

Helena in 1677, with the view of observing the southern stars, was at his own expense; but at a later period (in 1698), he was appointed to the command of a small vessel by King William the Third, in order that he might make his magnetical observations in all parts of the world. Lacaille was maintained by the French government four years at the Cape of Good Hope (1750-4), for the purpose of observing the stars of the southern hemisphere. The two transits of Venus in 1761 and 1769, occasioned expeditions to be sent to Kamtschatka and Tobolsk by the Russians; to the Isle of France, and to Coromandel, by the French;<sup>10</sup> to the isles of St. Helena and Otaheite by the English; to Lapland and to Drontheim, by the Swedes and Danes. I shall not here refer to the measures of degrees executed by various nations, still less the innumerable surveys by land and sea; but I may just notice the successive English expeditions of Captains Basil Hall, Sabine, and Foster, for the purpose of determining the length of the seconds' pendulum in different latitudes; and the voyages of M. Biot and others, sent by the French government for the same purpose. Much has been done in this way, but not more than the progress of astronomy absolutely required; and only a small portion of that which the completion of the subject calls for.

*Sect. 6.—Present State of Astronomy.*

ASTRONOMY, in its present condition, is not only much the most advanced of the sciences, but is also in far more favorable circumstances than any other science for making any future advance, as soon as this is possible. The general methods and conditions by which such an advantage is to be obtained for the various sciences, we shall endeavor hereafter to throw some light upon; but in the mean time, we may notice here some of the circumstances in which this peculiar felicity of the present state of astronomy may be traced.

The science is cultivated by a number of votaries, with an assiduity and labor, and with an expenditure of private and public resources, to which no other subject approaches; and the mode of its cultivation in all public and most private observatories, has this character—that it forms, at the same time, a constant process of verification of existing discoveries, and a strict search for any new discoverable laws. The observations made are immediately referred to the best tables, and cor-

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<sup>10</sup> Baily, iii. 107.