

southward, since we had opened Davis' Straits. The variation of the compass was observed to be $52^{\circ} 41' W$.

At nine P.M., brilliant coruscations of the *Aurora Borealis* appeared, of a pale ochre colour, with a slight tinge of red, in an arched form crossing the zenith from N.W. to S.E., but afterwards they assumed various shapes, and had a rapid motion.

On the 5th of August, a party of the officers endeavoured to get on one of the larger icebergs, but ineffectually, owing to the steepness and smoothness of its sides, and the swell produced by its undulating motion. This was one of the largest we saw, and Mr. Hood ascertained its height to be one hundred and forty-nine feet; but these masses of ice are frequently magnified to an immense size, through the illusive medium of a hazy atmosphere, and on this account their dimensions have often been exaggerated by voyagers.

In the morning of the 7th, the Island of Resolution was indistinctly seen through the haze, but was soon afterwards entirely hidden by a very dense fog. The favourable breeze subsided into a perfect calm, and left the ship surrounded by loose ice. At this time the Eddystone was perceived to be driving with rapidity towards some of the larger masses; the stern boats of this ship and of the *Wear* were despatched to assist in towing her clear of them. At ten, a momentary clearness presented the land distinctly at the distance of two miles; the ship was quite unmanageable, and under the sole governance of the currents, which ran in strong eddies between the masses of ice. Our consorts were also seen, the *Wear* being within hail, and the Eddystone at a short distance from us. Two attempts were ineffectually made to gain soundings, and the extreme density of the fog precluded us from any other means of ascertaining the direction in which we were driving until half past twelve, when we had the alarming view of a barren rugged shore within a few yards, towering over the masts-heads. Almost instantly afterwards the ship struck violently on a point of rocks, projecting from the island; and the ship's side was brought so near to the shore, that poles were prepared to push her off. This blow displaced the rudder, and raised it several inches, but it fortunately had been previously confined by tackles. A gentle