

knowledge of the southern coast, but all the western or windward side is still imperfectly explored, and is at present delineated on the charts from the rough sketches of the whaling vessels; so that, notwithstanding the lapse of a century since its discovery, Kerguelen Island is far from being thoroughly known, and the interior has been seldom visited, as the difficulty of travelling is so great, owing to the severity of the climate, the absence of trees or wood of any kind, the want of supplies, and the rugged nature of the ground, that long excursions inland are all but impracticable. The temperature, even in the summer season, is but a few degrees above freezing point on the coast, rendering it requisite for an exploring party to carry tents and blankets, besides fuel, in addition to their provisions; and these necessaries have to be transported over ground covered with a boggy vegetation, into which the leg sinks ankle, and frequently knee-deep, which renders the work of exploration very laborious, and reduces the distance that can be travelled over in a day very considerably, a walk of 10 miles in Kerguelen being fully equal to one of 25 or even 30 miles on hard ground.

The island appears to be the upper portion of a submerged plateau of considerable extent, for Sir James Ross found depths of 70 to 80 fathoms extending 100 miles north-east of Cape François, and the Challenger found depths of 50 to 60 fathoms 45 miles northeast of Cape Digby, and of 80 to 150 fathoms between its south coast and Heard Island, whilst the German frigate "Gazelle" sounded in 125 fathoms 40 miles west of Bligh's Cap, and in the same depth 80 miles north of Swain Island. It is therefore probable that Heard Island is the southern peak of the backbone of this submerged plateau, for a reference to the chart shows that the main watershed of Kerguelen Island, of which the culminating point is Mount Ross, 6120 feet above the level of the sea, runs in a N.W. by N. and S.E. by S. direction; and as the summit of Heard Island lies 260 miles S.E. by S. of Mount Ross, and comparatively shallow water has been obtained between them, it may be concluded that they both belong to the same system of mountains, although part of the range is submerged.

As before mentioned, the main watershed of the island runs in a N.W. by N. and S.E. by S. direction, and consequently the general direction of the ravines and water-courses is N.E. and S.W., the northeastern slope being more gentle than the southwestern, where the descent is sometimes very abrupt. The summit of the watershed is perpetually snow-clad, and from it glaciers descend on each side, occasionally reaching the sea. The most notable glaciers are those from Mount Richards, which fall on the east side into London River, and on the west side into Thunder Harbour,—a bay deriving its name from the noise made by the frequent fall of large pieces of ice over the cliffs into the sea. Owing to the almost perpetual cloud and mist covering the snow-clad summits of the main ridge of the island, the glaciers are seldom visible; they may, however, under favourable circumstances be seen and even visited, as an exploring party from the "Gazelle" reached the foot of