

made transparent with this design, to give man in the heavenly bodies the perpetual presence of the sublime; seen in the streets of cities, how great they are. If the stars should appear but one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; yet every night come out these preachers of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile."

This great double convex lens-shaped system, of which the Milky-Way is the outer extremity or ring, is not the universe, but a trivial part of it. Wherever the telescope has penetrated, it has brought to light other great systems of starry dust, whence the star-light comes in softened clouds, indefinite and vague. These are composed of myriads of separate stars, each one a sun, revolving with its attendant planets around the centre of the whole. In these we see the circular outline repeated in obedience to the law of gravitation,—the law which alike controls the form of a dewdrop or a tear, and a congress of a thousand stars. Beyond these are others more distant still; and thus down far, far into that soundless sea, the starry systems float and sing; and the telescope, but now a thing of marvel and triumph, is at last a toy and contemptible, for it reaches the cloudy masses no more. The star-light comes, but it will tell no story; it brings pictures, but they are pictures of mystery. And thus, from the spectacle of starry worlds revolving in our sky, we are carried up to the idea that those masses of nebulous light are astral systems also; and come at last to the conjecture, that, as the lesser worlds revolve around the sun, and that sun, in his own system, around a greater sun, the star-systems themselves, which we see floating away in the abyss yonder, may all be traversing a pathway around the feet of Deity, receiving from that Central Sun of all things a glory and a light Divine. Let us bow our heads, for surely God is in the midst, controlling, watching, and judging, but loving all the while!

But even here let us retrace our steps, for the star-light can yet tell us something which shall make manifest the omnipotence of Deity, as an attribute in harmony with that same star-light, and as a necessary consequence of its own physical law.

Light is not instantaneous in its passage; it requires time to travel. It moves at the rate of 2,000,000 of miles in a minute. Hence it is eight minutes reaching us from the Sun, or the Sun has really risen eight minutes before we see him, and is now eight minutes in advance in his path of the spot which he appears to occupy. Hence, again, the bright star in Centaur, which is eighteen billions of miles distant, is seen by us, not as it now is, or where it now is, but where it was, and as it was, three years ago; and if it were now to explode into fragments, and vanish from the sky, it would be three years before we should lose its picture in the heavens. This will be easier understood, if it be remembered that the ray of light leaves the star, and passes through space quite unconnected with its origin; and, when it falls on the optic nerve, it will give the eye a picture of the star, whether the star be there or not. Thus, we see the star Vega, as it

was twelve years ago, and a star of the twelfth magnitude as it was four thousand years ago. In the same way, if we reverse the phenomena, the inhabitants of the sun see the earth not as it is now, but as it was eight minutes before; and a spectator in Vega, as it was twelve years before; and, in like manner, to the deepest recesses of the universe. What is the result of this?—namely, that the universe contains not only the whole of space, but also the whole of time! Every event, as well as every existence, is treasured there; and empty space becomes a microcosm of the ages. Everything on which the light falls reflects back a picture of itself.

The stars send forth complete pictures of all the scenery and appearances on their respective surfaces; and although, from our limited powers of vision, we are unable to perceive anything more than a point of light; nevertheless, that point of light, could we dissect it, would reveal the landscapes, seas, and cities, as they were when the light came away, as plainly as we can behold the scenery of our own hills and valleys? * What then? Why, from some part of space the eye of Omnipotence can behold whatever has taken place here, or in any other world. There is some spot where the picture, embalmed in a ray of light, is speeding on its way through infinitude; and from thence He can behold it. At the Centaur in 1854, the picture of London in 1851, with its Palace of Glass and gathering of the Nations, will be visible; and upon a star of the twelfth magnitude may now be seen the founding of Memphis, and the wanderings of Abraham; while pictures of the dim geological ages of the earth are now speeding past the regions of distant nebulae, to travel on and on in a journey which can never be completed. Hoed your ways, therefore; for the eye of God watches over us physically as well as spiritually; the deed of to-day is to become part of the universe, and to be kept speeding on through starry spaces and silvery galaxies for an eternity to come. †

Possibly the spirit of man may hereafter be permitted to read these revelations of the star-light, when, separated from earthly scenes, he soars upward amid the stars, and looks upon the picture of his own life treasured up there in the blue expanse, and winging its flight from world to world upon the pinions of the lovely star-light. What, then, will be his emotion as the scene wherever he played the coward or the tyrant comes before him, and in pain and shame he

* In proof of this, witness the geographical features which may be seen of the moon, the planets, Mars and Venus, by the aid of a telescope. Jupiter, further distant still, yields something regarding his aspect; and Saturn, more distant still, a few features of its physical condition.

† Simple possibility is all the writer deems necessary in the enunciation of this idea, which is well-rooted in the laws of physics. Such exceptions as may occur in regard to events which take place in houses and places which impede the passage of light, are of no moment in the statement of a general truth. For the thought itself, the writer is indebted to a little work entitled "The Stars and the Earth; or, Thoughts upon Space, Time, and Eternity. Builliore, 1847."