

As the forms assumed by the ice-bergs are the most fantastic, so are their hues the most exquisite, they are thus beautifully and accurately described by Mr. Tomlinson in his interesting and valuable little work entitled "The Frozen Stream,"* "A great source of beauty and interest in ice-bergs is the endless variety in their appearance and color caused by atmospheric and prismatic effects, and by the different distances at which they are seen. While from afar the whole mass may appear to be composed of white marble or alabaster, on a nearer view the same berg may have a fine green tint, verging on blue. By night, as well as by day, the icy walls glitter and sparkle with a silvery radiance, or with a vividness of color which the witnesses of their beauty are wholly at a loss to describe. Sometimes the ice is mixed with earth, gravel or sand, sometimes it is the bearer of huge rocks, and even of plants and animals, in each case varying in appearance, and gaining or losing some picturesque effect. The romantic appearance of ice-bergs is greatly heightened by the foaming and dashing of the waves into the curious holes and caverns by which many of them are pierced, but the impression conveyed by their beauty has usually such a large admixture of awe, that we do not wonder at Captain Cook's remark that they 'fill the mind with admiration and horror.'"

Brief mention has been made above of the dangers incident to navigation in the neighborhood of ice-bergs. Such enormous masses of ice as are the submerged portions of the berg, when once given an impetus, are borne along by the powerful submarine currents with astonishing rapidity, against heavy winds, surface currents, and even through extensive ice-fields. On they go, crashing through every obstacle with a quiet, steady, yet murderous deliberation, spreading devastation on all sides, until they either ground or emerge into the open sea, where they continue their voyage with a proud defiance begotten of a conscious superiority to their surroundings. In the polar seas the chief danger to ships is that of being driven by the wind on a berg in foggy or tempestuous weather, and many are the thrilling narratives of hairbreadth escapes from destruction to ship and crew recounted by the brave commanders of Arctic voyages of discovery, with which, doubtless, many of our readers are familiar. In the North Atlantic, however, where steamships preponderate, the danger consists in a probable colliding with ice-bergs in the dense fogs which prevail at the meeting place of the Arctic current and the Gulf stream. Here the ice-bergs sometimes congregate in large numbers, and sometimes, alas! notwithstanding the exercise of the most patient care and watchfulness on the part of captain and crew, they have been the doom of many a fair ship as well as of hundreds of human beings, who, all unconscious of the presence of danger, have been awakened by a fearful



AN ARCTIC SCENE.

crash from natural sleep, only in-time to behold the ghastly means of their destruction, and then to sink into the sleep of death from which naught may awaken them but the thrilling blast of the "last trump."

The bergs undergo many transformations during their brief existence in the neighborhood of the Gulf stream, in consequence of the action of its warm waters, which split them up into many portions previous to their final dissolution. This splitting of the ice-bergs, or foundering as it is sometimes called, is accompanied by a noise resembling the booming of distant artillery, a sound familiar enough to those who, like the writer, have sojourned in the region of ice-bergs. Herein consists an additional source of danger to the hardy mariner who may have the misfortune to be in the proximity of a berg which has been immersed in the warm seas of summer for any length of time. The berg which has expanded by the power of heat bursts with an awful suddenness, "as when porcelain cracks with sharp report, suddenly and unequally heated on the winter stove. Judge of the report when the porcelain of a great cliff cracks and falls, or when the entire berg is blasted asunder by the subtle internal fire of the summer sun! If you would hear thunder or whole broadsides and batteries of the heaviest ordnance, come to the ice-berg then."* The effect of a foundering berg is almost beyond the power of words to describe. The writer was a few years ago visiting a bay on the southern coast of Labrador, in which there were lying aground nine large ice-bergs. The time of the year was July. One of the most

* S. P. C. K., London.

* The Rev. L. L. Noble, quoted by Mr. Tomlinson, in the "The Frozen Stream."