

shade. From their summits leaped headlong into the sea a host of rills, fed by the snows which melted under the sun of January, the summer of the Antarctic regions.

Sometimes the glaciers and icebergs were situated so close to one another as completely to obscure all view of the snow-mantled land; the eye then rested on two threatening walls of ice, whose sonorous echoes repeated again and again the orders of the officers and the shouts of the seamen. The corvette which followed the *Astrolabe* appeared of such insignificant dimensions, and her masts so frail, that the crew were seized with a panic of terror. For nearly an hour the ships sailed between vertical ramparts of ice, and then passed into a vast basin, formed on the one side by the chain of floating islands they had just traversed, and on the other by a coast between 3400 and 4000 feet in elevation, with a broken undulating surface, which was everywhere encrusted in a thick layer of ice, glittering in the sun like a world of crystal. D'Urville and his officers pushed forwards in their boats, through a maze of icebergs, until they reached a small islet opposite the shore. Here they landed, and hoisted the French flag, as formally taking possession of the new continent. Then they carried away with them some fragments, detached from the bare precipitous cliffs.

These rocks are composed of quartz and gneiss. The Southern continent, therefore, belongs to the primary strata, while the Arctic belongs, in the main, to the transition.

Dumont d'Urville traced the chart of Adelia Land for some thirty leagues. It is a dead and desolate country, without a sign of vegetation.

A little further north, the French navigator vaguely discerned, in the white lines of the horizon, another coast, which he named *Clarie Coast*, and whose existence was soon afterwards confirmed by the American expedition under Wilkes.\*

That skilful officer pushed to a great extent his researches in the

\* [It is now well known that Wilkes was mistaken in many of his so-called Antarctic discoveries, and that he laid down as land, in his maps, what was simply a bank of clouds.]