sat on them, have breastplates of fire-colour, and hyacinth, and  
brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of  
lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire, and smoke, and brimstone. 18. By these three plagues was the third of men killed,  
by the fire and the smoke, and the brimstone that proceeded out  
of their mouths.”  
  
 The riders and horses have breastplates, not of iron  
as usual, nor is the material specified; but they are of  
three colours: fire-coloured, dark blue, and yellow. Out  
of the horses’ mouths issue “fire,” answering to the first  
colour; “smoke,” answering to the dark blue or  
hyacinth colour; and “brimstone,” corresponding to  
the sulphur colour of the breastplates.  
 The forms of the horses are terrible. Their heads are  
not the usual horses’ heads: they are of the shape of the  
devouring lion. The horse’s mouth has not a wide opening: the lion’s is of a mighty span. But these lion-horses seek not to take flesh into their mouths, but  
breathe fumes of death from them. That is the main  
instrument of destruction used.  
 “But who can believe in such creatures? Who ever  
saw anything resembling them?” True it is, that we  
have no such monsters on earth, no such spirit-riders.  
They are “reserved for the day of battle and war.”  
But they who can believe that all things are possible  
with the Creator, will give Him credit, when He tells  
us of secret stores and creatures of wrath treasured for  
more matured and open wickedness than the earth has  
yet displayed.  
 The riders are not said to carry any weapons; they  
have only the defensive armour of breastplates. It is  
the *horses* that kill; and they slay, not by any of their  
members, but by their fiery sulphurous breath. They  
slay, not as the lion, by claws and by fangs; but by  
stifling and burning their victim: a way unknown  
to any creature of earth. What creatures of flesh