

matter of which it is composed. Finally terrestrial chemistry completes the evidence regarding the composition of such astronomical bodies; geophysics that regarding their state. The number of extinct suns is probably very great; Arrhenius thinks it not unlikely that they may be one hundred times more numerous than the luminous stars.¹

It is more difficult to gain a clear idea of the nebulæ, for such aggregations of matter are very diverse in appearance, and none lie near enough to the earth for us to study them as we study the solar system. However, investigation of new stars, of the spiral forms of many nebulæ, of the so-called star rifts which appear to be due to the movement of a large body through a nebula, sweeping up smaller bodies and leaving a channel behind, and a variety of considerations dependent upon the modern development of the sciences of physics and chemistry, all contribute to a growing belief that nebulæ may often, and sometimes at least do certainly arise from collisions between dense bodies. Further, the nature of the processes by which stars may be formed out of nebulæ becomes constantly better understood, and while there is small ground to regard our present science of nebulæ

¹ "Worlds in the Making," p. 151.