

tic Regions" several curious instances of unusual refraction, observed by him during his polar voyages. While sailing along the coast of Spitzbergen, with an easterly wind, he observed a singular transformation of the Foreland, or Charles's Island. There seemed to be a mountain in the form of a slender monument, and near it a prodigious and perfect arch, thrown over a valley, at least a league in breadth. This scene, however, did not last long, but was presently followed by the appearance of castles, spires, towers, and battlements, which changed their forms so rapidly, that the metamorphoses seemed as though they were the work of an occult agent. "Every object," says Mr. Scoresby, "between the north-east and southeast points of the compass, was more or less deformed by this peculiar refraction."

At other times, Mr. Scoresby observed similar results produced, and, from the whole of his observations, he deduces :

1. That the effects of unusual refraction occur in the evening or night after a clear day.

2. That they are most frequent on the commencement or approach of easterly winds.

3. That the mixture, near the surface of the land or sea, of two streams of air, having different temperatures, and the irregular deposition of imperfectly condensed vapour, are the causes of these phenomena.

Man is given to superstition ; and the unassisted senses being frequently incapable of giving accurate information as to the authenticity of the natural appearances by which he is surrounded, sometimes aid the innate propensity, and lead to erroneous conclusions. Yet all the sensations by which we become acquainted with material existence, are produced by external nature acting upon the organs of sense ; and we are consequently exposed to deception, either from the accidental construction of the organs, or the false impression conducted to them by the objects which act on them. Thus it is that the sensations produced by natural phenomena, uncorrected by a philosophical examination of causes, may encourage the superstitious feelings of our nature ; and in this way we may account for many of those opinions which are to be found among the illiterate in all nations.

We are not, however, on this account, to discard the testimony of our senses, but to receive it with care, if not with suspicion. The conditions under which the senses are acted