has been approached is to select for inquiry bright stars, which have in their immediate vicinity, so near as to be seen with them at the same time in the same telescope, two or three other very much smaller ones; and without troubling ourselves to determine their *absolute* places in the heavens (so throwing overboard the enormous difficulties which, as we have seen, that determination to a sufficient precision presents), confine ourselves to what may be called a microscopic examination and mapping down of the relative distances and situations of these stars *inter se*. Repeating this at all seasons of the year, we are enabled to ascertain whether the large star maintains steadily the same invariable position among the smaller ones; or is affected by any movements of which they do not partake. There is a general *primâ facie* probability that the brighter stars are nearer than very faint ones: and, near objects being more displaced than distant ones by the spectator's change of place; the large star in the case supposed would appear, by the effect of parallax, to move to and fro among the smaller ones; or rather to describe annually a minute ellipsis among them, the exact counterpart, equal in size and similar in the situation of its longer and shorter diameters, to that into which the earth's orbit itself would be seen projected by the effect of perspective from the star. Now no casual movement, or one arising from any other physical cause, *could* be mistaken for such a motion as this. For, not to mention the completion of the revolution in an exact year, the two diameters of the ellipse ought to stand to each other in a certain defi-