

the year only, while at others it is quite clear, because strong currents prevail there, which sweep the ice off to the northeast. Along the Antarctic Continent for the whole distance explored, which is upwards of fifteen hundred miles, no open strait is found. The coast, where the ice permitted approach, was found enveloped with a perpendicular barrier, in some cases unbroken for fifty miles. If there was only a chain of islands, the outline of the ice would undoubtedly be of another form; and it is scarcely to be conceived that so long a chain could extend so nearly in the same parallel of latitude. The land has none of the abruptness of termination that the islands of high southern latitudes exhibit; and I am satisfied that it exists in one uninterrupted line of coast, from Ringgold's Knoll, in the east, to Enderby's Land, in the west; that the coast (at longitude  $95^{\circ}$  E.) trends to the north, and this will account for the icy barrier existing, with little alteration, where it was seen by Cook in 1773. The vast number of ice-islands conclusively points out that there is some extensive nucleus which retains them in their position; for I can see no reason why the ice should not be disengaged from islands, if they were such, as happens in all other cases in like latitudes. The formation of the coast is different from what would probably be found near islands, soundings being obtained in comparatively shoal water; and the colour of the water also indicates that it is not like other southern lands, abrupt and precipitous. This cause is sufficient to retain the huge masses of ice, by their being attached by their lower surfaces instead of their sides only.

Much inquiry and a strong desire has been evinced by geologists, to ascertain the extent to which these ice-islands travel, the boulders and masses of earth they transport, and the direction they take.

From my own observations, and the information I have collected, there appears a great difference in the movements of these vast masses; in some years, great numbers of them have floated north from the Antarctic Circle, and even at times obstructed the navigation about the capes. The year 1832 was remarkable in this respect; many vessels bound round Cape Horn from the Pacific, were obliged to put back to Chili, in consequence of the dangers arising from ice; while, during the preceding and following years, little or none was seen: this would lead to the belief, that great changes must take place in the higher latitudes, or the prevalence of some cause to detach the ice-islands from the barrier in such great quantities as to cover almost the entire section of the ocean, south of the latitude  $50^{\circ}$  S. Taking the early part of the (southern) spring, as the time of separation, we are enabled to make some estimate of the velocity with which they move: