

glory that met our eyes. The glowing fire-masses had divided into glistening, many-colored bands, which were writhing and twisting across the sky both in the south and north. The rays sparkled with the purest, most crystalline rainbow colors, chiefly violet-red or carmine and the clearest green. Most frequently the rays of the arch were red at the ends, and changed higher up into sparkling green, which quite at the top turned darker and went over into blue or violet before disappearing in the blue of the sky; or the rays in one and the same arch might change from clear red to clear green, coming and going as if driven by a storm. It was an endless phantasmagoria of sparkling color, surpassing anything that one can dream. Sometimes the spectacle reached such a climax that one's breath was taken away; one felt that now something extraordinary must happen—at the very least the sky must fall. But as one stands in breathless expectation, down the whole thing trips, as if in a few quick, light scale-runs, into bare nothingness. There is something most undramatic about such a *dénouement*, but it is all done with such confident assurance that one cannot take it amiss; one feels one's self in the presence of a master who has the complete command of his instrument. With a single stroke of the bow he descends lightly and elegantly from the height of passion into quiet, every-day strains, only with a few more strokes to work himself up into passion again. It seems as if he were trying to mock, to tease us. When we are on