

therefore, to look for his rising again about the 8th of February next; our winter's night will thus comprehend ninety-six of your nights and days, of four and twenty hours together. Tedious, melancholy as this period might appear to us, accustomed to a very different distribution of the year and of time; no less true is it that what with necessary occupations connected with the expedition, what with voluntary employment, what with the amusements naturally suggested by our situation, this first half of our winter has passed away with unexpected velocity. So true is this that, it in some measure required a consultation of the almanack to persuade some, if not all of us, that we were already arrived at that point of our orbit round the sun, in which he is the farthest below our horizon. It was a subject of no little consideration, among the principal officers of the expedition, to devise methods of employing the men in some healthful and useful way, during a period in which the ordinary occupations of seamen could neither be required, nor indeed be practicable. Judge, then, with what satisfaction the commander learned, that the ships' companies secretly complained that they were so constantly employed by his orders as to have no time to attend to their own personal concerns. To this judicious arrangement and intermixture of easy labour and cheerful relaxation must, in a great degree, be ascribed the singularly healthy condition in which the crews of both ships were maintained, during our imprisonment.

At noon every day, when the atmosphere was clear, after the sun ceased to appear above the horizon, twilight was sensibly perceived; even on the shortest day we had light enough to take, for an hour or two, the exercise of walking on shore, or on the ice. The reflection of this light from the snow, joined to the occasional brightness of the moon, prevented us, even in the most tempestuous weather, from being involved in that blackness of darkness so frequent in more southern climates. By holding the book to the south at noon, in clear weather, one might read the print of a small pocket prayer-book. To prevent any encroachment on the regular order of discipline established by the commander of the expedition, great care was taken that the various periods fixed for rising and going to bed, for meals, occupation, exercise, amusement, &c. should be strictly adhered to, in the same manner as when the sun was visible. By a little practice the strangeness of some of these employments of the day, being discharged in what, to all intents and purposes, was night, was entirely effaced.

*Saturday* the 25th, being Christmas day, it was celebrated with all due solemnity. Divine service was performed in the morning on board both ships, and an addition was made to the usual allowance of fresh meat for the men. The officers had also their social