

through Mirror Lake—the very soul of transparency. It reflects grass, trees, rocks, mountain and sky with such perfect and startling vividness, that one cannot believe them images and shadows. One fancies the world turned upside down, and shrinks back from the lake lest one should tumble over the edge into the inverted dome of blue sky.

On the Middle or main Fork is Vernal fall, difficult of access. Leaving our horses three miles from the hotel, we climbed for two weary hours along dizzy shelves, and up sharp rocks, where the trail rises one thousand feet to the mile; pine woods all around us; at our left and far below, the river chafing and roaring in its stony bed. Then we stood at the foot of Vernal fall. Bridal Vail and Yosemite are on little lateral creeks; Vernal is the full, swelling torrent of the Merced. Those creep softly and slowly down as if in pain and hesitation. This rushes eagerly over gloomy brown rocks; then leaps headlong for more than three hundred feet, roaring like a miniature Niagara.

Rainbows of dazzling brightness shine at its base. Others of the party reported many; my own eyes, defective as to colours, beheld only two. But afterwards when alone, I saw what to Hebrew prophet had been a vision of heaven, or the visible presence of the Almighty. It was the round rainbow—the complete circle. In the afternoon sun I stood upon a rock a hundred feet from the base of the fall, and nearly on a level with it. There were two brilliant rainbows of usual form—the crescent,