

with that of the earth? And what is the substance of the filmy comet that sweeps with such indecent haste through the ranks of the dignified sisterhood of planets? In its dazzling proximity to the sun at perihelion, it can only exist as a fiery vapor, like the substance it seems to be. And if we gaze across the cold and starless interval which separates our firmament of stars from its nearest neighbors, there we may witness a universe in its formative stage. There, indeed, are firmaments so remote that the eye of the telescope is strained in the attempt to descry the component stars; but nearer to our domestic earth than these are the materials of firmaments which remain "rudis indigestaque moles"—the "semina rerum"—the primordial igneous vapor from which worlds are destined to be formed in some far distant future age—so distant, probably, that the career of terrestrial things will first have closed, and mankind will have been ushered into another state of being. Here are specimen creations, postponed to our age in the lapse of eternity, to illustrate before our eyes the infancy of the firmament which is garnished by the nightly splendors of Sirius and Orion. As the gar-pike among animal creations has been perpetuated to our day, to recite the tale of his noble ancestry, so the *Pentacrinus* of the Caribbean still lives to declare the history of pre-Adamite creatures, whose mausoleum is a continent, and the ruins of whose handiwork have risen in mountain piles.

In our attempt to depict the history of this immensity of flame, we draw upon the splendid deductions of Laplace, endorsed by the genius of the elder Herschel, and first foreshadowed by the genius of Leibnitz and Kant. There is every reason to believe that the radiation of heat, which is taking place from the earth and all the planets as well as the sun himself in our own day, is a process which began on the morning of the creation of matter. The rapid loss