

Early in the morning of the 30th July, having run our distance for Cape Sabine I stopped steaming, and at 5 A.M. the mist clearing off I observed the "Discovery" near the land apparently beset with a close pack five or six miles broad; no ice in sight to seaward. As I did not wish the two ships to separate, and the calm weather being favourable, I bored through the pack, which, although apparently close, opened sufficiently to admit of the slow progress of the ship until we gained the land in company with the "Discovery" and secured the ships in a convenient harbour, named after Lieutenant Payer, the successful and energetic arctic traveller, two miles to the southward of Cape Sabine.

A depôt of 240 rations was established on the southernmost of the islets in a convenient position for travelling parties, a cairn being built on the summit of the highest and outer one, and a notice of our movements deposited there.

The pack in the offing consisted of floes from 5 to 6 feet thick, with occasionally much older and heavier floes 10 to 12 feet thick intermixed with it, but all was very much decayed and honeycombed; still it could not be treated with the same impunity as the ice in the middle passage through Baffin Bay.

I may here draw attention to the deceptive impressions inexperienced people naturally receive when from a lofty look-out station they observe a sea unbordered by ice. The distance from Littleton Island to Cape Sabine is only 25 miles. On a clear evening, from an altitude of 700 feet, with the land and horizon distinctly visible, no ice was in sight from the first-named place, and the prospects of the Expedition as to attaining a higher Latitude without trouble appeared to be precisely the same as when I looked over a boundless sea from the summit of one of the Carey Islands 100 miles to the southward, and yet the ships were twenty-four hours afterwards locked up by ice in a harbour near Cape Sabine.

From Littleton Island the inexperienced observer would conclude that there was an open Polar Sea; from our present position he would as certainly conclude that his farther progress was for ever stayed, and that the sooner he looked for winter quarters the better.

The ships were detained at Payer Harbour for three days watching for an opening in the ice, getting under way whenever there appeared the slightest chance of proceeding onwards, but on each occasion, being unable to pass Cape Sabine, were forced to return. This resting-place proved to be an excellent station, well protected against the entrance of heavy floes, possessing a lofty look-out, and deep navigable channels to the north and south through which to proceed to sea immediately the ice opened with a favourable westerly wind.

Being advantageously situated near a prominent cape, where the tidal currents run with increased velocity, it is however subject to squally winds; but in icy seas during the summer, when awaiting the opening of the ice, they are rather an advantage than otherwise, striving, as they do with the sea currents, which is to be the chief worker in removing the impediments to a vessel's advance.

Early in the morning of the 4th of August, after several hours of light south-westerly winds, the main pack, while remaining perfectly close and impenetrable to the northward, moved off from the land to a sufficient distance to enable the ships to pass to the westward round Cape Sabine. In the hope of finding a passage on the western side of the island, of which Capes Victoria and Albert are the prominent eastern points, sail was immediately made, and we succeeded, with only one short detention, in advancing twenty miles along the southern shore of Hayes Sound, and securing the ships in a snug harbour. In the neighbourhood the sportsmen discovered a richly vegetated valley with numerous traces of musk-oxen and other game.

Two glaciers coming from nearly opposite directions, which, instead of uniting in their downward direction, abut the one against the other, and maintain a constant warfare for the mastery, a never-ending grapple for victory, suggested the name of Twin Glacier Valley for the locality.

The ice in the sound was one season old, and decaying so quickly that if not drifted away it would in a week's time present no impediment to the advance of a steam vessel. On the 5th of August the strong tides and a south-westerly wind opened a channel to the N.W., and we gained a few miles in advance; but not wishing to expend much coal, were finally stopped in the light pack. After remaining sufficiently long to determine that the flood tide still came from the eastward, although the ebb or east running tide was apparently the stronger of the two, I pushed the ships through the pack towards the shore, and with Captain Stephenson, ascended a hill 1,500 feet high. From this station the appearance of the land giving no prospect of a channel to the northward, and

Port Payer.
Depôt of
Provisions
and Cairn on
Brevoort
Island.
Not printed

Pack off
Cape
Sabine.

Deceptive
impression
on seeing
"Open
water."

Detention
at Payer
Harbour.

Advance up
Hayes
Sound.

Princess
Alexandra
Harbour.

Tides in
Hayes
Sound.