

impression of his own insignificance. The vault of the sky arched at a vast and unknown distance over our heads; the stars, apparently infinite in number, each keeping its appointed place and course, and seeming to belong to a wide system of things which has no relation to the earth; while man is but one among many millions of the earth's inhabitants;—all this makes the contemplative spectator feel how exceedingly small a portion of the universe he is; how little he must be, in the eyes of an intelligence which can embrace the whole. Every person, in every age and country, will recognize as irresistibly natural the train of thought expressed by the Hebrew psalmist: “when I consider the heavens the work of thy hands—the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained—Lord what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou regardest him?”

If this be the feeling of the untaught person, when he contemplates the aspect of the skies, such as they offer themselves to a casual and unassisted glance, the impression must needs be incalculably augmented, when we look at the universe with the aid of astronomical discovery and theory. We then find, that a few of the shining points which we see scattered on the face of the sky in such profusion, appear to be of the same nature as the earth, and may perhaps, as analogy would suggest, be like the earth, the habitations of organized beings;—that the rest of “the host of heaven” may, by a like analogy, be conjectured to be the centres of similar systems of revolving worlds;—that the vision of man has gone travelling onwards, to an extent never anticipated, through this multitude of systems, and that while myriads of new centres start up at every advance, he appears as yet not to have received any intimation of a limit. Every person probably feels, at first, lost, confounded, overwhelmed, with the vastness of this spectacle; and seems to himself, as it were, annihilated by the magnitude and multitude of the ob-