

But according to the American, Immanuel Velikovsky, worlds have already collided and we are still here. The Scandinavian Bergquist also wrote an ingenious account of something bumping into the earth and bouncing off again to stand pat a little distance away and become the real Earth Satellite One—*The Moon Puzzle* he called it.

By internal combustion. Volcanic eruptions, including Kratoa, were just hiccoughs, and when things really get hot at the centre then watch it.

By flood. The polar caps are gradually melting but the process was bound to quicken up, and perhaps the only bit of dry land left would be the Yangtze valley—where, oddly enough, we all began, according to certain anthropologists.

These are the 'spectaculars'—there are other and more humiliating prospects such as earth casually slipping out of its orbit and disappearing into some nebulous sun.

Imagining the end of the world is one thing; imagining the end of life is another and easier task.

By dying out—of starvation, of overeating, of disease, of sheer reckless healthiness.

By over-population—this one comes up regularly. The fellow in the corner seat reckons there are too many of us. 'All the young men ought to be sent to Australia,' is his favourite conclusion. But it finds support higher up the intellectual scale too. For instance, a few weeks ago Sir Charles Galton Darwin said at a lecture in Cambridge entitled 'The Problems of World Population': 'I have been forced to conclude that it is a problem of great importance, and it is absolutely urgent that considerations should not be postponed.' He then made what seems to us an astonishing assertion—that world population had been constant for about twenty centuries, but during the last century it had been increased by several 'explosions.' Now if he had said that the population had been increasing nicely,

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but some 'explosions' were being planned which would take care of things generally on the population front, then he might have approached reality. Sir Charles gloomily prophesied that there would be standing room only in the world unless something was done to check the increases in the number of people being born—round about 90,000 a day.

To come back to the question—it's more of a conundrum—how will life end? it occurred to us lately that man might eventually be suffocated by his own industrial leavings. Pollution of rivers and lakes has now gone too far to stop; pollution of the ocean will take a little time to complete; utter pollution of the air (because there is plenty where that came from) may be impossible, but it gets pretty thick at times. Burying atomic waste may poison the ground. But it's the muck left lying around on top which drives us mad. We recall a cartoon we saw in the *Saturday Evening Post* some time ago—the caption read: 'View of the Grand Canyon showing some of the cans.' These trippers get everywhere. All the same, there are ideas here for your sf story.

H. J.