

not a word could he succeed in uttering. After we had waited through two minutes of expectant silence he sat down at the table with his face between his hands and sobbed. It was the most eloquent speech he ever made." The astronomer was also a man, and he was a Celt; the terrible strain of these few years so suddenly relieved shook him to the very centre, as that same South African War and of this last Great War have almost shattered the pillars of many a man's self control. The tidal wave of his feelings overflowed its limits. But to a geographer of the skies, to a searcher for the limits of creation, those combats, mighty as they were, were in Tennyson's words only the struggle of ants "in the light of a million, million suns."

What are men that He should heed us?
Cried the King of sacred song;
Insects of an hour, but hourly work their brother insect wrong.
While the silent Heavens roll, and Suns along their fiery way
All their planets whirling round them, flash a million miles a day.

In 1905 the British Association for the advancement of Science visited Capetown. This meeting taxed Sir David's business and organizing energies so tremendously that he hardly ever recovered from the effects of it. He retired from the Directorship of the Observatory in 1907. His work as the Cape Astronomer during these twenty-eight years accomplished three great undertakings involving the highest accuracy attainable:

- (1) Geodetic triangulation and the measurement of an arc of meridian.
- (2) Observations of minor planets with a powerful heliometer to obtain a final definitive value of the sun's distance from the earth.
- (3) Observations of apparent stellar displacements, thus measuring star's distances from us.

This great work is thus described by his biographer Professor Forbes:

The force that attracted him to these three researches was the acknowledged difficulty and refinement of the necessary observations, and his belief in himself.

Probably it never occurred to him how intimately these were connected. If we take a broad outlook upon what he actually accomplished in these three directions we cannot fail to be impressed by the completeness of his undertaking. For his own measurements alone, and those under his immediate control, furnished the materials for measuring the distances of many stars, in metres, and comparing