

by European establishments, at these or other places, from their enemies the Esquimaux.

The polar regions of the globe within the arctic circle offer a wide field for the researches of a philosophic mind; yet, in point of science, very little is known beyond what is contained in the account of Captain Phipps's voyage to the neighbourhood of Spitzbergen. The natural history, though the best, is still but imperfectly known; the sea and land swarm with animals in these abodes of ice and snow, and multitudes of both yet remain to be discovered and described. It is an important object to obtain more accurate observations on those huge mountains of ice which float on the sea; it is no longer a question that the *field* or *flaked* ice is frozen sea-water, though itself perfectly fresh; and it is almost as certain, though doubted by some, that the huge masses which the Dutch call *icebergs*, are formed on the steep and precipitous shores, from whence those 'thunderbolts of snow' are occasionally hurled into the deep, bearing with them fragments of earth and stones. 'I came,' says FoXe, 'by one piece of ice higher than the rest, whereupon a stone was of the contents of five or six tonne weight, with divers other smaller stones and mud thereon.'

It is a common but we believe an erroneous opinion, that the temperature of our climate has regularly been diminishing, and that it is owing to the ice having permanently fixed itself to the shores of Greenland, which, in consequence, from being once a flourishing colony of Denmark, is now become uninhabitable and unapproachable. We doubt both the fact and the inference. It is not the climate that has altered, but we who feel it more severe as we advance in years; the registers of the absolute degree of temperature, as measured by the thermometer, do not warrant any such conclusion; and more attempts than one to land on the coast of Greenland must be made, before we can give credit to its being bound up in eternal ice—which is known to shift about with every gale of wind—to bedrifted by currents—and to crumble and consume below the surface of the water. We suspect indeed, that the summer heat, which in the latitude $80\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ Phipps found to be on the average of the month of July at 42° of Fahrenheit, during the whole twenty-four hours, and once, when exposed to the sun, as high as $66\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, dissolves fully as much of the ice and snow on the surface of the sea as the preceding winter may have formed.* It appears too, that

* In the Transactions of the Wernerian Society are published several Meteorological Journals of Mr. Scoresby, a whale-fisher of Hull, which, compared with that of Phipps, would seem to sanction the idea of a decreasing temperature, the average height of the thermometer, in the months of July in 1811 and 1812, being only about 33° , and very often below the freezing point, though in a lower latitude by three degrees than that in which Captain Phipps observed it; but the fishing vessels penetrate the fields of ice, the open spaces of which are frequented by whales; and there can be no doubt this diminished temperature is owing to their being in the midst of an atmosphere chilled by the surrounding ice.

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