

interesting proof is afforded by Encke's comet, that mere wisp of vapour, which in a period but little exceeding three years, revolves around the central luminary of our system.

This beautiful theory of Herschel, and La Place, explains by an easy and evident process the formation of planets and satellites, and accounts for the uniform direction of their revolutions. And not only is it believed that such is the law which the Creator has established for the maintenance and government of the universe, but it is satisfactorily shown, upon mechanical principles, that such nebulae *must of necessity produce* planetary bodies.

22. FORMATION OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM.—In our own system, the sun is a planetary orb with a luminous atmosphere, the central nucleus of a once extensive nebulosity. During the condensation of this nebula the planets were successively thrown off; the most distant, as Herschel, being the first or most ancient, followed by Saturn, Jupiter, the four asteroids, Mars, the Earth, Venus, and Mercury; the satellites, as distinct worlds, being the most recent of the whole. It is inferred, that in any given state of the rotating solar mass, the outer portion or ring might have its centrifugal force exactly balanced by gravity; but increased rotation would throw off that ring, which might sometimes retain its figure, of which we have a beautiful example in Saturn. This result, however,