

universal. Seneca mentions the fact of stars having been distinctly seen through comets. A star of the sixth magnitude was seen through the centre of the head of the comet of 1795, by Sir William Herschel."

It is seen, then, by these extracts, that comets move under fixed laws; that their course is towards and round the sun; that in general they consist merely of gaseous matter; that the opinion of that first of Astronomers, Sir Isaac Newton, was, that "they are the aliment by which suns are sustained." Comets have been a fertile source of amazement and terror to mankind for numerous ages previous to our times. No longer ago, indeed, than the year 1832, an Astronomer having calculated that the comet of that year would strike the earth somewhere, many of the people of Paris became so alarmed, that the French Government directed Mr. Arago to investigate the circumstance.

It is remarkable that, except Sir Isaac Newton's opinion, that the comets were employed in supporting the waste of the sun's fire, Astronomers have not, that I have learnt, made any further researches on this point. Now, as we consider by our theory, that the sun is a body of gaseous matter in combustion, for the purpose of heating and lighting the earth and planets, and as it is indispensable that the waste of this combustion must be restored, we therefore conceive this to be the very purpose of the numerous comets of our system, and of those of others. We conceive that the various combustible and other gases required to restore the waste of the atmospheres of the planets, and also the waste of the suns of the universe,—we conceive, I say, that these various gases are taken up by the power of attraction by the comets, from the laboratories of these gasses in the nebulae, (as we have stated in our theory of these laboratories), and that these comets then, directed by the unerring laws of their courses, distribute these gases to our sun and to the various suns of other systems, thereby restoring the waste of their heat and light. Now, it is a known fact in Pneumatic Chemistry, that neither the oxygen nor hydrogen gases are combustible, *per se*,

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