

In Figure 8, we represent the relative size of the planets, from the massive Jupiter to the modest Mercury. We have shown the Earth, attended by her satellite, the Moon; the other planets are likewise escorted by their appropriate trains.

The mountains form, on the surface of our globe, eminences of very moderate elevation. If we picture to ourselves the Earth as an orange, the small rugosities, or wrinkles, on its rind, may represent, to a certain degree, the comparative height of the loftiest terrestrial mountains.* In truth, the most considerable elevation of our snow-girdled peaks does not exceed 29,000 feet. But the mountains of Venus, whose mass nearly equals that of the Earth, probably attain 350,000 feet. The average height of the lunar mountains is from 18,000 to 20,000 feet; the mass, however, of the Moon is far inferior to that of the Earth.

All these comparisons prove that a greater harmony prevails in the plasticity, in the superficial variations of the Earth, than in those of the other celestial bodies with which we are acquainted. They confirm also the remark we have made above, as to the part played by our Earth in the midst of the solar system, that it represents a sort of middle state, equally distant from all the extremes: equally distant, so far as regards its dimensions, from the very great and the very small; as regards its movement, from swiftness and from slowness; as regards its temperature, from excessive heat and surpassing cold. This harmony, this admirable equilibrium of all the conditions destined to favour the existence and development of life, is peculiarly characteristic of our globe, which seems to have been pre-ordained by the Creator as the birth-place and home of the human race. Man could have found upon no other planet the means of satisfying, with so much facility, the varied necessities of his manifold nature, and of preparing himself for that eternity which will succeed to his terrestrial career.

Like all the great planets, the Earth is escorted by a *satellite*. This name we bestow upon certain celestial bodies, which are attached to the great stars as their invariable companions, and constantly follow them in their eternal course. Saturn and Uranus have each eight satellites; Jupiter has four; the Earth, a planet of medium importance, only one—the Moon.

This bright and beautiful star, which has awakened the purest minstrelsy of the poets from the days of Homer to those of Keats, is situate in space at a distance of 238,793 miles from the centre of the Earth, which represents a distance 400 times less than the distance of the Earth from the Sun, and could be traversed by an express train in 300 days. The Moon, 50 times smaller than our planet,

* [Kunchinjinga and Guarisankar, two of the Himalayan colossi, are only elevated above the surface of the earth the $\frac{1}{1000}$ th part of its diameter; Mont Blanc about half as much.—GUILLEMIN, *The Heavens*, p. 99.]