

difficulty of access. Off Cape Hotham we found a loose pack; it extended about half way across Wellington Channel, and then a clear sea spread itself eastward and northward along the shores off North Devon to Cape Bowden. From a strong ice-blink up Wellington Channel there was reason to think the barrier\* still athwart it; we did not, however, go to ascertain whether it was so, but, favoured by a fair wind, steamed, sailed, and towed the "Resolute," as fast as possible past Beechey Island. The form of sending letters to England had been duly enacted, but few were in a humour to write; the news would be unsatisfactory, and, unless Jones's Sound was an open sea, and we could not therefore help entering it, there was a moral certainty of all being in England within a short time of one another.

And so it proved. Leaving the "Assistance" and "Resolute" to join us off Cape Dudley Digges, the steamers proceeded, under Captain Austin, with three months' provisions, on the night of the 14th of August, for Jones's Sound.

Next morning brought the steamers close in with the shore between Capes Horsburgh and Osborn, along which we steered towards Jones's Sound. Glacier and iceberg again abounded, and the comparatively tame scenery of Barrow's Strait was changed for bold and picturesque mountains and

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\* Had we but happily known at that time of the perfect description of the Wellington Channel ice subsequent to our passage across in 1850, as shown by the tract of the American Expedition and Lieutenant De Haven's admirable report, we should not then have fallen into the error of believing *barriers* of ice to be permanent in deep-water channels, a fallacy which it is to be hoped has exploded with many other misconceptions as to the fixed nature of ice, and the constant accumulation of it in Polar regions.