

How was it that the precession of the equinoxes was not known to the Greeks but from the works of Hipparchus, if it had been inserted in the registers of the Egyptians, and written in such manifest characters on the ceilings of their temples?

How is it that Ptolemæus, who wrote in Egypt, did not deign to make use of any of the observations of the Egyptians?(1)

Besides, Herodotus, who dwelt with them so long, says nothing of these six hours which they added to the sacred year, nor of that great sothaic period which resulted from it. He, on the contrary, positively says, that the Egyptians making their years three hundred and sixty-five days, the seasons return at the same periods; so that at his time there was no appearance that they had as yet suspected the necessity of this quarter of a day.(2) Thales, who had visited the priests of Egypt less than a century before Herodotus, in like manner did not make known to his fellow-countrymen any other than the year of three hundred and sixty-five days only;(3) and, if we reflect that the colonies that went from Egypt, fourteen or fifteen centuries before Christ, the Jews, and the Athenians carried with them the lunar year; we may perhaps judge that the year of three hundred and sixty-five days itself, did not exist in Egypt at a period so remote.

I know that Macrobius(4) attributes a solar year

tion of the Sphere, by Eudoxus, in the 1st vol. of his History of Ancient Astronomy, p. 120, et seq.

(1) See M. Delambre's Preliminary Discourse on the History of the Astronomy of the Middle Age, p. 8, et seq.

(2) Euterpe, ch. iv.

(3) Diog. Laerte. lib. 1., in Thalet.

(4) Saturnal, lib. 1, ch. xv.