

ASTRONOMICAL.

The Comet, Eclipses, &c.

DURING the Year 1834, the return of the **COMET** recorded by Dr. Halley, is expected. It is found to occupy a period of about 75½ Years in its course; it was first observed in the year 1456, toward the close of what are termed "the dark ages," when its appearance spread such consternation over all Europe—already indeed terrified by the rapid successes of the Turkish arms—that prayers were offered up generally, throughout the Western Church, in which both the Turks and the Comet were included, in one sweeping anathema! Its next appearance was in the year 1531, and subsequently in 1607, and 1682. The last time of its appearance was in 1759, when it passed its perihelion on March 12th, in that year.

Astronomers are generally agreed, that Comets are opaque bodies, enlightened by the Sun; and that they are of different magnitudes, may be inferred from their apparent diameters and brightness. Various conjectures have been formed respecting the tails of Comets; though it is acknowledged that they depend, somehow or other, on the Sun, and for this plain reason, that the tail of a comet is always turned from it. There has been no comet whose frequent returns have been so regularly depended upon as this; we may therefore expect its re-appearance about the month of **SEPTEMBER, 1834**—unless in its path it may meet with the influence of some attracting body to impede its course for a time, as was supposed to be the case with it, when it appeared in 1682; then it approached so near to Jupiter, as to cause its gravitation towards that planet, to be equal to one-fiftieth of its gravitation towards the Sun.

It is utterly impossible for us to pronounce, with any certainty, for what purpose these vast bodies traverse through the regions of space, crossing and re-crossing the orbits of the Planets. It has been supposed by some, that the supernatural irruption of the waters, or the "breaking up of the fountains of the great deep," at the Deluge, was occasioned by the approximation of a comet to the earth; and it has been conjectured that in the "fulness of time" one of these wandering bodies will be deputed the instrument of Divine Power in dissolving our habitable globe in ruins. By what means Providence may bring about this awful event, is to us a mystery: we can view the appearance of these erratic bodies with serenity, having the Word of Truth itself for our assurance, that no more change shall take place in the course of nature, until the final consummation of all things: and previous to that awful event many unfulfilled prophecies, recorded in scripture, have to receive their accomplishment. We make these remarks, because we are aware, it has ever been the opinion of weak and ignorant persons,