



SKETCH OF LAND AND FIELD-ICE.

This night we were beating with frequent tacks, in order to gain as much southing as possible. Previous to its becoming broad daylight, the fog rendered every thing obscure, even at a short distance from the ship. I knew that we were in close proximity to icebergs and field-ice, but, from the report of the look-out at sunset, believed that there was an opening or large bay leading to the southward. The ship had rapid way on her, and was much tossed about, when in an instant all was perfectly still and quiet; the transition was so sudden that many were awakened by it from sound sleep, and all well knew, from the short experience we had had, that the cessation of the sound and motion usual at sea, was a proof that we had run within a line of ice, —an occurrence from which the feeling of great danger is inseparable. The watch was called by the officer of the deck, to be in readiness to execute such orders as might be necessary for the safety of the ship. Many of those from below were seen hurrying up the hatches, and those on deck straining their eyes to discover the barrier in time to avoid accident. The ship still moving rapidly along, some faint hope remained that the bay might prove a deep one, and enable me to satisfy my sanguine hopes and belief relative to the land.

The feeling is awful and the uncertainty most trying thus to enter within the icy barrier blindfolded as it were by an impenetrable fog, and the thought constantly recurring that both ship and crew were in imminent danger; yet I was satisfied that nothing could be gained but by pursuing this course. On we kept, until it was reported to me, by attentive listeners, that they heard the low and distant rustling of the ice: suddenly a dozen voices proclaimed the barrier to be in sight, just ahead. The ship, which a moment before seemed as if unpeopled, from the stillness of all on board, was instantly alive with the bustle of performing the evolutions necessary to bring her to the wind, which was unfavourable to a return on the same track by which we had entered. After a quarter of an hour, the ice was again made ahead, and the full danger of our situation was realized. The ship was certainly embayed; and although the extent of sea-room to which we were limited, was rendered invisible by the dark and murky weather,