

"Thus I ran my headlong course, unchecked, until my evil passions, violently inflamed by the vices in which I was indulged, impelled me to commit an act, which rendered it unsafe for me to remain longer beneath the parental roof, and I fled. My mother knew not where I went. Since that time I have been wandering in dissipation and crime. Four months since, I came to this place, where my vices have rendered me notorious. Night before last I was detected in the crime for which you now see me in prison. My career is run. The gloomy walls of a state prison will be my abode for several years. Should I live to leave them, I must leave with the brand of infamy upon me. One consolation alone remains. I am under an assumed name, so that my mother can never know. Still, I am a wretch, a villain, unworthy the society of men, and fit only for a prison.

"O! my mother! But I will not upbraid her. She meant well, though her undue fondness has led me to disgrace and ruin."

Here he became subdued, and bowing his face between his hands, wept tears of repentance and regret.

We left him, but never shall I forget that scene.

That young man is now an inmate of a state-prison. His term of imprisonment has now nearly expired, and he will soon leave that miserable abode, to wander a seared and blighted spirit over the earth, seeking rest and finding none. Perchance, in his wanderings, he may return to his native place; but he will find no mother there to soothe his troubled spirit. She is dead.

Reader, I knew that mother. Two years ago I heard her, with her dying breath, regret her weakness in not restraining her son. She died without a knowledge of his fate. I saw her laid beside her departed husband.

Parents, and especially mothers, ponder well the above, and remember that, to some extent, at least, you hold your children's destinies "for weal or for woe."—*Advocate of Moral Reform.*

THE REVELATIONS OF ASTRONOMY.

(Continued from North British Review.)

Before quitting the description of this wondrous system of worlds, let us contemplate the general harmony in the distance of the planets from the sun. Kepler, the great apostle of harmony in the celestial spaces, predicted the discovery of a planet between Mars and Jupiter. The discovery of Uranus, in 1781, directed the attention of German astronomers to this inquiry, and in 1789, Baron von Zach actually published in the Berlin Almanac for that year, the elements of the orbit of the planet which ought to be found between Mars and Jupiter! He makes its distance from the sun 2082 (that of the earth being 1), or 260 millions of miles, and its period four years and nine months. After the discovery of CERES, having almost this very distance and period, in 1801, Professor Bode of Berlin communicated to the Baron his empirical law of the planetary system, in which the distance between the orbits of any two planets is nearly twice as great as that between the orbits of the next two planets nearer the sun, and one half the distance of the next two planets from the sun. This very ingenious relation is shown more clearly in the following table:—

Distance from Sun.	Law of Distance.
Mercury, .	4 = 4
Venus, .	7 = 4 + 3 X 2 ⁰ = 4 + 3
Earth, .	10 = 4 + 3 X 2 ¹ = 4 + 6
Mars, .	16 = 4 + 3 X 2 ² = 4 + 12
Ceres, .	} 28 = 4 + 3 X 2 ³ = 4 + 24
Pallas, .	
Juno, .	
Vesta, .	
Astræa, .	
Jupiter, .	52 = 4 + 3 X 2 ⁴ = 4 + 48
Saturn, .	100 = 4 + 3 X 2 ⁵ = 4 + 96
Uranus, .	196 = 4 + 3 X 2 ⁶ = 4 + 192
New Planet, .	388 = 4 + 3 X 2 ⁷ = 4 + 384
Distance of other	772 = 4 + 3 X 2 ⁸
Planets, if they	1540 = 4 + 3 X 2 ⁹
exist, }	3076 = 4 + 3 X 2 ¹⁰

Had Kepler been alive, he would have predicted the discovery of planets at the three last of these stations, in order that the system might terminate with the tenth power of 2,* and that the number

* At present the number of primary planets is only NINE, a number with which the worshippers of the muses will be satisfied. If we reckon each of the small planets separately, we have the ill-omened number of THIRTEEN.

of the planets (reckoning the 5 asteroids one, might be TWELVE.*

Having thus conducted our fellow-travellers from the centre to the verge of the planetary system,—from the effulgent orb of day to that almost cimmeric twilight where Phæbus could scarcely see to guide his steeds, let us ponder awhile over the startling yet instructive sights which we have encountered in our course. Adjoining the Sun, we find Mercury and Venus, with days and seasons like our own, varying only with the peculiarity of their position. Upon reaching our own planet, we recognise in it the same general features, but we find it larger in magnitude, and possessing the additional distinction of a satellite to enlighten it, and a race of living beings to rejoice in the pre-eminence. In contrast with Mars, our Earth still maintains its superiority both in size and equipments; but upon advancing a little farther into space, our pride is rebuked and our fears evoked, when we reach the golgotha of our system, where the relics of a once mighty planet are revolving in disserved orbits, and warning the vain astronomer of another world, that a similar fate may await his own. Dejected, but not despairing, we pass onward, and as if in bright contrast with the desolation we have witnessed, there bursts upon our sight the splendid orb of Jupiter, eleven times the diameter of our own globe, and proudly enthroned amid his attendant torch-bearers. When compared with so glorious a creation, our earth dwindles into insignificance. It is no longer the monarch of the planetary throng, and we blush at the recollection that sovereigns and pontiffs, and even philosophers, made it the central ball, round which the Sun and Moon and planets, and even stars, revolved in obsequious subjection. The dignity of being the seat of intellectual and animal life, however, still seems to be our own, and if our globe does not swell so largely to the eye, or shine so brightly in the night, it has yet been the seat of glorious dynasties—of mighty empires—of heroes that have bled for their country—of martyrs who have died for their faith, and of sages who have unravelled the very universe we are surveying. Still, however, does the thought loom on the mind's horizon, that the gigantic planet which we are undervaluing may be teeming with life more pure and noble than our own,—with heroes who have never drawn the sword against truth and liberty,—with martyrs who have never died for error,—and with sages who have never denied their God. Pursuing our outward course, a new wonder is presented to us in the gorgeous appendages of Saturn, encircled with his triple halo of rings, and lighted up with his seven moons. Does this magnificent and splendid arch, whose circuit is seven times that of our own globe, span the azure vault of Saturn merely to delight the prying astronomer, and do his seven bright attendants serve but to try his telescopes? Advancing onward, we encounter Uranus with his six pledges that he is the seat of life; and after passing the New Planet, which awaits the scrutiny of science, at the frontier of our system, we reach what is the region, and what may be regarded as the home of comets.

COMETS, or wandering stars as they have been called, are those celestial bodies which appear occasionally within the limits of the Solar System. They move in illiptical orbits, in one of the foci of which the Sun is placed; but unlike the planets, whose orbits, excluding the asteroids, are never inclined more than seven degrees to the ecliptic, and which always move from west to east, the comets move in orbits inclined at all possible angles, and move in all possible directions. No fewer than between six and seven hundred comets have been recorded, and the orbits of nearly one hundred and forty have been calculated; and as there are times, when so far as astronomers know, there is not one of these comets (excepting those of Encke, Biela, and De Faye) "within the limits of the solar system, their movements must be principally executed within that vast region which lies between the nearest fixed star α Centauri, and the orbit of the new Planet, an interval equal to 6000 times the distance of that planet from the Sun. What is their occupation there, or what it is here, when they are our visitors, we cannot venture to guess. That they do not perform the functions of planets, will appear from the description of them which we shall proceed to give; and there is no appearance of their importing anything useful into our system, or

* Captain Smith has given us—without mentioning to whom we owe them—the following singular astronomical coincidences respecting the sun, moon and earth:—

Earth's diameter (miles 7,912 X 110 = 870,320,—the estimated diameter of the sun.

Sun's diameter 870,320 X 110 = 95,735,200,—average mean distance of the earth from the sun.

Moon's diameter 2,160 X 110 = 237,600,—average mean distance of the moon from the earth.