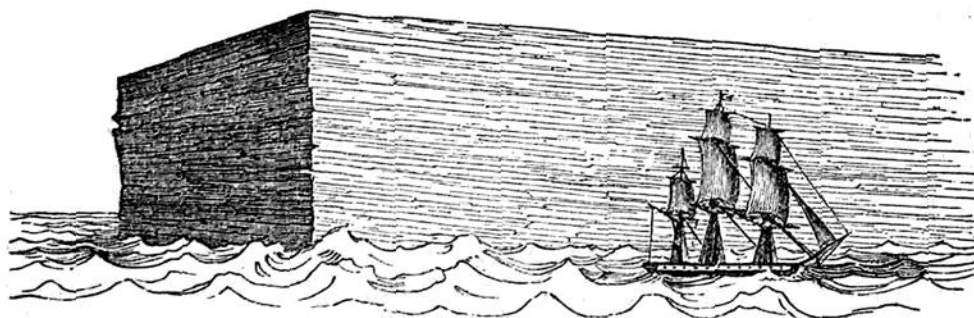


rapid than is generally supposed. The manner of their formation claimed much of my attention while among them, and I think it may be explained satisfactorily and without difficulty. In the first place, I conceive that ice requires a nucleus, whereon the fogs, snow, and rain, may congeal and accumulate; this the land affords. Accident then separates part of this mass of ice from the land, when it drifts off, and is broken into many pieces, and part of this may again join that which is in process of formation. The sketch in Chapter IX. has already given the reader some idea of its appearance in this state.

From the accumulation of snow, such a mass speedily assumes a flat or table-topped shape, and continues to increase. As these layers accumulate, the field-ice begins to sink, each storm (there of frequent occurrence) tending to give it more weight. The part which is now attached to the land remains aground, whilst that which is more remote being in deep water is free to sink. The accumulated weight on its outer edge produces fissures or fractures at the point where it takes the ground, which the frosts increase; thus separated, the surface again becomes horizontal, and continues to receive new layers from snow, rain, and even fogs, being still retained to the parent mass by the force of attraction. The fogs have no small influence in contributing to the accumulation: some idea may be formed of the increase from this cause, from the fact that during a few hours the ice accumulated to the thickness of a quarter of an inch on our rigging and spars, though neither rain nor snow fell. It may, therefore, I think, be safely asserted that these icebergs are at all times on the increase; for there are few days, according to our experience in this climate, in which some mode of precipitation does not prevail in these high latitudes, where, according to our observations, ice seldom melts. The temperature of even the summer months being rarely above the freezing point, masses of a thousand feet in thickness might require



TABULAR ICEBERG.

but few years to form. Icebergs were seen in all stages of formation, from five to two hundred feet above the surface, and each exposed its