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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SUNBEAMS AND SHADOWS

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A haze of water or dust in the air makes visible the alternating sunbeams and cloud shadows, radiating like the spokes of a wheel, that even meteorologists call "the sun drawing water," though no such process is really involved. Small-scale versions of these celestial beams and shadows are seen in the misty atmosphere of a forest when the sunlight sifts through the foliage, as well as in buildings into which sunlight enters through a restricted number of small openings, as in the well-known case of the Grand Central Station in New York City.

Distant mountains and clouds along or below the horizon cast shadows that form fan-like sheafs of gray or dark blue beams crossing the pink of the evening sky after sunset or the morning sky before sunrise. These "crepuscular rays" are really parallel, their apparent divergence being due to perspective. The student of Nature will be interested in noting how far the rays can be traced, and in looking for a corresponding sheaf of beams -- the "antirepuscular rays" -- that sometimes converge to a point on the horizon directly opposite the position of the sun. Very rarely, the rays completely overarch the heavens from east to west.

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