

Supposing the average fall of snow in these high latitudes to be an inch a day, or thirty feet a year, the largest icebergs would take more than thirty years to form. They were seen by us in all the stages of their growth, and all bore unequivocal marks of the same origin. The distance from the land at which they were forming, fully satisfied me that their fresh water could only be derived from the snows, &c.

The movement of the ice along the coast is entirely to the westward, and all the large ranges of ice-islands and bergs were found in that direction, while the eastern portion was comparatively free from it. A difference was found in the position of the floe-ice by the different vessels, caused rather by the wind than by the tide. When the Vincennes and Porpoise passed the opening by which the Peacock entered, it was found closed, although only twenty-four hours had elapsed. It has been seen that the ice had much movement during the time the Peacock was beset by it, and the bay was all but closed when she effected her escape. Another instance occurred, where the Porpoise, in about the longitude of 130° E., found the impracticable barrier a few miles further south than the Vincennes did six or seven days after; but this fact is not to be received as warranting any general conclusion, on account of the occurrence of southeast gales during the intermediate time. The trials for currents have, for the most part, shown none to exist. The Porpoise, it is true, experienced some, but these were generally after a gale. If currents do exist, their tendency is westward, which I think the drift of the ice would clearly prove. The difference between the astronomic positions and those given by dead-reckoning, was of no avail here as a test,* for the courses of the vessels among the ice were so tortuous, that the latter could not be depended upon.

The winds which prevail from the southwest to the southeast occasionally bring clear weather, interrupted by flurries of snow; the north wind is light, and brings thick fogs, attended by a rise of temperature. Extremes of weather are experienced in rapid succession, and it is truly a fickle climate.

The evidence that an extensive continent lies within the icy barrier, must have appeared in the account of my proceedings, but will be, I think, more forcibly exhibited by a comparison with the aspect of other lands in the same southern parallel. Palmer's Land, for instance, which is in like manner invested with ice, is so at certain seasons of

* The fact of there being no northerly current along this extended line of coast, is a strong proof in my mind of its being a continent, instead of a range of islands.