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ON THE TEMPERATURE OF THE PLANETS.

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MAN newly created, and even the ignorant man at this day beholds the extent and nature of the universe only by the simple organ of light: to him the earth is but a solid body, whose volume is unbounded, and whose extent is without limits, of which he can only survey small superficial spaces: while the sun and planets seem to be luminous points, of which the sun and moon appear to be the only objects worthy regard in the immensity of the heavens. To this false idea on the extent of nature and the proportions of the universe is joined the still more disproportionate sentiment of superiority. Man, by comparing himself with other terrestrial beings, feels that he ranks the first, and hence he presumes that all was made for him; that the earth was created only to serve for his habitation, and the heavens for a spectacle; and in short the whole universe ought to yield to his necessities, and even his pleasures. But in proportion as he makes use of that divine light, which alone ennobles his being;