

and examined all lands within a reasonable distance of our winter quarters, I decided to return with the expedition to England this year rather than expose the crew to a second sledging season in a region from which all the obtainable game had been shot down.

On the passage home, in a severe gale off Cape Farewell, the "Alert's" rudder head was severely sprung and rendered useless. The ship has been steered across the Atlantic by the rudder pendants. The spare rudder, itself badly sprung, has been rendered sufficiently serviceable to steer the vessel to Portsmouth.

I have ordered Commander Markham to proceed with H.M.S. "Alert" to Queenstown, and place himself under the orders of Captain Stephenson, of H.M.S. "Discovery."

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

G. S. NARES,

Captain Commanding Arctic Expedition.

To

*The Secretary of the Admiralty,
London.*

H.M.S. "Alert," at Valentia,
27th October, 1876.

Sir,

I have the honour to report in detail the proceedings of the Expedition since leaving Upernivik on the 22nd of July, 1875, as follows:—

Expedition
leaves
Upernivik.

The "Alert" and "Discovery," one ship in tow of the other, left Upernivik, from which port I last had the honour of addressing you, on the 22nd July, 1875.

A dense fog prevailing at sea, I steamed to the northward, between the islands and the main land, experiencing clear and calm weather until arriving near Kangitok Island, when the fog, stealing in from the sea, gradually obtained the mastery, and completely enveloped us. The numerous picturesque rocky islands and reefs in this sheltered labyrinthine passage are so incorrectly represented in the published charts that a pilot is at present a necessity. The one who accompanied us, an Esquimaux, informed me that many of the likely-looking channels are bridged across with sunken reefs, and from the many rocks we saw lying just awash directly in our passage, I have reason to believe his statement.

Upernivik
Glacier.

The large discharging Upernivik Glacier having only one outlet, leading direct to the sea, its numerous icebergs of all sizes are collected in great numbers by the eddy tides and currents among the islets situated to the southward, and tend to keep the channels completely closed until late in the season; but when once open in July by some of the bergs grounding on rocks, and others, by their height above the flotation line, affording certain evidence of deep water, they assist rather than impede navigation during calm weather. On the morning of the 23rd, after an anxious night, passed with a dense fog, and a strong tidal current, in a narrow channel, in which we could obtain no bottom with 100 fathoms of line at a cable's length of the shore, and with the "Discovery" in tow; during a momentary clearance of the atmosphere, two Esquimaux in their kyacks were observed close to us. After consulting with them through Christian Petersen, Danish and Esquimaux Interpreter, they volunteered to conduct us to an anchorage. On following them to the position they denoted, and obtaining no bottom with the hand-lead line at the main chains, I felt the bow of the ship glide slowly up on the ground. Through the fog we could then see that the land was within fifty yards of us. The Esquimaux had evidently not considered that our ships required a greater depth of water to float in than their own frail canoes. As it was nearly low water, and the tide still falling, I allowed the ship to remain quiet where she was, the "Discovery" still hanging to us by her towing hawser, and took advantage of the enforced delay by landing the ships' companies to wash their clothes.

"Alert" on
shore near
Kangitok.

The fog lifted slightly as the day advanced; and as the tide rose the ship floated without having incurred any strain or damage whatever. I then proceeded to sea; discharging the pilot, who was not to blame for our mishap, off the north shore of Kangitok, the outlying island of the group; after passing which the channel presents no difficulties.

Thinking that probably a distorted account of our getting on shore might reach Europe, at the last moment I wrote a hasty pencil letter to Captain Evans, Hydrographer, merely to point out how very unimportant the slight detention had been.

Crossing
through the
"Middle
Ice," Baffin
Bay.

By 4 p.m. we had passed the Brown Islands, with a sea perfectly clear of ice before and around us. Having given much study and consideration to the question, and a high and very steady barometer following a south-east wind, denoting that the calm settled weather we had lately enjoyed was likely to continue, I decided to force my way through the middle ice of Baffin Bay instead of proceeding by the ordinary route round