

of all pre-judgment, and to esteem the treasure-house of physical variety still unexhausted, and the phases of physical appearance still not all seen. And should this most unexpected and important fact be hereafter established, we shall then be presented with a startling and striking converse to the fact arrived at by the masterly induction of the lamented Bessel, with regard to the stars Sirius and Procyon—the first, one of the most majestic orbs which our firmament can claim,—that each is associated in binary combination with masses yet mightier than themselves, like our planets opaque and non-luminous; suns of darkness, whose light, if ever they shone, has waned and gone out for ever. And, on the supposition of the planet in question being self-luminous, it becomes an interesting object of inquiry whether, from any adjacent system, our sun can appear with it to constitute a double star.”

Such is the reviewer's statement. Now, opinions have lately been set forth with great skill and plausibility tending to the belief that this earth is the only planet fit for the habitation of intelligent beings, and that the other planets of the Solar System being either too near the sun, or too remote from it, receive either too great or too little an amount of light and heat to fit them for the abodes of creatures constituted like ourselves.

If, however, future observation should confirm this statement that Neptune is itself luminous, it must somewhat modify these views, for it will prove that a planet even at the great distance which Neptune is from the sun may after all not be such a dark world, and not quite so miserable as it has been represented. And this self-luminosity of Neptune may also account for its less complicated arrangements for compensation by means of moons for the small amount of light it receives from the sun. For it has only one satellite—at least Mr. Lassell, who has lately moved his celebrated Reflecting Telescope to Malta where the atmosphere is peculiarly well adapted for astronomical observations, states that he is satisfied there is only one satellite belonging to Neptune—or at least if there be others, there is no prospect of discovering them with our present telescopes. The suspicion entertained by Mr. Lassell and Mr. Bond that there is a ring round Neptune has since been abandoned. I may here mention that Mr. Lassell also states as the result of his late observations that he is satisfied there are only four satellites belonging to Uranus.

Now, these facts give rise to some reflections—and it may not be out of place here to offer a few observations upon the varieties which exist amongst the planetary bodies as regards their physical conditions, and to take a cursory view of the Solar System generally; from which