

tal I should have probably taken off my shoes. As it was I did not want to move, and even to speak would have seemed like a desecration. My friend and I, subdued and awed into speechlessness, sat by the wayside and gazed in silence at the "excellent glory." Away yonder in the extreme distance was its culminating point, and that which gave unity to the entire scene. To my apprehension there was but one thing to which it could be likened. I hope there was no irreverence in the thought, there was certainly none in the feeling—it suggested to me ideas of the throne of the eternal. There was no form or shape that could be seen, and no voice that could be heard, but one could hardly divest himself of the idea of a living presence in that throbbing, quivering, glowing mass of colourless flame—while on either side of it were what appeared to be thrones, only surpassed in splendour by that in the centre, to which these seemed to do homage.

Then, as if to make the vision of heaven complete, from under the throne there issued a mighty river, which seemed to symbolize the river of the water of life. This river, in its many windings, owing to the wonderful arrangement of light, seemed, as I have said, to stretch out into immeasurable distance, expanding as it flowed onward until it widened into a sea; and through the whole of its course studded and gemmed with islands composed of gold, diamonds and all manner of precious stones; while the headlands, capes and promontories along its shores were composed of the same material. What appeared to be a sea stretched away northward, between us and it, but not so as to separate between

us and the river, which lay almost at our feet, projected a point of land, but land transfigured and glorified, the outline of which was clear and distinct, the purple and blue cliffs becoming gradually bolder as the coast-line swept away to the eastward.

Then as to heighten the effect of this glorious scene by contrast—away to the north, or perhaps a point or two east of north—lay a frowning terrible mass of black vapour, a storm-cloud black as night, so black that it required but little imagination to conceive of it as the smoke of Gehenna; and from the centre of it arose three fiery volcanic peaks, as if *Ætna*, *Vesuvius* and *Stromboli* had all been brought together. The burning lava that bathed these peaks at first glowed with a brightness approaching to that of flame, but gradually faded into sullen red, and every moment became darker in color. But this was but the dark back-ground, from which the eye turned instinctively to the glory which I have been ineffectually attempting to describe—a glory which retained its superlative grandeur and awe-inspiring majesty until the central splendour, upon which the very being of all the other objects of beauty and sublimity, which if included, depended, had sunk beneath the horizon and the illusion was at an end; and one of the grandest pictures that the eye of man ever rested upon vanished into thin air. My friend and I pursued our journey silently for a time, being overwhelmed with the conviction that we had seen indescribable things, and above all that we had had such a vision of heaven as we should never have again so long as we remained on earth.