

many great oceans,—one of these (unfortunately the only one in contact with man's place of habitation) of salt water, one of sugar-cane juice, one of spirituous liquor, one of clarified butter, and one of sour curds. It has, besides, its very great ocean of sweet water. And around all, forming a sort of gigantic hoop or ring, there extends a continent of pure gold. Of all the luminaries that rise over this huge world, the sun is the nearest: the distance of the moon is twice as great; the lesser fixed stars occur immediately beyond; then Mercury, then Venus, then Mars, then Jupiter, then Saturn; and finally, the great bear and the polar star. And such is that cosmogony and astronomy of the Brahmins to which their religion, in its character as a revelation, stands committed, and in which a very lenient criticism has found the geologic revolutions. Let me draw my next illustration from Buddhism, the most ancient and most widely-spread religion of the east; for, though partially overlaid in the great Indian peninsula by the more modern monstrosities of Brahminism, it extends in one direction from the Persian Gulf to Formosa and Japan, and in the other from the wastes of Siberia to the Gulf of Siam. Scarce any of the other forms of heathenism darken so large a portion of the map as Buddhism,—a superstition which is estimated to include within its pale nearly one-third of the whole human species.

It has been held, I need scarce say, by most astronomers since the times of Newton, that the universe consists of innumerable systems of worlds, furnished each with its own sun; and held by most geologists during the last fifty years, that the past duration of our earth was divided into periods of vast extent, each of which had a creation of its own. And certainly in Buddhism we find both these ideas,—the idea of the existence of separate systems, each with its own sun; and the idea of successive periods, each with its own crea-