

again for the last fifty years up and down the Hudson I had a pretty good idea of its breadth. I looked for the land on its eastern shore ; but not a vestige of it remained. It was now broad daylight, and nothing but the wide waste of waters could be seen. I had become interested, not to say excited. The air was balmy, fresh and delicious, and with only a little imagination one could have smelled the odour of the salt sea. But while my interest was at its height, so far as it could be excited by this watery scene, something wonderful took place. A single thread of gold was shot through the blue so suddenly and instantaneously that I could not say whether it was from south to north, or from north to south. But there it was a single thread, only a thread, as fine as sewing silk, but it was clear and distinct.

I had no time to speculate, however, for the mighty shuttle was at work, and now another, another, and still another thread was shot, as by magic, through the azure web. And now these lines of gold became lines of fire, and began to glow with ineffable lustre. Nay, they seemed to become living things, and to exult and dance as they began to melt and mingle, and the whole quivering mass began to glow and send forth from its centre corruscations in every direction ; causing the very waters to have the appearance of burning like a furnace ; realizing to an extent that I had never witnessed but once before, the apocalyptic vision of a "sea of glass mingled with fire."

I need not describe what followed, as it does not belong to the phantasmagoria. The illusion at this point came to an end. From the quivering, dancing mass of flame at the centre of this scene of supernal splendour the upper edge of the sun, clearly defined, arose ; the valley of the

Hudson was seen to be full of fog, which however, no longer presented the appearance of a compact mass, but, ragged and broken, began to disappear ; and in but a few minutes the scene which had interested me so profoundly, had dissolved into thin air, or invisible vapour, though as I have said of the dark mountain covered with silver trees, as a vision of surpassing beauty it had entered into my dreams forever.

Another of these optical illusions, and the last that I shall mention in this article, is one that I have never attempted to describe, and now I have no hope of doing justice to it, though the impression of it remains as distinct in my mind as if it were at this moment actually before me. It occurred near Toronto, in a part of the country where there was nothing remarkable in the way of natural scenery to heighten its effect. It had been a day of rain, but the atmosphere was clearing up, and the sun was setting in supernal splendour. And one part of the illusion consisted in the apparent nearness of the celestial scene. Only the breadth of a field from where a friend and I sat in a buggy, in which we were driving, it began, and such was the marvellous perspective of the arrangement of its various parts, that it seemed to stretch out into infinitude.

It was a picture in which the beautiful and the sublime were so mingled that each of these seemed to heighten the effect of the other, and their combined effect was overwhelming. In presence of it, I have to confess, even my phlegmatic nature was kindled into ecstasy. I experienced something of the feeling which I imagine took possession of the patriarch, when he stood in presence of the burning bush in the desert, in which he recognized the revelation of the Divine presence. If I had been an Orien-