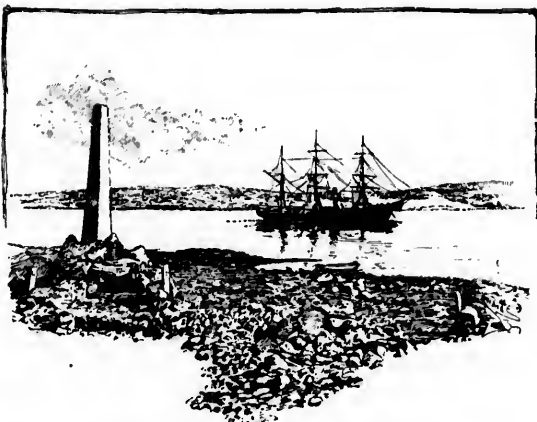


The round of the different stations was then made, and men who had spent the winter there were replaced by fresh garrisons, the number in each case being the same as before. With two exceptions the men were found in perfect health, the exceptions being one of the observers, who was suffering from a slight attack of scurvy, and one of the station hands, who had fallen a victim to that disease. In the latter case the fault lay entirely with the unfortunate fellow, as, during the winter months, he spent the greater part of his time in bed, and persistently neglected every precaution against an attack. After visiting Fort Churchill, where, as may be readily supposed, the advent of the "Alert" was hailed with delight by the little band of residents, and her departure was delayed by a violent storm that lasted over a week, the return voyage was entered upon, the parting round of the stations made, and their tiny garrisons were left to the cold and darkness of a long and dreary Arctic winter.

The third expedition, in which the "Alert" was again used, sailed on June 24th, 1886, and had far better luck than its immediate predecessor, as no special difficulty or cause of delay was experienced, the season proving to be somewhat earlier than the previous year, and the ice, consequently, in a much more disorganized condition. It is true that while ramming at a taut bar of ice a little more than half way through the strait, the screw got worsted in the encounter to the extent of one blade, but as the same accident had occurred on both the previous trips, Lieut. Gordon knew exactly how to repair the damage, and little time was lost. The stations were visited in turn, and all their occupants taken off, as they were to be maintained no longer. This duty accomplished, an excursion was made to Marble Island, in the northern part of the bay, a great resort of whalers, in whose chief harbor there is a spot called Deadman's Island, because of the num-



STEAMER "ALERT" OFF DEADMAN'S ISLAND.

ber of graves dotting its bleak and barren back with pathetic memorials of those who had gone out from their New Bedford homes to return no more forever.

Forts York and Churchill were then called at, and a survey made of the latter place with a view of ascertaining its commercial capabilities, the result being that it was pronounced admirably suited for the water terminus of a railroad system, and easily convertible into a port fit for doing a business of great magnitude. The estuary of the Nelson River, by the shores of which Fort York stands, is, on the other hand, declared by Lieut. Gordon to be one of the most dangerous places in the world for shipping; so that, if Hudson's Bay ever does become the summer outlet for the commerce of the Great North-west, Churchill harbor must undoubtedly be the shipping port. Some day or other there may be a boom up there, and this little bit of information may prove very valuable, but I present it freely to my readers notwithstanding, and they can use it as they see fit.

Having thus glanced briefly at the movements of the three expeditions, my next business is to rescue the more important results of their explorations from the quick oblivion of the blue-book, and make them public property; a task that has been rendered materially more interesting through the kindness of Mr. W. A. Ashe, observer at Ashe Inlet, in placing at my disposal the