

CHAPTER XI. -The coming Race

Chapter XI of "The Coming Race" delves into the narrator's fascination and confusion regarding the habitability of subterranean regions, which seemingly contradict established scientific beliefs about the relationship between depth beneath the earth's surface and temperature. Traditionally, it is believed that the deeper one goes towards the earth's core, the hotter it becomes, with a general assertion of increasing heat at a rate of a degree for every foot, starting from fifty feet below the surface. However, the narrator discovers that the underground world he explores, although closer to the surface in higher regions, maintains a temperate climate akin to the south of France or Italy, even in its deeper valleys and ravines—contrary to what would be expected based on general scientific consensus.

This discrepancy between expected and observed subterranean temperatures, especially in realms so deep that they should, theoretically, only be bearable to creatures like salamanders, is inexplicable to the narrator. The native inhabitants, led by the character Zee, offer some insights, suggesting that the earth's interior's extreme porousness, vast cavities, and ability to generate air currents and evaporate heat might contribute to the milder climates observed. Yet, even these explanations fall short of completely demystifying the phenomenon.

Zee concedes that there exists a depth at which the heat becomes intolerable for life as known to the Vril-ya, their advanced subterranean society. Still, Vril-ya philosophers are convinced that life, both sentient and intellectual, thrives even in those extreme conditions. This belief is rooted in a fundamental principle that wherever creation exists, it is meant to be inhabited, indicating a theological or philosophical notion that the universe is purposefully filled with life by a benevolent creator. The chapter, thus, juxtaposes scientific curiosity and mysticism, encapsulating the narrator's ongoing quest to understand the complex, and often paradoxical, nature of the world beneath the earth's surface.