

nature of the regions they inhabit, we owe, however, to the perseverance and energy of Captain Hall. The task abandoned by us has been taken up on the Continent, but with very small success. A German expedition, equipped in 1868, has added little, if anything, to the knowledge we already possess of the Arctic shores and seas. A French expedition is projected, and the question has also been raised of a new English venture ; but it does not seem to have called forth the public support.]

This rapid survey we shall terminate with a few remarks upon a geological fact of great interest.

As far as we have been able to explore the nature of the soils of the countries adjacent to the North Pole, we have found them belonging, in the main, to the carboniferous formations. Such is the case, for instance, in Prince Patrick's Island and Melville Island. Under the crust of ice which covers them the coal-measures exist, with all the débris of fossil vegetables by which they are usually characterized. In the geological age, then, the Arctic regions of our earth must have been clothed with a rich and abundant vegetation, whose remains now constitute the carboniferous strata ; a fact which clearly proves that their climate must formerly have been one of burning heat, and fiercer than that which now prevails in the Tropic zone. What a prodigious fall in temperature our globe must have undergone since that remote geological epoch !

It is a strange contrast which is afforded by the presence of vast coal-beds under a dense crust of snow and ice! If human industry ever planted itself in these apparently inhospitable lands, it could draw from the earth the combustible needful to warm its habitations, and thus nature herself would furnish the means of combating the rigorous conditions of an Arctic climate.

THE ANTARCTIC POLE.

The Southern Pole is probably surrounded by an enormous belt of ice, 250 miles in diameter ; though there is every reason to believe