

nearly in one plane, and then in nearly circular orbits. We are aware that, according to the discoveries, or rather perhaps to the guesses, of some later analysts, the three last circumstances might be dispensed with; and yet, notwithstanding, the planetary system, its errors still remaining periodical, would in virtue of the single law oscillate around a mean state that should be indestructible and everlasting. Should this come to be a conclusively settled doctrine in the science, it will extenuate, we admit, the argument for a designing cause in the formation of the planetarium. But it will not annihilate that argument—for there do remain certain palpable utilities in the dispositions as well as laws of the planetary system, acknowledged by all the astronomers; such as the vastly superior weight and quantity of matter accumulated in its centre, and the local establishment there of that great fountain of light and heat from which the surrounding worlds receive throughout the whole of their course an equable dispensation. What a mal-adjustment would it have been, had the luminous and the opaque matter changed places in the firmament; or the planets, by the eccentricity of their orbits, been subject to such vicissitudes of temperature as would certainly, in our own at least, have entailed destruction both on the animal and vegetable kingdoms!

11. But whatever defect or doubtfulness of evidence there may be in the mechanism of the