ference of a sphere whose radius stretches so far into the fields of space, it is only a diminutive point, compared with the nearest body unconnected with this family group—a point so diminutive, indeed, as scarcely to form a paralax to some of the fixed stars. The time required for light to travel from the centre to the circumference of our system, we reekon by the narrow measure of minutes, hours, and days : but the moment we immerge from hence to the nearest star, the journey of light, rapid as it is, has to be computed by years.

The star a Centauri is computed to be two hundred thousand times farther from us than we are from the sun; the star 61 Cygni is three times the distance of a Centauri; and the star a Lyræ is nearly three times more remote than 61 Cygni. Thus, the remotest of these three stars is so distant, that a ray of light would be thirty years in passing from it to our world. We cannot realize these enormous distances, and yet they are "but our first mile-stones among the trackless space." For, if we extend our observations to those stars whose distance renders them only just visible to the naked eye, we behold objects so remote, that their light does not reach us until one hundred and twenty years after it has left the twinkling orbs. It is vain to give this distance in miles; we have to heap billions upon millions until the imagination becomes confused by the chormous multitude. Yet here, in these remote regions, we are only on the frontier of creation. Beyond the visible stars, we come to that faint light called the Milky Way, whose belt infolds a space far beyond the smallest stars visible to the naked eye. This luminous zone consists of myriads of stars, which, from their distance, are invisible to the eye; but they are resolved by Herschel's telescope, and in one quarter of an hour one hundred and sixteen thousand of these stars were observed to pass through the field of vision of that powerful instrument. These stars are estimated, on satisfactory data, to be four hundred and ninety-seven times more remote from us than some of the fixed stars; and it would require one thousand six hundred and forty years for a ray of light to pass from thence to our world; or a cannon ball flying at the rate of five hundred miles an hour, would occupy more than two thousand two hundred and sixty-seven millions eight hundred thousand years in passing through the same space! How prodigious the distance, then, of those orbs, whose light constitutes the Milky Way! and yet we have made but little progress through the vast system of created being; for the Milky Way is, with good reason supposed to be but the outer bounds of that great stellary congregation to which our sun, and his planets, and all visible stars belong. In depths of space immeasurably beyond the Milky Way, there lie other congregated systems, each as large, or perhaps larger, than the entire field of creation we have hitherto explored. Our own galaxy, sufficient itself for a universe, and made up of millions upon millions of suns so remote that light itself cannot pass from one star to another until hundreds or thousands of years, is yet but a unit among myriads. Beyond it are other galaxies which hang as wreaths or folded curtains of light ; and beyond these, again, are others, appearing as filmy flakes, of faint and dubious aspect ; and again, beyond these are others which the telescope alone reveals to our vision, the succession appearing in every part of the heavens, so long