

and so on: describing, or trying to describe, the horrors of that desolation which would ensue. They are assembled and piled on one another in this powerful poem with the hand of a master of the horrible; and in the end everybody goes mad, fights with everybody else, and dies of starvation.

(2.) But there would not be time for fighting or starvation. In three days from the extinction of the sun there would, in all probability, not be a vestige of animal or vegetable life on the globe; unless it were among deep-sea fishes and the subterranean inhabitants of the great limestone caves. The first forty-eight hours would suffice to precipitate every atom of moisture from the air in deluges of rain and piles of snow, and from that moment would set in a universal frost such as Siberia or the highest peak of the Himalayas never felt—a temperature of between two and three hundred degrees below the zero of our thermometers. This is no fanciful guess-work. Professor Tyndall has quite recently shown that it is entirely to the moisture existing in the air that our atmosphere owes its power of confining, and cherishing as it were the heat which is always endeavouring to radiate away from the earth's surface into space. Pure *air* is *perfectly* transparent to terrestrial heat—so that but for the moisture present in the atmosphere, every night would place the earth's surface as it were in contact with that intense cold which we are certain exists in empty space: a degree of cold which from several different and quite independent lines of inquiry we are sure is not less than 230 degrees of Fah.