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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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STRANGE LIGHTS AT SEA

Among the many recorded cases of unexplained luminous phenomena in the atmosphere one of the strangest was that observed from H. M. S. "Caroline" while cruising in the North China Sea in February, 1893. About 10 p. m. of the 24th, a cold, moonlight night, when the ship was 16 or 17 miles south of Quelpart Island, the officer of the watch reported some unusual lights between the vessel and Mount Auckland, a mountain 6,000 feet high. They appeared sometimes as a mass, and at other times as spread out in an irregular line. They were globular and resembled Chinese lanterns festooned between the lofty masts of a ship. The "Caroline" was proceeding eastward at seven knots an hour, but the lights maintained their same northerly bearing until lost sight of at midnight.

The following night, February 25, about the same time, 10 p.m., the ship having cleared Port Hamilton, was steering east, on the parallel of 34 degrees, when these curious lights were again observed on the same bearing, at an altitude of three or four degrees above the horizon. On this occasion there was no land in sight on a north bearing when the lights were first observed, but soon afterward a small islet was passed, which for a time eclipsed the lights. As the ship steamed on at a rate of seven knots, the lights maintained a constant bearing of about two degrees west of north, as if carried by some vessel traveling in the same direction and at the same speed. As on the previous night, they were sometimes massed together and sometimes spread apart. Through a telescope the globes appeared to be of a reddish color and to emit a thin smoke. They remained visible, always on the same bearing, until daybreak.

Capt. C. J. Norcock, R.N., in his report of this experience, says: "On arrival at Kobe I read in a daily paper that the 'unknown light of Japan' had, as was customary at this season when the weather is very cold, stormy and clear, been observed by fishermen in the Shimbara Gulf and Japanese waters."

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