

On one occasion, as we were approaching the pack ice, some distant bergs were seen to assume a most intense black colour. This was due to their being thrown in shade by clouds passing between them and the sun, and the heightening of this effect by the contrast with brilliantly lighted up bergs around them. They looked like rocks of basalt.

On February 15th, a remarkable twilight effect was seen to the southward at about 10 P.M. A narrow band or line of dazzling bright yellow light shone out through a long narrow gap intervening between the lower edge of a densely dark cloud bank and the equally dark, almost black, horizon line. The horizon line was uneven, showing minute black projections or jags, due to hummocky pack ice.

The distant flat-topped icebergs showed out black and sharp, with rectangular outlines against the bright band, and some of their dark bodies joined the dark cloud line to the dark horizon line, bridging over the band of light. The whole effect was very curious, and drew all on deck to gaze at it.

We frequently enjoyed the sight of brilliant red sunsets. Then the bergs directly between the observer and the illuminated sky show a hard, almost black outline. Those lying on the horizon, right and left of the setting sun, reflect the light from their entire faces, or from those parts of their faces which lie at the necessary angle. Hence, bright red bergs, and also fantastic red forms, due to reflection from very uneven surfaces, appear on the horizon. Those that are nearer take a salmon tint.

In one remarkably brilliant sunset, the sun just before its lower limb reached the horizon was of a brilliant golden-yellow, and lit up the spars and shrouds of the ship with a dazzling light. Later on, the horizon became excessively dark. Above it was a streak of golden light, succeeded by a band of green sky, the two colours being separated by a narrow horizontal violet cloud. Above the green were dark clouds lighted up with bright crimson at the edges. The bergs reflected the crimson and yellow light, and assumed the brightest hues.

Bergs in the far distance, in ordinary daylight, when lighted up often have a pinkish tinge, and then look remarkably like land. The deception is very complete. No doubt Commodore Wilkes was deceived by it. Bergs often also, from the presence of deep shadows, have the appearance of having rocks upon them when they have not.

We entered the ice rather unexpectedly, on February 13th. I was on deck at 11.30 P.M. Two icebergs were then in sight ahead, only just visible in the dim foggy haze. They became gradually more plain, and then a berg was reported right ahead.