

Sail was shortened, and we glided slowly on. A line of mist, contrasting strongly with the dark water, seemed in the uncertain light to be creeping over the surface of the sea towards us; in reality we were approaching it. Its edge was most sharply defined. We passed it, and immediately the dark water showed a sprinkling over of white dots, which looked as if they had been snow-flakes, which for some reason had fallen on the water without melting. These white specks became larger and larger, and closer together, and all at once I realized that we were amongst the ice. The thin layer of mist was hanging over its edge.

The pieces increased rapidly in size and thickness, as we went farther and farther ahead, until, in a very few minutes, we were forcing our way through a sort of soup-like looking fluid, full of large pieces of ice. The pieces were as much as six feet long, and three or four broad, all flat slabs, and standing six inches or so out of the water. The pieces bumped and grated against the ship's side, and the water-line being near the level of the officers' heads, as they lay in their berths asleep, several came up on deck to see what had happened. We soon steered out of the edge of the pack again.

Next morning I viewed the ice from the foretop, and made a sketch of its appearance. All along the horizon, southwards, was a white line of ice, broken here and there by the outlines of bergs fast in the pack at various distances from the ship; some partly beyond the horizon, and with only their tops showing; others at the outer edge of the vast expanse of ice; others at all intermediate positions.

The field of ice appeared continuous, except just near its edge, where meandering openings, like rivers, led into it, sometimes for a mile or so. The edge of the pack was very irregular, projecting as it were in capes and promontories, with bays between, as on a broken coast-line. The fields of ice were made up of large fragments closely packed together. The pieces were not, however, much tilted or heaped up upon one another, as commonly occurs in packs.

Off the edge of the pack, extended serpentine bands of floating ice which drifted before the wind; they are termed "stream ice." We dredged within one of the streams. All the packs which we saw were similar to the one described.

Sometimes, the smaller floating masses of ice at the edge of the pack were covered with fresh snow. The parts of them projecting above water were frequently of very fantastic shapes. Some were like the antlers of deer, others like two pairs of antlers with three or four upstanding and branching horns, all born aloft by irregularly shaped submerged floats. The soft