

and these little specks of light by night, went round and round this great flat plain which constituted their world, appearing above it in the east, ascending high overhead, and then sinking beneath it once more in the west. They knew not that that ball of fire was made of the same materials as their desert tracts, or that, indeed, those very tracts were part of that ball of fire. They had no conception that this sun was a million times as far from them as the most distant hill they could see—a million times as far away as the longest day's march they had ever made. They had never supposed that that seemingly small ball of fire was millions of times as great as the round of their horizon, vast as that desert horizon appears. And in their highest flights of imagination they had never thought those little specks of light were greater worlds still—greater and infinitely more distant; or that, besides those few thousands which they could see with their eyes, there were millions and millions beyond.

And if we know so much more than these primitive peoples, it is simply because those who have gone before have thought, and reasoned, and given play to their imagination, and have recorded their thoughts to help on those who will follow after. It is not so many centuries ago that the most learned men in Europe would have told us that we could never hope to know what the sun was made of, still less what were the materials of the stars. And yet, little by little, these and other secrets have been forced out of Nature. Men have watched her, studied her every movement, marked each down, and thought over it, till Nature could no longer conceal what had been hidden in her breast during all the long ages of the past, and so it is we now know what we do know. So it is that the cultured European is able to realize so much better than these simple nomads what our true position in the universe is; and, realizing this, to have higher and more enlarged ideas of the character of its Creator and Ruler.