

ocean. The colour of these vast masses of ice is various, depending in part upon the direction of the incidental luminous rays, and in part upon the constitution of the bergs themselves; they not unfrequently appear as though formed of emerald or sapphire, and the colours produced by the refraction are frequently so beautiful, that they seem as though they were built of light, and mimicked the representations of oriental fable. It has been supposed that the iceberg is formed by the piling together of the fragments produced by the breaking up of the large fields of ice, but it is more commonly allowed that they are masses broken off from the enormous glaciers abounding on the coasts of Greenland and Spitzbergen. Some, however, may be produced by the consolidation of driven snow, and contain trees, which occasionally take fire, in consequence of the great friction to which they are exposed, presenting the singular appearance of a burning mountain of ice. The bergs are sometimes enveloped in a thick fog; and if a ship should come in contact with them, almost certain destruction must result from the collision. Very many of the vessels employed in the fisheries are every year lost, we are informed, by accidents of this kind.

Mr. Scoresby has given, in his "Arctic Regions," a very interesting sketch of the seven icebergs of Spitzbergen, from which we may select the most important facts. "I speak not here," he says, "of the islands of ice which are borne to southern climates on the bosom of the ocean, but of those prodigious lodgments of ice which occur in the valleys adjoining the coast of Spitzbergen and other polar countries, from which the floating icebergs seem to be derived. Where a chain of hills lies parallel to the line of the coast, and within a few miles distant of the seabeach, having lateral ridges jutting towards the sea, at intervals of a league or two, we have a most favourable situation for the formation of icebergs. Such is precisely the nature of the situation a little to the northward of Charles Island, where the conspicuous bodies of ice noticed by Martens, Phipps, and others, and known by the name of the seven icebergs, occur. Each of these occupies a deep valley, open towards the sea, formed by hills of about two thousand feet elevation on the sides, and terminated in the interior by a chain of mountains of perhaps three thousand to three thousand five hundred feet in height, which follows the line of coast. They are exactly of the