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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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ANTARCTIC SKY COLORS

Most people think of the polar lands and seas as monotonously white, but the narratives of exploration in high latitudes dwell upon the magnificence and variety of the colors, which result chiefly from the fact that the sun, during a great part of the year, does not rise very far above the horizon or sink very far below it. Thus the Arctic and the Antarctic get much more than their share of sunrise and sunset colors, as compared with the rest of the world. The sun has now set for the winter upon Commander Byrd and his companions in Antarctica, but they will still enjoy for some time to come the splendors of the sunset sky part of each clear day.

The beautiful coloring of the skies is described by Shackleton, who tells of a golden tint that lasted seven hours, and who records one night in the Weddell Sea when the sun, which did not set, traveled behind a bank of clouds and gave "a glow of crimson and gold to the southward, with delicate pale green reflections in the water of the lanes". Sometimes the color schemes are continuous for several days. Priestly describes such a feast of coloring seen once at Robertson Bay. Amundsen speaks of the splendor of the sunset in the Bay of Whales, saying: "No doubt the surroundings of this fairyland of blue and white do much to increase their beauty." Scott often dwells on this subject, and Dr. E.A. Wilson has left us some charming water color sketches of Antarctic skies.

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