

ahead, but the "Challenger" was not strengthened for ice work, and we were not ordered to proceed further south, so we turned back. There seemed to be a deep opening in the pack here, nearly due south of Heard Island. We subsequently passed within six miles of what is marked on maps as Wilkes' Termination Land, and found that this did not exist. Wilkes no doubt was deceived by the land-like appearance of distant icebergs. It is to be noted that he merely says that he saw appearance of land here, sixty miles distant, but high and mountainous. Others have named it for him and placed it on the charts.

On two occasions, whilst amongst the southern ice, our ship was in some little danger, having to ride through heavy gales of wind amongst numerous icebergs in thick weather.

On the morning of February 24th there was a fresh breeze, in which we sounded in 1,300 fathoms, and attempted to dredge, but the ship drifted so fast before the wind, that the dredge did not reach the bottom. The wind became fresher and fresher, and the barometer sank to  $28^{\circ}50$ . The atmospheric pressure is, however, for some reason, normally low in the Antarctic regions, and Ross once observed it as low as  $28^{\circ}35$ .

Before long it blew a gale, with dry powdery drifting snow, obscuring the view and rendering it impossible to see for a greater distance than 200 or 300 yards. The thermometer sank to  $21^{\circ}$  F., the lowest reading which occurred during the cruise. Before the weather became very bad we steamed up under the lee of a small sloping berg, with the intention of making fast to it if possible by means of ice anchors.

This was found impracticable, the slope being too steep to allow of men dropping on to it from the end of the jibboom, as had been intended. The ship was then placed under the lee of the berg, with the view of facilitating the reefing of top sails, as a preparation for the coming gale. Either a back current set the ship on to the berg, or the berg itself was drifting towards us with the wind more rapidly than was expected. A collision ensued, and the jibboom was forced against the side of the berg and broken, together with some parts of the rigging in connection with it.

The end of the jibboom left a star-like mark on the sloping wall of the berg, but had no other effect on the mass. The men who were aloft reefing the topsails, came down the back stays helter-skelter, expecting the top-gallant masts to fall, but no further damage ensued.

As the weather became worse we were in rather a critical position. We were surrounded by bergs, with the weather so