

that height, at all times of the year, to the freezing point. It is not probable, that this great difference of heat simply proceeds from the difference of the earth ; and of that we must be fully convinced, if we consider, that at the mouth of the volcanos, where the earth is hotter than in any other part on the surface of the globe, the air is nearly as cold as on other mountains of the same height.

It may then be supposed that the atoms of light, though very hot at the moment of quitting the sun, are greatly cooled during the seven minutes and a half in which they pass from that body to the earth ; and this in fact would be the case if they were detached ; but, as they almost immediately succeed each other, and are the more confined as they are nearer the place of their origin, the heat lost by each atom falls on the neighbouring ones ; and this reciprocal communication supports the general heat of light a longer time ; and as their constant direction is in divergent rays, their distance from each other increases according to the space they run over ; and as the heat which flies from each atom, as a centre, diminishes also in the same ratio, it follows, that the light of the solar rays, decreasing in an inverted ratio from the square of the distance,