

was heard, " It is taken ; " instantly all rushed to the railing and anxiously peered down upon the waters ; slowly the mist arose and in its place appeared a smooth surface of hard blue ice, extending far down the river to Indian Point and up as far as the eye could reach. Under the cloud of mist nature had done the work, and in a few minutes had improvised a bridge out of the power of man to construct, a glorious crystal bridge, as wonderful as it was beautiful. The opposite shore, which up to within a few minutes was almost unattainable, had been, as it were, in a moment of time, brought into communication. Minute by minute the bridge was strengthening, the intensity of the cold thickened the ice, and in half an hour afterwards, a boy in a sleigh, drawn by a dog, ventured on its surface. As they progressed towards the opposite shore, a sound as of distant thunder rose from the river, for the ice was as a sounding board ; and even when the sleigh became but a speck, the rumbling sound continued, reverberating between the opposite highlands ; then followed, as it seemed to me foolhardy skaters, who, venturing on the brittle surface, sped on in sweeping circles, hither and thither ; then hundreds followed, and then the bridge presented the view of countless men luxuriating in the enjoyment of skating on virgin ice. It was barely more than an inch in thickness, and it appeared mad temerity to trust such fragility,