

jects appear of much greater dimensions than they really possess. A fox assumes the proportions of a bear; low banks of ice soar into radiant mountains. The eyes seemingly rest on the horizon of lands which are never approached. Just as in the sandy desert of Sahara, the distances of real objects are apparently diminished; the navigator advances, and still advances, but never reaches his goal.

Another source of error is the mirage, which represents as suspended in air the image of remote objects, and in this wise originates the wildest, strangest scenes. Scoresby one day perceived in the sky the reversed representation of a vessel which he recognized as the *Fame*, commanded by his father; he afterwards discovered that it had been lying moored in a creek about ten leagues from the point where the mirage had sported with his imagination.

In approaching a field of ice or snow, we invariably catch sight of a belt of resplendent white immediately above the horizon: this is called the *ice-blink*; a phenomenon which reveals to us beforehand the character of the ice we are approaching.

The great distinction between the polar countries and the other regions of the globe, is their long day and long night. Describing an immense spiral around the horizon, the sun gradually mounts to the highest point of his course, or 30° ; then, in the same manner, it returns towards the horizon, and bids farewell to earth, slowly dying away in a gloomy and ghastly twilight. And, for six months, the Arctic wildernesses know it not.

When the navigator, says Captain Parry, finds himself buried for the first time in the silent shadows of the polar night, he cannot conquer an involuntary emotion of dread; he feels transported out of the sphere of ordinary existence. These deadly and sombre deserts seem like those uncreated voids which Milton has placed between the realms of life and death.

The very animals are affected by the melancholy which veils the face of nature. Under the influence of the almost perpetual gloominess Dr. Kane's Newfoundland dogs went mad, and died.

But if the sun for six months of the year deprives the circumpolar countries of the splendour of its fires, an imposing phenomenon frequently illuminates the long nights with dazzling radiance, as if Nature sought to compensate for the absence of the orb of day by the most impressive of all her optical wonders. The polar nights