

out cause or without anything having transpired to bring this strange occurrence into relation with the things of everyday life. A fish-pond, a ditch, or any small body of water becomes colored, first green, then red; and if the water has been dried up by the sun, spots of blood remain everywhere. Or on the highest peaks of the Alps, in the region of eternal ice, where at length the last trace of life disappears in endless winter; or on an island beneath the polar skies which never knows the spring, suddenly the dazzling pureness of the snow vanishes; it becomes green, and the coloring appears all the livelier as the eye, in the uniform whiteness of all around, is less accustomed to the light play of colors; presently the color changes to red and appears at last to be rivalled in brilliancy only by the carmine. Or suddenly, in far-extending tracts, a lake, or even the sea, begins to glow with a purple shimmer in the bright sunshine; far as the eye can reach it sees a red surface; a few hours afterwards the sun becomes clouded, and the water is again clear; another day and it appears again in its bright mantle.

Such spectacles must ever have powerfully swayed the emotions of men. They did not harmonize with the regular round of observations which nature furnishes; they accordingly were attributed to the immediate influence of a higher power which stands over and beyond nature. In reality these phenomena are by no means so entirely isolated as one would suppose from the impression they made upon those peoples by whom they were so frequently observed. Very often victuals become covered with a white, green, or blue coating; very often there appears on walls, stones, or trees, a dark green or yellow color; very often the water of our ditches and ponds becomes a beautiful green. But no one is surprised if bread moulds; and green is so peculiar to water that we can scarcely separate the ideas. These colors could not, indeed, attract the attention; and, in fact, we find among the older writers scarcely an indication that they were ever observed, or at most deemed noteworthy, in earlier times. But what made the kindred red colors so