

although with only a foot or two of water to spare at low tide; the winter now, however, set in with so much severity, that it was impossible to keep the men any longer so employed without serious injury to their health.

On the 12th of October, the ships were finally hove into their winter position, within 200 yards of each other, and were soon firmly frozen in, and surrounded by an immense field of level ice, as seen in the winter portion of the Panorama. "Although I could not but feel extreme disappointment," remarks Sir James, "at the small advance we had been able to make during our first season, we had much to be thankful for in having been permitted to gain secure winter quarters at Port Leopold, a position that, of all others, was the most desirable, if any one spot had to be selected for that purpose, being at the junction of the four great channels of Barrow's Straits, Lancaster Sound, Prince Regent's Inlet, and Wellington Channel. It was hardly possible for any party, after abandoning their ships, to pass along the shores of any inlet without finding indications of the proximity of our Expedition."

In this inhospitable region, isolated for a period from the rest of the world, these heroes of the Arctic Seas passed 342 days, during three whole months of which they never caught a single glimpse of the joyous sun; all was alike night, that luminary having disappeared below the horizon on the 9th of November, and having been entirely lost to sight from the ships, until the 9th of February. The thermometer at the same time fell so low as 40° , 50° , and on one or two occasions, even to 60° minus, the average reading during the three months being 35° .

Sir James observes, "the winter was passed as are all winters in this climate, but long experience and liberal means gave us many comforts that no other Expedition had enjoyed, yet it is remarkable that the health of the crews suffered more during this winter than on any former occasions. Our want of success might have tended in some measure to depress their spirits, and unfortunately the cold of winter was prolonged unusually far into the spring, before we could give them active employment."

No language can convey an adequate idea of the sadness and dreariness of such a situation, surrounded on all sides by the same desolate and cheerless prospect, with no sound breaking the universal monotony, but the roaring of the tempest, or the occasional cracking of the ice; but it requires no very lively imagination to conceive the frightful tedium endured during the many hours of darkness, in the close and confined space below decks, a space that had been purposely shorn of its due proportions, partly to admit of the insertion of double timbers to strengthen the ships, partly for the heating apparatus to keep up such a temperature as was consonant with existence, and partly to make room for the immense amount of provisions and stores each ship carried. The greatest hardships and privations were necessarily severely felt, not indeed whilst there was anything to do, but it was in the midst of stillness, inactivity, ill health, and failing hopes, that the sharpest trials and the most intense sufferings were experienced. In alternations between the clammy atmosphere below and the keen pinchings of the cold air above, into which they were unable to move without being covered with an immense load of clothing, and