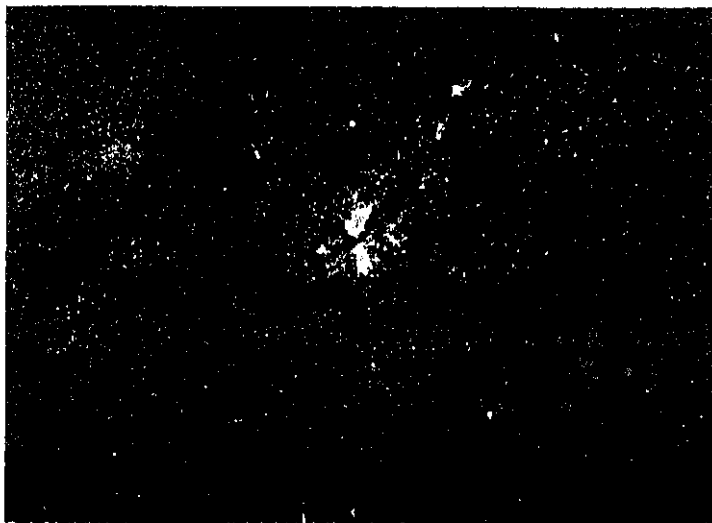


Omega Centauri is faintly seen in southern skies with the naked eye. When viewed through a powerful telescope, it is found to consist of about six thousand, four hundred stars of about the fourth magnitude, forming almost a blaze of light in the centre. It is beyond all doubt the richest and the largest object of its kind in the heavens. Some idea of the vast distance that separates this cluster of suns from us may be formed from the fact that the united light of the six thousand, four hundred stars shines in the sky with no greater light than a single star of the fourth magnitude would do. Large

light, looking like patches of the milky way, but are not in any way connected with the galaxy. The larger cloud, or Nebecula Major, occupies a space in the heavens about two hundred times the apparent size of the full moon. A good telescope shows that it consists of about two hundred clusters and nebulae, besides many thousands of stars. Mr. Russell, the Government Astronomer of Sydney, says: "The whole of this great cloud is a complex spiral nebula, with two centres, if I may so express it." This spiral character was first noticed by him on some photographs taken in 1890, and the discovery



NEBULA ABOUT ETA ARGUS AND PART OF MILKY WAY.

From a photograph taken at Arequipa, Peru, May 10th, 1893. Exposure, 78 minutes.

numbers of the component stars of this cluster are variable, upwards of one hundred of these varying in brightness in short periods of under twenty-four hours. This globular cluster of suns is a universe in itself, and the conclusion seems to be that worlds revolving round these suns would have perpetual daylight. The blaze of light to inhabitants of these worlds would hide all external systems; so that here we have the strange anomaly that an excess of light may hide more than it reveals.

The Magellanic clouds are remarkable objects in the southern sky, forming two bright spots, roughly circular, of milky

is a very remarkable one, and corroborates Sir John Herschell's statement made long ago, "that the Nebeculae are to be regarded as systems *sui generis*, and which have no analogues in the northern hemisphere." The best-known spiral nebula in the heavens is the very remarkable one in the constellation of Canes Venatici, or the Greyhounds, and there are other spiral nebulae in other parts of the sky. In this instance, however, we have the whole of the great Magellan Cloud, with its swarms of nebulae and clusters, forming a gigantic spiral of itself. The smaller Magellanic Cloud, or Nebecula Minor, is fainter to the eye, and not so rich