

three hundred and one contemporary planets, only one is a scene of rational existence, and the others either not inhabited at all, or inhabited by but sentient irrationality. We cannot give the argument any such exact form, seeing that an unreckoned but possible, nay, probable element, comes in to destroy its exactitude. The other planets *may*, nay, in all likelihood, *have* been ripening as certainly as our own, and the period of rational inhabitancy may have arrived in not a few of them. Quite as perilous, however, would it be to argue from the particular analogy furnished by the history of the earth, that all, or even the greater part of them, had so ripened. Why, even the fruit of one season, whether apples or apricots, does not all ripen at the same time on the same tree; far less do the fruits of different trees ripen at the same time. And we are sufficiently acquainted with the planets to know, that with certain general resemblances they are very different fruit indeed from our own earth. Even supposing Jupiter, for instance, to be in every respect save size a second earth (which, by the way, demonstrably he is not), he would take, on the soberest calculations of the geologist, many hundred times more time to ripen than our small planet. And so may it be predicted of Saturn, and Uranus, and Neptune also, and most probably, from the different circumstances in which they are placed, of the smaller planets Mercury and Venus. But while this geological question, in relation to the present time of *ripe* or *unripe*, must be now brought in to qualify the reasonings of the astronomer, let us not forget that these reasonings have, with reference to *ultimate* results, a value as positive as ever. From the crustaceous eyes of many facets that existed during the times of the Silurian period, and the ichthyic eyes of but one facet or capsule that existed during the times of the Old Red Sandstone, the geologist infers that during these periods there existed light; while the astronomer, taking up the converse of the argu-