

ing it, was, for many ages, and among many nations, a prevailing opinion. Though, how to ascertain on what foundation the earth rested, or how to account for the velocity with which the heavenly luminaries seemed to move round it, they knew not. For a long series of ages, Europe continued in ignorance of astronomy, as well as of the other sciences. The revival of astronomical studies, some have dated from the times of the Emperor Frederick, who, in the thirteenth century; caused the astronomical treatise of Ptolemy, to be translated into Latin. Is it not a strong intimation of the utility of philosophy, and its subservience to the advancement of religion, that the revival of the former, and the reformation of the latter, happened almost at one time? Important, indeed, is the superstructure, which our modern philosophers have raised upon that noble foundation, which the great Bacon, upwards of two hundred years ago, began to lay. The honour of restoring and establishing the true solar system, belongs, in a peculiar manner, to Copernicus, a native of Thorn, born in the year 1472. All the books written by philosophers and astronomers, which could be found, he collected and perused; and all the various hypotheses they had invented for the solution of the celestial phenomena, he examined. The result was a firm persuasion; that the only true system was the Pythagorean; which makes the sun to be the centre, and the earth to move, not only round the sun, but also round its own axis. After twenty years spent in contemplating the phenomena of the heavens, in making mathematical calculations, in examining the observations of the ancients, and in making new ones of his own, he fully established that system of the universe, which now goes by his name, and is universally received by scientific men of all nations. Greatly has the science of astronomy been improved by the invention and use of telescopes. This improvement is attributed to Galileo, a famous mathematician and astronomer, the son of a Florentine nobleman, born in the year 1564.