

In stormy weather the rolling billows are all lighted up, and swell and break in silver-flashing foam. Glittering bodies, which might be mistaken for fiery snakes, seem to pursue each other, to overtake each other, to disappear, and again to flash forth in living lustre!

Known from time immemorial, the phenomenon of the phosphorescence of the sea has been observed by all navigators. It is of frequent occurrence in certain regions of the ocean, especially in the

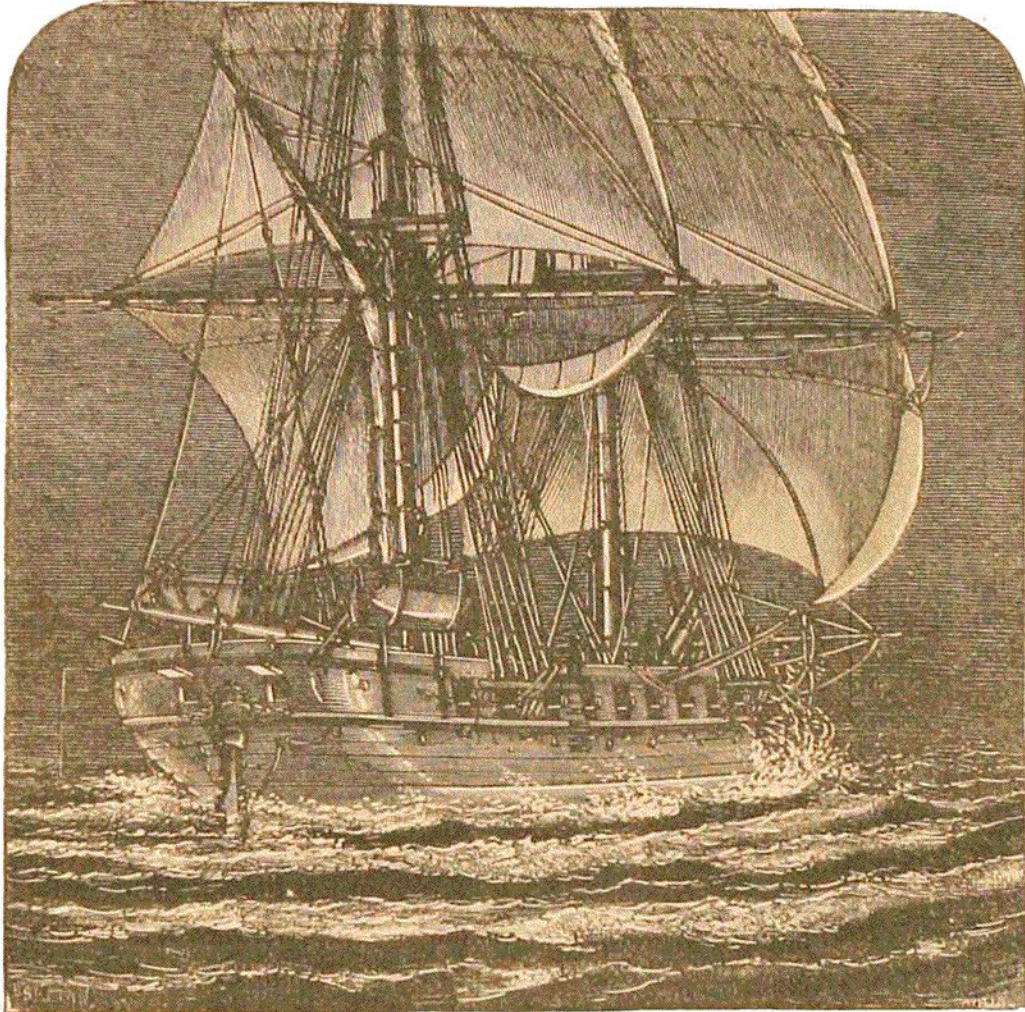


FIG. 208.—THE PHOSPHORESCENT SEA.

Indian Sea and under the Tropics. The radiance lights up the crest of the waves which, as they fall back, scatter it abroad in every direction; it clings also to the helm, and seems to escape from the waves tossed off the vessel's bow; it plays also about the weedy rock and billow-beaten reef. In the still, shadowless nights of the Tropic World the effect produced by this phenomenon is truly magical.

This phosphorescent lustre originates in the presence of a multitude