

passed before she was entirely clear of it. This gave more room for the drifting ice, and permitted the vessel to be worked by her sails.

The relief from this pressing danger, however gratifying, gave no assurance of ultimate safety. The weather had an unusually stormy appearance; and the destruction of the vessel seemed almost inevitable, with the loss of every life on board. They had the melancholy alternative in prospect of being frozen to death one after the other, or perishing in a body by the dissolving of the iceberg on which they should take refuge, should the vessel sink.

When the dinner hour arrived the vessel was again fast in the ice, and nothing could for a time be done: it was therefore piped as usual. This served to divert the minds of the men from the dangers around them.

When the meal was over, the former manœuvring was resorted to, the yards being kept swinging to and fro, in order to keep the ship's head in the required direction. She was labouring in the swell, with ice grinding and thumping against her on all sides; every moment something either fore or aft was carried away—chains, bolts, bobstays, bowsprit, shrouds; even the anchors were lifted, coming down with a surge that carried away the eyebolts and lashings, and left them to hang by the stoppers. The cut-water also was injured, and every timber seemed to groan.

Similar dangers attended those in the boats. Passed Midshipman Eld was sent to plant the ice-anchors: there was no room for the use of oars; the grinding and grating of the ice, as it rose and fell with the swell, rendered great precaution necessary to prevent the boat from being swamped or crushed; and when it is stated that two hours of hard exertion were required to plant the ice-anchors, some idea of the difficulty attending this service will be had. But this was not all; the difficulty of returning was equally great, and no possible way of effecting it seemed to suggest itself. The sides of the icebergs could not be ascended, and to approach the berg on the side next the ship was certain destruction to the boat and crew, for the ice and water were foaming like a cauldron; and to abandon the former was equally out of the question. At last a chance offered, although almost a hopeless one, by passing between two of these bergs, that appeared on the other side of a small clear space. The boat was upon a small piece of ice, from which, by great exertions, she was launched; a few pulls at the oars brought them to the passage; the bergs were closing fast, and agitated by the swell; no time, therefore, was to be lost: the danger was already great, and in a few seconds it would be impossible to pass. They entered; their oars caught, and they got but half-way