

close and some floes had already entered our late anchorage, and lay across its entrance. We sailed out from under the glacier to the point of Cape Alexander, in order to obtain a better view, and found that a heavy pack had driven up from the south-westward upon the land south of the cape, off which there still remained about half a mile of water. To the southward and south-westward the sea was now covered with heavy ice and bergs, but we could still see open water about six miles due south from the cape. Our retreat thus appeared as if about to be cut off; and, as we could not remain in our present position, we had either to try to re-enter the harbour, there, probably, to be shut in for the winter, or to attempt to force out through the pack into the water seen in the south. There was no time to reflect, as a southerly storm was evidently approaching; so I chose the latter alternative, and immediately steamed into the slackest place in the pack, and succeeded by 2 P.M. in reaching the water, where we lay-to, with the engines going, during the following twenty-four hours, in a violent gale and snow storm. A breaking sea and the ice on each hand compelled us to tack the ship incessantly.

"August 28.—At 3 P.M. the gale moderated, and we saw that the ice had filled the straits and the head of Baffin's Bay right across and to about eight miles south of Cape Alexander. The pack extended in the S.W. as far as visible, but in the south there was open water, with a high swell rolling up from that direction.

"As we could not now re-enter the straits until some change should occur, and it was purposeless to remain outside in Baffin's Sea, I decided to proceed towards Upernivik, in North Greenland, upon the chance of finding that the last ship had not already sailed for Denmark, and in that case to send an officer home, and then return to Smith Straits. In arriving at this decision, I was guided by the conviction that either by remaining in our present position or in returning north we should very probably be overtaken by the frost, and have to remain during the winter, for which we were, however, fully prepared if necessary. We were all in good health, and our ship had received no serious damage beyond the bending of one of the blades of the propeller, which, however, considerably impeded our speed under steam.

"We therefore steered southward at 4 P.M., and on the following morning were off Hakluyt Island, having the pack always on our star-board hand until now, when it trended away in the direction of Clarence Head.

"As we had not met any of the natives, and being desirous of ascertaining where they were located in the event of our returning northward,