

CHAPTER X.

ANTARCTIC CRUISE—CONTINUED.

1840.

IN taking up the narrative of the disaster sustained by the Peacock, with which the preceding chapter closes, the Vincennes and Porpoise were left on the 22d of January.

On that day the Vincennes passed the place through which the Peacock entered, as has been related, on the 23d, and found no opening. To judge from the manner in which the ice moved during the time the Peacock was enclosed in it, I am inclined to ascribe the alternate opening and closing of the passage into the bay, to a tide setting along this coast. In support of this opinion it is sufficient to state, that the strength of the winds experienced on board that vessel was at no time sufficient to account for the manner in which the ice was found to move.

About thirty miles to the westward of this point, the Vincennes passed a remarkable collection of tabular icebergs, for whose existence I can account in no other manner than by supposing them to be attached to a rocky islet, which formed a nucleus to which they adhered. It was quite obvious that they had not been formed in the place where they were seen, and must, therefore, have grounded, after being adrift.

On the 23d January, after passing around this group of icebergs, the sea was found comparatively clear, and a large open space showed itself to the southward. Into this space the course of the Vincennes was immediately directed. While thus steering to the south, the appearance of land was observed on either hand, both to the eastward and westward.

Pursuing this course, we by midnight reached the solid barrier, and