Coal Districts at Disco.

ground in from 8 to 10 fathoms was found off this coal strata, though exposed to the southerly winds, at which time a heavy sea sets right upon the shore. A wooden house has been erected some years ago, but now uninhabited; it would form, however, good shelter for a party collecting coal, which could be shipped in fine weather, or during northerly winds when the sea is perfectly smooth.

Leaving "Skandsen" at 5.30 P.M., we then proceeded towards "Ritenbenk" for the purpose of communicating with a Danish bark that arrived the previous day, and which afforded us European intelligence twelve days later than our own.

The captain of the vessel, when acquainted by Mr. Olric with the object of the expedition, gave me 78 lbs. of potatoes, which I have added to our stock of vegetables for the Arctic squadron. We passed inside the small islands, as seen in the track chart enclosed, and observed an extensive loom and kittiwake rookery, where thousands of birds and eggs might be readily obtained. I learn that a still larger rookery is situated at "*Niakornak Næs*," an island a little to the northward. I paid a visit to the Governor of "Ritenbenk," whom I had previously known as governor of Lievely. The vessels were kept under weigh in the mean time, and by 8 A.M. of the 7th we were well clear of the small islands which lie near the settlement.

A strong breeze from the northward prevented our reaching "*Atanekerdluk*" before 5 P.M.; here we found excellent sheltered harbours, the northmost one for vessels during southerly winds, and the other affording capital shelter with north winds, and with very good stiff clay holding ground. We came to in 23 fathoms and rode out the gale, which was doubtless putting the "Diligence" well through Davis Straits. Shortly after anchoring I landed with a party of officers from both vessels, for the purpose of visiting a petrified forest reported by the Esquimaux, but which had never been previously visited by any European, excepting Mr. Rink.

Petrified Trees.

Here, at a measured elevation of 1084 feet above the level of the sea, we found extensive remains of petrified trees, though nearly entirely embedded in sandstone clay; the specimens collected were in all stages of petrifaction, some charred into coal. That this has been a forest of considerable extent, and that the species of tree was doubtless what now only exists in a far more temperate clime, is beautifully illustrated by the widely scattered specimens found of petrified leaves, identifying the lime, beech, fir, &c., and some sorts of fern. To the geologist this cannot fail to be a source of the greatest interest, and must be viewed by all as matter for great speculation.

A small piece of amber was found, and I succeeded, though with much difficulty, in reaching a spot at the edge of the cliff, where a portion of a semipetrified tree still *stood* at an angle of about 45°, and sloping towards the north, the hill upon which the forest is situate facing the south.

This tree was about the size of a man's body in girth, and four feet of it stood exposed; a small portion is sent, marked A. Some pieces of the coal found in the neighbourhood is also forwarded. I defer sending a more detailed account of the geological formation of the land at this spot as being more suitable for a paper to the geological societies, than for an official letter to my Lords Commissioners. I will therefore only add, that the commencement of what is known as greenstone, sandstone, clay slate, and trap formation, was clearly defined at a spot a short distance from our anchorage, and where it was met by the gneiss and granite of other periods.

At 7 on the following morning our anchor was tripped, and we steamed across the Waigattet towards Ritenbenk Kulbrud. On landing, I soon found an extensive strata of coal, extending, as far as my own observation went, for more than a mile along the coast; this vein is from 3 to 6 feet in depth and of a species known in England as anthracite. Considering that there could be no better proof of its available position and means of obtaining it, I ordered all the quarter boats of the two vessels on shore, for the purpose of taking a load, and though it had to be broken out from the bank and put into the boats which had then to pull off to the ship, which was lying to under steam, at a distance from the shore varying from three-quarters to a mile, we, nevertheless, got off *upwards* of twelve tons in four hours, and this working only the boats' crews at the strata in different spots, and themselves loading and carrying off their own boats