

Analogous fluctuations between cosmical and terrestrial hypotheses, between universal space and the atmosphere, still lead, at last, to a more correct view of natural phenomena.

 IV.

THE RING OF THE ZODIACAL LIGHT.

IN our solar system, so rich in varieties of form, the existence, place, and configuration of many individual members have been discovered, since scarcely a century and a half, and at long intervals of time: first, the subordinate, or *particular systems*, in which, analogous to the principal system of the Sun, smaller spherical cosmical bodies revolve round a larger; then concentric *rings* round one, and that, indeed, one of the less dense and exterior planets which possesses the greatest number of satellites; then the existence, and probably material cause, of the mild, pyramidal-formed, *zodiacal light*, very visible to the naked eye; then the mutually intersecting orbits of the so-called *small planets*, or *asteroids*, inclosed between the regions of two principal planets, and situated beyond the zodiacal zone; finally, the remarkable group of *interior comets*, whose aphelia are smaller than those of Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. In a cosmical repre-

sentibus. Rerum natura sacra sua non simul tradit. Initiatos nos credimus; in vestibulo ejus hæremus. Illa arcana non promiscue nec omnibus patent, reducta et in interiore sacrario clausa sunt. Ex quibus aliud hæc ætas, aliud quæ post nos subibit, dispiciet. Tarde magna proveniunt." "For I do not think that comets are a casual outburst of fire, but belong to the eternal works of nature. For why should it surprise us that comets, so rare a phenomenon, should not yet be subject to the regulation of any known laws? and that their origin and ends should be hid from us, who see them only at immense intervals? It is not yet five hundred years since Greece gave names and number to the stars. And to this day there are many nations who know nothing of the heavenly bodies but as they appear to the eye, who are still ignorant of the causes of the waves and eclipses of the moon; even we ourselves have only lately attained an accurate knowledge of these phenomena. The time will arrive when the diligence of a remoter age shall throw light on subjects which are now involved in obscurity. The time will arrive when our posterity will wonder at our ignorance of things so plain to them. Eleusis reserves her favors for those who repeat their visits. Nature does not permit us to explore her sanctuary all at once. We believe we are initiated, whereas we halt at the very threshold. Those mysteries are not revealed indiscriminately to all; they are laid up and enshrined within the penetralia. Some are revealed to the men of our age, some to those who shall come after us. Great results proceed slowly."