

but the soundings not less than forty fathoms, the vessel has crossed the Bank to the north of the lane; but if she find herself in less than thirty fathoms, then she has crossed to the south of it. Should she, however, find herself in water that suddenly shoals to less than twenty fathoms and as suddenly deepens again, then she is near the Virgin Rocks, or the rock and Nine-fathom Bank to the east of them, and her position is immediately known.

It should be recollected, however, that these lanes are not channel-ways in which steamers must keep or be lost. Gales of wind, ice, and other things will now and then force a steamer out of them, and in such cases she will actually be where she is now, for she will then be in no more danger than she is now; only when she gets back into the lane she will be in less.

You will doubtless observe the advantageous position of the fork to Halifax in the lane from Europe. As this lane approaches Newfoundland, it edges off to the south, in such a manner as to render it impossible for a vessel so to miss her way as to get ashore. Suppose a steamer attempting this lane to be, when she nears the Grand Banks, 100 miles out in position, (a most extravagant case,) and that she be out on the Newfoundland side, she would, if behaving properly, be steering parallel with the lane, and if bound to New York she would go clear of Cape Race. But she might be bound for Halifax, and by steering west too soon might run upon the land; but recollect that the land to Halifax turns off *on soundings*, and a west course from where the lane from England strikes soundings on the Grand Banks will take you clear of everything. So, without the most gross neglect of the lead and all the proper precautions, which it is the duty of the shipmaster to take, it would seem impossible for him to run his steamer into danger here.

In the longitude of the Grand Banks, the lane to Europe is 200 miles south of the lane to America. As a rule, this lane for the eastern-bound steamers can be followed always, admitting that an exception now and then in practice will make the rule general. It will be observed that this lane runs E. 15° S. from Sandy Hook to the meridian of 70°, where it takes a course E. 12° N., toward its junction with the arc of a great circle, south of the Grand Banks. Though