

generally found that we got nearer to the shore in those places than elsewhere. One thing I must tell you, as respects filling your water: you will sometimes find a pond of delicious water on the top of an old iceberg, frozen over, but on cutting through it you will see a supply sufficient for a navy. It will save you fuel, and discomfort and cold to you, your vessels, and their crews.

I was very fortunate in the weather the latter part of the time; and indeed altogether I was scarcely a day without some observation, (except during the gales, of which we had three, occupying about eight days,) and generally half a dozen.

My time for six weeks was passed on deck, and having all day-light, I of course had constant employment, and with the many assistants, I could make rapid progress; and you will find that no opportunity ought to be lost in this navigation, if one is to do any thing. One's ship is in constant danger, and the Vincennes, a first-class sloop of seven hundred and eighty tons, it requires all the foresight and activity one is possessed of to look-out for her.

I consider that I have had a most providential escape; and if this ship had not been enabled to "do every thing but talk," I should not have been where I now am; but she had inspired me with so much confidence, among the coral reefs last summer, that I could put full faith in her doing her duty. I must refer you to the chart, on which I have noted remarks, variations, &c. \

I should have mentioned, that in 1838 and 1839 I went south in the brig Porpoise, in order to trace Palmer's Land on its eastern side, (but too late for any trial to reach high latitudes,) and hoping that the lateness of the season would enable me to run some distance along it. I got within three miles of the coast, and saw it trending to the south-southeast about thirty miles; but it was so blocked up with ice as to render it impossible to get through. I have little doubt myself, in favourable seasons, Weddell's track may be followed, notwithstanding what the Frenchman may say, there being no land to which the ice is attached; and that the ice in those parts changes very much, the currents being exceedingly strong, as I myself witnessed. I could not afford the time to be frozen up, as my other duties were and are paramount to passing the winter in such a situation. But you are differently situated, and I should advise you, by all means, to try to penetrate between longitude 35° and 45° W.

I am, &c.,

CHARLES WILKES,  
Commanding Exploring Expedition

To CAPTAIN JAMES C. ROSS,  
Commanding H. B. M. Ships Erebus and Terror.