

Such, virtually, is the argument which has been reproduced and greatly expanded in the "Essay on the Plurality of Worlds." We think, however, that the ingenious and accomplished author of that work has pressed it too far, and forgotten that, though it introduces into the reasonings of the astronomer, regarding the existence of rational inhabitants in the planets, the *modifying element of time*, it does not affect his general conclusions. It merely shows, from the extended experience of the earth's history which geology furnishes, that these conclusions may not refer to the *now* of the planetary universe, but to some period in a perhaps very remote future. For the argument of the astronomer, in a condensed form, let us draw on Fontenelle,—a man who wrote ere geology had yet any existence as a science. It is thus he makes his philosopher reason with his lady friend the Marchioness, in a general summary :—"We cannot pretend to make you *see* them [the inhabitants of the planets] ; and you cannot insist upon demonstration here, as you would in a mathematical question ; but you have all the proofs you could desire in our world ;—the entire resemblance of the planets with the earth which is inhabited, the impossibility of conceiving any other use for which they were created, the fecundity and magnificence of nature, the certain regards which she seems to have had to the necessities of the inhabitants, as in giving moons to those planets remote from the sun, and more moons still to those yet more remote ; and, what is still very material, there are all things to be said on one side, and nothing on the other. In short, supposing that these inhabitants of the planets really exist, they could not declare themselves by more marks, or by marks more sensible." Such is the statement of Fontenelle ; and though it can be no longer affirmed that nothing can be said on the *opposite* side, seeing that we have now a very ingenious volume written on the opposite side, by not merely a clever, but also a highly scien-