

Towards the south the horizon is overspread by an arch of bright and splendid crimson light, tinging the ice and snow in the direction of its rays with a warm and beautiful colour; and the whole scene is illumed by the sun, which shines in these regions with a dazzling splendour unknown to the inhabitants of a more southern climate.

The winter scene presents most prominently the two ships in their winter quarters in Port Leopold, firmly beset by the ice, in a position nearly north and south; the housings of the decks and all upon them white with snow; the masts, tops, shrouds, stays, and every portion of the rigging that was left standing, on which a particle of snow could lodge, encrusted with a fleecy covering, presenting if not a very cheerful, at least a most picturesque and beautiful appearance. The ice here is a perfectly flat surface, being covered several feet in depth with snow, the harbour being only distinguishable from the land by the line of rocks by which it is surrounded, which, towards its entrance, rise to an immense height, forming two noble capes, the bare and precipitous sides of which present strata of primitive limestone, mostly horizontal, sometimes piled with great regularity, at others so confused as to make it evident that they mark some great convulsion of nature; their dark frowning masses singularly contrasting with the dazzling whiteness of the snow. Around in every direction the distance is one interminable waste, and desolate region of eternal winter, like unfinished portions of the creation from which man and his interests seem for ever banished; whose very barrenness is beautiful, but whose vast solitude conveys a feeling of total privation and utter desolation.

Towards the south the hemisphere is splendidly illuminated by that extraordinary and beautiful phenomenon, the *Aurora Borealis*,—vividly darting its brilliant corruscations towards the zenith, and tinging the snow with its pale mellow light. The moon, also, which shines with peculiar brightness, presents one of those remarkable phenomena so frequently seen in these regions. The remaining portions of the sky are clear, dark, and unclouded; studded with numberless stars of peculiar lustre, which, with the refraction from the snow, renders anything like a deep or positive gloom of rare occurrence.

Both views form striking and romantic scenes, most difficult to conceive, the awful grandeur and sublimity of which cannot be contemplated without intense interest and enthusiastic admiration.

The great and important problem of a north-west passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific, which has engaged the interests of the curious, and provoked the inquiries of the learned for many centuries, and has especially occupied the attention of the British Government, who, for a considerable period have zealously and steadily pursued the inquiry, seems as far from being solved as ever it was; but it has become quite clear, that discovery has already been pushed far beyond the limits of practical utility, and that for all purposes of commerce or traffic, the Arctic regions must remain a sealed book to the human race, until some vast change shall occur in the temperature and in the meteorological arrangement of the globe.