

Cape Clarence, might have been, and whatever my own expectations were as to the probability of an opening in this direction, the ardour existing at home for the discovery of a north-west passage, and the confidence with which the supposed situation of such an opening has been transferred to one spot, as fast as it has been found not to exist in another, render it necessary to recapitulate the circumstances which disprove its existence in this place, which forms the northermost extremity of Baffin's Bay.

On the 19th of August, at fifty minutes past midnight, the ship being nearly on the seventy-seventh degree of north latitude, ten leagues to the westward of Cape Saumarez, which forms the east side and the bottom of this bay, the land was distinctly seen. On the 20th and 21st, when off Cape Clarence, at the distance of six leagues, the land which forms the west side, and the bottom of this bay, was also distinctly seen by the officers and myself, and by these two observations the coast is determined to be connected all round. At each of these periods, this immense bay was observed to be covered with field ice; besides which, a vast chain of large icebergs was seen to extend across it. These were apparently aground, and had probably been driven on shore there by southerly gales. It was also observed, that the tide rose and fell only four feet, and that the stream was scarcely perceptible.

From these several considerations, it appears perfectly certain, that the land is here continuous, and that there is no opening at the northermost part of Baffin's Bay, from Hackluit's Island to Cape Clarence. Even if it be imagined that some narrow Strait may exist through these mountains, it is evident that it must for ever be unnavigable, and that there is not even a chance of ascertaining its existence, since all approach to the bottoms of these bays is prevented by the ice which fills them to so great a depth, and appears never to have moved from its station.

Being thus satisfied that there could be no further inducement to continue longer in this place, and it being necessary to husband the little time yet remaining, for the work which was still to be done, I shaped my course, on the morning of the 21st, towards the next opening which appeared in view to the westward.

Several copper cylinders, containing an account of our proceedings, were left on the floating ice when we left the bay.