

of the revolution of the fixed stars, that is, 13,000 years, and even more.

Thus Pluche, generalizing some indications of the ancients, has thought that Aries announces the beginning of the sun's elevation and the vernal equinox; that Cancer announces his retrogradation to the summer solstice; that Libra, the emblem of the equality, marks the autumnal equinox;(1) and that Capricornus, a climbing animal, denotes the winter solstice; after which, the sun returns to us. In this manner, by placing the inventors of the zodiac in a temperate climate, we should have rains under Aquarius; the birth of lambs and kids under Gemini; violent heats under Leo; harvests under the Virgin; hunting under Sagittarius, &c.; and these emblems are perfectly appropriate. By placing the colures at the commencement of the constellations, or at least, the equinox at the first stars of Aries, we should only arrive in the first instance at 389 years before Christ, an epoch evidently too modern, and which would render it necessary to refer to an entire equinoctial period, or 26,000 years. But if it be supposed that the equinox passed through the middle of the constellation, we should reach nearly 1000 or 1200 years more remote to 1600 or 1700 years before Christ; and this is the epoch which many celebrated men have thought really to be that of the invention of the zodiac, the honour of which, on very slight grounds, they have assigned to Chiron.

But Dupuis, who needed for the origin which he pretended to attribute to all religions, that astrono-

(1) Varro de Ling. Lat. lib. vi. Signa quod aliquid significant, at Libra æquinoctium, Mabroc. Sat. lib. 1, c. cxxi. Capricornus ab infernis partibus ad superas solem reducens Capræ naturam videtur imitari,