

hours, were supposed by Chladni and Schnurrer to be occasioned by the passage of meteoric masses before the sun's disk. Since the period that streams of meteoric shooting stars were first considered with reference to the direction of their orbit as a closed ring, the epochs of these mysterious celestial phenomena have been observed to present a remarkable connection with the regular recurrence of swarms of shooting stars. Adolph Erman has evinced great acuteness of mind in his accurate investigation of the facts hitherto observed on this subject, and his researches have enabled him to discover the connection of the sun's conjunction with the August asteroids on the 7th of February, and with the November asteroids on the 12th of May, the latter period corresponding with the days of St. Mamert (May 11th), St. Pancras (May 12th), and St. Servatius (May 13th), which, according to popular belief, were accounted "cold days."*

The Greek natural philosophers, who were but little disposed to pursue observations, but evinced inexhaustible fertility of imagination in giving the most various interpretation of half-perceived facts, have, however, left some hypotheses regarding shooting stars and meteoric stones which strikingly accord with the views now almost universally admitted of the cosmical process of these phenomena. "Falling stars," says Plutarch, in his life of Lysander,† "are, according to

* Adolph Erman, in Poggend., *Annalen*, 1839, bd. xlviii., s. 582-601. Biot had previously thrown doubt regarding the probability of the November stream reappearing in the beginning of May (*Comptes Rendus*, 1836, t. ii., p. 670). Mädler has examined the mean depression of temperature on the three ill-named days of May by Berlin observations for eighty-six years (*Verhandl. des Vereins zur Beförd. des Gartenbaues*, 1834, s. 377), and found a retrogression of temperature amounting to 2°·2 Fahr. from the 11th to the 13th of May, a period at which nearly the most rapid advance of heat takes place. It is much to be desired that this phenomenon of depressed temperature, which some have felt inclined to attribute to the melting of the ice in the northeast of Europe, should be also investigated in very remote spots, as in America, or in the southern hemisphere. (*Comp. Bull. de l'Acad. Imp. de St. Pétersbourg*, 1843, t. i., No. 4.)

† Plut., *Vitæ par. in Lysandro*, cap. 22. The statement of Damachos (Daïmachos), that for seventy days continuously there was a fiery cloud seen in the sky, emitting sparks like falling stars, and which then, sinking nearer to the earth, let fall the stone of Ægos Potamos, "which, however, was only a small part of it," is extremely improbable, since the direction and velocity of the fire-cloud would in that case of necessity have to remain for so many days the same as those of the earth; and this, in the fire-ball of the 19th of July, 1686, described by Halley (*Trans.*, vol. xxix., p. 163), lasted only a few minutes. It is not altogether certain whether Daïmachos, the writer, *περὶ εὐσεθείας*, was the