

In the polar regions, the duration of daylight is about six months. Throughout this long interval the sun never ceases to shine ; and at midnight it is only a little lower in the sky than at noon. [The long days act like the long nights upon certain animals. An amusing anecdote, in illustration of this fact, is recorded by Lord Dufferin :—*

“I had observed for some days past,” he writes, “that the cock we had on board, as we proceeded north, and the nights became shorter,

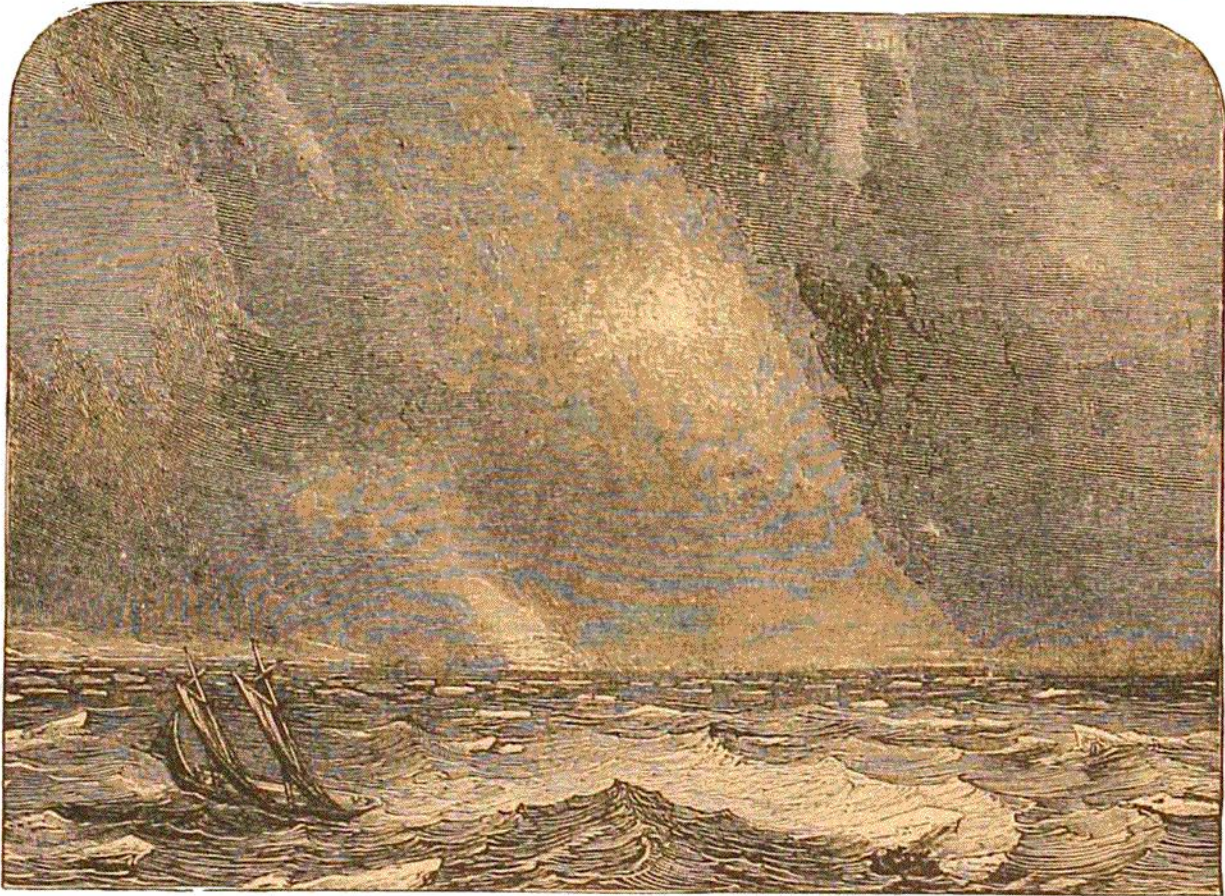


FIG. 233.—MIDNIGHT SUN AT SPITZBERGEN.

had become quite bewildered on the subject of that meteorological phenomenon, the Dawn of Day. In fact, I doubt whether he ever slept for more than five minutes at a stretch, without waking up in a state of nervous agitation lest it should be cock-crow. At last, when night ceased altogether, his constitution could no longer stand the shock. He crowed once or twice sarcastically, then went melancholy mad ; finally, taking a calenture, he cackled lowly (probably of green fields), and leaping overboard, drowned himself.”

To the same able and entertaining authority we are indebted for

* [Lord Dufferin, “Letters from High Latitudes,” p. 31.]