
upright there, than he could here on earth with twenty-nine men on his shoulders. He would be squeezed as flat as a pancake by his own weight.

(20.) Giant Size and Giant Strength are ugly qualities without beneficence. But the sun is the almoner of the Almighty, the delegated dispenser to us of light and warmth, as well as the centre of attraction; and as such, the immediate source of all our comforts, and indeed of the very possibility of our existence on earth. Even the very coals which we burn, owe their origin to the sun's influence, being all of vegetable materials, the remains of vast forests which have been buried and preserved in that form for the use of man, millions of ages before he was placed on the earth; and which, but for the solar light and heat, would have had no existence.* Indeed, the theory of heat which is now gaining ground would almost go to prove that it is the actual identical heat which the sun put into the coal, while in the form of living vegetation, that comes out again when it is burnt *as* coal in our grates and furnaces; so that, after all, Swift's idea of extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers, which he attributes to his Laputan philosophers, may not be so very absurd.†

* See the treatise on Astronomy, by the author of this paper, in "Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia," published in 1833. Stevenson (the celebrated engineer) has more recently drawn attention to this fact.

† Not more so at least than some of his other Laputan speculations; such as calcining ice into gunpowder: or moving vast locomotive masses by magnetism, both which feats have, in a somewhat altered form of expression, been accomplished (as in the explosion of potassium when laid on ice, and the movement of a ship by electro-mag-