

ments of oracular predictions. But the early death of this amiable youth, and the after profligate life and miserable end of Julia herself, put an end to these visionary dreams.

About half a century ago an essay appeared from the London press, called "Observations, &c., on Virgil's Fourth Eclogue," ingeniously conceived and argumentatively written; and carrying by astrological demonstration the object of this prophecy home to Octavius Cæsar himself—especially to the so-called establishment of the empire in the West by the *peace of Brundisium*. This effort of triumphant genius was received, for the time, with admiration; and it seemed to finally settle this mysterious poem as a "*Genethliacon*," or birthday poem, in honour of *Octavius*. That this forcible production so soon disappeared, is evidence that, though tacitly accepted, it had not obtained the confidence of the learned. In fact it involved several anachronisms. The peace of Brundisium was effected A. U. C. 714; in which year the Eclogue is supposed to have been written. With this period in the life of Octavius we cannot easily reconcile such expressions as: "*fundent cunabula flores*"—"nascenti puero"—"*Incipe parve puer*," &c., nor can we readily synchronise with it such an expression as "*surget*," &c., the verb being in the future tense. I cannot accept the opinion of Heyne that *nova progenies* and *aurea gens* mean the same thing: for of the one is said, "*demittitur*"—*is sent down*; and of the other, "*surget*"—*will arise*. The latter alludes to the new generations which should come after, and in consequence of, the birth of this child: the former speaks of the Divine origin of the child, and the mandate gone forth whereby he *is sent* into the world. Some suppose, that by *demittitur* the poet is to be understood in manifest allusion to the Divine descent of the Julian race—e. g. *Æneid* 1. v. 1285 et seq.

Nascetur pulchrâ Trojanus origine Cæsar,  
Imperium Oceano, famam qui terminet astris,  
Julius, à magno *dimissum* nomen Iulo.

This fulsome adulation harmonizes indeed with the perverted sublimity of the prophecy; but anachronism destroys the assumed personal identity. I admit the avowed object of the poet—"Si canimus Sylvas, Sylvæ sint Consule dignæ"—but deny even possibility to fix the distinguished honours, of the *Cumæi carminis ætas* upon any person then existing. But beside the discrepancy of time, there is an increasing gradation of blessings accompanying the new-born race utterly incommensurate with the life and inconsistent with the reign of Octavius Cæsar.

Another anachronism is the inauguration of this happy age with what is called "*the peace of Brundisium*;" which, at best, was only a political truce basely cemented by a matrimonial alliance, and for the purpose of crushing the Consular power. The fall of the Commonwealth by this strategy was followed by widespread confiscation and death. The arms of the conspirators against public liberty now were turned against each other: and it was not till after the battle of Actium