

eastern or leeward sides than on the western or weather coasts. In no case, however, does it extend far from the shore, nor has any been seen between the islands. The vicinity of the kelp should be carefully avoided. Between the two islands is a channel 12 miles in width perfectly free from danger, the depths in which vary from 90 to 130 fathoms.

The weather in the vicinity of the islands is seldom favourable, for owing to their height, their position in the open ocean far away from any larger tract of land, and the general prevalence of strong winds in their latitude, they are seldom free from fog or mist, and their summits are but rarely visible, whilst days may elapse before a landing can be effected on either of them. The prevalence of fog and mist not only renders the islands difficult to see, but also prevents the position of the vessel approaching them being ascertained with certainty, so that a course cannot be shaped to make them, or pass at a given distance on either side of them with any great degree of confidence, it is therefore advisable to avoid their neighbourhood unless some considerable object is to be gained by visiting them.

Viewed from the sea, the coast cliffs showed layers of compact and brecciated lavas of no great thickness, and were surmounted by an undulating country covered with herbage, which, as the height increases, passes into a barren mountain-cluster with many sharp and sometimes perfectly conical peaks. At the time of the Challenger's visit the highest of these were covered with snow, and for the greater part of the day enveloped in mist; the lower ones were mostly of a bright brick-red colour.

The snow commenced, as usual, on the slopes of Marion Island as patches lying unmelted in sheltered hollows, succeeded by a general thin coating or powdering over, through which the black rock showed out in all directions, and above this, again, on the highest cones and peaks, formed a continuous sheet of glistening white. The summits were enveloped in clouds, which lifted or dispersed in a partial manner from time to time. Amongst the patches of snow and below the snow line, the slopes of the island were covered with a coating of green, in striking contrast to the dark cliffs and red lower cones, which were almost destitute of verdure and had very little snow upon them. Here and there large patches of yellow showed out amidst the green, and were conspicuous even at some distance from the shore. It was found that these patches were formed of mosses. The mosses, indeed, occurring thus in patches, some dark, some nearly white, and others yellow, form the principal features in the vegetation as seen from a distance, showing out amongst the very uniform mixture of phanerogamic plants. The small rocky projections on the rough surfaces of the modern lava-flows, standing out dark above the verdure, have at a distance exactly the appearance of low bushes with dark foliage, and were at first believed to be such.

*Marion Island.*—At 6 A.M. sails were furled, and the ship proceeded under steam looking for a landing place and anchorage; the former was found at the northeast point