

forming all things around it in the same manner as we, according to our present views, suppose the planets of our system to have originated in the expanded atmosphere of another central body, the Sun. These views must not, therefore, be confounded with what is commonly termed the telluric or atmospheric origin of meteoric stones, nor yet with the singular opinion of Aristotle, which supposed the enormous mass of *Ægos Potamos* to have been raised by a hurricane. That arrogant spirit of incredulity, which rejects facts without attempting to investigate them, is in some cases almost more injurious than an unquestioning credulity. Both are alike detrimental to the force of investigation. Notwithstanding that for more than two thousand years the annals of different nations had recorded falls of meteoric stones, many of which had been attested beyond all doubt by the evidence of irreproachable eye-witnesses—notwithstanding the important part enacted by the *Bætylia* in the meteor-worship of the ancients—notwithstanding the fact of the companions of Cortez having seen an aërolite at Cholula which had fallen on the neighboring pyramid—notwithstanding that califs and Mongolian chiefs had caused swords to be forged from recently-fallen meteoric stones—nay, notwithstanding that several persons had been struck dead by stones falling from heaven, as, for instance, a monk at Crema on the 4th of September, 1511, another monk at Milan in 1650, and two Swedish sailors on board ship in 1674, yet this great cosmical phenomenon remained almost wholly unheeded, and its intimate connection with other planetary systems unknown, until attention was drawn to the subject by Chladni, who had already gained immortal renown by his discovery of the sound-figures. He who is penetrated with a sense of this mysterious connection, and whose mind is open to deep impressions of nature, will feel himself moved by the deepest and most solemn emotion at the sight of every star that shoots across the vault of heaven, no less than at the glorious spectacle of meteoric swarms in the November phenomenon or on St. Lawrence's day. Here motion is suddenly revealed in the midst of nocturnal rest. The still radiance of the vault of heaven is for a moment animated with life and movement. In the mild radiance left on the track of the shooting star, imagination pictures the lengthened path of the meteor through the vault of heaven,

bolically connected in chronology with the cycle of intercalation of the lunar year, with the moon-worship at *Nemra*, and the games by which it was accompanied.