

compasses are doubtless furnished to all vessels of this important class; but the very best compass may be rendered worse than useless, by a disregard of the petty circumstances on board that derange its action. Captain Shannon related to us a curious instance of a derangement in the compass, which had since rendered him punctiliously cautious. He had left Halifax with his vessel on the homeward-bound voyage; it was during one of the cold winter months, when fogs prevail on the American coast. His directions at night to the officers of the watch were to run for a point thirty miles eastward of Newfoundland, so as to make sure of keeping clear of its rock-bound shores; and the point of the compass that would lead in this required direction was fixed upon. On coming on deck in the gray of the morning, what was his horror on seeing that the ship had just entered a small bay, and seemed about to be dashed in pieces on the lofty precipices that revealed themselves through the mist! By instantaneously shouting orders to the man at the wheel, and by reversing the engines, he barely saved the vessel from destruction. After some trouble, it was paddled out to deep water. His first impression of course was, that the compass had been neglected. But to his surprise, he found that his orders in this respect had been exactly followed. The head of the vessel had been kept in the direction which, by compass, should have led to the open sea, thirty miles from land, and yet here was it running full inshore. To all concerned, the deviation seemed perfectly magical—not on any ordinary principle to be accounted for. The truth at length dawned on the captain. The error must have arisen from some local derangement of the compass. He caused all the compasses in the ship to be ranged on the deck; and soon it was perceived that no two agreed. The seat of the disorder was ascertained to be at a certain spot close