

to fail before we quitted the ice, would, in a week or two longer, have suffered very severely, and become a serious encumbrance, instead of an assistance, to our party. As far as we were able to judge, without farther trial, Mr. Beverly and myself* were of opinion that, in order to maintain the strength of men thus employed for several weeks together, an addition would be requisite of at least one third more to the provisions which we daily issued. I need scarcely remark how much this would increase the difficulty of equipping such an expedition.

I cannot dismiss the subject of this enterprise without attempting to explain, as far as I am able, how it may have happened that the ice over which we passed was found to answer so little to the description of that observed by the respectable authorities quoted in a former part of this volume.* It frequently occurred to us, in the course of our daily journeys, that this may, in some degree, have arisen from our navigators' having generally viewed the ice from a considerable height. The only clear and commanding view on board a ship is that from the crow's-nest; and Phipps's most important remarks concerning the nature of the ice to the north of Spitzbergen were made from a station several hundred feet above the sea; and, as it is well known how much the most experienced eye may thus be deceived, it is possible enough that the irregularities which cost us so much time and labour may, when viewed in this manner, have en-

* See Introduction.