



*Another enormous crab was standing just behind me.*

now, the enormous red sun covered almost a tenth of the darkening sky.

'Then I stopped again and the hundreds of crabs had disappeared. Now the red beach, except for its green plants, seemed lifeless. A strong cold attacked me and snow fell from time to time. There was ice along the edge of the sea, with large pieces further out, but most of that salt ocean – all bloody under the sky – was still unfrozen.

'I looked around me to see if any animals were still alive, but I saw nothing moving, on the land or in the sky or sea. A low island of sand had appeared in the sea and the water had moved back from the beach. I thought I saw a black object moving around on this, but it stopped moving when I looked at it, and I decided that it was just a rock. The stars in the sky were very bright.

'Suddenly I noticed that the shape of the sun in the west had changed and that something was moving into its circle. For a minute, perhaps, I stared in shock at this and then I realised that either the moon or Mercury was passing across the sun.

'It became darker and darker, a cold wind began to blow from the east and the snow fell more and more heavily. Except for these lifeless sounds the world was silent. Silent? It would be hard to describe the quietness of it all. All the everyday sounds of people, and of sheep, birds and insects – all that had ended. As the darkness grew, the snow fell more heavily and it turned colder. The soft wind grew stronger. In another moment only the pale stars could be seen. Everything else was darkness. The sky was completely black.

'This great darkness was horrible to me. I shook, and began to feel very sick. Then, like a red-hot curve in the sky, the edge of the sun appeared. I got off the machine to recover. I felt unable to face the return journey. As I stood there, I saw again the moving thing on the island – there was no mistake now that it