

he had in hand. Soft, deep, damp soils, and hot steaming skies, brought forth herbs and trees with a luxuriance that baffles our imagination, now that it has passed away from the senses; these were deposited in layers along broad valleys, covered over, hot-pressed and caked into coal, that it might keep till it should be required as fuel for the coming man. Now, we have nothing more to do when we wish to mend our fire, than to go down to the cellar for coals: at least we send the colliers down.—Although cats and monkeys like well enough to warm themselves at one of our fires when they find it, no species of animal except the human has sufficient skill to light a fire. Here you have amazing complication and exactitude of plan. When the fuel was stratifying and crystallizing and caking, man was designed and promised: the coal measures promised him. If he had not come; or come other than he is, the promise would have been false and the preparation abortive. For man these stores were provided, because he only can use them: but these stores were accumulated at a period when man did not exist. The only rational account of the matter is:—Our Father in heaven provided warmth for his children before he brought them home.

Here without noticing at all the processes by which light is distributed, we must draw our sketches to a close. You might profitably and pleasantly occupy many evenings in studying the physical geography of the earth and the sea. The world is fearfully and wonderfully made.—The inhabitant is guilty of ingratitude to the Architect of all, if he fail to observe and admire the structure, the furniture, and the decorations of his dwelling. Some months ago as I sat in a railway carriage at a junction of the Scottish Central, waiting for a converging train, I overheard the conversation of two porters employed on the line. One of them, according to his own account a most worthy but unappreciated man, summed up his complaint against men and things in general with these words:—"Well this is the queerest world ever I saw." Rightly spoke, but wrongly thought, the ill-used porter of the Scottish Central Railway! In another sense than the querulous labourer intended, it is the queerest world that I have any of us ever saw; and the queerest thing,

about it is its chief inhabitant. Considering his ignorance, and improvidence, and quarrelsomeness, it is a wonder that the Great Proprietor permits him to run his lease. The house and furniture are perfect; all that is wanted is an industrious and contented tenant.

Although Adam's family count now some ten or eleven hundred millions of men and women, the lodgings provided for them are still greatly too large. Like a prudent couple who have married early, the family at first left portions of the house unoccupied, that they might afterwards gradually take possession of it room by room. It would have been very awkward if the whole house had been occupied at an early period of the family history; for there is no other world conveniently near to absorb the surplus.

The rapid outspread of the race to take possession of the unoccupied apartments of the dwelling, is one of the characteristic features of the present age. When the fulness of time arrives, the world will probably be found full of men. This consummation approaches in our day at a greatly accelerated speed. It is instructive, and sometimes also amusing, to see the machinery for spreading men over the world at work. As a general rule, it requires a considerable force to reduce human beings to leave the thickly peopled places of the Earth and settle in its solitudes: the force applied is sometimes a drawing, and sometimes a driving, and sometimes both together. In regard to the power which impels them forward, there is some analogy between asses and men. I have seen a pair of pictures which, by way of parable, represented the two principal propelling forces in action as applied to an ass. In one picture a brace of boys were belabouring a loaded donkey on the hinder parts with a stout stick, but all in vain, for the poor brute has evidently made up his mind that it is better on the whole to bear the blows than trudge to market with his burden: consequently he stands stock still in the mud. In the other an old woman is comfortably seated on her donkey's back, above a couple of panniers stuffed with vegetables; she is armed with a long slender pole like a fishing-rod; but in this case it has neither a fly at the one end nor a fool at the other. A fine fresh carrot by way of bait attached to the front of the pole, the cunning angler