses of rock, broad at the bottom, and coming to a point at the top, resembling so many buttresses, raised by art at equal intervals.

After lying-to for an hour, we again bore up to the westward, and soon after discovered a cape, afterward named by Captain Sabine, CAPE FELLFOOT, which appeared to form the termination of this coast; and as the haze, which still prevailed to the south, prevented our seeing any land in that quarter, and the sea was literally as free from ice as any part of the Atlantic, we began to flatter ourselves that we had fairly entered the Polar Sea, and some of the most sanguine among us had even calculated the bearing and distance of Icy Cape, as a matter of no very difficult or improbable accomplishment. This pleasing prospect was rendered the more flattering by the sea having, as we thought, regained the usual oceanic colour, and by a long swell which was rolling in from the southward and eastward. At six P.M., however, land was reported to be seen ahead. The vexation and anxiety produced on every countenance by such a report were but too visible, until, on a nearer approach, it was found to be only an island, of no very large extent, and that, on each side of it, the horizon still appeared clear for several points of the compass. At eight P.M. we came to some ice of no great breadth or thickness, extending several miles in a direction nearly parallel to our course; and as we could see clear water over it to the southward, I was for some time in the hope that it would prove a detached stream, from which no obstruction to our progress westerly was to be apprehended. At twenty minutes past ten, however, the weather having become hazy and the wind light, we perceived that the ice, along which we had been sailing for the last two hours, was joined, at the distance of half a mile to the westward of us, to a compact and impenetrable body of floes, which lay