

and, as we approached them, we found a quantity of "floe-ice\*" intermixed with them, beyond which, to the westward, nothing but ice could be seen. At noon we had soundings, with one hundred and twenty fathoms of line, on a bottom of fine sand, which makes it probable that most of the icebergs were aground in this place. In the afternoon, we sailed within the edge of the ice, as much as a light westerly wind would admit, in order to approach the western land, as directed by my instructions. Some curious effects of atmospheric refraction were observed this evening, the low ice being at times considerably raised in the horizon, and constantly altering its appearance.

The weather being nearly calm on the morning of the 25th, all the boats were kept a-head, to tow the ships through the ice to the westward. It remained tolerably open till four P.M., when a breeze, freshening up from the eastward, caused the ice, through which we had lately been towing, to close together so rapidly, that we had scarcely time to hoist up the boats before the ships were immovably 'beset.' The clear sea which we had left was about four miles to the eastward of us, while to the west-

\* An extensive sheet of ice, whose limits, however, can be distinguished from a ship's mast-head: the extent of what is called a field of ice cannot be distinguished from the same point.