

condensation, a beautiful red colour, which is owing to some animalcules with a reddish shell (*carapace*) that live in sea-water under this condition, and die (a strange and curious fact !) as soon as the water becomes more highly condensed, or is diluted by the effect of rain.

Navigators frequently traverse long green, red, white, or yellow belts of water, whose tints are derived from certain microscopic crustacea, medusas, zoophytes, and marine plants. Such is the case with the "Sargasso Sea" of the Atlantic, which lies midway between the Azores, the Canaries, and the Cape de Verde islands, occupying a space equal in extent to the whole valley of the Mississippi. Another Sargasso Sea is found in the Indian Ocean ; and a third just outside the Antarctic Circle.*

It is to a similar cause we must refer the magnificent phenomenon of the phosphorescence of the sea, which delights and astonishes the voyager in the Indian Ocean, the Baltic, the Arabian Gulf, and elsewhere. In the Indian Ocean, Captain Kingman traversed a zone fully twenty-four miles in width which was so full of phosphorescent animalcules as to present, at nightfall, the appearance of an immense field of snow. These animals, nearly two inches long (15 centimètres), were formed of a transparent gelatinous matter. The reflection of the solar light upon this viscous substance gave to the surface of the water a milky appearance.

The phosphorescence of the sea is an imposing and magnificent spectacle. The ship, when cleaving "the liquid plain," seems to advance in the midst of golden and vermilion flames, which flash off from the keel like electric lightnings. Myriads of stars seem to float and play on the rippling tide ; they multiply—they unite—they swell into one vast field of fire. The scene is one which in its fantastic and almost weird character may well remind the spectator of the sight that dazzled the Ancient Mariner :—†

" They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

" Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire ;
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam ; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire."

* [See "The Mysteries of the Ocean," pp. 120–123, edited by the compiler of the present work, and published by Messrs. T. Nelson and Sons.]

† [Coleridge, "The Ancient Mariner," part iv.]