

continuous and crossed by dark lines. He concluded that there was vapor of sodium in the atmosphere of the sun, and that it absorbed the light represented by those two lines and left that part of the spectrum dark. He and others have since compared the bright lines given by most of our elements with the dark lines in the solar spectrum, and sixteen of them have been found to exist in the sun's atmosphere. The lines of iron are especially numerous and distinct, 450 of them having been recognized. Who has sufficient imagination to conceive of an atmosphere in which oxygen and nitrogen are not found, but which is principally made up of iron, copper, zinc, and other metals, with hydrogen floating on top? Who can represent to himself a climate where one day a rain of molten iron may hiss down white hot from a sky of metal, and next day a fearful shower of melted copper? Dante's *Inferno* or Milton's *Paradise Lost* contains no picture of terrors which can even faintly image the state of affairs in such a region; and yet out of this huge, seething, flaming globe, wherein the elements are put to torture in a furnace a thousandfold hotter than any furnace on earth—out of this centre, whose dreadfulness is only dimly shadowed by the greatest poet's vision of hell, spring the mild and beneficent rays of light and heat, without which our world and its sister planets would revolve in darkness and death for ever. Byron's wild dream of darkness would come true.

We cannot forbear giving a few lines of that poem :

“I had a dream which was not all a dream :
The bright sun was extinguished, and the stars
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless and pathless ; and the icy earth
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air.
Morn came and went and came, and brought no day ;
And men forgot their passions in the dread
Of this their desolation ; and all hearts
Were chilled into a selfish prayer for light.”

Then follows a fearful description of what passed till all life was dead and