

which I furnish. And if ignorant or volatile minds would fain oppose me with certain passages from the Holy Writings, whose meaning they misconstrue, I shall despise their attacks. Mathematical truths can only be judged by mathematicians."

The astronomer of Thorn did not deceive himself when he foresaw a determined opposition to his opinions. Shortly before the publication of his book, Father Riccioli put forward a series of arguments in con-

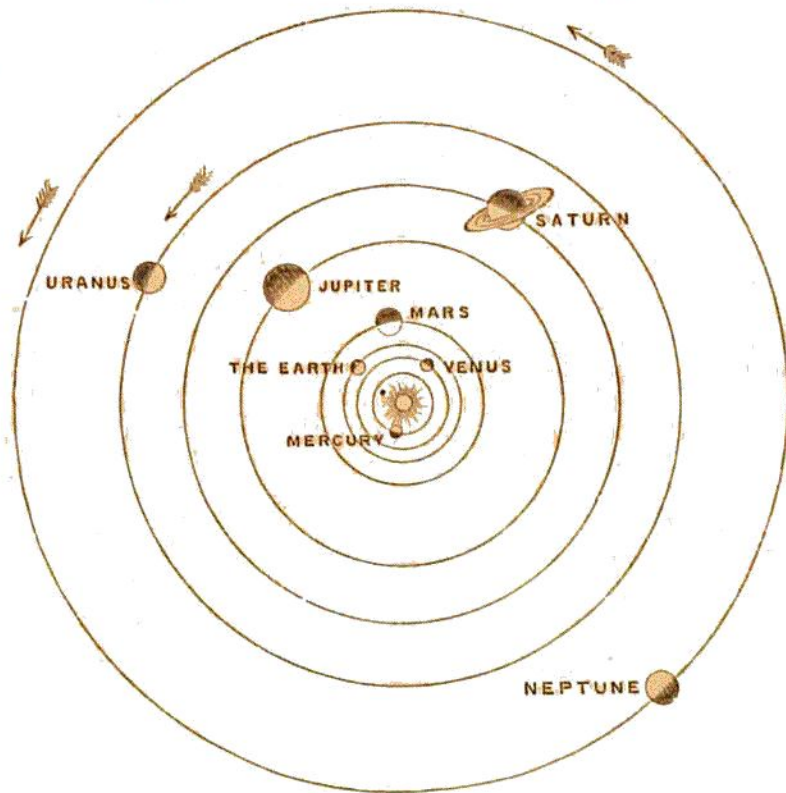


FIG. 13. — SYSTEM OF COPERNICUS.

→ Course of movement of translation for the entire system.

tradiction of the Earth's movement. These arguments, seventy-seven in number, were marvellously absurd. "Would the birds," said Father Riccioli, for example, "dare to rise in the air if they saw the earth passing away from beneath them?" From such a specimen we may judge of the rest of the egregious structure.

The book "*De Revolutionibus Orbium*" has been placed by the Church of Rome on the condemned list of its *Index Expurgatorius*.* Another learned monk, Father Boscovich, who printed at Rome, in 1746, a work on the course of the comets, thus expresses himself: "As for me, I look upon the Earth as immovable. Nevertheless, for the sake of simplifying my explanations, I shall treat of it *as if it did revolve*" (!)—[Was there ever a finer instance of the subtlety of the serpent combined with the gentleness of the dove? Did ever man

* [The "*Index Librorum Prohibitorum*" is a catalogue of the books which the Roman Church interdicts to its members on religious, moral, or doctrinal grounds. The first catalogue of the kind was issued, under Pope Gelatius, in 494; but the formal Index may be dated from 1564, when it was published by Pope Pius IV.]