

board to spend the night with us and bid us farewell. So at supper we had a large party and spent two or three hours very agreeably. Captain Heard, Dr. Rae, Dr. Bennet, Messrs. Mason, Watson and Miles sung some beautiful odes and songs, and it was near 1 o'clock, a. m. when the party separated. All day Tuesday, the 19th, we were confined in the "five fathom hole," not being able to get out for the want of strong favourable wind, the wind being against us. Tuesday at 8 o'clock, a. m. we sailed. There were passengers in the cabin, Mr. and Mrs. Tom and two sons, Miss Bird, Mr. and Mrs. Hunter and child, Neal Finlinson, Esq., Doctor Rae, Messrs. Ross and Steinhaur. There were also about twenty-five steerage passengers. The crew consists of twenty-four men besides the captain and first and second mates, twenty-seven in all. The "Prince of Wales" is a fine ship of five hundred and fifty tons measurement, but capable of carrying eight hundred tons. She has now on board more than five hundred tons of fur skins. The trade of the North-west company must be immense. The cargo with which the ship is now freighted is estimated as worth not less than £120,000 *sterling*. The three first days after sailing the breeze was light but favourable; but on Saturday the 24th the wind turned against us and during the night we got entangled in the ice, or the ice became so thick around the ship that we were obliged to lay to and "wait for the morning," but when the morning light came it did not bring with it the discovery of the way of escape from the perils by which we were surrounded. We were between three and four days shut up in the ice, surrounded with fields and mountains of it, extending far beyond the reach of our vision even when assisted by the spy-glass. Fears now began to be entertained by all on board that we should not get out of the ice, at least towards the point of our destination. To be *closed in the Hudson Straits* in the early part of the season is nothing unusual and not particularly dangerous for the warm season is before you, but to be enclosed in the ice in *these Straits* just as winter is setting in, when you are liable to be *frozen up* any hour is most dangerous. We were in latitude 63—it was snowing

and blowing almost continually with a frost that put the thermometer down to 26 below zero; indeed there was every appearance of the winter setting in; and what added strength to the gloomy prospects was the universal belief that we were to have an early winter. The passengers looked exceedingly cast down. The captain himself appeared any thing but comfortable, and said that he never saw any thing on this wise in the Hudson's Straits at this season of the year, before, though he had navigated these waters for twenty years.

Wednesday the 28th, on the south side of the Straits we found a narrow channel of open water, through which we wended our way until we had passed the fields of ice, when by a strong head wind we were driven over to the opposite shore of the Straits; in the afternoon we found ourselves quite close to the shore of what is called Digg's Islands, the most barren and dreary looking region of all the desolate scenes I ever beheld.

Thursday.—We are now fairly in the Narrow Straits and near "Cape Walsingham" on the south side of the Straits. The hills and mountains of rocks that rise to a great height are covered with snow, and not the sign of vegetable life is visible upon them. Dr. Rae says, there does grow on these sterile hills of everlasting snow, a kind of heath or heather and a short kind of moss, upon which the rabbits live, that are found here in considerable numbers. We are now coasting along within five or ten miles of the shore, which is very bold, and the water very deep right up to the banks: it is said that the ship could in perfect safety, so far as the depth of water is concerned, go within twenty yards of the shore.

Friday the 29th.—The weather is extremely cold and we have no fire in our cabin: I can hardly keep myself from freezing. Yesterday for the want of wind we made little progress; during the night, however, the wind rose a little, or there came a little wind: towards morning it increased, so that in an early part of the day we had made eighty miles from where we were the evening before at 6 o'clock. We are now near Charles Island, a barren rock in the midst of the Straits, now and most of the year round