

in which our visible firmament is constructed? To this, however, astronomy has hitherto proved unable to supply an answer. All we know on the subject is negative. Quitting, however, the region of speculation, and confining ourselves within certain limits which we are sure are less than the truth, let us employ the negative knowledge we have obtained respecting the distance of the stars, to form some conformable estimate of their real magnitudes. If this telescopes afford us no direct information. The discs which good telescopes shew us of the stars are not real, but *spurious*, a mere optical illusion. Their light therefore must be our only guide. Now Dr. Wollaston by experiments, open as it would seem, to no objections, has ascertained the light of Sirius, as received by us, to be that of the sun, as 1 to 20,000,000,000. The sun, therefore, in order that it should appear to us no brighter than Sirius, would require to be removed to 141,400 times its actual distance. We have seen, however, that the distance of Sirius cannot be so small as 200,000 times that of the sun. Hence it follows, that, upon the lowest possible computation, the light really thrown out by Sirius cannot be so little as double that emitted by the sun; or that Sirius must, in point of intrinsic splendor, be at least equal to two suns, and is in all probability vastly greater. *Dr. Wollaston has concluded the intrinsic light of this star to be nearly that of fourteen suns.* Now, for what purpose are we to suppose such magnificent bodies scattered through the abyss of space? Surely not to illuminate our nights, which an additional moon of the thousandth part of the size of our own would do much better, nor to sparkle as a pageant void of meaning and reality, and bewilder us among vain conjectures. Useful it is true, they are to man as points of reference; but he must have studied astronomy to little purpose, who can suppose man to be the only object of his Creator's care, or who does not see in the vast and wonderful apparatus around us, provision for other races of animated beings. The planets derive their light from the sun; but that cannot be the case with the stars. These, doubtless, then are themselves suns, and may, perhaps, each in its sphere, be the presiding centre round which other planets, or bodies of which we can form no conception from any analogy offered by our own system, may be circulating.

There are about three thousand fixed stars visible to the naked eye. Every one of those stars is doubtless a sun, and each of these suns

affords light and heat to another system of worlds. Let us only suppose that each of those suns illuminates as many orbs as belong to our system. We shall state the number at two hundred, (though it is believed that there are seven thousand comets, besides the planets, which have already been discovered.) This would give six hundred thousand worlds. But three thousand is a small number, when compared with the whole number of stars that have been discovered. The relative places of fifty thousand stars have been determined, by the help of telescopes. Fifty thousand solar systems, each containing, at least, one hundred worlds. Five millions of worlds, all inhabited by rational beings. How do we seem to dwindle into littleness! How few, how small, are the ephemerists of this little globe, when compared with the countless myriads who inhabit five millions of worlds! And these worlds, reader, are but specks in the infinity of creation. All are under the constant care of the Divine Being; not one of them is neglected. Surely it becomes us to exclaim with the psalmist, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him?" G. B.

*St. John, May, 1843.*



### THE ALMOND BRANCH.

FROM THE FRENCH.

THOU art, alas! but beauty's emblem,  
Blooming branch of the almond tree!  
Fading away on thy parent stem,  
The flower of life is seen in thee.

It heedeth not neglect or care—  
It waiteth not on summer's ray;  
Leaf after leaf thus withering there,  
Shows forth our pleasures day by day.

Though short, O let us prize delight—  
'Tis fleeting as the zephyr's breath—  
And drain its chalice ere the night  
Approach and warn us of its death.

Often doth beauty in its pride,  
Remind us of the morning flower,  
Wreathing the fair brow of the bride,  
And fading o'er the festive hour.

One day is past, yet others come,  
But Spring is hastening to depart,  
And every flower it calls to bloom,  
Cries, "hasten!" to the human heart.

*Montreal Garland.*