

our power could it reach the rendezvous by the appointed time ; and as the ship would be obliged to wait for the return of the party, the delay would render it impossible to regain this place as a winter station, in the event of its being so ordered. With these considerations, and a present prospect of an early release, I thought it better not to divide our small force at a time when the services of every one would be required to extricate the ship, and to take the earliest opportunity of going to the south in order to recruit the health of the ship's company.

As early as July 25 we were enabled to swing the ship for local attraction ; and the ice having cleared away for a considerable space in our neighbourhood, we moved into the fairway to be ready for the first opening in the offing.

The natives brought us a report this morning that our deserted boats had been seen drifted near the shore at the Sea Horse Islands, and their contents made a prize of by a small party, who succeeded in bringing the gig to the land. On our passage down, beating close along shore, some natives brought the shell of the boat off, exchanging her readily for a native u-mi-ak we had provided ourselves with in the mean time.

In watching the dissolution of the bay ice, we had flattered ourselves this season was fourteen days before the last, which it really was in the thinness of the ice ; but from the absence of strong winds it remained stationary, at a time when the sea was open the preceding year. Every day at this period (the end of July) seemed to effect a marked change in the ice, and on the 30th a perceptible motion to the northward was observed in some of the heavy hummocks in the offing, and a lane of water sufficient for the ship was found by Mr Hull (second master), whom I sent to observe the state of the ice to seaward.

In consequence of this report I set out in a boat on the following day to trace its extent, preparatory to moving the ship, and to sound along shore to find how close we could approach