

For the Pearl.

## THOUGHTS ON ASTRONOMY.

The heavens declare the glory of God,  
And the firmament sheweth his handy work.

To those who view the magnificence of the great Creator in all his works, these words of the sublime psalmist have already said more than man can express, and if the writer sought applause, he would certainly not have chosen a text which at once casts his performance in the shade.

But the pleasure he has received from a very limited study of Astronomy, induces an endeavour to draw the attention of others to the same delightful subject.

Many nations ere the gospels light had reached them, adored the Sun as the Author of their happiness; they felt the benefit of its light, the necessity of its heat to the vegetable world, which was their chief subsistence, and they knew also that they were mortal; they had never heard of God, but acknowledged a superior being, and naturally worshipped the most grand and imposing object that nature presented to their view. They looked upon the heavens with wonder, and to the Sun (as the great director of the universe) with awe and veneration.

How thankful should we be for the light that shines upon us! How much ought we to appreciate our emersion from the cares and darkness of Superstition. If our unenlightened ancestors could have imagined the immense distance of the Sun or could have conceived its magnitude, how much would their respect for, and fear of that orb have been increased. Science has brought this subject within reach of the most humble; the principles of Astronomy are explained in such clear language that their abstruseness is no longer to be dreaded.

As a mere mathematical calculation, this study would interest only a few.—But if we think of the great power that mankind have derived from it, even in its earliest stages;—if we consider the advantages that navigation has opened to the world; the wealth that nations who have made Astronomy their study have acquired; the honour that individuals have gained by discovery, and the consequent moral benefit that the Western world has received from civilization; we shall find that a general knowledge of its principles is neither uninteresting or without benefit. But these are not its only advantages; for who can view the wide expanse of heaven, and the countless stars that stud its apparent canopy, without feeling his insignificance when he knows their nature and vast distance. Or who can learn unmoved that the earth on which he stands is travelling with great velocity through infinite space attached by the invisible power of gravitation to other worlds, that revolve at ever varying distance about the visible direction of their system with paths so well defined, and governed by such unerring laws that they can never come in contact with each other. And how must the mind expand in the consideration of "space" unlimited "unconfined"—through which a comet may wander for nearly a century, and yet be traced through every mile of its path by the ingenious research of man, who foretels its return but lives not to witness the veracity of his calculation. The heavenly bodies wander on for ages but man returns to the dust! Can these ideas, and pride find place in the same breast?

Astronomy must raise the mind to God. The study of it must lead to humility for two reasons, first because the further we advance the wider appears the field before us, and secondly because the consideration of things superior to ourselves shews us our extreme weakness. Without Astronomy what are the heavens to us? The sky is a field of blue, and the stars are only the spangles that adorn it! but the mariner seeks in vain his destined port, or is unwittingly dashed on some sunken rock. The years roll on unmarked. The destroyer "time" still continues his ravages but his days are no longer numbered. The mind loses the pleasure which the knowledge of so beautiful a system, must produce; and rises not in praise to the Author of all. For to it the Heavens do not declare the full glory of God—the firmament sheweth not the extent of his handy work.

A SAILOR.

## THE HAPPY DREAM.

I laid me down and slumbered,  
And gladness filled my breast:  
I dreamt that my days were numbered,  
That my weary heart had rest:  
And a loved fair girl whom I joy'd to see,  
Was the first with smiles to welcome me  
To the land of the good and blest.

As she came, there was music on the air  
With the motion of her wings,  
That parted from her pinions fair,  
Free as the gush of springs:  
And the strains which arose and died around,  
Were softer than twilight-mellowed sound,  
More sweet than from earthly strings.

I turned with the pain of parting  
From the few I left behind,  
But that fair one's radiance darting,  
Swept the shadow from my mind:  
As I gazed on her beauty beyond compare,  
Away was dissolved the pain, and care,  
That had linked me to my kind.

I marvelled at the splendour  
So pure and so intense:  
Yet all subdued and tender  
That injured not the sense:  
I marvelled at the coming bright,  
Of that illimitable light,  
Which was, I knew not whence.

Around were myriads soaring  
With fadeless glory bright,  
Whose natures were adoring  
The fountain of all light:  
And soothing o'er my spirit stole  
These accents of the loved soul  
That first entranced my sight.

"Thou hast left the realms of night,  
Thou hast left the land of care;  
Thou hast gained the abode of Love and Light,  
The home of the good and fair:  
Oh! blessed art thou such home to gain,  
Where Rest is not the child of Pain,  
Nor Joy is Sorrow's heir!"

I awoke, and pined to die,  
For the light came thick and dull;  
I pined on the wings of the dove to fly  
To the Land of the Beautiful:  
I pined to sever the mind from the clay,  
But the spirit within me for ever would say,  
"God's laws man may not annul."

Metropolitan for June. RICHARD HOWITT.

ROUTE OF THE ISRAELITES.—"Late in the afternoon we landed on the opposite side, on the most sacred spot connected with the wanderings of the Israelites, where they rose from the dry bed of the sea, and at the command of Moses, the divided waters rushed together, overwhelming Pharaoh and his chariots, and the whole host of Egypt. With the devotion of a pious pilgrim, I picked up a shell and put it into my pocket as a memorial of the place, and then Paul and I mounting the dromedaries which my guide had brought down to the shore in readiness, rode to a grove of palm-trees, shading a fountain of bad water, called ayoun Moussa, or the fountain of Moses. I was riding carelessly along, looking behind me towards the sea, and had almost reached the grove of palm-trees, when a large flock of crows flew out, and my dromedary frightened with their sudden whizzing, started back and threw me twenty feet over his head completely clear of his long neck, and left me sprawling in the sand. It was a mercy I did not finish my wanderings where the children of Israel began theirs; but I saved my head at the expense of my hands, which sank in the loose soil up to the wrist, and bore the marks for more than two months afterward. I seated myself where I fell, and as the sun was just dipping below the horizon, told Paul to pitch the tent with the door towards the place of the miraculous passage. I was sitting on the sand on the very spot where the chosen people of God, after walking over the dry bed

of the sea, stopped to behold the divided waters returning to their place and swallowing up the host of the pursuers. The mountains on the other side looked dark and portentous, as if proud and conscious witnesses of the mighty miracle, while the sun, descended slowly behind them, long after it had disappeared, left a reflected brightness which illumined with an almost supernatural light the dark surface of the water.

"But to return to the fountains of Moses. I am aware that there is some dispute as to the precise spot where Moses crossed; but having no time for scepticism on such matters, I began by making up my mind that this was the place, and then looked around to see whether, according to the account given in the Bible, the face of the country and the natural landmarks did not sustain my opinion. I remember I looked up to the head of the gulf, where Suez or Kolsun now stands, and saw that almost to the very head of the gulf there was a high range of mountains which it would be necessary to cross, an undertaking which it would have been physically impossible for 600,000 people, men, women, and children, to accomplish with a hostile army pursuing them. At Suez, Moses could not have been hemmed in as he was; he could go off into the Syrian desert, or, unless the sea has changed since that time, round the head of the gulf. But here, directly opposite where I sat, was an opening in the mountains, making a clear passage from the desert to the shore of the sea."—*Incidents of Travel*.

## CREATION OF MAN.

When the divine counsel in the infinitude of its wisdom entered within itself to meditate on a plan by which to fashion finite man, the sun was looking down upon the new born world in the brightness of unclouded splendor, and the earliest flower that sprung spontaneous from the new made soil—the first production of prolific nature—unbosomed its beauty to his morning beams—then it was that gentle zephyrs which had not learned to vaunt themselves into angry tempests, wafted fragrance on their unseen wings, bounding as it were in joy through the thornless bowers of paradise; the bright waters too, spread out in chrysal calmness, seemed as the vast mirror of the glorious heaven, reflecting the excellencies of creation from its shining bosom, teeming with life, and rushing in very gladness, with the scaly tribes wantoning in their own elastic element—the feathered race of varied plumage, lifted their ten thousand songs of praise and thanksgiving, to him who gave them being and bade them sing shaded as they were from the mid-day heat, by the fading foliage of the blessed Eden, they wafted sweet bosannas to the high home of angelic and godlike perfection where their mighty Maker sat enthroned.

There stood the tree of life in the midst of the flowery plain, untouched, save by the unshining bird that chanted hallowed praise among its branches, and the soft wind that murmured by, catching on spotless pinions, nature's sacrifice of unsullied incense and bearing it up to the throne of heaven's eternal King. No hand was there to gather in the treasures that spontaneous grew, or to molest the unmolested shoot. Silence reigned profoundly and quiet, throughout the blissful regions, until a voice in commanding tones, exclaimed, "let us make man in our image and after our likeness." Then it was, at the mention of the word man first named in heaven, that unfallen spirits, bowed their forms, and meditated what the word might mean,—it was of interest to them, whether it should be a creation greater or a "little lower" than themselves. While gazing with intensity of interest on the action of Omnipotent Power, they beheld in Eden a fair form arise upon his brow he bore the dignity of unspotted innocence, his eye beamed with the consciousness of his Creator's favor—his heart rejoiced in the approbation of his Maker. Thus he sat alone in the light of the sixth day's sun, on himself so strangely brought into being and into being. Looking upward with a mind unclouded by sin—unobscured by contamination's contagious hand, he in amazement viewed the stupendous works which appeared around and around him.