

islands. In the northern regions, near Spitzbergen, Phipps observed nothing remarkable in the variation of the needle, but Baffin found it at 5 points, or  $56^{\circ}$ , 'a thing almost incredible, and almost matchless in all the world besides.' Duncan supposed the needle to be attracted by Charles's Island, as the variation amounted to  $63^{\circ} 51'$ , nearly 6 points; and on the same parallel, when the island was out of sight, only  $45^{\circ} 22'$ ; and he states, that when near Merry and Jones's Islands, in a violent storm of thunder, lightning and heavy rain, the night being very dark and dismal, all the compasses in the ship were running round, and so unsteady, that they could not trust one moment to the course they were steering.

Many other meteorological phenomena peculiar to these regions afford curious matter for investigation; but our geographical knowledge of every part of Hudson's and Baffin's seas is most defective. We need only cast an eye over the different charts made by Arrowsmith, from 1793 to 1811, no two of which are alike—large islands being inserted in some and omitted in others—the north-eastern side of the continent is, in one, cut into islands—in another, islands are joined to the continent—here a strait is filled up—there another opened—in short—

'Vidi ego quod fuerat quondam solidissima tellus

Esse fretum. Vidi factas ex æquore terras'—

These flourishes *ad libitum* (for not one iota of additional information of the northern parts has been received for the last sixty years) are not very commendable, in a geographical point of view; and in the absence of all knowledge, we should deem it preferable to leave *blank* (as Purdey has left Baffin's Sea in his General Chart) those coasts and islands which fancy only has created.

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