

enormous distance which separates the sun from the nearest fixed star affords a still more complete guarantee against the possibility of any disturbance of the planetary movements by *their* attraction, and may not unnaturally be considered as so intended. A continuance of the same system of precaution (if we may venture on the use of such a word) against external influence, into the mutual relations of *sidereal* systems might therefore lead us to expect that the intervals between them would at least bear some very large proportion to the extent of each. That there exist instances of nebulae which appear to be bound together by a kind of companionship similar to that of the double stars, does not in the least invalidate this as a general conclusion. Here, however, figures avail us nothing. Nor can it be necessary, after what has been already said, to stimulate our imaginations to any further effort to grasp and comprehend distances and magnitudes inconceivable by man. Suffice it that in the dim glimpse thus caught of an immensity of material existence stretching outward by steps continually more and more gigantic, we carry with us not a mere general impression, but a well-founded conviction grounded on an induction from observed facts of measurement and computation, that the same mechanical laws at least; the same relation between matter, force, and motion as those we see in action around us, prevail in the uttermost regions of space; and regulate, there as here, the evolutions of the systems disseminated through it. In the endless variety of combination exhibited among the double stars too (to say nothing of a multi-