Poetry.

Press On!

A RIVULET'S SONG.

Just under an island," midst rushes and moss
I was born of a rock-spring and dew;
as shaded by trees, whose branches and leaves
Ne'er suffered the sun to gaze through.

wandered around the steep brow of a hill,
Where the daisies and violets fair
re shaking the mist from their wakening eyes,
And pouring their breath on the air.

Then I crept gently on, and I moistened the feet
Of a shrub that enfolded a nest—
The bird, in return, sang his merriest song,
And showed me his feathery crest.

"How joyous I felt in the bright afternoon,
When the sun, riding off in the west,
Came out in red gold from behind the green trees
And burnished my tremulous breast.

"My memory now can return to the time
When the trees murmured low plaintive tones,
While I wasted the day in dancing away,
Or playing with pebbles and stones.

"It points to the hour when the rain pattered down,
Oft resting awhile on the trees;
Then quickly descending it ruffled my calm,
And whispered to me of the seas!

"'Twas then the first wish found a home in my breast
To increase as time hurries along;
'Twas then I first learned to speak softly the words
Which I now love so dearly—'Press on!'

"I'll make wider my bed, as onward I tread
A deep, mighty river I'll be—
'Press on' all the day will I sing on my way,
Till I reach the far-spreading sea."

It ceased. A youth lingered beside its green edge
Till the stars in its face brightly shone;
He hoped the sweet strain would re-echo again—
But he just heard a murmur—"Press on!"

Miscellaneous.

Chronology of Comets.

Comets have been observed by the Chinese for a great number of years. Historians say that the mother of the Emperor Yu, in the year 2296 B. C., saw a wandering star, and drew therefrom a favorable omen. Other stars of a similar character were noticed in the same country about the year 2241. A passage from Varron, given by Saint Augustine, refers to the appearance of a comet about the year 1770 B. C. Several authors make mention of another comet visible in 1272 B. C., and of one which appeared in Egypt and Palestine in the year 619. Some commentators pretend that this last was referred to by Jeremiah, when he declared that he had seen "a cauldron blazing toward the north wind."

According to Pliny, a comet, having the shape of a horn, appeared in the heavens during the battle of Salamis. In 871 a burning flame was visible for several nights.

Two comets appeared at the time of the celebrated games given by Augustus Cesar in honor of Venus. Augustus then placed on the head of a statue, which he had raised to Cesar, a star, and this star afterward figured on all the monuments erected to the dictator. They can still be seen in some of the coins of that period. According to various *savants*, the comet to which allusion is here made, was that spoken of by Homer in his *Illiad*, the same which reappeared in 1689, and was the subject of Rayle's *Thoughts on the Comet*. It has been calculated that this body will re-appear in 2255.

The astronomer Pingre, who has published very learned historical and scientific researches on comets, speaks of the appearance of one of these stars in the first year of the Christian era. Another comet of which he speaks had the accompaniments that Aristotle and Theophrates give to these celestial phenomena—violent and extraordinary tempests. In Achaia and Macedonia several cities were destroyed by earthquakes.

Josephus, the historian, includes the appearance of a comet among the miracles which announced the destruction of Jerusalem and the ruin of its temple. Some time before his death, Vespasian ridiculed the sinister omens that his attendants drew from the appearance of a comet. "This long-haired star," he said, "does not notice me; it menaces rather the king of the Parthians. It is long-haired, and I am bald."

In 389 a comet was observed in Italy and China. Some historians pretend that the misfortunes from which the city of Constantinople suffered about this time, were foretold by the appearance of the most terrible comet mentioned in history, and which had the form of a long sword.

A comet, whose apperance in the year 400, is fixed by Pingre, was among the prodigies which, according to various writers of the day, announced the disastrous invasion of Italy by Alaric.

In 539 a comet was noticed which, according to cotemporaneous historians, was of the size of a man. It appeared again in 678, at the accession of Pope Dieudonne or Diodat. In 837, Louis C. Debonnaire, then reigning, intimated his wish that the author of a work called *Vita et Actus Lodovice Pie*, who was both astronomer and historian, should pass a night in his palace of Aix-la-Chapelle to observe with him a comet which had appeared in the beginning of April. The superstitious monarch was persuaded that the stars could indicate the death of the great, and he confided his fears to the *savant* who said, "Fear nothing from the signs in the heavens." To this the emperor replied: "I do not fear the signs; I fear the omnipotent author of them, and this one warns me, without doubt, to prepare for death." A comet was also remarked in 877, the year of the death of Charles le Chauve.

In October 942, a comet visible for twenty-one days, foretold, according to the writers of the time, a great mortality among cattle, and this certainly did occur during the following year.

In 991, the appearance of a celebrated comet, accompanied by a meteor, threw all Europe into consternation. The *savant* Pingre thinks that this comet appeared in 1000, or perhaps 1001, at the earliest. Predicted a long time before, it was believed to fortell the end of the world. People everywhere prepared to die a Christian death. Labor, commerce, industry and agriculture, were in a state of complete stagnation. Merchandise, which everyone wanted to sell, could find no pruchasers. The fear of some terrible catastrophe such ed on the 2d of April. It was visible during sixty-five days, and was observed in the east of Europe during the month of May. It was also observed in the west in the early part of the year. The authors, German, English and French, do not agree upon the length of the appearance of this comet in Europe. This phenomenon gave rise to various conjectures. The partisans of William regarded it as a prediction of victory. Upon one portion of the famous tapestry on which Queen Matilda had traced the most memorable events of her husband's expedition, there are a group of persons attentively watching this comet, and at the same time there is an inscription which antiquarians have thus read: "*Isti mirantur stellam.*"

In 1208 a very brilliant comet appeared for two weeks. The Jews of the west thought that it foretold the advent of their Messiah. A comet, visible in the autumn of 1265, alarmed Mainfroi, King of Naples and Sicily, who lost his crown and his life on the 26th of February, 1266. In 1270, the first day of the twelfth month, the largest comet that had ever been seen was observed in Japan. Its tail, says a Japanese writer, "was the length of the street."

In 1293, Koublai-Khan, founder of the Tartar dynasty, alarmed at the appearance of a comet, asked his ministers how Heaven, whom he supposed was angered could be appeased. A minister, named Pouhoutchou, passed the night in the monarch's chamber, and read several sacred extracts, and give him, says the historian Gaubil, examples from ancient history "to make him understand that the principal object of a prince should be the practice of virtue, and that, to avoid the dangers of eclipses, comets and and earthquakes, he should keep his mind pure and govern his people righteously."

Comets appeared in the years 1299, 1301, 1305, 1313, 1315 1334, 1337, 1341, 1343, and 1347. In 1402 two comets were seen in the greater part of Europe. Jean Galeas Visconti, Duke of Milan, then dangerously sick and convinced that the phenomenon predicted his death, beseeched his friends to aid him in leaving his bed, and looking at the comet, he cried; "I thank God that he has been pleased to announce to men my death by this heavenly sign."—He died at Mariguan on the 3rd of September.

In 1456 a red, angry-looking comet appeared in several countries, and the mathematicians foretold terrible plagues, pestilences and murders therefrom, and Pope Calixtes III. ordered all the faithful to implore the aid of Heaven against the Turks, whose armies then menaced Western Europe.

Comets appeared in 1458, 1468, 1471, and 1472. On the 12th of May, in the year 1500, navigators, *en route* from Brazil, and the Cape of Good Hope, noticed a comet, which was also noticed at the same time in Europe. The writers at the time did not fail to attribute to it all the disasters of this year, fruitful as it was in misfortunes—an irruption of the Tartars into Poland, a famine in Susbia, war carried by France into the kingdom of Naples.

The historians of Westphalia speak of the comet of 1516, which announced calamities to the town of Munster, and the tyranny of Jean de Leyde. These writers add that they saw at the same time three suns pierced through and through with luminous swords, and that a phantom, its head encircled with a golden crown, and sword in hand, traversed the air in full light of day.

Authorities in all parts of Europe considered as a veritable comet the meteor which appeared on the 11th of August, 1516, and which spread universal consternation. It is recorded that a large number of persons died of fright in different countries. The Turkish invasion of Hungary, a bloody war in Switzerland, a pestilence in England, inundations in Holland, and a disastrous earthquake in Portugal, were the events believed to have been produced by this sinister object. At that time it was believed to Europe that all the secrets of the future could be learnt from the celestial bodies by those who attentively observed them.

The greatest alarm was created in France by the appearance of a comet in 1521, and by the prediction of astrologers who then, more than ever, excelled in audacity and extravagance. They gave full vent to their imaginations, and princes even had an entire confidence in the dreams of these impostors and a profound respect for their persons.

We find that in many of the courts of Europe astrologers were in the personal service of sovereigns. The astrologer of the Elector of Brandenburg, one Jean Carrion, affirmed that in the year 1525 "there would be a great effusion of blood among the Christians, and grave oppressions by governments." This same Carrion, a most indefatigable prophet, predicted events to take place in 1789. "Then," said he "one of the grandest conjunctions will take place, and the tenth regeneration of Saturn will be accomplished; if the world is to last after that, no one except God knows it.—Oh, what wonders will then be seen, what changes, and what overturnings of constitutions and Christian ordinances!"

In 1556 there appeared the comet observed and described by Paul Fabrice, Doctor and Astronomer of Vienna. This large and very brilliant comet so frightened the Emperor Charles V, that, persuaded it announced his death, he suddenly resolved to resign his scepter and employ the life that yet remained to him in exercises of piety and religion. Having, therefore, abdicated the throne in favor of his brother Ferdinand, and having abandoned to his sons his hereditary domains, he retired, with only twelve attendants, to a monastery, situated in the neighbourhood of the town of Placentia, on the frontiers of Portugal.

In 1572 there appeared a comet which the learned William Landgrave, of Hesse, so intently watched, that the news of the burning of his palace brought by his affrighted domestics, failed to interrupt him in his observations. This comet, says Guy Patin, disappeared at the death of Charles IX, in 1574, after being visible since the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

In 1657 a comet was visible in Portugal at the time of King Sebastien's expedition to Africa. The war-party maintained that the phenomenon predicted the future greatness of the king; others arrived at different conclusions, which they communicated to the king. "No," said he, "I will not change my plans; the comet has appeared to terrify those against whom I shall make war."

In 1664, Alphonse VI, King of Portugal, whose extravagances where the cause of his dethronement in 1667, complained publicly of the misfortunes he suffered from a comet. The comet of 1680 was most famous for the terror that it inspired. Newton pretended that after it had approached the sun, this comet would be two thousand times hotter than red-hot iron. Bayle and many other writers pubished works combating the superstition upon which the predictions relative to comets were founded, and proving that these heavenly bodies were not dangerous.

1759, comets were visible in different parts of the earth. In 1786 the number of comets known was 81. Others have been observed since, especially in 1793, 1804 and 1805.—One which appeared on the 18th of October, 1807, had a tail nine millions of miles in length. The comet of 1811 was observed during a space of seventeen months.

Last year there was a great deal said about the reappearance of the comet of Charles V., but the general expectation was not realized.—*N. Y. Times.*

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