

thousand voices rapidly increased—each telling his neighbour of the strange feelings coming over him. Suddenly, the last filament of the sun's disc was covered, and, at that moment, a deep, prolonged moan, as from one man, arose from that vast crowd. It was like the stifled groan of the multitude witnessing a public execution, at the moment that the axe or the drop falls. The moan, however did not mark the climax of high-strained feeling. The dead silence that ensued was the culminating point. Not a whisper was heard, not an attitude was changed as, with the rigidity of a statue, each man stood and gazed upwards. So unearthly was the silence, that the beat of the chronometers was heard with painful distinctness. The heart of the universe seemed to cease its throbbings. Nature had fallen into a state of syncope. For two and a half minutes this dreadful pause continued. At the end of this period a thread of light burst forth; the tension was at once relieved, and one loud burst of joy rent the heavens. The people could not restrain their transports of happiness, now that the dread, undefinable woe had passed over. They did not care now to look at the final phase of the eclipse, as the darkness wore off; they had beheld the crowning spectacle; they would not weaken the impression by looking at the partial obscuration; and soon the whole crowd melted away—leaving the astronomers to continue their observations alone."

Perhaps the most attractive chapter in the book is the last, in which the question of the plurality of worlds is discussed at considerable length and with great ability. Principal Leitch reasons the question with far more caution than we should have expected from the animation with which he expatiates on the other subjects on which he treats, and states very ably all the conspicuous arguments *pro* and *con*. His own opinion on the question is, that many of the planets forming part of our solar system are not yet in that normal condition from which we can, with any degree of probability, infer that they are inhabited by living beings. Others, however, such as Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn,

may not vary so much from the conditions under which we find life existing on our planet, as would warrant us in concluding with Professor Whewell, that they are uninhabitable. We suspect that something more might be said than this, in perfect accordance with the arguments based on the conditions of existing life. It cannot be denied, for example, that it is in strict accordance with analogy that other planetary systems exist, besides that to which our world belongs; and if this is granted, it would be arguing, not on a probability, but on the very highest improbability, that many planets belonging to these systems have not all the conditions for supporting life, and high intellectual life, such as our world contains. Of course we cannot be certain of the existence of other planetary systems besides our own; but we are certain of the existence of thousands of other suns, and there is nothing more reasonable than the supposition that they are the centres from whence ray forth to attendant planets the same power as that which is dispensed from our own luminary. And we suspect that from the vast number of these planetary centres, the law of chances itself, to sink altogether the analogical argument, would favour the idea that some of these distant planets have at any rate conditions as favourable to the existence of animated beings as our world possesses.

Principal Leitch's book, besides discussing questions like these, contains also a great deal of information in reference to recent discoveries in astronomy, is illustrated by excellent engravings (some of them—the telescopic views of the moon—being taken from photographs) and has appended to it a valuable synopsis of all the most prominent facts in the science. We heartily wish for it a large circulation.

The Church in Canada.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF TEMPORALITIES BOARD.

The Committee, appointed by the Board to take steps to obtain such increase of income as would render it possible to pay the usual allowances to every minister on the Synod's Roll, respectfully report:—

That on the 15th November they issued a circular, of which a copy is herewith transmitted, to all the ministers of the church, requesting them to bring the subject of it before their respective congregations, and to send an answer before the 15th December. Shortly before

that date no answer had been received from sixty-six ministers, and another circular was issued, of which a copy is also herewith transmitted, in which it was stated that no answer would be considered tantamount to authority to make the deduction proposed in the first circular. Ten did not answer either circular; but the committee did not make any deduction from their allowance, thinking direct authority in every case desirable. The names of the ten will be found in list No. 1.

The Contingent Fund has been increased either by money sent, or what was equivalent to money, by authority to deduct from the al-