

When we bore away, I had the intention of passing towards the assigned situation of the Aurora Isles, but I found the crew so much enfeebled by their constant exposure, while some of them were affected with incipient scurvy, that I concluded it was better to return to Orange Harbour as soon as possible. We encountered great numbers of ice-islands, of large size; but I shall defer speaking of their formation &c., until I relate my second trip to the Antarctic Circle, the following year, and shall only remark here, that they were similar in formation and appearance to those then seen.

We continued under easy sail, enveloped in fogs, and falling in repeatedly with icebergs close aboard, from which at times we escaped with difficulty.

On the 6th March the wind shifted to the northward, with snow. Great numbers of penguins, Cape pigeons, and whales, were around the vessel.

The 7th commenced with rain and snow. The wind was light and from the westward; it gradually hauled to the southwestward and blew fresh. While making all way to the northward, the fog lifted, and high land was reported within a short distance of us. A few moments more, and we should have been wrecked. It proved to be Elephant Island. We found from it that we had been set upwards of fifty miles to the eastward, in the last four days, by the current. We passed to leeward of it. The sea was too high to attempt a landing. In the afternoon it cleared, and from our observations, we found Cape Belsham, its eastern point, well placed. We passed between it and Cornwallis Island. The Seal Rocks were also seen and observed upon.

Elephant Island is high and of volcanic appearance; its valleys were filled with ice and snow. We tried the deep-sea temperature. At the surface it was found to be 36° , whilst at three hundred fathoms it was 33° .

We now stood to the northward, and until the 14th had continued bad weather, accompanied with heavy seas. On this day we made the land.

On the 16th we were off the Straits of Le Maire, where I again tried the deep-sea temperature, with a wire sounding-line, which parted at three hundred and forty fathoms, and we lost the apparatus. I then made a second experiment, with a line of rope four hundred fathoms in length. The temperature of the surface was 44° , of the water below, 37° . This was about sixty miles to the eastward of the place where I had sounded before, on the 15th February, when passing around Cape Horn in the Vincennes.