

chambers of the future—ideas reserved in the all-producing mind of Omniscience. Food for them there was none. The atmosphere was a noxious poison, charged with all the carbon which now exists in the form of modern vegetation and beds of mineral coal. Denizens of the sea had for ages strewn its bottom with the ruins of their workmanship—mountains of coral masonry had been reared by the little polyp architect, but in all the murky air which floated over the land and sea was not one motion of an animated being—not a voice—no song of bird, or hum of insect's wing to break the dread, eternal silence. The surges broke upon the beach, the tempest gathered in the thickening air, but no beast hurried to the sheltering cave; the storm burst upon the bald and desolate cliff, but no fluttering wing sought protection from its fury.

The period had now arrived, however, when this verdureless and voiceless scene was to be clothed and animated. Now was perhaps the most important epoch in the whole physical history of our planet. The forces of nature were now to be called to their grandest exercise. The laws of chemistry were summoned to an operation miraculously beneficent and providential. Organic force now girded itself for the production of new and higher forms of animalization, and for the display of the earliest and richest exuberance of the vegetable kingdom.

The series of animate existences began with the proto-zoön, and had been carried through long progressive stages to the highest types which make their home in the water and respire that element. Man, the far-off consummation of all these improvements, was to be a vastly superior being; but the next step in the direction of this consummation must be the introduction of an air-breathing animal. In the existing condition of the world no air-breathing animal could survive, and Nature was called upon to