

these wonderful masses of ice; and the contrast between their glittering surfaces, and the dark monotonous gloom of the rocks and snow-clad peaks by which they are surrounded, presents the beholder with scenes of interest, even within the confines of the polar circle, where nature almost loses the spark of vitality, and struggles incessantly to free itself from the iron band of eternal frost.

WATER-SPOUTS.

Among the most interesting phenomena observed at sea, we may mention the formation of water-spouts. This curious and perplexing phenomenon is not to the present moment thoroughly understood; for it is still a matter of dispute among meteorologists, whether it is due to the agency of electricity, or to the mechanical action of whirlwinds. It is quite certain that water-spouts are commonly attended with electrical phenomena; but it cannot be determined, from the data in the hands of the philosopher, whether electricity is an effect or a cause, for it is equally certain that the spiral motion of the water must result from a gyratory motion of the air, which also may be an effect or a secondary cause.

Mr. Steward, speaking of the water-spouts seen by him in the Mediterranean, in the year 1701, says that they all consisted of a transparent tube. "It was observable of all of them, but chiefly of the large pillar, that towards the end it began to appear like a hollow canal, only black in the borders, but white in the middle; and, though at first it was altogether black and opaque, yet one could very distinctly perceive the seawater to fly up along the middle of this canal, as smoke does up a chimney, and that with great swiftmess, and a very perceptible motion; and then, soon after, the spout or canal burst in the middle, and disappeared little by little, the boiling up and the pillar-like form of the seawater continuing always the last, even for some time after the spout disappeared, and perhaps till the spout appeared again or reformed itself, which it commonly did in the same place as before, breaking and forming itself again several times in a quarter or half an hour."

Dr. Buchanan observed this phenomenon once or twice during a voyage to and from India. When his attention was first called to it, he observed a dark thick cloud which threw