

any bounds to the further extension of that principle of systematic subordination which we have already traced to a certain extent; and which combines in its fullest conception a unity of plan and singleness of result with an unlimited multiplicity of subordinated individuals, groups, systems, and families of systems. Thus it by no means follows that all those objects which stand classed under the general designation of "nebulæ" or "clusters of stars," and of which the number already known amounts to upwards of five thousand, are objects (looked upon from this point of view) *of the same order*. Among those dim and mysterious existences, which only a practised eye, aided by a powerful telescope, can pronounce to be *something different from* minute stars, may, for anything we can prove to the contrary, be included *systems of a higher order* than that which comprehends all *our* nebulæ (properly such) reduced by immensity of distance to the very last limit of visibility. And this conception, we may remark, affords something like a reasonable answer to those who have assumed an *imperfect transparency* of the celestial spaces, on the ground that, but for some such cause, the whole celestial vault ought to blaze with solar splendour, seeing that in no direction of the visual ray, if continued far enough, would it fail to meet with a star. Such would no doubt be the case were all space occupied by stars disseminated through it uniformly, *i.e.*, so that the same number of stars should in every region be comprised in the same space. But no such consequence would follow were the law of sidereal distribution such as we have been here describing: a