

Down to the graves of the dead,  
 Down through chasms and gulfs profound,  
 To the dreary fountain-head  
 Of lakes and rivers underground ;  
 And sees them, when the rain is done,  
 On the bridge of colours seven  
 Climbing up once more to heaven,  
 Opposite the setting sun.

“ Thus the Sun,  
 With vision clear,  
 Sees forms appear and disappear,  
 In the perpetual round of strange,  
 Mysterious change  
 From birth to death, from death to birth ;  
 From earth to heaven, from heaven to earth.” ]

The waters which are condensed in the bosom of the atmosphere, and which descend upon the earth in the shape of rain, are, chemically speaking, almost pure. They are named *fresh waters*, in opposition to the *salt waters* of ocean.

[Rain is a capricious phenomenon, which it seems very difficult to fetter with any general laws. In certain parts of the globe, which are known as Rainless Regions, it seldom or never falls : such is the case in the valley of the Colorado and Columbia, in North America ; on the Peruvian coast of South America ; in the Sahara Desert of Africa ; and the Desert of the Great Gobi, in Asia. In other places, as in Patagonia, it rains almost daily.

The quantities descending even in the more temperate climates are very irregular, and differ in successive years. They differ also at places situated within a comparatively short distance. Thus, in England, a rainfall of an inch in one day is considered very heavy. But in the Scotch Highlands it will often exceed three inches. On the 5th of December 1861, 12½ inches fell at Portree, in the island of Skye, in thirteen hours. On the 27th of November 1845, at Scathwaite, in Cumberland, 6.62 inches fell.

The heaviest rainfall is, of course, found in tropical countries, but undergoes considerable modification from local causes, such as the contiguity or absence of mountains, forests, swamps, or great lakes. The maximum for the whole world is met with on the Khasia Hills,