



The Ocean, Atmosphere, and Life Being the Second Series of a Descriptive History of the Life of the Globe

Elisee Reclus



This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can usually download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1874 edition. Excerpt: ...colder, the haze of drops will increase in volume. There are few sights which exceed in beauty that which is presented by a fine calm summers afternoon, with clouds alternately formed and dissolved in the azure of the sky. We first see a simple flake of vapor similar to a white bird floating in space but this flake grows, spreads, and is surrounded by undecided streamers it is now a cloud still semitransparent, allowing us to see the blue of the air through its rifts then it is a real cloud developing its folds over the arch of the heavens. But let us look a few instants afterward, and already the cloud is destroyed perhaps it has divided into numerous fragments, which, becoming smaller and smaller, are torn, scattered, melt, and disappear we think we see them still, but it is an illusion, for the sky has resumed its blue. At other times, on the contrary, the first cloud that we have seen rise does not remain isolated new masses of vapor are condensed around it, and the space is gradually filled with floating clouds, which approach one another, join, and agglomerate and soon the sky, which seemed entirely free from vapor, presents in every part a thick stratum of clouds formed on the spot by the chilling of the atmosphere, and the condensation of the particles of moisture. The height at which the clouds are formed and sustained varies in every season and country, according to the temperature and direction of the winds. There are some, especially among the clouds chased by tempests, which touch the tops of buildings or trees others float at many hundred yards of elevation others, again, are level with the highest points of mountains, and all the aeronauts who have passed the summits of the great peaks in their ascents have...

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