

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
August 12, 1931

A Science Service Feature

? Why the Weather ?

Mailed August 5, 1931

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

A MYSTERY OF THE SEA

The recent revival of interest in the subject of ball lightning has directed attention to some of the many observations of other luminous phenomena of one sort or another recorded in scientific literature. Here is a strange tale set forth in a once well-known textbook by Dr. Dionysius Lardner:

"Major Sabine and Captain James Ross, in their first northern expedition, being in the Greenland seas during one of the dark nights of those regions, were called up by the officer of the deck to observe an extraordinary appearance. Ahead of the vessel, and lying precisely in her course, appeared a stationary light resting on the water and rising to a considerable elevation, every other part of the heavens and the horizon all around the ship being as black as pitch. As there was no known danger in this phenomenon, the course of the vessel was not changed. When the ship entered the region of this light, the officers and crew looking on with the liveliest interest, the whole vessel was illuminated; the most elevated parts of the masts and sails and the minutest parts of the rigging became visible. The extent of this luminous atmosphere might have been about 450 yards. When the bow of the ship emerged from it, it seemed as if the vessel were suddenly plunged in darkness. There was no gradual decrease of illumination. The ship was already at a considerable distance from the luminous region when it was again visible as a stationary light astern."

This phenomenon recalls the famous "fire ship" of Bay Chaleur, and is equally mysterious.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

SCIENCE SERVICE
21st and Constitution Ave.
Washington, D.C.