

five minutes. Alarmed at this significant proof of intricate navigation, he sprang from his couch, slipped on a wrapper, and hastened upon deck. He arrived at a critical moment; the vessel was involved in a narrow channel or creek, with the ice rapidly closing in on every side. The width of the channel when he went below was fully two miles; when he came on deck, it had become narrowed to some eight or nine hundred yards. Moreover, the position of the *Baffin* was specially unfavourable, for a large ice-floe to the eastward and a sheet of thin land-ice to the westward were drawing close together. In a very short time the width of open water was diminished to one hundred and fifty yards. Every stitch of canvas was crowded on the ship which she could safely carry. Fortunately, her crew were experienced and steady, and her commander was a thorough seaman; his well-conceived orders were instantly carried out; the gale blew strongly, but top-gallant sails were set upon double-reefed topsails, and the *Baffin* was driven into the thinner ice, which she crashed and shivered before her bows. Sometimes her course seemed to be arrested, and those on board felt the profoundest apprehension; but eventually the ice