

only have witnessed. It also very often happens that a comet, which before its disappearance in the sun's rays was but a feeble and insignificant object, reappears magnified and glorified, throwing out an immense tail and exhibiting every symptom of violent excitement, as if set on fire by a near approach to the source of light and heat. Such was the case with the great comet of 1680—and that of 1843, both of which, as I shall presently take occasion to explain, really did approach extremely near to the body of the sun, and must have undergone a very violent heat. Other comets, furnished with beautiful and conspicuous tails before their immersion in the sun's rays, at their reappearance are seen stripped of that appendage, and altogether so very different that, but for a knowledge of their courses, it would be quite impossible to identify them as the same bodies. This was the case with the beautiful comet of 1835-6, one of the most remarkable comets in history. Some, on the other hand, which have escaped notice altogether in their approach to the sun burst upon us at once in the plenitude of their splendour, quite unexpectedly, as did that of the year 1861.

(7.) I come now to speak of the paths described by comets in the sky among the stars (which I need hardly observe keep always the same relative situations one among the other, and stand as landmarks, among which comets, planets, the moon and the sun pursue, or seem to us to pursue, their destined courses). Now we all know that the sun, moon, and planets, keep to certain high roads, like beaten tracks in the sky, from which they never deviate