COSMOS.

VII.

NEBULOUS SPOTS.—ARE THESE ONLY REMOTE AND VERY DENSE CLUSTERS OF STARS?—THE TWO MAGELLANIC CLOUDS, IN WHICH CROWDED NEBULOUS SPOTS ARE INTERSPERSED WITH NUMEROUS STELLAR SWARMS.—THE SO-CALLED COAL-SACKS OF THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE.

AMONG the visible cosmical bodies occupying the regions of space, besides those which shine with *stellar light* (whether self-luminous, or illumined like planets, stars isolated or in multiple groups, and revolving round a common center of gravity), there are also masses which present a *faint and milder nebulous light*.* These bodies, which appear at one time as sharply defined, disk-formed, luminous clouds, at another as irregularly and variously-shaped masses, widely diffused over large spaces, seem to the naked eye, at first sight, to be wholly different from those cosmical bodies of which we treated fully in the last four sections of the Astrognosy. In the same way that there is an inclination to infer from the observed and as yet unexplained motion of the *visible* cosmical bodies,† the existence of others hitherto *invisible*, so the knowledge gained as to the *resolvability* of a considerable number of nebulous spots has recently led to conclusions regarding the non-existence of all nebulæ, and, indeed, of all cosmical vapor generally. But whether these well-defined nebulous spots be a self-luminous vapory matter, or remote, closely-thronged globular *clusters of stars*, they must ever remain objects of vast importance in the knowledge of the structure of the universe and of the contents of space.

The number whose positions have been determined by right ascension and declination exceeds 3600. Some of the

* *Cosmos*, vol. i., p. 85–89, 91, and 142; vol. ii., p. 328; vol. iii., p 37–41, 140, 154, and 162. † *Cosmos*, vol. iii., p. 185, 186