

REASONS
FOR BELIEF IN
JUDICIAL ASTROLOGY;
COMPRISING SOME
ADVICE TO STUDENTS,
AND
REMARKS ON THE DANGEROUS CHARACTER
OF
Popish Priestcraft:

ALSO, A WORD OR TWO UPON ASTROLOGICAL BOOKS AND
DIRECTIONS, IN AN APPENDIX.

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P R E F A C E.

DR. PALEY, in his chapter "Of Reverencing the Deity," declares that the "truth or falsehood of Christianity" may be discussed with propriety, and that the inquiry need be "restrained by no laws but those of decency:" which the author of the following pages pleads, as a more than sufficient justification of inquiry into matters of very much less importance.

Among the various systems which have influenced the mind of man, there cannot be found one which has been more generally denounced as superstitious and absurd, than Judicial Astrology; and yet it is almost the only one which offers the means of philosophical examination, and experimental proof.

Finding himself unable to reconcile the falsehood of Astrology with the statements of those who had availed themselves of its use, the author

determined to investigate the subject for himself. His object at first, was merely to convince himself whether there were really grounds for believing in the indications of the stars ; but with increased knowledge came increased curiosity, and for more than twenty years the study has been a source of pleasure.

The space to which the author has confined himself has prevented his giving such full advice to students as he wished ; but observation of the little he has said will enable them to perceive they are studying a reality, and proceeding in a proper manner to gain knowledge of it ; which is a gratification the author did not obtain without much labour and perseverance.

Every inductive science is subject to the intrusion of errors, so great, that it is afterwards thought surprising they could ever have been received as truths. Astronomy is sufficiently conspicuous in this respect ; and Astrology, which has to deal with a much greater number of influences, has not been the only one science exempt from all mistakes. The errors of Astrology both real and imaginary, together with a great number of blunders for which it is by no

means answerable, may be found in the writings of its opponents.

The author much regrets his inability to use facts which must be obvious to all thinkers, in a manner better calculated to do justice to his subject : he has done his best with the space at his disposal.

London, May, 1849.

R E A S O N S
FOR BELIEF IN
J U D I C I A L A S T R O L O G Y,
&c. &c.

WHEN, and by what people, Astrology was first studied will probably never be known. Playfair, as quoted by Simmonite in his *Astro-philosopher* (page 17), declares the Indians to have been well acquainted with Astrology at the epoch of the Tirvalore Tables 3102 years before Christ. In Maurice's *History of Hindostan*, vol. 1, page 179, it is said, "Abraham's father, Terah, who was a maker of idols, and fashioned them under the particular influences of the planets, could be no stranger to astronomy, or, at least, to a science very intimately connected with it, and which in those days formed a part of it, Astrology."

"When God bade Abraham lift up his eyes *to the stars*, and count their number, it was probably done in allusion to the science in which that patriarch so eminently excelled; and the vision of Jacob when he saw the ladder whose top reached up to heaven, and on which the angels of God, that is the glorified spirits, ascended and descended, has a very

"near relation to the sidereal ladder and seven gates erected in the ancient astronomical cavern temple of Mithra, on which the transmigrating soul ascended or descended." Terah is said to have died 1921 years B.C., the date of the "cavern temple of Mithra" could not, we suppose, be easily ascertained.

In Chambers's Journal for 21 Decem., 1839, astrology is said to have been "practised by the Babylonians and Chaldeans from 2000 to 1000 years before Christ." Even the word *astrologer* is now used in a different sense to that in which it was formerly used: anciently it meant "one that understood the motions of the planets, without including prediction;" now it designates "one that professes to foretell events by the stars."*

But many persons say, and more believe, that the stars intimate nothing; that their indications are entirely imaginary; and that those who declare such indications to be real, and to obey certain laws, are either credulous dupes, or cunning impostors. If astrology is imposture, it is surely the most extraordinary imposture ever heard of. We have just mentioned certain dates assigned for its commencement, and we find it stated in the Penny Magazine for 23 Sept., 1843, that "the disbelief in astrology which is now so generally prevalent in society, is rather to be considered as the effect of education, than a firm conviction of the mind resulting from investigation and inquiry." Surely if it were nothing better than "the most

* See Todd's "Johnson's Dictionary," and "The Penny Cyclopædia."

“ splendid fiction that has ever been imposed on
“ the credulity of mankind,” its alleged falsehood
and absurdity might have been proved and estab-
lished by its opponents in less than 3000 years.

It is scarcely conceivable that such a question
should have been discussed for centuries, and
still remain unsettled, or that those who deny
the existence of astral influence, should do so,
because they are taught to do so, rather than,
because they are convinced they are justified in
doing it ; but such is confessedly the case. We
cannot imagine this uncertainty could exist, if
either of the opposed parties had offered clear
and sound reasons for the opinion they entertain ;
but this they have not done, for whoever attends
to the discussion of this subject, will find that on
one side, the reasonings upon it amount to a de-
claration that *astrology is true*, and on the other,
that *astrology is false and absurd*. Its advocates
are found asserting a state of things which
cannot be proved to exist, as a reason for facts
they wish to establish ; and its opponents gene-
rally save themselves all trouble by taking for
granted that which is alone the subject of dis-
putation.

But sometimes a more laboured attempt is
made by opponents of astrology. Thus we find
in the Companion to the British Almanac for
1828, a work that was heralded by long news-
paper articles, and was to destroy all remaining
faith in astrological predictions, as if by the
flourish of a magician’s wand,—a chapter in-
tended to attain this object ; which is a curiosity
in its way, from its unhesitating assertions, and
the very odd character of its logic. As a
sample of the latter, we will quote a short para-

graph from page 27, where after describing the "harvest moon," &c. &c., it is said,—

"Such are the principal changes in the moon's appearance; they are all to be explained upon the simple facts of the motions of the moon and the earth; and therefore they neither have, nor can have, any of those influences which superstition, the child of ignorance, ascribes to them." And from the context, there is no doubt that by *superstition* is meant astrology.

We must leave it to others to justify the above conclusion. It has never been supposed that the astrological indications of the moon depended upon her unnatural appearance; and *therefore*, the explanation of her appearance by facts of any kind, leaves the question of her astrological indications *just where it found that question*. But this is the best reasoning the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge has offered on the subject.

A pet question of the opponents of astrology is, *How can planets which are millions of miles from the earth, in any way indicate the destiny of an infant born on that earth?* The proper return to which is, *How should I know?* It is found by observation and experience that they do so indicate: and we are not justified in rejecting that fact, because we cannot account for it. A similar objection was urged against the existence of gravitation when its influence was first propounded. It was said to be an occult influence, and therefore inadmissible: that it was impossible for one body to have any influence upon another body which was millions of miles distant, &c. &c. But these objections were met by Cotes in his Preface to the Principia, and as

they were utterly worthless they were soon forgotten.

Facts brought forward in proof of the truth of astrology, are frequently got rid of by its opponents, by being called *coincidences*: and it is an undeniable truth that they are so. But the observing and registering such coincidences, constitute almost the only means we have of acquiring a knowledge of the powers and laws of nature. All we know of gravitation has been learnt by noting these coincidences; and although it seems the most general law of nature, we know nothing of it except what we learn from its observed effects. Even "the motions of the heavenly bodies, which can be exactly measured, and the very excentricities of which are regular within a certain range, are examples of Definite Certainties:" and for anything man can tell, "the whole of the sidereal motions may stop to-morrow."* All this must be admitted; but nevertheless a certain number of coincidences invariably recurring, justify the conclusion that they recur in obedience to a law, which we may probably become acquainted with by means of those recurrences. The contact of certain substances at one end of a wire, and the simultaneous occurrence of certain movements at the other end of the wire, is merely a *coincidence*; but this coincidence has been so uniformly observed, that people believe the contact at one end will be always accompanied by the motion at the other, although they are ignorant how the effect is produced; and thereupon they construct Electric Telegraphs.

* See "Chambers's Journal," December 31, 1842.

Numerous examples might be given of the inexplicable and mysterious character of nature's influences. We are only "slowly, but surely, raising a corner of the veil that hides from us the mysteries of natural phenomena,"* and yet the phenomena alluded to have been studied by the best and most cultivated intellects for ages: surely then the votary of Truth should pause before he decides a fact to be impossible, merely because he cannot perceive how it is accomplished.

Astrology has never derived that assistance from the modern, and improved modes of investigation, which have advanced all other kindred subjects towards perfection. "The history of every science founded on observation is a record of imperfect generalizations enlarged and corrected by inductions from more copious supplies of newly-observed facts."† Astrology has never among the moderns, been in a condition to benefit by this process: many of its laws are unknown; "because no inductive science can be absolutely perfect. Adams and Leverrier have shown us that there is something still to be learnt, even in Astronomy."* Yet how often has Astrology been attacked, because it is *not* "absolutely perfect."

The persons best qualified to cultivate the knowledge of astral indications have been taught to spurn the idea of doing so, and have left the subject to the care and keeping of (with some exceptions) the ignorant and the mercenary; of poor knaves who use it, or in most cases only

* "Athenæum," November 18, 1848, p. 1150.

† *Ibid.*, September 4, 1847, p. 925.

affect to use it, to obtain a sixpence illegally : and it is made answerable for all the blunders of these vile pretenders. If Mathematics, Astronomy, Medicine, or indeed any one of the acknowledged sciences had been placed in similar circumstances for the same length of time, what would it be now ? most likely a thing for boobies to contemn, or wits to make a jest of, as it suited their humour or their purpose.

Astrology, Phrenology, Physiognomy, &c. &c. are supposed by some persons to favour Fatalism ; and they are therefore decried by many worthy people who dread fatalism, as something unchristian and detestable. It is an error into which persons of note have fallen, “ to suppose that the “ most extravagant belief in predestination leads “ to a life of profligacy ; on the contrary, fatalists “ are usually rigid moralists,—such was the character of the Stoics in Greece, the Pharisees “ in Judea, and the Calvinistic Puritans in England.”* Religious belief takes its form from the genius of the people among whom it is prevalent. We admit that having once taken its form, it may react upon the popular mind, and prevent its advance and refinement. Thus an auto-da-fé could only be exhibited to a barbarous people ; but repeated exhibitions of this kind would retain the people in their barbarity and ignorance, and consequently in the power of the Romish priesthood by whose instigation such enormities were perpetrated.†

Priestly domination is no assurance of morality. Even at the present day we find nations which

* “Athenæum,” November 6, 1841, p. 848.

† See Howitt’s “History of Priestcraft,” eighth edition, p. 131.

are the most slavishly superstitious, and subservient to their priests, are at the same time the most immoral in their conduct, and the most licentious in their habits. The single-minded and earnest character of the Puritan, made him ready to sacrifice everything dear to him for any cause that he felt to be a good cause ; but nothing short of miraculous interference could have made one of his temperament utter the phrase " Our Lord God the Pope,"* with the fervour of a Neapolitan bravo.

We must state our conviction, that if there be truth in Astrology, or Phrenology, or Physiognomy, man cannot be a free agent : but on the other hand we submit, that if all these were proved to rest on imaginary bases, such proof would be of little, if any, service to the advocates of Freewill. It is an undenied and an undeniable fact, that some men are more talented, more fortunate, or in some way more gifted by nature than others ; and this is equally a fact, whether it be shown in the horoscope and the contour of the head and face ; or whether it be possible to find the mind of a sage in a skull like that of an idiot, or a Shakspeare's genius in a head like a monkey's.

But we cannot imagine how phrenology can lead to materialism : for it seems to us to be founded on the hypothesis, that while in this world the human mind requires certain corporal conditions to enable it to manifest its powers perfectly, without reference to what the mind itself

* See page 122 of " Pagan and Popish Priestcraft Identified and Exposed." By the Rev. R. Taylor, incumbent of Hartlepool. 1847.

is. We cannot imagine it to affirm that every man is clever whose head is of such and such size and shape, because that would be tantamount to saying, a sudden attack of madness or paralysis could make no difference in the mental power. But it may be said that where there is little brain there is little power, in the same manner that it may be said, where there is little bone and muscle there is little strength, without the one declaration leading to materialism more than the other.

This needless apprehension seems to have been the consequence of writers having endeavoured to find evidence of Man's immortality, in the distinctive character of his mind from that of brutes. Thus, of S. T. Coleridge it is said, "It is in the possession of reason, then, that he distinguishes man from the lower animals; and in the faculties and powers which this confers, he believes all the qualities to exist that give to the former his superiority over the latter—supply him with a never-ending source of thought whereon his progress is dependent—place him in immediate relation with his Creator—and are the guarantee of his immortality."*

To differ from such an authority upon such a subject, would be a degree of presumption that we disclaim; but we may be permitted to say that difficulties present themselves which we cannot surmount. If man's mental powers are the guarantee of his immortality, what becomes of the idiot? Is evidence of immortality to be derived from the most talented alone, or from

* "Athenæum," November 6, 1847, p. 1144.

the aggregate? if from the former, the idiot's immortality seems liable to be doubted; if from the latter, we do not see why animals should not be included, whose mental powers are undeniably superior to those of the idiot.

As to freewill, we confess our inability to comprehend what is meant by it. We of course know that a man may choose the colour of his coat; wear top-boots or pumps, &c. &c. according to his taste; but this does not lessen our difficulty. As to a "limited freewill," it is like talking of the freedom of a prisoner. To us, freewill seems an amusing figment of the brain. Man comes into the world endowed with a certain constitution, mind, and passions: over the strength and character of these endowments he has no more control than he has over the fact of his parents being Catholics or Mahometans: he is trained and educated amidst scenes and circumstances, the most trifling of which he is powerless to change, or modify in the smallest degree: the influence of the scenes and circumstances in which he is trained upon his physical and mental constitution, produce those peculiarities which, in their combination constitute his individualism: and every feeling, thought, and act, is a natural and unavoidable consequence of that combination. Where then is man's freewill? He is constrained by his feelings, thoughts, tastes, and habits, to do certain things, and when he has done them he imagines, or tries to imagine, that he did those certain things in consequence of some impulse entirely distinct from his feelings, thoughts, tastes and habits; and pleases, and flatters himself, with fancying he is a free agent.

No! Free Will can only belong to the One Supreme: and for so helpless a creature as man to claim the possession of it, and thus attempt to place himself on a level with the Highest and the Eternal, is too ludicrously absurd to be treated as presumptuous.

If it be said that such doctrines as these are fraught with danger to mankind; we answer, that man's belief cannot alter his actual condition, and that he must necessarily be much more endangered by imagining himself to be what he is *not*, than by knowing himself to be what he *is*. If it be objected that these truths are repugnant to certain systems which have long been acquiesced in, we answer that the searcher for truth should not be influenced by any system, further than its consistency with nature's laws can be demonstrated by reason, or proved by experience.

The truth is, Free Will is not a fact, nor a principle, nor a natural law, the existence of which can be manifested; but merely a dogma: that is to say, a something which certain men agree to receive, and teach, as an established truth. Thus we are told that "as freedom of will is essential to the nature of moral agents, that they may co-operate with God in their own improvement and happiness, and that they may be accountable for their conduct, so also certain limits are necessarily prescribed to their natures and powers, beyond which they cannot act according to their own wills."* Here free-will is not spoken of as a fact, but as a necessary

* See "The Imperial Encyclopædia," by the Rev. W. M. Johnson, A.M., and Thomas Exley, A.M., article "Christianity."

element of a certain theory. But so gratifying to the self-love, so flattering to the vanity, and altogether so acceptable to the more energetic classes of mankind is this particular dogma of freewill, that it was received with avidity; and so habituated are numbers of men to believe it an established truth, that they cannot imagine the affairs of the world could go on unless it were so. But all the attempts that we have seen to prove man endowed with this power have failed.

As an example of how this subject is treated we will quote from M. Victor Cousin.*

"The will, which is the seat of liberty, is the same in all men. It may have at its service different instruments, different and consequently unequal powers, whether material or spiritual. But the powers which the will employs are not the will. The only free power is that of the will, and that is essentially free."

This seems tantamount to saying "the will is free *because it is*:" and with all deference to M. Cousin we must express a different opinion.

We have no means of judging of the Will except by its manifestations: it is declared that all its means of manifestation may differ; and consequently that its power of manifesting its own freedom must vary; yet we are told it is "essentially" and therefore equally "free." But we cannot admit the Will possesses a freedom which it has not the power to manifest, and which, therefore, we have no means of knowing it possesses.

It may possibly be said, that we can derive

* See "Athenæum," for September 16, 1848, p. 924.

opinions of the Will from other sources than its manifestations ; but we believe such opinions are formed by means that will enable men to sophisticate themselves into the belief of anything.

The believers in Free Will are quite sure that man possesses it "to a limited extent;" but their attempts to prove its existence are as abortive as if they sought to establish the existence of a sixth sense. We confess we have no liking for this freewill system. Some worthless biped sits on a throne, says "I am everybody," and incarcerates, during his pleasure, all who offend him : millions exist in brute-like ignorance, starvation, and wretchedness, in order that a few scores of profligates may revel in the studied refinements of luxury : there is not one of the latter whose personal liberty is worth one hour's purchase, and yet they imagine themselves superior to all the rest of the human family, merely because ages of practice has conferred the power of being profligate and puerile with a charming elegance of manner, that none but high-bred scoundrels can exhibit. Such was the state of the French before the first revolution. Hostile armies meet, and thousands are slaughtered, and many more thousands made wretched ; but this is called *glory*, and as if by magic, the dreadful scene becomes a source of exultation. Many other facts might be adduced which render Man, when regarded as a free agent, a most humiliating subject of contemplation. But viewed as a necessity of creation, the meanest thing in existence becomes a requisite atom of one grand unit, of which countless suns and systems are component parts : and thus regarded, deformity and vice lose their hideousness, beauty becomes more beau-

tiful, and the Eternal Creator of all more reverently worshipped, and more fervently adored.

But so entirely convinced have the Romish Priesthood been of the freedom of the human will, and of the unlimited control of the will over the opinion, that they have destroyed mankind *by millions*, for the ostensible reason that the destroyed did not worship the God of Justice and of Mercy, in the manner which they ought to have believed most acceptable to him. According to Llorente, the Inquisition deprived Spain alone of *three millions* of inhabitants in 119 years; and this was *previous* to the Reformation which served as an excuse for destroying crowds of "heretics."*

The distinguishing features of priestcraft have remained unchanged throughout its entire history. In its palmy days amongst the Egyptians, the Priests exhibited what were to the multitude, mysterious ceremonies. These mysteries "were instituted with a view to aggrandize that order of men, to extend their influence, and enlarge their revenues. To accomplish these objects, they applied every engine to besot the multitude with superstition and enthusiasm. They taught them, that themselves were the distinguished favourites of heaven; and that celestial doctrines had been revealed to them, too holy to be communicated to the profane vulgar, and too sublime to be comprehended by them. After the mysteries were instituted, and had acquired a high reputation, legislators, magistrates, judges, and monarchs, joined in the im-

* See Howitt's "History of Priestcraft," eighth edition, p. 131.

“posture, with the same views. Priests and
 “princes were actuated by the same spirit.
 “The combination was equally advantageous to
 “both.”*

The conspicuous characteristic of nearly every section of the sacerdotal order, has always been the love of worldly distinction, and of sensuality, and of riches as the means of securing them: nor have the ministers of Priestcraft been over scrupulous as to the means of obtaining the desired possessions. “As the stern injunction of “the Deity was explained” to the Indian “by “the barbarous priest, the child of his affection “or the wife of his bosom alternately expired on “altars reeking with human sacrifice.” * * * “If the offender happened to be of elevated rank “or of distinguished fortune, the penalty of life “was sometimes remitted, and the Brahmin pronounced that the divinity might be appeased “by a less barbarous oblation. In that case, the “half of his possessions was brought to the foot “of the altar, and the treasures thus extorted, “were devoted to swell the immense revenues of “the temple, and to gratify the insatiable avarice “of the priest.” * * * “Proportionate to “the boon which he wished to obtain, or to the “evil which he laboured to avert, was the largess “the sacrificer bestowed.”† When afterwards their religion forbade the shedding of blood, the ingenuity of priestcraft found ample means of revenue and licentiousness, in converting the tem-

* See “The Imperial Encyclopædia,” article “Mystery.”

† See Maurice’s “Indian Antiquities,” vol. ii., p. 69. At page 71 he quotes authorities to prove that “the altars of India were once stained with human blood.”

ples of their deities into "public brothels."* It must be admitted this was an improvement: a procurer is much less detestable than a man-slayer.

In South America, where the Spaniards found so strange a mixture of barbarity and refinement, it was a part of the sacerdotal occupation to put to death the prisoners of war; and it was to obtain men to be thus killed that war was made. These unfortunate captives were slaughtered by the priest by *forty* or *fifty* at a time.† "Without attempting a precise calculation, therefore, it is safe to conclude that thousands were yearly offered up, in the different cities of Anahuac, on the bloody altars of the Mexican divinities."‡

"In heathen history, before the advent of Christ, we read little of religious persecution."§ And although history furnishes appalling proof of the heinous crimes perpetrated by the priesthood of various religions for the advantage of their church, we believe the distinction of first persecuting men unto the death for their opinions upon speculative subjects, was reserved for the Romish priesthood: and to do them justice it must be said, they have well sustained the character of their order. The auto-da-fé was a terrible manifestation; and in the prisons of the Inquisition, the most infernal hatred of humanity found ample gratification, in the studiously artful continuance and prolongation of human agony.||

* See Maurice's "Indian Antiquities," vol. ii., p. 309.

† *Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 791.

‡ See Prescott's "History of the Conquest of Mexico."

§ "Pagan and Popish Priestcraft," p. 272.

|| See Howitt's "History of Priestcraft," eighth edition, chap. xv.

It is to be feared that tales might be told of the Protestants which would not be very creditable to their humanity. Possibly the day has yet to arrive when the religion of Christ shall be truly taught and sincerely practised. "As to persecution—CHRISTIANITY NEVER DID PERSECUTE. Whatever any one may have pretended to be, if a persecuting spirit were in him, the Holy Spirit of God was not there—he was destitute of divine grace; and in that case he was no Christian."*

Astrology was not repudiated by the early Christians, but "the predestinarian principle assumed a modified form more consistent with the belief of the Catholic church. It was said the stars only incline, but cannot compel." * * * "The Greek and Roman Christians of the earlier centuries had in many instances received the whole of astrology; in others the modified belief above mentioned."† There is nothing surprising in this when we recollect that about the time of Constantine the *First* or soon after, Paganism and Christianity became in some way assimilated. We have seen it stated that Christianity became general at this time; but we much doubt it. Nations do not change their faith all at once; nor is it likely that Paganism, which had existed from periods beyond the reach of history, should have been laid aside by mankind for a faith not four centuries old; nor is it probable that, if it had been so, Julian the Apostate would have dared to open the temples of the heathen gods, offer sacrifices according to the

* "Pagan and Popish Priestcraft," p. 124.

† "Penny Cyclopædia," article "Astrology."

ancient rites, and exhort all persons to follow his example, as he did about the year 361. It seems far more probable that Christianity was absorbed by Paganism, in much the same manner that Protestantism might have been absorbed by Romanism,—and may be still,—if the sheep are not watchful of the shepherds, and carefully on their guard against the wolves.

But whether the millions joined the religion of the units or the units joined them, the assimilation was not so difficult a matter as at first sight it may appear. The educated heathens had for countless ages believed in One Supreme Deity;* the Trinity was a mystery they had been equally long accustomed to;† even the Cross was a symbol they were familiar with as “allusive to the “four elements,” and to the “four cardinal “points of the world.”‡ “Whatever name was “applied as an attribute to the ancient Great “Mother, at Rome,” was afterwards “applied to “the Virgin Mary.”§ Thus the “Queen of “Heaven, under all the variety of names and “attributes, from the Mother of all the Gods “Cybele; through the imperial Juno; the wise “and warlike Minerva; the chaste Diana; and “the chief favorite of all, the pleasure, laughter-loving Venus—had ever been the women’s “favorite deity: and all these they soon discovered in the Virgin Mother, henceforth the “Mother of God and their Queen of Heaven.”||

* Maurice’s “Indian Antiquities,” vol. ii., pp. 63, 286, 297; and vol. v., pp. 779, 821, &c., &c.

† *Ibid.*, vols. iv. and v.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. ii., pp. 359, 360, &c.

§ “Popish and Pagan Priestcraft,” p. 48.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 129.

If the people allowed the names of their household gods to be changed, they might sacrifice to them and worship them as before. Gorgeous processions were, as heretofore, exhibited to the people, "whose external religious practices the founders of the Romish Church made a practice of imitating in order to take advantage of the habits of the people."* By such means the two religions were soon consolidated into the one Romish Church; for "Popery and Paganism are as much the same as a man is the same in one dress that he is in another."†

Whether it arose from the prevalence of pagan learning or from belief arising from other causes, it seems that "many zealous catholics in later times" believed in astrology, "and among them churchmen of the highest rank, such as the Cardinal d'Ailly (died in 1425) who calculated the horoscope of Jesus Christ. The astrology of comets, which is hardly yet out of date, has even been recognized by a Pope: in the fifteenth century Calixtus III. directed prayers and anathemas against a comet which had either assisted in, or predicted the success of the Turks against the Christians."‡ Surely the unchristian character of astrology cannot be very decided, nor very manifest, when we find the head of the Christian Church publicly exhibiting his belief in it in the fifteenth century.

The controversy in the Romish church about Predestination—the basis of astrology—began in

* Chambers's "Information for the People, article "Key to the Calendar."

† "Pagan and Popish Priestcraft," p. 124.

‡ "Penny Cyclopædia," article "Astrology."

the fifth century, and seems to have been evaded by the councils; for in the sixteenth century the council of Trent was much perplexed how to settle the matter without giving offence to the Dominicans who were much attached to that doctrine, and possessed great influence in the council. "After much dispute the great object came to be, how to contrive such a decree as might give offence to nobody, although it should decide nothing."* But this indecision could not long serve the purpose; the increasing intelligence of the people had long been watched by the priesthood with dislike and distrust; Luther and Calvin had successfully contradicted the infallibility of the Church; and it probably felt apprehensive that the people would very soon perceive the inconsistency of its pronouncing man a free agent, but sanctioning opinions at variance with that dogma. Nor was it desirable in a commercial point of view that the people should lean to Calvinistic opinions, for it was not likely to increase the sale of dispensations, pardons, indulgences, and all such like matters that the Romish Church makes money by.

It was probably some such considerations as these, that occasioned the Council of Milan held in 1565 to direct the bishops to "chastise and banish" and "severely punish" astrologers and those who consulted them;† but whatever occasioned the direction to be given, it does not seem to have been very scrupulously obeyed, for "the

* "Imperial Encyclopædia," *article* "Predestination."

† See the English translation of "History of Auricular Confession," by Count C. P. De Lasteyrie, vol. ii., p. 226. The Protestants enumerate eight councils; the Romanists eighteen.

“seventeenth century formed the era during which judicial astrology chiefly flourished in our island, and indeed all over Europe.”* For the reason of this sufferance on the part of the Romish church we need not look far. Astrology was intimately connected with predestination, and the latter as we have seen was advocated by a powerful portion of the church itself; and it is highly probable from the pagan tendency of that church, that many of its members believed in, and defended astrology.

But what priesthood that ever existed have yielded to a first disappointment? And above all, when did the Romish church resign any object it had once perceived desirable to its own interest? A body so admirably organized to attain its ends, so incessantly watchful, so unceasingly vigilant, that it would command our highest admiration if its aim were the good of mankind, instead of the enthrallment of the human mind, and the annihilation of political liberty, for the sake of its own aggrandizement. Does it lose England in the sixteenth century? it will regain her at some time. It will quietly and gradually obtain Oxford; and thence influence the privileged classes: and imperceptibly, but with certainty secure its prey. Does it determine to extirpate all belief in any connexion between God and man except such as suits its own views to teach? be sure it will be done if unceasing perseverance will do it. If direct means fail, indirect will answer. Books teaching what it does not wish men to learn can be destroyed; those who cultivate such learning can be dis-

* “Chambers’s Journal” for December 21, 1839, p. 380.

countenanced; it can be manifested that those who oppose and ridicule such learning will be acceptable to their superiors; and a multitude of such ways may be adopted—and have been adopted—to annihilate all evidences of a science, which is opposed to the interests of a church whose practice is founded, and whose prosperity depends, upon belief in the free agency of man. Indeed the secret influence of such an institution as the Romish church is indescribable, and almost unlimited; and enables it to direct and control affairs over which it has no legitimate authority. The worldly welfare of every one within its pale is more or less at its disposal; all who wish to rise in life must do it homage; and talent, and genius, must bend before the idol that so powerfully sways the multitude. Hopes of personal advantage induce individuals who know its evilness, to fawn upon, and flatter the oppressor of the community; and thus it becomes, even in matters extraneous to its proper functions, arbitrary, despotic, and almost irresistible.

It must not be imagined that the Romish priesthood is the only one to which astrology is displeasing, as it must necessarily be so to all who teach that man is a free agent, and consequently to the Church of England. For although Luther at first adopted predestinarian opinions, he afterwards abandoned them; and they are now known by the name of “Calvinistic doctrines.”*
 * * * * “With regard to the church of England, it, “ is clearly proved by the Lord Bishop of Lincoln,

* To guard against *one* gross misrepresentation which may occur, we remark, that we do *not* maintain that Calvinists must needs believe in astrology.

“in his Refutation of Calvinism, that her doctrines are not Calvinistic.”* We are therefore not surprised when we find that theologians have taught that all attempts to become acquainted with the future are criminal;† because the sacerdotal order has always from its first institution opposed all inquiry, and condemned all knowledge, that in any way interfered with its own teaching; or had the remotest tendency to lessen its own influence. But it cannot be criminal to investigate natural phenomena, nor is it pretended to be so in the present day. “*No TRUTH in any department of knowledge can ever be in contradiction to any other TRUTH.*” It is the business of the Truth-seeker to inquire and investigate; if he find a new truth it must be good, whether at first sight it agree with other known truths or no: if he be deceived into mistaking that for truth which is not, further investigation will correct the error; but his mission is antagonistic to priestcraft; the dictum of which is, “*believe: and ask no questions.*”

That Shakspeare, Butler, and other poets should have exercised their wit upon astrology is quite natural, whether astrology be true or false. The first adapted his plays to the opinions of the influential persons of his day, and is not to be relied on even for historical facts. The second was eager to seize everything he could turn to account in bringing the opposite party into contempt, and recommending himself to his own.

Ample proof of the unfairness with which Astrology has been treated by its opponents, may

* “Imperial Encyclopædia,” *art.* “Predestination.”

† “Penny Magazine” for September 23, 1843.

be found in their printed attacks. We will quote a few passages without confining ourselves to the order of their appearance, and will begin with Voltaire; who, by the way, is the most honest critic of this subject we ever met with. In his *Philosophical Dictionary art. Astrology** he says, there would be no absurdity in saying that children born under certain configurations were weak and short lived; and those born under other configurations were of sound constitution and their lives long and happy. Nor "of two children who were born in the same minute" [he should have added *and in the same place*], "one became a king, the other nothing more than churchwarden of his parish;" for each might make his fortune by the elevation. And that "if such observations had been frequently repeated and found just, experience might, at the end of a few thousand centuries, have formed an art which it would have been difficult to call in question."

Now this is very nearly what astrology does say; and as astrological facts may be learned in far less time than Voltaire supposed, there is good reason to believe that if he had been better acquainted with the subject he would have formed a favourable opinion of it. As to the imagined cases which his article contains, no proof can be derived from them until such cases have occurred.

But the opponents of astrology have a great preference for imaginary cases; and the habit of unscrupulously drawing conclusions from them as if they were real ones. Thus the Penny Cyclo-

* We quote from the translation published in 1824 by J. and H. L. Hunt.

pædia art. Astrology says, "To take a case that might have occurred: suppose two men had engaged to throw dice against each other for their whole fortunes, and that each went the night before to consult different astrologers in the same town. To them it would not be necessary to tell their names, or exhibit their horoscopes; the present position of the heavens would be sufficient for pointing out a favourable hour, and if both astrologers worked by the same rules, as they ought to do, they would both arrive at the same result; that is, the same would be recommended to both inquirers, though one of them must certainly lose."

Now this is very plausible, and must have great influence on the opinion of a person ignorant of astrology. But the writer has thought proper to omit the one condition essential to the result he describes: and that is, *that each of the two gamesters should consult his astrologer at the same moment*; which is *very* unlikely to occur, and according to astrology is all but *impossible*, unless both gamesters were born at the same time and place.

In the same *article* it is said, "The astrologers never made any allowance for the precession of the equinoxes." But in like manner the Nautical Almanac has never made any such allowance; and yet its omitting to do so is not found "fatal to astronomy." The computers of the Nautical Almanac begin their reckonings at the same point as the astrologers, and that point they were taught how to select nearly two thousand years ago by Ptolemy; who at pages 31 and 32 of the *Tetrabiblos** says, the beginning of the whole

* When Ptolemy is quoted in these pages, Ashmand's translation of his "*Tetrabiblos*" is the work referred to.

zodiacal circle is the "Sign of Aries, which commences at the vernal equinox." At page 34 that "the first thirty degrees after the summer solstice" compose the sign of Cancer. And again at page 54 that the beginnings of the signs "are to be taken from the equinoxial and tropical points." In Chap. ix. of Book 1 he speaks of the fixed stars, which he indicates by the "constellations," and the like distinction is preserved throughout the work. Yet Voltaire says "The great misfortune of astrologers is, that the heavens have changed since the rules of the art were laid down;" as if the precession of the equinoxes settled the question of astrological truth at once. The same error was committed by Butler, and has been repeated by almost every opponent of astrology who has written on the subject. But who could resist the temptation to repeat, parrot-like, the words of others, when the reputation of a wit might be acquired by it?

The writer in the Penny Magazine for 23 September 1843 plumes himself on the discovery "that round pale faces, light grey eyes, and light brown hair, are more characteristic of climate than a well dignified moon." But—we do assure our readers it is true—Ptolemy knew that the natives of warm climates were not exactly like those of cold ones, and took some pains to impress upon his readers the necessity of paying due regard to that fact; lest negligence should lead to the assertion "that the native of Ethiopia will be born of white complexion," &c. &c., or on the other hand, "that the native of Germany or of Gaul will be black," &c. &c.*

* See book iv., chap. x.

The Chambers's in their Journal for 21 December 1839 make a determined onslaught upon astrology; but they make the attack with more zeal than discretion, which is unusual with Scotchmen. Amongst a mass of misrepresentations and unwarranted assumptions and assertions they say, "Because the heathens gave the name of Saturn, whom they painted as a gruff old man with a scythe, to one planet, and the name of Jupiter" &c. &c. "this was held as a sufficient reason by all parties in later times for believing that the first of these luminaries shed a black and baneful influence on mankind." But the Indians hold a similar opinion, although they represent Saturn in quite a different manner. According to M. Sonnerat, as quoted by Maurice,* "Sani, or Saturn, is the god who inflicts punishment on men during this life; he approaches only to annoy them: Saturday is the day of the week sacred to him. The Indians entertain dreadful apprehensions concerning him, and offer him conciliatory prayers. He is represented as of a *blue colour*; he has four arms; he is mounted upon a raven; and is surrounded by two serpents, whose intertwining bodies form a circle round him." It is not easy to imagine how the very same belief in his malific influence could be derived from two such very different images.

It must be remembered that the baneful influence of Saturn was taught and *believed* by the most learned among the Egyptians,—by that class who were the tutors of Thales, Pythagoras, and Plato; and whose lives were devoted to the

* "Indian Antiquities," vol. ii., p. 200.

cultivation of the sciences. Such men were very unlikely to be deceived in the manner asserted by the Chambers's. And it is to be observed that during the thousands of years that the mind of man has been more or less influenced by belief in astrology, and while many, various, and opposite opinions upon speculative subjects have been promulgated, persecuted, and defended, the fundamental principles of astrology have remained unchanged. During all that time there has not been one astrologer who has imagined Saturn and Mars to be benefics, or Jupiter and Venus the reverse; and this of itself is evidence that the opinions of astrologers are derived from observation and not from fancy. Indeed to imagine the ancients derived the belief in Saturn's malignity in the manner represented by the Chambers's, would be as unjustifiable as to suppose, that they believed the human soul to be a butterfly, because they invented the allegory of Cupid and Psyche.

Considering the early times when the mythological fables were invented, and the prevalent belief in astrology of all the educated world of those times, there cannot be any reason to doubt that the truths of astrology, as well as of other sciences, were concealed in those fables. Thus, Saturn devours all his male children until Jupiter is born, who under certain circumstances drives Saturn from his throne into another kingdom, where he does much good. This may be understood to intimate that the malignity of Saturn is too powerful for any of the planets to contend with except Jupiter, who in certain circumstances counteracts, although he does not remove Saturn's influence, and so modifies it as to render it, upon the whole, beneficial. We are strongly inclined to

think that Saturn, like a certain other "gentleman of no very good repute," is not so black as he is painted. We know that those in whose nativities Mars has little or no influence, are deficient in courage and other manly qualities; and we suspect it is desirable that Saturn should have more or less power according to the strength of other indications. But there is no doubt that Saturn and Mars are malific when compared with others, nor that when the influence of either is powerfully predominant in the nativity, it quickly destroys life.*

We do not recollect a better example of the astrological meaning of the mythological fables than the description of Jupiter's person and amours. There is no doubt whatever that when Jupiter's influence predominates,† the native is large in person, well favoured, of sanguine temperament and pleasing manners. Such men are seldom remarkably chaste; nor do they find it difficult to adapt themselves to the humours of their mistresses, however various those humours may be.

But it is impossible to *know* the true and entire meaning of these fables unless we were *told* by those who invented them; at best we can but guess their meaning; many details were no doubt added for the sake of ornament, and of more effectually concealing from the multitude the truths on which the fables were founded, and no

* To prevent misunderstanding, we explain, that we speak of the *influence* of a planet as we should speak of the influence of a magnet, a galvanic battery, a cannon-ball, &c., &c., and not as if the planets were sentient beings.

† We do *not* mean merely when Sagittary or Pisces is ascending.

one is so silly as to suppose they are to be literally understood. Nothing can appear more monstrous than the fiction that "Jove took Metis " for his wife, and as soon as he perceived her " pregnant eat her, whence he himself conceived, " and brought forth Pallas armed from his head." But "Metis being made the wife of Jove plainly " signifies counsel,"* and viewed in this light the fiction assumes quite another character.

To return to Chambers's Journal: which proceeds to tell us what great knaves Lilly and the rest of the astrologers were—that they kept up a "kind of common jargon among themselves, but " this was merely to give colour to their assumption;" and that the "issue was, that they told " the fool " (by which they mean the person who went to consult them) "just what he *wished* to be " told."

Now how can the Chambers's know who went to the astrologer's, or what they *wished* to be told, or what they *were* told? The assertions we have quoted, and many others in the passage from which they are taken, are manifestly unfounded and unjustifiable: and in fact are contradicted by the statement that Lilly's productions were "quoted in the senate, though some of its members were among the clearest-headed men " England has ever produced." It is quite obvious that if the knavery had been such as is described above it must have been detected, and the ruin of the astrologer's credit have followed. It would be astonishing to see such antagonistic statements in a respectable publication upon any

* See Lord Bacon's preface to his treatise on the "Wisdom of the Ancients," as quoted in Lee's "Hesiod," p. 38.

other subject than astrology; but it is possible a portion of them may be accounted for by the existence of a work purporting to be "Confessions" or "Memoirs" &c. &c. of William Lilly. If there is such a work there is no doubt that it is a fabrication; but if genuine it proves too much; for it establishes the fact that Lilly must have been such an utter knave, that nothing he said could be worthy of notice whether confessions or anything else: but has no more to do with the truth of astrology than the fact of Partidge having sold physic, or the price that stock will fetch next week.

"The discoveries of Copernicus are usually held to have given the death-blow to astrology" say the Chambers's; and proceed to explain why. The Penny Cyclopædia with more candour declares, that the argument founded on the Copernican system is "not one bit stronger against it" [astrology] "than preceding systems for it," which is true: for astrology is founded upon "*apparent astronomy*," "or that *which passes before human eyes*;" and we need hardly add that these appearances will be *the same*, in whatever manner they may be explained by "*a follower of any school of explanation that ever existed*.*" When certain visible objects called planets, are seen in certain situations, they are found, by experience, to indicate that which they do not indicate in other situations: and whether those planets are what they are, or "mere spots of light," or sentient beings conscious of all they effect, are matters which

* See "The Globes Celestial and Terrestrial," by Aug. De Morgan, F.R.A.S., &c., &c., &c., pp. 1, 2, 3.

have no influence on astrology, and therefore matters with which it has no concern.

“Fatalism is certainly the most dangerous doctrine that can be entertained by erring man” say the Chambers’s; but we have already referred to historical evidence that “fatalists are usually rigid moralists.” Shall we conclude that rigid morality is “most dangerous” or that the Chambers’s are mistaken?

Fatalism, like many other things, is feared and disliked *not* for what it is, but for what its enemies represent it to be. Kingcraft and priestcraft did much in France up to the time of Lewis the Sixteenth, and did it effectually; for the useful classes were starved, wretched, ignorant, and degraded. Which were most worthy of being called men, these unfortunate French people, or the Puritans of England in the time of Cromwell?

It is a stock reproach of the contemners of astrology, to be used upon all possible occasions, that astrologers do not know what is about to happen to themselves: as if the study of the science involved the necessity of the student knowing the time of his own birth, and therefore of his having the means of knowing his own destiny. And not only that, but by such knowledge having the power to alter that destiny, and thereby evade the laws under which he was created, and thus defy his Maker. Can any objection be more curiously ridiculous? If we are to imagine a man may avoid any evil he foresees will happen, we have only to admit he can foresee his own death, and to conclude he may consequently live for ever.

And it is a stock evasion of the vilifiers of

astrology to say that, "the time has long gone by for arguing seriously upon this subject." The truth is, the time has never come, and from the nature of the subject *never can come, when the truth or fallacy of astrology can be established by abstract argument of any kind*: and as these writers must know this fact as well as we do, or perhaps better, the evasion looks very like a dishonest attempt to misrepresent the case. The truth or falsehood of astrology can no more be established by abstract argument, than the existence of Gravitation, or Electricity, or Magnetism, for we do not know the cause of any one more than of the rest. It is by experience alone that we are made aware of any of nature's influences; yet, are there any who doubt their existence? Does the mariner refuse to put to sea because no man knows the cause of the magnet's polarity?

The Athenæum for 6 Jan. 1849 page 15 announces, "in common with the rest of the educated world, we have abundant means in our own power for testing the pretensions of astrology—have employed them—have convinced ourselves that the whole thing is an absurdity—and shall" &c. &c. In the very next number it cannot "please the Prophets" by explaining what the "abundant means" are; but pleases itself by imagining what great things it will do one of these days: it will prove astrology to be an absurdity, by annually attacking those almanacks that contain astrological predictions! Now surely a child must perceive that if all predictions in all almanacs, were proved false, the question of the truth of astrology would remain untouched; for the proof would establish nothing

but the incapacity of the writers in those almanacs ; which might arise from their attempting impossibilities, or from their ignorance of the subject they attempted to handle. It was very long before astronomy, the pet child of Science, could predict the future place of a planet,* and even now it cannot foretell the return of a comet with certainty ; and if, with all its means and appliances, it names the time within " twelve or " eighteen months†" it is thought a hit. But if the almanacs do not predict, in precise terms, events which have never yet happened, and name the exact time at which they *will* happen, astrology is declared to be altogether absurd. The sophistry is so manifest, that we cannot imagine the writer did not himself perceive it.

Knowledge of astral influence must have been acquired by observation and experience, and any one who chooses may still obtain that knowledge by the same means. We do not say that a stranger to the subject may take a nativity and by the aid of books at once read what it indicates : nor should we say that a person who had never seen Greek before, might read Demosthenes by the aid of a grammar and dictionary. But the being foiled in such an attempt would not by any means justify the declaration that there was no such language as Greek, and that all those who pretended to read it were knaves and cheats, and all those who believed it could be read were dupes. For many centuries past there have been numbers of the " educated

* See Dr. Small's " Account of the Astronomical Discoveries of Kepler."

† " Athenæum," September 16, 1848, p. 935.

world" quite as anxious to prove the absurdity of astrology as the writer in the *Athenæum*, but still the proof is not furnished.

The fact is, the writers who oppose astrology are taught, that belief in its truth is unfounded and injurious; and thus prejudiced they proceed to inveigh against it, without taking sufficient time or pains to inform themselves whether it is true or false. Their object is not to *examine*, for they are persuaded they already know; but to *extirpate* that which for want of examination, they imagine to be a pernicious absurdity.

And there is a large number of persons who deny facts in order that they may screen their incapacity, or indulge their indolence, without incurring the charge of credulity; forgetting, or never having known, that credulity is equally manifested by either denial, or assent, without sufficient reason. And there is another large class of persons who seldom think right, but who, when they have expressed an opinion upon any subject make a point of persisting in it, for the purpose of evincing their consistency and firmness. To such persons knowledge is an accident, and reflection an impossibility; but they nearly all denounce astrology.

Thus, a variety of influences, the most conspicuous of which are the strenuous efforts made to enforce belief in the free agency of man, have combined to bring one of the most wonderful and sublime manifestations of the Unity of the Creation, and the Power of the Creator, into contempt.

"A philosopher is one who so loves truth that
"he desires the utmost liberty for its manifesta-
"tions. He is opposed to Sectarianism in every

shape :”* he believes that which the Creator manifests, and however pious he may be is never chargeable with superstition. The man of Faith believes what he is told without inquiry ; and unreasoning faith is the pabulum upon which Priestcraft feeds and fattens. Philosophy says the earth was, for ages, teeming with animal and vegetable life before man was created. Faith says the earth was made in six days—man and all. But it seems philosophy has truth in its favour, for there is scarcely any one “out of Oxford” who denies that “long before the period referred to in the first chapter of Genesis the world had existed and been subjected to the influences of heat, air, and water,—and been the theatre on which successive creations of plants and animals had existed and perished.”† If this admission should be adduced as a proof that unpalatable truths will be readily admitted by all “out of Oxford” we deny the inference. The geological evidence of the earth’s age came upon its opponents in a form so complete and irresistible, that policy dictated acquiescence.

In our observations on Popery we have not had occasion to discuss its doctrines, nor do we wish to meddle with them. That men can be found who, claiming the respect due to rational beings, believe that by the ceremony of consecration substances are “physically changed,”‡ is certainly very surprising ; but one is in some measure prepared for this curious conclusion by

* “Athenæum,” September 2, 1848, p. 879.

† *Ibid.*, February 19, 1848, p. 188.

‡ “Pagan and Popish Priestcraft,” pp. 208, 209, &c.

knowing that men have been for countless ages "in the habit of considering images as the inhabited temples" of their divinities,* and of believing that certain invocations would confine their deity in a vase, for as long a time as they wanted him.† The Indian however has the advantage in point of politeness, for when he has done with his god he civilly dismisses him—the Papist eats him up.‡

And if virgins choose to be polluted by the "filthy questions" of their confessors: if "the newly married wife, the mother, and the matron," are to be found so debased by superstition,—so utterly degraded and unfeminized, as to submit to be questioned by priests "on what the husband alone is privileged to know,"§ we feel scandalized and sorely grieved that such things are: but when the priesthood commanded every woman to prostitute herself, at least once in her life, for the profit of the "Church" of that day, the priesthood were obeyed.||

That which renders the Romish church an object of suspicion and distrust to all thinkers is, its distinct separation from the rest of the community. That it regards religion as a matter of trade—as a means of obtaining unlimited worldly influence and wealth—no one can doubt who knows its history. In order to prevent the natural passions and social feelings of its clergy

* "Pagan and Popish Priestcraft," p. 128.

† Maurice's "Indian Antiquities," vol. v., p. 939.

‡ "Pagan and Popish Priestcraft," p. 203.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 224; or "History of Auricular Confession," by Count C. P. De Lasteyrie.

|| Maurice's "Indian Antiquities," vol. v., p. 916; or, Howitt's "History of Priestcraft," eighth edition, p. 12.

offering an impediment to the attainment of its object, it required them to take a vow of celibacy;—well knowing that the effect of this vow must be, to render nearly every energetic member of its body a hypocritical profligate, or a heartless ascetic; and in either case well prepared to contribute, unscrupulously, to the aggrandizement of his order. Ordaining celibacy was a political masterpiece: and by means of this, and similar artifices, the Romish church has, for ages, stood prominently forward as a most elaborately contrived vivification of Selfishness. It has been, as a matter of necessity, the opponent of peace, civilization, and improvement; for it required but little foresight to perceive, that enlightened men would not submit to the bonds it imposed. How far its members have been bound by its own ordinances, various authentic documents describing the lives of its popes and its clergy will manifest: it is true that when the latter have been convicted of dissoluteness, some of them have been chastised—in a similar spirit to that in which Lycurgus encouraged theft, but severely punished the culprit who was detected. Every church whose policy is of a similar character must, necessarily, be highly dangerous to the community in which it is suffered to exist; however mild and tolerant may be the religion it professes, and however blandly that religion may be administered; and the diabolical and execrable crimes that such a church may commit, have been sufficiently exemplified by the Inquisition. It is either a gross mistake to suppose, or a jesuitical trick to pretend, that Protestants are too intelligent to fall into the snares of a combination of cunning and selfishness, which renders the Romish church

the stronghold of Priestcraft ; the fundamental principles of which have remained the same from the first dawn of its history. Studious to deceive : bold and positive in assertion in defiance of all truth and evidence : unflinching in extortion : unforgiving of offence : ruthless in persecution : unrelenting in hatred : unsparing in vengeance : in all the conspicuous characteristics which render it pernicious and detestable Priestcraft remains unchanged.* And if the Romish church has exhibited these characteristics more prominently than other churches, it is because the completeness of its political organization has given it greater power than any other church ever possessed, rather than because its priesthood has been composed of worse men than that of other churches ; or because there is anything in the Romish faith that renders priestcraft unusually virulent. That the poor, the ignorant, the simple and the weak-minded should be the victims of priestcraft is not to be wondered at ;—they are its natural prey : that men talented by nature, and enlightened by education, should bend to such an execrable imposture is humiliating ; but it is quite consistent that those who believe without evidence of truth, should disbelieve without evidence of falsehood.

We think we have said enough to show, that the charges brought against astrology of absurdity, inconsistency, &c. &c. are at least unproved ; and that the arguments by which it has been attempted to sustain those charges are so utterly unsound, and the conclusions arrived at

* If any one thinks we treat it harshly, let him read its history.

so manifestly false, that those who advanced such arguments could hardly have done so for the sake of truth. We have also shown that the principal cause of the bitterness with which astrology is assailed is to be sought in the fact, that certain influential parties are very desirous it should be denied and contemned; and has no reference whatever to its absolute truth or falsehood. And we have glanced at certain monstrous fictions, and customs, by means of which large numbers of mankind are enslaved, used, and plundered, by a particular class; and their minds debased to a degree which it would be impossible to believe, upon evidence less conclusive than that which is afforded by experience. But all this does not establish the truth of astrology; which, for anything we have said, may be as false as were the gods of the Egyptians when they worshipped leeks and monkeys, and destroyed each other for the sake of such divinities.* But these poor, simple idolators, were content their leek should remain a leek: had they lived among the enlightened moderns, they might have learnt how to do something with their leek, and imagine it cheese.

We have already said, that it is impossible either to prove, or disprove, the existence of astral influence by abstract argument; and we are not acquainted with any means of convincing the *general reader* that astrology is founded on truth; for different combinations of the celestial bodies will produce too nearly the same result to enable us to say of any one sign or planet, "such a thing in such a place *always* indicates so

* See the 15th Satire of "Juvenal."

“and so *to the native* ;” because the influence of any one may be to a greater or less extent, modified and counteracted by the rest. The difficulty in assigning to each its proper indication, has been magnified by certain parties into an impossibility ; but M. Quetelet of Brussels in the course of his investigations of a different subject shows, that although the laws which govern mankind baffle all attempts to detect them when a single case is examined, they are very “easily established” when large numbers of cases are considered :* and we need not remind the reader of what ample means the Egyptian priesthood possessed of studying nativities in large numbers, and of thus transmitting to us knowledge which we have no means of readily obtaining for ourselves.

Nor will the truth-seeker be much assisted by the astrological books : they teach how to draw the figure, how to calculate directions, what certain directions indicate when they are completed,—and that is all. This is something like telling a man that it is *always* bright and warm at noon, and dark and freezing at midnight. The consequence is, that most of those who attempt to learn astrology from books alone, are disappointed,—imagine the whole thing a knavish fabrication,—and quickly throw up the pursuit in disgust.

Nor is it easy to obtain the assistance of those who have a practical knowledge of this subject, for that knowledge exists in holes and corners, and generally speaking amongst the poor and the illiterate ; and there is such a number of fortune-

* See “Chambers’s Journal,” February 17, 1849, p. 99.

tellers in all large towns, that it is difficult to select one that is worth the trouble of finding. And when you have found one who does really know something of the subject, the probability is, that he will not communicate his knowledge upon any terms you can offer.

It must be admitted that to obtain a sound knowledge of this subject is not an easy matter : but it may be done to a certain extent.

We suppose the student to know how to make the requisite computations ; rules for which are given in nearly all the books. He should then study the principal qualities of the signs, as fixed, common, moveable, &c. &c., which are very important ; and also the characteristic qualities of the planets. The probable effects of the combinations of each planet with each sign should then be considered, and the correctness of the student's views may be in some degree tested, as to corporal qualities, &c. by comparison with the descriptions in Eland's Tutor, or some similar work. The learner ought then, aided by his books, to examine Figures ; and if possible those of remarkable persons, such as William Pitt, the Duke of Wellington, &c. &c., because the characteristics of the figure are strongly marked : it is very difficult to obtain the time of birth of any such person in a manner that makes one confident in its correctness, but when it can be so obtained it is invaluable ; for the figures of the multitude are as unremarkable as their lives, and it is not easy to learn much from either. But we most earnestly advise students to be very cautious of all published nativities, and times of births, and to study those only which they know to be correct within a few minutes.

It will be some time—more or less according to many different circumstances—before the student finds himself improved by this mode of proceeding. But after awhile he will get sufficiently familiar with the subject to distinguish those figures which indicate good health, long life, prosperity, &c. &c. from those which threaten the reverse ; and so on.

Aphorisms, the vaunt of almost every astrological work, should not be studied for some time : for they speak of some one celestial body as if its influence *on the native*, under the circumstances described, were positive and unmodified ; and are sure to mislead the beginner.

Many persons who are competent judges, and who know that the destiny of the native is indicated by the figure of birth, feel fully convinced that the system of Directions usually taught in the books is utterly fallacious. We would, however, recommend the student to try the *MUNDANE conjunctions and oppositions* of the sun, moon, and planets, but *not any other directions*, either mundane or zodiacal : and to use Ptolemy's measure of time of a degree to a year, and he will seldom find one of these directions occur, particularly an opposition, without some remarkable event happening to the native nearly about the time due to the direction. It sometimes happens that the effect is neutralized by other directions, or by the radical positions, but not often. We have nativities in our possession in which every important event is clearly pointed out by its appropriate direction : we have others in which every thing is so crossed, checked, and counteracted, that scarcely anything could have been foretold with certainty.

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We have no doubt that, like most calculations founded upon a natural law, these directions require a correction; and most probably the correction ought to vary with the latitude of the place of birth; but we think that for the latitudes of all places in England they will be found sufficiently correct, to prove there is truth in the system. When the time and figure of birth are *very correct*, the same directions to the angles may be tried; we never yet found them ineffective, particularly those to the ascendant. We recommend the mundane conjunctions and oppositions *only* because there is no doubt that *for these directions* the methods of Ptolemy and Placidus will give the same length of arc; and because we are firmly convinced, by experience, of the truth of the system taught by Ptolemy.

But the student must not expect just such an event to happen, as is described in the books as due to the direction he is examining; for the nature and importance of the event must be judged from the radix, and can only be judged correctly by the experienced. The beginner must be satisfied if something of an important character to the native occur near the indicated time, and he will be able to form more correct opinions of the particular character of the event as he proceeds. We know an instance in which the native broke a blood-vessel, which laid the foundation of consumption, when the moon came to the mundane opposition of Jupiter; which no book we have ever seen would intimate, but which is nevertheless, perfectly consistent with the situation and circumstances of Jupiter in the Figure alluded to.

Nor must the student be discouraged, if the

event be even a whole year distant from the time due to the direction. Astrology is quite competent to indicate those parts of the native's life at which it is wise to remain quiet, or to undertake certain enterprises, &c. &c.; and in this its great usefulness consists. But even experienced persons cannot often name the *precise* time for activity, because it depends in general, upon a great number and variety of influences, and can be best decided by the native. Astrology has been needlessly discredited, by injudicious persons having claimed for it the power of indicating precise times, which it does not, and probably never did, possess. When Lucas Gaurico the Bishop of Castellana drew the horoscope of Henry the Second of France he wrote, "But, about the forty-first year of his age, let him shun combat, for the stars threaten a *wound in the head which will immediately produce either blindness or death,*"* without attempting to name the exact date; yet, astrology was in all probability much better understood in those days than it is now, although Placidus had not then been born. If the times of events could be named with accuracy, it would be of very little use. It might benefit a man to foreknow that he would go a long voyage at about a stated age; but it could hardly be important to him to know the day and hour at which the ship would sail, until the time approached for starting.

The mode of proceeding we have pointed out

* See "Archives Curieuses," &c., par M. Cimber et F. Danjon; or "Athenæum," March 19, 1836. Henry II.'s death was occasioned by a wound in the eye, received while tilting: he died in 1559, *before he had completed his forty-second year.*

will generally afford indubitable evidence that astrology is founded on truth; but it will sometimes happen that the nativities considered are of too common a character, or that the number of them is too small, to warrant the formation of any opinion upon the subject. It is enough that we point out the course by which unquestionable evidence of the truth of astrology may be obtained: we cannot indicate a royal road to that object.

We adopted an easier method than the one we have recommended for ascertaining the truth of astrology.

When we were young we were quite sure that man was a free agent. It was very agreeable to believe we could win fame, wealth,—anything we wished to win and took proper means to obtain. When therefore we heard of a certain person whom we shall call Tiffs, and his wonderful revelations, we laughed at the notion that any one could tell a man what he himself would choose to do at some future time, and thought it very silly to be so imposed upon.

But it happened that we heard of Mr. Tiffs so often that we felt curious to see him, and have proof of his talent of cunningly learning from those who applied to him the events of their past lives, (which we were confident must be his mode of proceeding,) and as to the future—they knew nothing about it, and therefore he could tell them anything he pleased.

We called on Mr. T. and were ushered through a passage of unplastered brick-work into a mean back room. Shortly after a door opened and we were invited into the front parlor, which was not much better than the room we first entered. Mr.

Tiffs was rather tall, and from the spareness of his figure appeared taller than he really was; with a head of small diameter but extraordinary height; countenance pock-marked, and if he had ever been handsome he had strangely altered before we saw him. His appearance, language, and manners, impressed us with the idea that he was a very illiterate and sensual man; and we were gratified by thinking our opinion of fortune-tellers was about to be confirmed.

We sat down and told Mr. T. when we were born as nearly as we could, and were about to tell him more; but he told us to be silent, and we were. And he soon proceeded to describe the stature, complexion, contour of the face, peculiarities of figure, walk, teeth, hair, and eyes of persons we had been and were then acquainted with, and the nature of the acquaintance, with singular accuracy. He also told us of certain events which had occurred to us, and of others that would occur; and at the end of about forty minutes we left him. We thought much of our interview with Mr. Tiffs; but it was inexplicable. At last we concluded some one must have told him all he told us of our past life, and having accepted this apology to ourselves for our incapability of accounting for his knowledge, we thought little more of the matter. But after a time one of the predicted events occurred: this we thought a lucky hit. But another occurred; and we began to feel some doubts of the correctness of our first view. Eventually we determined to examine the subject further as soon as we had an opportunity.

Mr. Tiffs died we believe in 1833; having first taught his method to a person whom we shall call

Night, and who died a few years after him. There is sufficient reason to conclude, that whatever Mr. Tiffs's method was, it must have been very easy of acquirement, retention, and application. We have understood Mr. Night was the only person he ever taught, although we are quite justified in believing he had been many times offered large sums to teach others.

We believe Mr. Tiffs was imprisoned more than once for describing the results of laws, which the Creator has ordained for the government of the created ; and that by the law of England he was called a "rogue and vagabond." He predicted what would happen in this world, the truth of his predictions could be verified by living men, and they sent him to jail as a cheat. If he had predicted what would happen in the next world, the truth of his predictions could never have been tested by living men ; but they would have approached him with awe, and kissed his toe with "idolatrous homage."

To return to our narration. When we had leisure to pursue the inquiry, we applied to a person of whose knowledge and judgment we had a high opinion, and induced him to assist us. Our object was not so much to *learn* astrology, as to satisfy ourselves of its true character ; and the method we adopted was this.

We possess a number of horoscopes, the times of which we have ample reason to believe are correct within a few minutes, and we laid them before our teacher ; who always inquired the sex, and then proceeded to describe the prominent characteristics of the native ; at what period he thought it likely he, or she was married, or prospered, or was unfortunate, &c., &c. ; entering more

or less into particulars according (apparently) to the greater or less ease with which he could read the figure. Many figures were submitted to him in this way, and of nearly all he spoke correctly, and we concluded there must be truth in Judicial Astrology; and further inquiry and study have fully confirmed that opinion. That such is the fact the "educated world" may rest assured; and it may also rest assured that, while persons capable of giving such proofs of its truth as we have described, are to be found in every large town in the kingdom, the *uneducated* world will never be so credulous as to believe that "the whole thing is an absurdity."

APPENDIX.

As to BOOKS on Astrology, Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* stands first, but is of very little use to a beginner ; to whom we recommend *The Star*, or *Zadkiel's Grammar*, second edition ;* but particularly the latter, the third chapter of which is very useful to beginners. Indeed we should be glad to see a Supplement published, containing a complete Index to the whole work, and enlarging this chapter to the utmost extent justified by the author's experience ; it would be most useful to the student, and might be incorporated with a new edition of the *Grammar*. But we again most earnestly advise the student to avoid *all directions* except those we have mentioned. There are some excellent remarks in *Oxley's Celestial Planispheres* ; since (according to *Zadkiel's Magazine*, page 24), improved and called the *Gem of the Astral Sciences* ; but we never used the instruments. Some parts of *Raphael's Manual*, and of *Zadkiel's Horoscope*, are good. *Wilson* is like a stinging nettle—useful to those who know how to treat him, but dangerous to those who do not—and we advise beginners to avoid him. *Simonite's* works, judging from the portions we have seen are good ; Numbers 2 and 3 of his *Celestial Philosopher* contain some curious infor-

* A third edition is announced : we have not seen it.

mation relating to the faces of the signs. Sibly's works we should advise the beginner by all means to avoid, although some parts are good. There are some excellent papers in *The World of Fashion* for 1824 and 1825; but it is almost impossible to obtain them. In Varley's *Zodiacal Physiognomy* there are some curious things. We do not recollect anything upon *nativities*, published in this century, except what we have named that we need notice; but there may be good works we have not heard of. We know that much trash that was never worth the ink required to print it has appeared, and the student had better not waste time upon it.

Gadbury's *Doctrine of Nativities* is worth having, but *not* for the Tables, nor method of directing. In Salmon's *Soul of Astrology* is some very curious information. Lilly's mode of treating *nativities* (the only part of the subject we have studied) is erroneous and in part obsolete. Partridge's works usually fetch high prices; but if the purchaser is half as well satisfied with them as Partridge was with himself, they are cheap at any price.

The *Physiognomonix Coelestis* of J. B. Porta; the *Astronomicon* of Julius Firmicus; and the writings of Albohazen Haly (Basiliæ, 1571, Lilly says all others are defective) are well worthy of attention. But we do not think they have appeared in English, except a part of Firmicus, under the title of *Astrologicall Opticks*, which is said on the title-page to have been compiled at Venice by Johann. Regiomontanus and Johannes Angelus; but they derived it from Firmicus. It is a very defective translation of the small part attempted; but is well worth having, and very

seldom met with. Firmicus says that the *Moon* with *Mars* is bad for the native's father. We have seen many proofs of the truth of this aphorism; and the exemplary nativity in Zadkiel's Grammar is a conspicuous one.

In Wilson's Tables we have found many errors, and in the Right Ascension of Capricorn, we believe the column for three degrees of south latitude is nearly all wrong. Similar tables to Wilson's are to be found in Cooper's Placidus, and in Worsdale's Celestial Philosophy, with others not in Wilson's collection. Zadkiel's Tables are very neat and cheap; but we never used any but Wilson's, which we believe is the only collection containing the Ascensional Differences for the latitude of London.

ALL MUNDANE DIRECTIONS, *both converse and direct*, are completed by apparent motion: that is from the eastern horizon round by the south meridian, (or medium cœlie, or midheaven,) to the western horizon, and so round by the north meridian to the east again; like the apparent motion of the Sun.

Stars (or planets, or any celestial bodies) are in *mundane conjunction* when they are on the same meridian, or the same horizon, of the place of birth. And also when they are in the same quadrant, and each star is the same portion of its own arc, distant from the meridian which bisects that arc.

Stars are in *mundane opposition* when they are on opposite meridians, or opposite horizons, of the place of birth. And also when they are in opposite quadrants, and each star is the same

portion of its own arc, distant from the meridian which bisects that arc.

Therefore, all mundane directions to conjunction or opposition may be calculated without any reference to the houses either of the planets, or the figure ; which we think is a more natural and simple method, and more easily understood, than the usual one : but the numbers used are larger, and consequently the arithmetic more laborious.

We must not by any means be supposed to underrate Secondary Directions, some of which are very important. What those directions are is well explained in most books on Astrology.

Nor must Transits be neglected : they probably have much influence in fixing the exact dates of events indicated by directions.

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