

in a uniform horizontal line. A cloud so moving, when first seen, will appear to be in contact with the distant horizon; and will thus necessarily, from its remote position, appear to be much smaller than in reality it is. During its advance towards us, the cloud will seem to rise into the sky, and to become gradually larger, till it is almost directly overhead. Continuing its progress, it will then seem again to descend from the zenith, and to lessen in size as gradually as it had before increased; till at last it vanishes in the distance, opposite to where it commenced its movement. Thus the same cloud, without deviating from its motion in a straight line, and retaining throughout the same size and figure, will, by optical delusion, seem continually to vary in magnitude. The line of its motion also, instead of being straight, will appear to be a curve having its vertex directly above us, and its extremes boundless in opposite points of the horizon. We have given the most simple case that can be supposed. But clouds, as they exist in nature, are unceasingly varying in shape, in magnitude, in direction, and in velocity; so that to form a just estimate of their figure and direction, or to unravel their motions, becomes absolutely impossible.

After what has been stated, it will be superfluous to dwell upon the *uses* of clouds in the economy of nature; we shall therefore briefly