

fissures and cracks, some of which formed chasms of one or two feet wide ; but as they are not uncommon, and the dogs easily leap over them, the sledge following without danger, they are terrible only to new comers.

As soon as the sun declined, the wind increased and rose to a storm. The snow was driven about by whirl winds, both on the ice and from off the peaks of the high mountains, and filled the air. At the same time the swell had increased so much, that its effects upon the ice became very extraordinary and alarming. The sledges, instead of gliding along smoothly upon an even surface, sometimes ran with violence after the dogs, and shortly after seemed with difficulty to ascend the rising hill ; for the elasticity of so vast a body of ice, of many leagues square, supported by a troubled sea, though in some places three or four yards in thickness, would, in some degree, occasion a motion not unlike that of a sheet of paper upon the surface of a rippling stream. Noises were now likewise heard in many directions, like the report of cannon, owing to the bursting of the ice at some distance.

The Esquimaux drove with all haste towards the shore, as it plainly appeared the ice would break and disperse in the open sea. When the sledges approached the coast, the prospect before them was truly terrific. The ice, having broken loose from the rocks, was forced up and down, grinding and breaking into a thousand pieces against the precipices, with a tremendous noise, which, added to the raging of the wind, and the snow driving about in the air, nearly deprived the travellers of the power of hearing and seeing any thing distinctly.

To make the land at any risk, was now the only hope left, but it was with the utmost difficulty the frightened dogs could be forced forward, the whole body of the ice sinking frequently below the rocks, then rising above them. As the only moment to land was that when the ice gained the level of the shore, the attempt was extremely nice and hazardous. However, by God's mercy, it succeeded ; both sledges gained the shore, and were drawn up the beach, though with much difficulty.

The travellers had hardly time to reflect with gratitude to God for their safety, when that part of the ice from which they had just now made good their landing, burst